

Tips for Media Experts

Plan for the interview. Do not take an interview without having an opportunity to think ahead of time. Learn about the reporter and get a sense of what they generally write about. Contact Gary J. Erwin, associate vice president of Marketing & Communications, at 313-578-0339 or erwingj@udmercy.edu, or Ron Bernas, director of Communications, at 313-993-1251 or bernasrj@udmercy.edu, to receive background on their approach to covering stories.

Find out what the topic of the interview will be upfront, so you can prepare for it.

*If you *do* receive an immediate interview, ask if you may call the reporter back in 15 minutes to make sure you are best prepared.

Decide if this interview is in your and Detroit Mercy's best interest. As flattering as it might be to be asked to give an interview, you are under no obligation to do it. If it's not about a topic you will feel comfortable speaking about, don't do it. Refer them back to Erwin or Bernas.

Keep it simple. Stick to the main point. It is helpful to speak in short sentences and soundbites. Sentences with one point is best. Avoid jargon. Remember your rhetoric and be aware of your audience. In other words, your audience is not in the dental profession, they are your patients. Don't speak over their heads.

Don't let reporters put words in your mouth. Journalists will often rephrase what you've said with a, "So what you're saying is ..." If what they say is not something you entirely agree with, it can be effective to say, "What I mean is ..." Taking this approach makes it very clear what your message is. You need to make sure that your ideas are expressed in the way that *you* want them to be.

Practice the pause. Reporters are very good at waiting after you've finished talking. When you've said what you've wanted, stop. The reporter *will* eventually speak again.

Put yourself in their shoes. Reporters are often on tight deadlines and if they feel like their conversation with you wasn't valuable, they won't call again. Find out what other topics they cover and offer to be a resource, and they'll think of you and Detroit Mercy in the future. If you say you will call them back or email them with additional information, do so.

Don't say anything you don't want to read in tomorrow's paper. Avoid saying anything that could negatively affect you and Detroit Mercy. Don't speak negatively about schools and do not comment on rumors or things you may have heard. It will probably show up in the story. Similarly, avoid commenting on events that have yet to occur, like a deal or partnership that is imminent but isn't signed. If you don't want it out there, don't say it.

Ways to reference the University or school:

- Detroit Mercy
- University of Detroit Mercy
- Detroit Mercy Dental
- School of Dentistry
- **DO NOT use UDM or U of D**