

College of Osteopathic Medicine Michigan State University

Media Policy

This policy provides guidelines for faculty, staff and student groups who are contacted by the media or would like to reach out to media.

Media Practices

The news media provides an important communication channel to the community, region, state and nation. Public awareness and support of the College of Osteopathic Medicine and its programs is enhanced through the maintenance of good working relationships with the media and the public.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine communications office strives to disseminate information in a cooperative and coordinated manner to those people who request assistance and is the point of contact for reporters. Typically, members of the media are asked to contact the office directly, prior to reaching out to faculty, staff and students. However, sometimes that doesn't happen.

It is highly recommended that faculty, staff and students notify the communications office first prior to initiating contact with reporters. The communications office also must be notified prior to inviting members of the media into university buildings. Likewise, when members of the media are seeking comment from, or an interview with, any college faculty, staff or students, the office should be contacted to assist with arranging the interview or responding to the request. Our office deals with the media on a regular basis and is here to help guide you through the process.

The news media includes reporters from any type of outlet, including but not limited to, newspaper, magazine, radio, broadcast, digital and internet.

Who to contact when media calls

College of Osteopathic Medicine:

- Communications Director: Terri Hughes-Lazzell (<mailto:hughe260@msu.edu>; office: 517-884-3755, cell: 260-403-0766)
- Communications Manager: Pai Liu (liupa@msu.edu)

The communications team can provide guidance for developing talking points/key messages or offer assistance with redirecting media requests to an alternate source, when appropriate.

Alternate University Communications contacts:

- MSU deputy spokesperson: Dan Olsen (<mailto:olsenda2@msu.edu>, 517-355-3853)
- University Communications Health Communicator: Kim Ward (<mailto:kward@msu.edu>; office: 517-432-0117)

What to do if you are contacted by media

If you are contacted by the media seeking comment or requesting an interview:

- Contact the communications office immediately or simply refer the reporter to one of the contacts above.
- Be responsive and helpful. Reporters often work under tight deadlines, so a timely response is important.
- Ask who the reporter/outlet is, what their contact information is, what specifically do they want to cover, and when do they want to cover it.

What to discuss with media

Once the communications office is made aware and an interview has been established:

- Remember you are the subject matter expert in your field. Focus on 3 to 4 key messages about the topic you are discussing. It's important to stick to what you know. There are times a reporter may ask an off-topic question and you can simply state that it isn't your area of expertise and can look into an alternate source that can comment.
- Make sure to represent yourself, the College of Osteopathic Medicine and MSU professionally and responsibly. In some cases, you may be viewed as responding on behalf of the college or university.
 - Be clear that you are providing your personal opinion or insight and not that of the college or university overall.
 - If you are speaking for another organization, be sure to say so and clearly identify who you are representing.
- Also, be sure to let the communications office know of any changes that occur to an agreed-upon interview, including date, time, location, topic or additional interviewees.

What not to discuss with media

University policies and practices take into account Michigan State's status as a public institution of higher education and the state/federal laws governing the release of information. As a result of these laws, employees have limitations in releasing information to protect the rights of students or employees. Therefore, employees should refrain from discussing:

- Legal issues
- Personnel issues
- Questions that involve college or university integrity or are particularly controversial or sensitive
- A campus crisis or emergency

If asked to provide information or a comment on these matters, avoid saying "no comment." Rather, indicate to reporters that you are not the appropriate person to talk to and can connect them with the college communications office.

- Take down the reporter's name/number/email

- Send an email to the College of Osteopathic Medicine's communications office (Terri Hughes-Lazzell - <mailto:hughe260@msu.edu>) explaining the inquiry and provide the reporter's contact information.
- We will handle the inquiry from there and if needed, work with University Communications.

Protecting students, employees and research

Again, as a public institution, MSU is guided by state and federal laws when it comes to the protection of student and staff information and research. Therefore, reporters/photographers with cameras or recording devices of any kind can access only public areas in and outside university buildings. This includes main lobby areas and hallways. Media is strictly prohibited from accessing private offices, labs, classrooms, etc. in university buildings unless accompanied by the college communications director or University Communications. This particularly includes anatomy or animal research labs/facilities.

If you see a reporter or photographer in an area of a building that is not considered a public area, immediately contact the communications department or University Communications.