Talking To The News Media
WHEN A REPORTER CONTACTS YOU

Get name, news outlet and phone number

Find out why he/she wants to interview you, how interview will be used

Find out deadline

Arrange to call back

Check out the reporter and news outlet (Google, Lexis-Nexis)

If you decide to say yes, ask what information the reporter wants.....

Should you ask for questions in advance.....?
YOU HOPE FOR THE RIGHT REPORTER
SOMETIMES YOU’RE NOT SO LUCKY
KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE
DISTILLING YOUR MESSAGE

4C’s: clear, concise, conversational, compelling
Aim to convey 1-3 main points
Think about facts vs message
Refresh your memory on facts
Emotion is memorable
Shorter often is better. TV sound bite = 10 seconds
Anecdotes, metaphors, examples help make your point vividly
HELP THE REPORTER GET IT RIGHT

Check to make sure you’re being understood
Don’t guess – if you don’t know, say so
Don’t comment on a “fact” that is unknown to you
Don’t get angry, impatient or expect the reporter to be an expert
Suggest other people to talk with, or things to read
YOUR MAIN POINT

Know it
Know how you are going to make it
Make it
SO WHAT?

Answer the question early

The intervewer will want to know
CONNECT WITH THE INTERVIEWER

Eye contact
Responsiveness
Body language
Interaction
GET READY FOR TV

Sit up straight
Don’t rock, sigh, tilt, roll your eyes, fidget
Don’t wear anything that is going to be a distraction
Solid, warm colors
CAN YOU SEE A STORY IN ADVANCE?

Most news reporters will not allow this

Some will read back your quotes to you, or read back technical passages

Magazine and non-news writers may be more open to this

No harm in asking
AFTER THE FACT

If a story contains a factual error, tell the reporter in a polite email. Suggest a way to correct it.

If you like the story, send a complimentary email.

Don’t be disappointed if little or nothing from you makes it into the story.

A source who never gets quoted can help shape news coverage in important ways.