

**UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE**

Responding to the Media

1. As soon as news media contact has been made with a staff person, student assistant, or volunteer, he/she should notify his/her supervisor or Executive Secretary **and** the Marketing Department. As long as time factors are taken into consideration, it is permissible to take a number, ask what topic will be covered, when is their story due, and immediately return the call. This allows the person queried the opportunity to seek advice.
2. Everything that is said directly or indirectly is "on the record."
3. As a representative of the University Student Union you should always respond with the best interest of the organization in mind.
4. Remember your message points. When talking to the Sundial your message points will always be: we provide services and programs to students with their needs in mind, we are a student development focused organization, and we strive to provide the best for students. Always keep in mind our mission statement.
5. If you do not have an answer to a reporter's question, say "I don't know," and refer them to the appropriate contact rather than making up information or responding with "no comment." Never lie.
6. If there are quiet moments during the interview, stay quiet. Do not feel compelled to say anything; however, you can use this time also to refer back to your message points. Remember, never vent to a reporter.
7. Keep responses short or the editor will shorten them for you. Most publications won't print more than three paragraphs. The shorter the better.
8. Back up strong statements with facts. For example, refer the reporter to the USU Web site, a reputable resource, or person to back up your statement. Don't make statements that end with a negative. Avoid using "but," it usually leads into a negative statement.
9. Personalize the issue (put a human face to it), but try not to get emotional. Always relate it back to the organization and what is best for the organization. Keep in mind that your attitude sets the tone.
10. Be aware that the reporter's final story has an impact on the organization, with positive or negative effects. Always treat a reporter with the same respect and courtesy you would with any professional, colleague, or patron.
11. Because reporters work on tight deadlines, it is of utmost importance to return a reporter's call or request for an interview on the day you receive the request. Offer a way for the reporter to contact you (e.g. cell phone or email) in case they have questions once they have begun writing their story.
12. In case of external media, e.g. Los Angeles Times, Daily News, or other off-campus media sources, take a number, ask what topic will be covered, the date their story is due, and contact the Marketing Department immediately. The Marketing Department will contact the Executive Director and the CSUN University Advancement Department to ensure compliance with the University's media policies.

Contacts in the Marketing Department

Michael Niles
Marketing Manager
michael.niles@csun.edu 818-677-6023

Quote Examples

Ineffective Quotes

“I am really excited about Dippin' Dots because most students can't afford the expensive ice cream.”

“I'm not sure whether it's awareness (about the events) or if we're just not getting through to all 34,000 students”

“I think ### needs to get [clubs and organizations] in the habit of coming to us as a last resort.”

“We need to keep them safe in line. They think it's fun to push...I think what went wrong is that it's a very popular event.”

Effective Quotes

“We try and act responsible with student fees, I believe we've acted responsibly and that's why we are in relatively good situation compared to many other colleges and even businesses.”

“One of the important things to remember is that the students have expressed an interest in this, it's not the board who thought it up and said, 'This would be a good idea.’”

“This is a great way for students to see our facilities and engage in activities during finals.”

“This event is a unique experience for students,” ### added. “It is...the start of the spring semester. And this is a nice way to kick back,”