

MEWBOURNE COLLEGE OF EARTH AND ENERGY

MEDIA POLICY

If you are contacted by a media agency or reporter for an interview or statement:

1. Do not speak with a reporter until contacting Mewbourne College's Director of Communications.
2. If the Director of Communications is not available, contact the Dean's Office, who will contact OU MarComm.
3. The Director of Communications will:
 - a. Serve as a liaison between you and the reporter.
 - b. Coordinate with the Dean and MarComm leadership if the request involves a sensitive subject. They will determine whether or not we can comment.
 - c. Prep and coach you as needed.
 - d. If required, facilitate any approvals for filming on campus.

If you are sent an Open-Records request

1. Contact the Dean's Office.
2. All Open-Records requests should go to: openrecords@ou.edu.

When speaking with reporters, remember:

- Reporters are not the enemy, but they are also not your buddy. There is no need to feel like you are being deposited. At the same time, you should still think before you speak – both what you say and how you say it.
- Reporters often work on tight deadlines. We will work hard to help them meet those deadlines, but we will not forego proper approval channels. If a reporter calls and says they need an answer now, before you can request approval, that is a red flag.
- If you are asked about research ALWAYS be mindful of publicity embargoes in your research contract. The Mewbourne College Director of Communications will coordinate with the VPRP's office to ensure there are no violations.
- Nothing is actually "off the record."
- As a faculty or staff member of the University of Oklahoma, you are ALWAYS speaking on behalf of the University.
 - Example: Suppose you are on a geology committee for a county in Oklahoma and are helping to make a policy. You will be referenced not as "committee member xxx," but as "OU professor of geosciences xxx."

- Whenever possible, try to show how your research/activities positively impacts Oklahomans.
- Avoid technical speak and jargon. This is where coaching from the Director of Communications can help.
- Do not get led off message. Most reporters are honest and genuinely want your expertise. If a reporter is going to try to be tricky, it will usually be attempted by moving you off message.
 - Example 1: Obvious

Reporter: “You work with college students every day. Any idea how they feel about...(presidential election, state or university scandal).

You: “My students are dedicated, for example in this project...(lead back to the subject)

- Example 1: Subtle

Reporter: “Your research brings to mind (a current debate about the actions of xx company, a proposed policy tangentially related to your research area, recent politician’s statement). As an expert in this area, any thoughts on that?

You: “I prefer to focus on my research. Did you know...(lead back to the subject).”