

TV Interview Tips

Wear clothing that is neat and comfortable.

- Select something you feel good wearing.
- Plain attire is best.
- Avoid:
 - small patterns of stripes or checks;
 - bright red, as it will bleed into the background;
 - solid white or black – both are overpowering on camera.
- Solid pale blue or a pastel work best on camera.
- Remember you are representing the university. Don't wear clothes with the insignia of another organization or university.

Don't talk to the camera unless you are asked to do so.

- Talk to the interviewer (*look at him/her*) – or in a panel situation – to the person you mean to address. Eye contact is important.
- Look at the reporter, not into the camera. If you can't look at a person, pick something else to focus on. If you are passionate about your message – just tell it – and it will come through.
- Talk with the reporter about the interview or panel before it starts. Find out what the questions might be so you can prepare your responses.
- Sit if possible, don't stand.
- Gestures are fine for emphasis, but don't overdo it.

Finally, the message.

- You must be passionate and you must be truthful.
- You must not have more than three points to make. Think about them in advance.
- Talk clearly in short phrases. Try not to talk too fast.
- Your comments will be edited and anything edited later can misconstrue what you intend unless you have a few prepared “sound bites” where there is no room to edit them.
- If you get an unexpected question, don't answer right away. They will edit out silences (dead air). Take a minute and collect your thoughts before you begin. Try not to say “um” or other filler words.
- Don't ever tell a reporter not to talk about something. That means you will likely get that question.

- Silent pauses are okay. And, if you really do not have an answer, or it is a subject about which you are not familiar, just say so.

Stay focused.

- If you are asked a question off topic, try to lead the discussion back on topic. This is called bridging.
- Bridging example: “I can’t comment on what Professor. Jones has said, (BRIDGE TO) but I have found that in my own research.....”
- You bridge to what you want to get across. Don’t worry if you repeat yourself – they will edit.
- Never repeat a reporter’s negative terms or phrasing. You don’t want that to be the clip that shows up on TV.
- If a reporter asks a negative question, you don’t have to answer it.

Beware the B roll.

- If you are asked to “chat” while the cameraman shoots “B” roll (non-interview footage, cutaway shots, etc.), be sure your body language and comments are appropriate.
- And be aware that any answers you provide or comments you make during this time can be used on the air.