



Press Release and Media Advisory Tips

Press releases and media advisories are tremendously important for bringing attention to a particular issue or promoting an event to help drive change on campus. Press releases and media advisories serve different purposes. Press releases tell the media about something so that they can report on it; media advisories are used to get media to attend your event.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR CRAFTING A RELEASE THAT WILL GENERATE THE MOST MEDIA EXPOSURE POSSIBLE:

- Carefully think through the headline for your press release. Write it as if it is the only thing the recipient will read. In order to capture the attention of the reader, the headline should be short, bold, and slightly larger than the body of your text. Use standard capitalization rules for titles. For the rest of the release, keep your font simple and professional.
- When writing, assume that readers will only be skimming the body of your press release. Because of this, strive to write every paragraph as tightly and concisely as possible. Pull your reader in by putting the most important information first. It's important that the entire release is written with the goal of providing an objective, third-person perspective, even as you emphasize your strongest points.
- When deciding what to include in your release, pretend that you are explaining the event or issue to a friend who doesn't know much about it. Anticipate what questions they may have. Ask friends who are not in your group to read the release so that you can see if you are missing any important details or points of clarification. The most important information to include in the release is the date, time, and location of the event, as well as reasons why the reader should care about the event. Be sure to also include one or more well-placed quotes from prominent officers like your club president explaining why you hosted a particular speaker, or how the news you're sharing affects the reader. If the release or advisory is for a lecture or debate, include details from the speaker's biography to establish their credibility for your audience.
- Before closing, include a short paragraph describing the mission of your organization. If your group has a website, include that as well.
- Finish the release with the contact information for your club president or the appropriate contact person for the event, if applicable.

To get a better sense of what press releases and media advisories look like, check out the samples included below before you start writing yours.



SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Justice U. Student Group Holds ‘Free Speech Zone’ Protest on Constitution Day

Salem, Ore., September 15, 2016—On Thursday, September 17—Constitution Day—the student group Justice Students for the Environment (JSE) will head to the courtyard in front of Green Library to protest Justice University’s (JU) unconstitutional “free speech zone.” The group aims to bring awareness to JU’s restrictive speech policies, which limit the First Amendment rights of the school’s more than 50,000 students.

[City that the event is taking place], [State], [Date]

[The opening sentence/paragraph is the lede, which should give readers the main idea of the press release. The lede should catch the reader’s attention and keep their interest to read on. Not all of the specifics need to be included in the lede because the details of the event will be discussed later on in the press release.]

“JU’s administrators need to realize that it is unacceptable to confine speech to such a small area of campus,” said JSE President John Doe. “On Thursday, we will demonstrate that the campus free speech zone restricts students’ First Amendment rights and discourages students from engaging in activism and with the campus community.”

[Include a nice, punchy quote from one of the event organizers. Newspapers/reporters like to grab these quotes and include them in their articles. Usually the quote is the second or third paragraph.]

[Prioritize the rest of your press release so that the most newsworthy info is first, followed by important details. Include general/background information nearer to the end.]

On Thursday at 3 p.m., students will gather in JU’s free speech zone with the goal of packing the space. The campus free speech zone is a small patch of turf on a part of campus that receives very little foot traffic. With enough attendees, the space will overflow, demonstrating that it is not possible for all of JU’s students to exercise their First Amendment rights at the same time if their free speech rights are confined to the campus free speech zone.

Students attending the event are encouraged to bring signs with quotes and images related to the First Amendment and free speech. The Constitution Day protest is open to all students and campus groups.

[Event details]

Last spring, JSE met resistance while holding recruitment events on campus outside of the free speech zone. On one occasion, administrators stopped JSE members from passing out flyers while trying to recruit members. At a recent JSE meeting, the club’s executive board discussed that JSE may not be the only group facing resistance to their activism and how the restrictive free speech zone affects all



students on campus. At the same meeting, the group decided to initiate an on-campus protest. The group's leaders decided that raising awareness about the detrimental effects of the free speech zone would make it more likely that the free speech zone will be eliminated so that the rights of JU students would be honored.

[Background info]

According to a survey done by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), more than 40 percent of the over 449 colleges and universities analyzed maintain written policies that seriously infringe upon the free speech rights of students. In 2016, FIRE found that one in 10 of America's top colleges and universities have free speech zones.

[General info on free speech zones]

"I can't wait until the day that JU's free speech zone is a thing of the past," said John Doe. "The more students become aware of JU's restrictive speech policies, the harder it will be for the administration to keep them on the books. Thursday's protest will help educate students that are currently unaware of a problem that impacts all students on campus."

[If the event is sponsored by multiple groups, include another quote at the end. This is not always necessary.]

Students for the Environment is the nation's oldest, largest, and most active organization of college students organizing for environmental issues. We are comprised of campus chapters that are affiliates of People for the Environment. We bring together thousands of current students and millions of young people who work, volunteer, and support solving environmental issues.

[At the bottom of press release, include a description of your organization. If there is more than one organization sponsoring the event, include a description for each organization.]

CONTACT:

John Doe, President, Justice Students for the Environment: (555)-555-5555;
JSE@studentsfortheenvironment.com

[Include the points of contact for information regarding the event. This will help members of the media get in touch with the appropriate person.]



SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Theresa Glinski, 215-717-3473; theresa@thefire.org; <https://www.thefire.org/debates>

MEDIA ADVISORY

DEBATE TOMORROW:

ESPN's Jay Bilas and NCAA's Oliver Luck Debate Paying College Athletes

TIME & LOCATION:

Tuesday, October 20 at 7 p.m. CDT, doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Texas A&M University

Rudder Theatre

401 Joe Routh Boulevard

College Station, Texas 77843

PARTICIPANTS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS:

Jay Bilas, analyst and courtside commentator, ESPN

Oliver Luck, executive vice president of regulatory affairs, NCAA

Robert Shibley, executive director, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE)

SUMMARY:

Should college athletes be allowed to be paid? That is the question ESPN analyst and broadcaster **Jay Bilas** and NCAA Executive Vice President of Regulatory Affairs **Oliver Luck** will debate tomorrow at 7 p.m. CDT in Texas A&M University's Rudder Theatre. Bilas will advocate for the motion "College athletes should be allowed to be paid," while Luck will argue against it. The debate will be moderated by **Darryl Bruffett**, sports director for the region's CBS affiliate, KBTX, and a familiar presence in Texas A&M sports.

The debate is free and open to the public. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. CDT and the debate will begin at 7 p.m. **Press planning to attend the debate must confirm their attendance by emailing theresa@thefire.org to ensure special press-only seating and accommodations.**

For those unable to attend in person, the debate will be streamed live on **FIRE's website.**

Tomorrow's debate is the first in the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education's (FIRE's) debate series: **FIRE Debates**. For FIRE Debates' inaugural year, FIRE will host four debates at colleges across the country. The debates are intended to remind students that free inquiry and open discussion play a central role in both education and democracy.

To learn more about this FIRE Debate, [visit this website](#). FIRE is the nation's leading defender of free speech and due process rights on college campuses.