

CARL R. WOESE INSTITUTE FOR GENOMIC BIOLOGY

tips on speaking to the media

PREPARATION

- Identify the key points the reporter must understand by the end of your interview.
- Interviews may take place in-person, over the phone, or through a submitted list of questions. If in person, meet in a relatively quiet, well-lit location. If possible, use a location that enhances the message you are conveying.
- You do not have to be interviewed on the spot, the first time the reporter makes contact with you. You may wish to arrange a time to call back, mindful of the fact that journalists are nearly always on a very tight deadline.
- If you anticipate tough questions, practice beforehand. The News Bureau (217) 333-1085 or Public Affairs (217) 333-5010 are able to provide a mock interview with a seasoned journalist if requested.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Answer questions using only information you want to appear in the final story.
- Ask questions if needed to ensure the reporter understands the information. Clarify the story for the reporter if they are unclear on any points.
- If the reporter asks a question you do not have an answer for, volunteer to follow up with the information at a later date.
- If the reporter asks a question you do not want to answer, politely decline and move on to another topic.
- If possible formulate a one sentence, compelling soundbite about your topic for use during the interview, and incorporate into a response to one of the interview questions.
- Know the reporter's deadline and provide the best possible contact information for that time frame.

IMPORTANT INFO TO RELATE

- Clearly convey your name, home department, and connection to the Institute for Genomic Biology (faculty member, affiliate).
- If you will be conducting research and it will take place at the IGB, make that statement.
- Identify the funding organization associated with your announcement.
- Include associated universities, institutes, or key individuals involved, and provide their full information. If a team was involved, request that all team members be listed in the article.

Adding your connection to the IGB in your author byline will greatly help track potential newsworthy publications and increase the possibility of coverage, so please do so!

If you have any questions or concerns about interacting with the media, please contact Nicholas Vasi of the IGB communications department at nvasi@illinois.edu.

The sections "Preparation" and "During the Interview" were taken in part from the Public Affairs section of the University of Illinois website at <http://publicaffairs.illinois.edu/media/crisis/interview.html>