

## Communicating with the Media

IUB faculty are often contacted by the media to share their perspective on education topics in the news. The advent of the No Child Left Behind Act and Indiana's PL221 have increased public awareness of educational issues, further creating a need for our perspectives to be shared.

The School of Education's Faculty Affairs Committee asked the External Relations staff to help prepare some guidance for faculty to consider when they interact with journalists. Richard Doty, IU Media Relations, provided the framework and much of the content for the following guidelines, and he would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional advice ([rgdoty@indiana.edu](mailto:rgdoty@indiana.edu), 5-3911). Debbie O'Leary is available for consultation as a member of the School's External Relations staff ([devo99@indiana.edu](mailto:devo99@indiana.edu), 6-8031).

1. Remember that the most important thing is preparation. You have to have the information down cold that you want to convey.
2. You control the interview, not the person asking the questions, so don't give this up or be intimidated.
3. If you receive a cold call from a journalist, it is often better to schedule another time to talk rather than speak without preparation.
4. Feel free to correct reporters who have wrong information, but do this in a tactful way.
5. Stay under control and don't lose your temper.
6. If there is anything just important as preparation, it is to make sure the point you want to make gets presented, even if you have to repeat it several times in the course of the interview to make sure the reporter both gets it and understands it.
7. Plan ahead what you may want to do to enhance the interview through visuals such as photographs, charts (but keep them simple), etc.
8. In the same vein, have examples ready to illustrate your main points. If you're example is hypothetical, make sure the reporter understands that.
9. Be prepared for unexpected questions and try to anticipate what will be asked.
10. When setting up the interview, it is perfectly appropriate to ask the purpose and other sources being interviewed.
11. Never agree to speak off the record. For that matter, assume nothing is ever off the record.
12. Feel free to suggest other sources that may be helpful to the interviewer.
13. The best responses are short, crisp and confident answers.
14. Presume all microphones are always on.
15. On difficult or vague questions, ask them to be repeated, as this will give you some additional time to formulate an answer.
16. Ask approximately when the story will run. Journalists are busy, too, and they can't be expected to remember to contact every source whenever a story appears.
17. Maintain a record of reporters with whom you've interacted, especially for those interviews that went well. Positive relationships with journalists can be mutually beneficial (e.g., they call you when they need help, you call them with a story idea).
18. Put a copy of these guidelines by your telephone.