

Style Guide

2016



Casper College



Writing Style Guide



Dear Casper College Employee,

In today's competitive environment, Casper College must tell its story clearly, consistently and effectively.

We must promote a positive, accurate image to our core audiences.

This campus style guide, prepared by the professionals in the Casper College Public Relations Department, is an important document to help us present this unified message.

To assist administrators, faculty and staff in producing the highest quality publications possible, all college publications intended for off-campus audiences or wide distribution on campus will be reviewed by public relations prior to publication. This policy applies to printed publications, including all program brochures, program/department newsletters, recruitment materials, and new program web pages. It does not apply to professional papers, manuscripts, or correspondence written by individual faculty and staff, nor to official accreditation reports and routine administrative documents.

The vice president for academic affairs must also review any college publication that has academic program or course information before it can be released for printing.

These policies and procedures are designed to support the college's effort to produce high-quality publications, reduce unnecessary duplication of effort, and avoid the confusion that results from multiple published versions of college information. Questions about this manual should be directed to the public relations department at ext. 2456.

The staff in public relations is responsible for creating materials that reflect Casper College's position as an educational leader in the state of Wyoming and beyond. The success of this integrated program – which includes everything from advertising and publications to stationery, press releases and Web design – depends on faithful adherence by Casper College employees.

A consistent presentation of the college is an integral part of creating Casper College's "brand" in the marketplace. It helps build name recognition and advances our mission.

I sincerely request your cooperation in adopting these guidelines so Casper College shares a clear, consistent message. Call PR at ext. 2456 and let them help you tell your story.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Divine'.

Darren Divine, Ph.D., President, Casper College

About this Style Guide

This guide is intended for use by anyone writing for or about Casper College. It covers basic guidelines that will be observed on the website, news releases, advertisements, and other publications produced by the Casper College Public Relations Department. CC employees are encouraged to use this guide for reference when producing materials for students, employees, the media, and the public.

This guide contains information that is specific to CC and the college environment. It includes information for the proper use of names, spellings, punctuation, capitalization, usage, etc. For many terms, there is more than one “correct” version, but adhering to the guide will create consistency.

Any information not addressed here should be referenced through the AP Stylebook, which can be accessed at the Goodstein Foundation Library.

A

Academic degrees

associate degree, not associate’s

bachelor’s degree

master’s degree

doctorate degree, Ph.D.

No apostrophe in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.

If mention of degrees is necessary to establish someone’s credentials, the preferred form is to avoid abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as: John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology.

Use abbreviations such as B.S., M.A., LL.D. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name, never after just a last name.

When used after a name, set it off by commas. John Snow, Ph.D., spoke.

Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference. Wrong: Dr. Pam Jones, Ph.D. Right: Dr. Pam Jones, a chemist.

Academic departments

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department, or when department is part of the official and formal name: Casper College Department of Nursing.

Academic Titles

Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as chancellor, president, dean, etc., when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere. Lowercase modifiers such as department in department Chairman John Doe.

Acronyms

Use acronyms sparingly, replacing them with the appropriate common noun when possible. Always spell out on first reference unless noted otherwise. Provide the acronym in parentheses directly after first reference: The college recently opened its Digital Learning Center (DLC).

Alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae

Use alumnus [alumni in the plural] when referring to a man who has attended a school. Use alumna [alumnae in the plural] for similar references to a woman. Use alumni when referring to a group of men and women.

Athletic program

Lowercase unless Thunderbirds Athletics or Athletic Department. The program consists of the following, which are lowercased:

men’s basketball team

women’s basketball team

women’s volleyball team

rodeo team

B

Board of trustees

Always lowercase: the board of trustees of Casper College. The board of trustees is holding its first meeting.

Buildings

All proper names of buildings should be capitalized. When used with a room number, abbreviate only upon second reference: The meeting will be held in the Music Building, Room 123. It then will move to MU 223.

Aley Hall (AH)

Durham Auditorium

Thorson Institute of Business (BU)

Civic Apartments (CA)

McMurry Career Studies Center (CS)

Sharon J. Nichols Auditorium

Doornbos Livestock Facility (DL)

Early Childhood Learning Center/second reference ECLC (EC)

Myra Fox Skelton Energy Institute/second reference Energy Institute (EI)

Walter H. Nolte Gateway Center/second reference Nolte Gateway Center (GW)

Robert and Ruth Dove Conference Center

Enrollment Services/Student Success Center

Saunders Health Science Center (HS)

Liek Auditorium

Health Science Simulation Center

Gertrude Krampert Theatre and Dance Center/

second reference Krampert Theatre (KT)

McMurry Mainstage

Thomas H. Empey Black Box Theatre/second reference Empey Theatre

Barbara and Leland Scifers Dance Performance Theatre/second reference

Scifers Dance Theatre

Ken Ury Little Theatre/second reference Ury Little Theatre

Liesinger Hall (LH)

Doornbos Student Lounge

Goodstein Foundation Library (LI)

Casper College Western History Center

Loftin Life Science Center

Maintenance Building (MA)

shipping and receiving

mailroom

Music Building

Wheeler Concert Hall

Mildred Zahradnicek Gallery

Jean D. and H.A. (Dave) True, Jr. Atrium

Wold Physical Science Center (PS)

Wheeler Auditorium

Residence Hall (RH)
Storage Facility (SF)
Strausner Hall (SH)
Thorson Apartments (TA)
Erickson Thunderbird Gym or “Swede” Erickson Thunderbird Gym (TB)
/second reference T-Bird Gym
T-Bird Fitness Center

Tate Geological Museum (TM)
Casper College Student Union and University of Wyoming at Casper building/
shorter version Union/University building (UU)
Goodstein Visual Arts Center (VA)
Goodstein Visual Arts Gallery
Werner Agriculture Pavilion (WA)
Wheeler Terrace Apartments (WH)
Werner Wildlife Museum (WM)
Werner Technical Center (WT)
Adult Learning Center at Casper College/second reference ALC

C

Casper College

Spell out upon first reference. Subsequent references can be abbreviated to CC. When referring to CC as the college, leave college lowercased.

Catalog

Capitalize when used with a year. The 2015-16 Catalog is available online. Lowercase in other uses.

Class descriptions

Any information regarding class or course descriptions must be exactly the same as the information provided by academic services in the current Casper College catalog.

Class names

Lowercase classes and courses unless using the specific and complete title or if the name carries a proper noun or numeral. Biology 1010, the biology course.

Clubs and teams

Lowercase campus clubs unless you use the specific and complete title. Student Nurses' Association, Fitting and Showing Club. But: speech team, student newspaper club.

College

Capitalize only when part of a proper name. Boston College, Casper College. But: Students attend the college.

Cost and dollar amounts (see “Prices”)

D

Dates

Do not use ordinal numbers: 12th, 22nd. The event will be held from April 10-12.

Departments

Capitalize formal and complete names of campus departments. The word department may be dropped if the meaning still makes sense. The Casper College Department of Information Technology, but IT; the Casper College Public Relations Department, but public relations.

F

First annual

Do not use. Say first instead. See AP Stylebook.

G

GEAR UP

No hyphen. The acronym is acceptable on first reference for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs.

GPA

The acronym is acceptable on first reference for grade point average. No periods.

I

Internet

Always lowercase

O

Off campus, on campus

Hyphenate only when used as a modifier. The meeting was held off campus. The on-campus event went smoothly.

Offices

Capitalize formal and complete names of campus offices, lowercase informal names and incomplete designations. The Casper College Enrollment Services Office. But: the secretary's office, the division office, the president's office.

P

Page

Capitalize when used with a number. The class can be found on Page 87.

Prices

Use dollar sign. Do not use decimal point for even dollar amounts. Right: \$99 or \$149.50

Wrong: \$99.00

Programs

Lowercase academic programs. The nursing program, the process technology program. Any information regarding program descriptions or requirements must be exactly the same as the information provided by academic affairs in the current Casper College catalog.

R

Room numbers

Use figures and capitalize room only when used with a figure: Room 149. No space between the building and room number: Room GW304.

S

School year

2015-16 school year, 2015-16 basketball season. Do not use a back slash or m dash.

Do not capitalize freshman, sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student.

Schools

Refers to the academic areas in academic affairs. Casper College has five schools. They are:

Business and Industry

Fine Arts and Humanities

Health Science

Science

Social and Behavioral Science

Semester

Lowercase: fall 2016, fall semester 2016.

Student Activities Board

A group of students who plan and organize activities, such as barbecues, dances, noontime parties and family fun nights, to help make student life more enjoyable. SAB is acceptable on second reference, but in general, avoid the use of acronyms.

T

Telephone numbers

Use a hyphen to separate numbers. Do not use a 1 before toll-free numbers: 307-268-2100, 800-442-2963.

Theater

Use theater, and not theatre, unless a formal name, i.e. Gertrude Krampert Theatre. But: theater instructors, theater classes.

Thunderbird

The college mascot.

U

University of Wyoming at Casper

UW-Casper on second reference or UWC when space is a factor.

W

Website

One word. Use a period at the end if the site falls at the end of a sentence. Use http:// if www is not part of the address. Sites should not be underlined in print materials. Do not capitalize letters within the address unless absolutely necessary for readability.

Media Relations

Building strong relationships with external news media is a priority of the Casper College Public Relations Department. It is here where the staff brings story ideas to the media's attention. We keep in touch with other campus communicators, faculty and students to identify ideas that the media may find newsworthy. Ideas that are fresh, timely, important or unusual draw the most attention.

Inviting the Media

The Casper College Public Relations Department frequently pitches story ideas to reporters through phone calls and emailed news releases. These efforts represent invitations to the media to cover events and activities, but do not guarantee that reporters will attend. When Casper College issues such an invitation, the college says we will allow the media to observe the activity, interview its participants, take photographs or videotape, and that someone will be available to answer questions. If an activity is opened to the public, all news media must be allowed access.

Editorial Coverage vs. Advertising

Casper College's Public Relations Department staff persuades editors, reporters and producers to see Casper College's sources, programs and activities as newsworthy. If what's happening at Casper College is viewed by an editor as among the most important or interesting events planned in Casper that day, he or she will assign a story. Casper College does not pay for this coverage and has no control over the story's content or whether it is aired or published. It is considered free media.

If you want to ensure the attraction of participants to an event and guarantee that the public knows about your program, you should consider advertising, or paid media. Advertising ensures that your information will be published or aired in the space you purchase on the date you specify in the format you provide and does not have to be deemed newsworthy by an editor.

What to do When a Reporter Calls

All calls from local, regional, national, and international media outlets should go through the Casper College Public Relations Department. Casper College employees are not expected to meet with reporters and media professionals; administrators and campus leaders are encouraged to help with interviews.

If you are contacted directly by a reporter please ask them to contact Casper College's Public Relations staff at ext. 2456. Public relations will always contact you ahead of time about a possible interview so you will never receive a cold call from a reporter. If you have not heard from public relations before you receive a call, you can assume that the reporter has not checked in with public relations. Please ask them to do so. Never feel pressured or obligated to talk to a reporter.

If you think some preparation before the interview would be helpful, or your schedule prevents an immediate interview, tell

the reporter you need time and arrange to get back together. It is appropriate and helpful to ask the reporter what questions will be asked so you can begin formulating answers. You may want to seek the assistance of the public relations department at that point. The public relations department can help you frame responses as well as understand what to expect from specific reporters and news media outlets. The public relations department can talk you through potential questions and help tailor your thoughts into quotable statements or sound bites.

"Off the Record" and Other Terms

The term "off the record" means something different to everyone and comments made under this agreement are not guaranteed to remain confidential. You can't say after the fact "Now what I just said is off the record." It is best not to say anything that would embarrass you if it appeared in print or on the air.

It is a good practice to refrain from using the phrase, "No comment." It implies that you are hiding something or are uncooperative and does not convey the real reason you do not want to or cannot respond. Instead, express why you would rather not discuss the matter, such as explaining that an answer would violate a student's right to privacy or that revealing the results of your latest study at this time might jeopardize publication in a professional journal. It's better to be honest and frank.

Tips for a Successful Interview

- When a reporter calls, cite your affiliation with Casper College and ask to be identified as a Casper College faculty member or administrator in the story.
- Avoid jargon. Explain what you mean briefly and in simple language, keeping in mind that reporters look for colorful, lively quotes.
- Don't let the reporter put words in your mouth. Reporters sometimes repeat what they heard to double-check with the source, and that recollection may not be accurate. Listen carefully and clarify.
- When dealing with overly complex information, take the time to make sure the reporter understands what you are talking about.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so.
- Beware of hypothetical or "what if?" questions. Stick to what you know to be true.
- Prepare answers for the best and worst questions you might be asked.
- Avoid being defensive when asked a difficult question.
- Remember that you will be identified with Casper College and your comments will reflect on the college. If you express personal opinions to a reporter, identify them as such.
- Be brief. The shorter the comments, the less likely you are to be misquoted in print, and the more likely you are to create a "sound bite" for broadcast.
- Relax. Be conversational and informative.

- Avoid technical jargon or terms. Tell your story with confidence and conviction.
- Be objective and factual. Do not offer opinions or interpretations unless the reporter specifically asks for them and you feel comfortable providing a response.
- Asking the reporter to rephrase the question will give you time to think of an appropriate answer.
- Always “keep your cool” even if the subject matter is sensitive or difficult to discuss. If you are uncomfortable for any reason or at any time, you can defer to public relations.
- Avoid being an “unnamed source.” It’s not a wise practice.
- For a taped TV interview, look at the reporter (not the camera). Don’t look back and forth between the reporter, camera or any other person. This makes you look shift on camera.
- Live TV interviews from a remote site may require you to look directly into the camera and wear an earpiece. If you’re not sure what to do, ask.
- Avoid rocking, swaying or moving around during a TV interview. This will help keep the audio recording levels consistent and keep you in focus on camera.
- Be aware of any nervous habits such as tapping a pen or saying “um” throughout the interview.
- TV crews often take “cutaways.” These are extra camera shots and angles used to edit stories together. Act naturally during the cutaway taping, but always be aware that the microphone may still be recording your comments.

Tips for Television

- Appearance is very important. Producers recommend wearing solid, dark, comfortable clothing. Avoid white, plaid or narrowly striped clothing. Avoid busy patterns and noisy, distracting jewelry.
- If you usually wear glasses, do so for the interview. The best advice is to be yourself.
- Ask that Casper College appear under your name in lettering superimposed on the television screen.
- Anything you say to a reporter may appear in the story, even if you said it when the camera was off.
- Understand the program’s format. Will it be a question-and-answer session between you and a reporter? Will there be other guests? If so, who? Will you be on a panel?
- Off-camera before the interview, make sure the reporter understands the background of the story. On-camera, stick to the topic and don’t complicate the discussion with unnecessary history and context.
- Outline key points you want to make ahead of time and repeat them several times during the interview.
- Responses that are 10 to 15 seconds long have the best chance of being included in the final story. Short sound bites are the building blocks of broadcast news.
- Look at the reporter, not the camera.
- Remind yourself about good posture. Try to be relaxed and don’t be afraid to use your hands when speaking, but not in excess.
- Studio lights are hot. You may want to blot any perspiration from your face before the camera rolls.
- Videotaped interviews may be edited so you can pause to collect your thoughts or correct yourself if you make a mistake.
- Always check in a mirror. A reporter may not tell you whether or not your hair is a mess.
- Ask whether the TV or radio interview will be live or taped. Be sure you are comfortable with the process of live interviewing before agreeing to “go live.”

After the Interview

- Don’t expect an opportunity to preview a story before it appears. Journalists shun that idea. Instead, listen carefully during the interview. If you are unsure about whether the reporter understood your main points, ask him or her a few questions and clarify if necessary. If you have concerns about the reporter accurately conveying your statements, contact public relations at ext. 2456.
- It’s OK to ask when the story will be printed or broadcast (although the reporter may not know or control publication date or broadcast time).
- If you note an error in the story or are unhappy with it, call ext. 2456, and not the reporter or their boss, to clarify the point.

We’re Here to Help

Casper College has a great story to tell, and the public relations department can help tell it most effectively, whether it’s reaching out to a particular reporter or drafting a comprehensive media plan for a significant event.

The Casper College Public Relations Department keeps in touch with as many potential news sources – faculty, students and administrators – as possible, but we are a small department. We appreciate tips from the college community when newsworthy events are happening. If you think something you are doing professionally or personally is newsworthy, call ext. 2456 or email pr@caspercollege.edu to discuss it. This could include attending an important conference, developing a new teaching method, presenting a paper on a newsworthy issue, discovering a research breakthrough, hosting a meeting where action on a timely topic may be taken sponsoring an event at the college that merits news coverage, strategic changes, organizational changes, issues that impact the community or college, new programs or services, etc.

The Casper College Public Relations Department works to promote the news stories that align with the college’s strategic plan and brand positioning. We write, edit, shoot, produce, and

deliver news and information to a variety of audiences, including news media ranging from local to national/international. Our office also manages the college's primary web and social media presence to maximize Casper College's reputation online. Our services include:

Media Training

The Casper College Public Relations Department contacts with local, state, regional, national, and international media are a critical component of its strategy to showcase Casper College's reputation and work in critical areas. Public relations provides training and guidance for faculty and administrators before they meet with reporters. We can help develop a response strategy and work with experts to raise their comfort level and effectiveness when responding to media inquiries.

If you would like to understand the interview process and your role in it, contact public relations, at ext. 2456.

Crisis Communications

The Casper College Public Relations Department manages the crisis communications plan, which is part of the college's overall emergency response plan. The main objective of the plan is to provide information quickly and effectively to appropriate audiences through a variety of channels.

Social Media

The Casper College Public Relations Department maintains social media channels to interact with our constituents and communicate Casper College's story. Our office is a resource for other groups on campus developing and managing their own channels.

Web Development

The Casper College Public Relations Department manages the design and content for the Casper College home page, www.caspercollege.edu, and all other second- and third-tier pages. From simple consulting to full-scale redevelopment, our office works to create an attractive and effective web presence. More information is available in the Casper College Brand Standards Manual.

The CC Newsroom Official Publications

Inside Casper College, the President's Newsletter, calendar, and news on the homepage are produced with stories from The CC Newsroom.

News Releases, Stories and Calendar Items

If you have news of interest, please let public relations know. The staff can guide you to make the best decision about where your information should appear and how to present it. Issuing a news release doesn't always ensure coverage. The public relations staff will advise if an item or event merits a news release. The staff's goal is to be able to communicate to local, state, regional, and national media what's important about Casper College from an institutional perspective.

When you are deciding if you need a news release, consider the newsworthiness of your topic. Ask yourself who would care about your issue. Editors ask the same question before they decide which stories to make news. But remember, there are different audiences for different stories. Understand who your audience is and remember you cannot expect to make national news with a local-interest story. Neither can you expect that every news release will result in coverage.

What's News?

Listed are some things to consider in determining what makes a good newsworthy event. Is the subject matter current? Is new research being conducted on campus? Student achievements and awards, or involvement with professors on research, also is of interest. Timely issues discussed daily in the mainstream press or subjects that already are in the news could be interesting to the media.

Often covered are scheduled music and theater performances; public meetings, conferences, and seminars; courses; special lectures and presentations; open houses; and deadlines for applications and registrations.

The public relations department is constantly looking for news and stories to feed a broad range of content needs. From community calendars to social media to news releases, they can help you find the best way to get your message delivered.

Other Options

Sometimes, the best option for your information is not a news release, but a Web announcement, a calendar entry, or an item for the President's Newsletter.

News Conferences

If a college announcement requires the attention of the media, public relations will invite the media to a news conference. News conferences are to be reserved for special or unique situations. Where appropriate, public relations will provide the appropriate background material.

Media Advisories

Public relations will send out advisories on a number of topics. Sometimes they are brief reminders of upcoming events, such as a symposium that's likely to draw wide interest, or a meeting announcement.

Casper College has many experts on campus who can discuss timely subjects with the media and are good sources for reporters. Advisories will also be sent when our experts can provide commentary on the day's news events.

News Photos

We encourage using photographs with stories. We prefer not to schedule "grip and grin" photos; they include award presentations or photos of one or more persons passing a check or certificate or signing a document. Most newspapers do not accept such photos, and they usually don't work well for our purposes.

Sending News Release Information to Public Relations

The Casper College Public Relations Department publicizes a number of campus events, programs and activities by a number of different delivery methods. However, our staff size prevents us from covering many newsworthy items, so we encourage other departments to work with us to share important and exciting news from their area.

To publicize your event or program through public relations, please do the following:

Send your information to the editor and news coordinator at pr@caspercollege.edu. You may be contacted with queries or requests for more information.

Submit information on upcoming events at least two weeks in advance. News releases on program achievements may be submitted up to a month following the achievement. Include the five W's: who, what, when, where, and why. Each question should have a factual answer – facts necessary to include for a press release to be considered complete. Importantly, none of these questions can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.”

Public relations will review your release and how best to communicate it.

If you are unsure whether your information is press release material, please check with public relations.

For questions or concerns, contact public relations at ext. 2456.

Sports Media Relations

Casper College Thunderbird student-athletes and coaches benefit tremendously from local, national and even international media exposure, and Casper College works diligently to maintain a positive relationship with media representatives.

Therefore, it's important to understand the media's role, the value of positive media relations and the best ways to deal with the media.

Building a Positive Relationship

One of the responsibilities of CC student-athletes and coaches is to cooperate with the media in appropriate situations.

Working with the media is a natural and important part of athletics success.

Some media contacts will be arranged by public relations. They know the media well and can help you develop better media relations.

The job of the media, generally, is to be objective, fair and nonbiased – neither for your team nor against your team. They do not serve as CC's cheerleading squad.

Look at the media as your best friend. Good news coverage can help you recruit student-athletes, raise money and improve your team's image.

If you have developed a strong relationship with individuals in the media, they are less likely to criticize you for minor mistakes – although you can't count on your relationship to prevent major news from being published or aired. In fact, asking them to withhold news will quickly sour a good relationship.

Every time someone from the media wants to talk to you, you have the chance to promote yourself and your team. And when you can plan an interview in advance, you can put a more positive “spin” on the situation as you talk to a reporter.

Who Are the Media and How do They Operate?

While Casper will never be confused with Denver, we do have two local television stations, a daily newspaper and several local radio stations that report on Thunderbird teams and student-athletes. Here's a more in-depth look at the types of sports journalists with whom you will come into contact:

Beat Writers: These newspaper reporters cover CC on a daily/weekly basis and are responsible for writing previews and game stories. While beat writers may become more familiar to you because they are around more often, they must still remain impartial. They also look for interesting human-interest (feature) stories on Thunderbird student-athletes.

Columnists: In Casper, beat writers can double as columnists, so don't be surprised if something you say on game night is used later in a column.

Columns are a more creative and opinionated form of sports writing. You might not always agree with what the columnist writes.

Television News Crews: You likely won't see TV reporters as often as newspaper reporters, but they can have a major impact. Many people get their news from TV instead of newspapers, and local news programs have large audiences. However, most sportscasts are only three to four minutes long, so they usually only have time for game highlights and scores. If extra time is available, they might air a short sound bite from an interview.

Importance of Media Deadlines

If, after a game, you are asked to speak to a member of the media, please talk to them immediately if possible. Generally, the Casper Star-Tribune has an 8 p.m. deadline for scores and game highlights, so timing is critical. TV crews usually need to have their work wrapped up by 4 p.m. (for the 5 and 6 p.m. newscasts and 8 p.m. for the 10 p.m. newscast), unless they're doing a “live” shot from the site of the event.

Even though your work is done when the game is over, the reporter's work is just beginning – and he/she needs your help, including on occasion adequate workspace, phone and electrical outlet.

Mistakes in Headlines

Sometimes a reporter writes a great story, and the copy editor misreads the lead sentence and places a wrong or misleading headline on the story. After reporters' stories are turned in at deadline, they generally do not see them again until morning. Reporters do not have control of what is written in the headline, so please do not blame a reporter if the headline paints a different picture. If you have a major complaint, call public relations and we can visit with the editor actually responsible for the problem.

CC Sports Information Through the CC Public Relations Department

Sports information is coordinated by the public relations department. You can contact them at ext. 2456 or pr@caspercollege.edu.

The public relations department promotes Casper College athletics by writing stories about student-athletes and coaches, coordinating press interviews and press conferences, and servicing the information needs of reporters. Sports Information also produces game programs, media guides and press releases, and is involved in marketing achievements of student-athletes and coaches to a wide variety of audiences.

If you feel overloaded with too many interviews or want advice on how to handle an interview, please call public relations at ext. 2456 or pr@caspercollege.edu.

Media Guidelines for Coaches and Student-Athletes

- Do not, for any reason, give your home phone number to a member of the media. You don't want a late-night call from a reporter catching you unprepared during a time of crisis. Coaches, don't give a student-athlete's phone number to the media. Simply have the media member call public relations to arrange an interview.
- When public relations calls and asks you to call a newspaper or TV reporter, please do so as soon as possible. Remember, media have early deadlines, and your cooperation is needed to meet those deadlines and to help you get good news coverage.
- Be honest and sincere in your dealings with the media. You are continuously building credibility and respect. Do not make statements that mislead, that are untrue or that are exaggerations. Be honest in your appraisal of a player or team, but don't ridicule or criticize. Don't blame referees or umpires for a loss; it's a weak excuse that makes you look bad and will cause you to lose the respect of the media – and your fans. Credibility and respect built up over several years can be damaged by one unfortunate incident.

- Mention players by name, use objective evidence and give complete answers. Speak positively, find specific areas to compliment, and talk about good points to maintain and weak points on which to improve. Short, complete sentences allow reporters to easily edit the interview without distorting your answers, especially on television.
- If you make an appointment, be on time. If you're going to be late, notify the writer or broadcaster ahead of time to cause a minimal amount of inconvenience. Practice courtesy and build positive rather than adversarial relationships.
- Anticipate questions that reporters will ask you. Prior to live interviews, try to determine the subject matters to be covered and review potential answers. Be prepared. Inaccurate statements or stories can be corrected in a firm but polite manner. Just state the facts.
- Get to know the local media people who most frequently visit our campus. Help them get to know the coaches and student-athletes. Everyone should be comfortable in each other's presence. Acknowledge their presence. Make eye contact, shake hands and call them by name. Coaches, let the media know they are (usually) welcome to conduct interviews with student-athletes before or after practice, or at other appropriate times. Make sure they know that CC student-athletes are not professional athletes, and they have obligations to academic work.
- "No comment" generally sends up red flags to a reporter. However, if you don't want to provide certain information, simply say, "I can't answer that question" or "I'd prefer to pass on that question." If you don't want to confirm a story, don't even ask what kind of information the reporter has in his or her possession. Just tell them that you cannot comment or say, "I can't answer your questions."

Be careful of what you say. Don't say anything you don't want to see on television that night or in the newspaper the next morning. Remember, microphones are extremely sensitive, and cameras have zoom lenses. If you can see them, assume your actions and words are being recorded. During a print interview, just because a reporter puts his pad and pen away doesn't mean the interview is over. Journalists are taught that some of the best quotes come after the interview subject feels more at ease (i.e., when the pen and pad are put away). Therefore, reporters sometimes save the "zinger" question until you think the interview is over and you have let your guard down.

- Remember, an interview is your time to talk. Plan to do at least half the talking and avoid "yes" and "no" answers.
- A journalist can ask any question he or she sees fit to ask. You can't control what is asked, but you can control the answers. Think carefully before answering a question. If you are uncomfortable answering the question, or if you need to find out more information before answering, say, "I'd like to look into that further before answering" or "Let's come back to that after we talk for a few minutes."

- Don't let negative questions lead you to say something you'll later regret. For example, after a tough loss, a reporter might ask, "Do you think the coach should have called timeout instead of running the ball late in the game?" Even if you think the coach should have called a timeout instead of running the ball, don't say that. Just say, "Coaching is not my job. My job is to run the ball and get points on the board, and I didn't get it done." That will make a positive impression on everyone – your coaches and teammates, the media and fans.
- Some reporters might ask you to comment on controversial issues with the promise that, if you wish, your name will not be used. Unless you know the reporter very well, it is not usually wise to comment. Check with public relations for more information on the reporter or the specific situation. There are times when editors pressure reporters to use a name even after the reporter has made this promise because it enhances the media's credibility with readers.
- Avoid "off the record" comments to reporters; they have a way of winding up in print. Using "off the record" is no guarantee of confidentiality. Don't say something unless you know it's okay for the public to read or hear it. Never get five minutes into an interview and say, "Everything I've just told you is off the record." By then it's too late.
- You should never expect to see a reporter's newspaper or television story before it is printed or aired. The newscaster is under no obligation to "preview" the story for you, and most media policies forbid this practice.

Conclusion

Dealing with the media, learning to express yourself in a professional manner, and developing poise in these situations can be valuable parts of the college experience.

Coaches and student-athletes are public figures and must conduct themselves accordingly. A good relationship with the media – which the college currently enjoys – can do wonders for an athletics program's image.

If you have questions about what you should or shouldn't say – or what you might have already said – contact public relations. More than anything, relax, be yourself and have fun!

And always remember that you are representing Casper College.

For the Media

Access to the Campus

Casper College is a public institution, so access to its facilities by members of the media during the hours they are open is welcome. You aren't required to check in with public relations if you plan a trip to any college facility (with some exceptions) but if you notify public relations, we can help with parking, gaining access to experts, creating photo and video opportunities, and answering questions from the college community about your visit.

Students' rooms in Casper College residences facilities aren't open to the public or the media, but a student may grant access.

Classrooms aren't generally open to the media while classes are in session; however instructors may grant access during a session if that arrangement is agreed to in advance.

Crisis Communications

In the event of an emergency, your point of contact is the Casper College Public Relations director or his designee.

Other Things You Should Know

Advertising

The Casper College Public Relations Department must coordinate all advertising purchases through local, regional and national media.

Development of Publications

The Casper College Public Relations Department must coordinate all campus publications aimed at an external audience or wide distribution on campus. The only exceptions are those publications developed as part of classroom work or assignments.

Stylebook Use

Most, if not all, of the copy used in Casper College promotional materials will be written using the latest Associated Press Stylebook. The only exceptions are items written for an academic audience, academic journal, etc.

Contact Information

For information about logo use, press relations, advertising buys, and the development of publications, contact the public relations director, at ext. 3088 or pr@caspercollege.edu.



More information

For information about logo use, athletics logo use, licensing questions, press relations, advertising buys and the development of publications, contact the Public Relations Department at 307-268-2456 or pr@caspercollege.edu.







Casper College

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