Be Strategic.

Strategic Media Relations and Communications

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Be Boulder.
University of Colorado Boulder
What does our office do?

Our job is to make sure our strategic audiences know about the great stories at CU-Boulder.
Channels we use

- **Traditional media**: Press releases, media pitches, tip sheets
- **Internal newsletter**: CU-Boulder Today (faculty-staff and student editions)
- **Executive Communications**: Chancellor’s newsletter, speeches, Federal Research Report
- **Web-only content**: Feature stories and in-depth series
- **Social media**: Campus Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, etc., accounts
- **CU-produced magazines**: College, department, institute and alumni magazines
Traditional Media

Watch news for trends and be aware of sensitive information that would make headlines. Even if the response is from a department, the headline will read “CU …”

Daily Camera headlines
Audit of CU's web security reveals risks
CU-Boulder to hire 'campus alcohol agent'
CU-Boulder tows 53 cars for Obama visit, but won't fine owners
CU-Boulder may merge music school with new arts, media college
CU-Boulder projects fall's freshman class will be smaller than last year
CU-Boulder police report more alcohol, drug arrests and tickets
CU-Boulder's 'graywater' system at new 'green' dorm hung up by state law
Call before responding to:

Trend stories
Ties to a national trend or event. May be positive, but are often issue driven and more complex than the reporter indicates.

News stories
About policies, procedures, events and people. Often conflict driven. Can be data driven.

Investigative stories
Always conflict driven and often about budgets, policies and people. Main focus is accountability.
Findings with direct applications: This is the “news you can use.”

Children who have more unstructured time are better able to set and meet their own goals.

“Oh wow!” findings: People love it when science is weird.

Spidernaut returns from space and retires to the Smithsonian.
Important new findings: These are the discoveries that are milestones in your own field of study.

Physicists here helped discover evidence of the Higgs boson using the Large Hadron Collider.

Forecasts/predictions: A report being issued by an expert in your area that gives predictions about such things as economics or politics

The yearly Business Economic Outlook Forum led by Rich Wobbekind always makes the news statewide.
**Timely:** News that adds to the conversation about current events.

*After the earthquake struck in Nepal there was heightened interest in a cultural programming event put on by the Nepalese student association.*

**Experts:** Big news stories like a natural disaster, trial, election, or a cultural event (Superbowl) generate expert requests.

*An expert on earthquakes was interviewed last weekend by the NYT, LA Times and other media organizations.*
Findings that are surprising: Things that surprise you, surprise your colleagues, are counterintuitive or go against generally accepted wisdom.

CU-Boulder example: Geologists show that the Grand Canyon may be 60 million years older than previously thought, meaning dinosaurs may have peered over the rim.
Research that is topical: These are things that may not be groundbreaking but can add to the conversation about current events. This can be an opportunity to talk about ongoing research projects or to be put on a tip sheet.

CU-Boulder example: When earthquakes struck Greeley, our experts set up seismometers to try and determine if there was a link with nearby injection wells. The local earthquakes also made a scientific study about earthquakes in Oklahoma more interesting to Colorado media.
**Programs/initiatives/services:** A new service or program, or one that will garner interest every year

*New payment plan for tuition, Leeds tax prep service by students, CU Achieve, Entrepreneurs in Residence*

**Human connections:**
News connected to a human-interest story.

*Researchers use 3-D printing to make children’s picture books accessible to children who are visually impaired.*
Outreach: Programs or individuals presenting in schools or going out into the community.

Shakespeare in the schools to promote anti-bullying.

Events and exhibits:
Out of the ordinary or of national prominence.

An original copy of Shakespeare’s First Folio will be displayed on campus in 2016.
Projects that are visual: Work that would make striking pictures or videos. This may involve talking about your research while it’s still in progress and could include class projects.

CU-Boulder example: Restocking the “true” native cutthroat trout.
What is a difficult sell for traditional media?

Your conference, symposium or meeting EXCEPT when you have a prestigious speaker and the public is invited.

Your award UNLESS it is a Nobel Prize, a National Medal of Science, Pulitzer Prize, MacArthur “genius grant” or something of similar caliber.

Your grant UNLESS it’s unusually big or unless it launches a study that’s interesting on its own.

Your book UNLESS it’s based on new research or it meets other requirements for “newsworthiness.”
CU-Boulder Today: A great place to put mentions of upcoming campus events, smaller awards, conferences and talks. There is both a student and a faculty/staff edition. You can fill out a “community note” and access the calendar online at colorado.edu/news/today
Web-only features: Stories that aren’t necessarily newsworthy but which highlight an aspect of CU-Boulder that we want to emphasize, such as great student research opportunities.

CU-Boulder example: Computer science student working to determine how wind and rain can affect cycling performance.
In-house magazines: Engineering, Arts and Sciences, Alumni, CIRES, JILA and others produce their own publications.

CU-Boulder example: The Engineering alumni magazine.
Social media: Posts on CU-Boulder’s social media channels—including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and YouTube—may link back to your website, news releases, features, or CU-Boulder Today articles, but they may also be a way to highlight something that doesn’t necessarily fit into any of these channels.

**CU-Boulder example:**
Highlighting mission to Pluto.
Your role in media outreach:

- Work with us to write news releases instead of writing them yourself
- Give us plenty of lead time before the publication or the event
- Be available to talk to the media, and return all media inquiries, including local and national as well as print, online and broadcast.
Media interview tips*

• Avoid jargon
• Use analogies, stories or anecdotes when possible
• Keep answers short and speak in complete thoughts
• Have one or two main points you want to make
• Put the findings in context
• Don’t overestimate a reporter’s knowledge
• Don’t be afraid to say you don’t know
• Ask for clarification if you don’t understand the question
• Never say anything you don’t want to see in print, hear on the radio, or see on TV

*With thanks to AAAS
We’re Here to Help

Contact a media professional *before* agreeing to an interview or writing a news release:

- Melissa Wise, Engineering Communications, MelissaWise@colorado.edu
- Malinda Miller-Huey, Director of Media Relations (millerm@colorado.edu) (303-999-7808)

We will help determine:

- If your story is best for marketing or news (or both)
- If a news release should be written or a story pitched