Partnering with OUC to Amplify Your News
Corrie Pikul
Sr. Communications Manager & Writer (Life Sciences)
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News & Editorial Development (OUC)

Who we are

▶ Brown University’s campus-based news bureau

▶ Brown’s most direct connection to the external news media
News & Editorial Development (OUC)

What we do

► Work with journalists to highlight compelling stories from campus
► Respond to media queries for information or perspective on topics and issues related to Brown.
► Cover Brown news on behalf of the University
  ► Seek out “distinctively Brown” stories
► Create effective strategies to build awareness for the University’s initiatives and priorities
► Elevate Brown’s reputation as a world-class teaching and research institution
Senior Communications Manager & Writer

Life Sciences

► School of Public Health
► Warren Alpert Medical School
► Carney Institute for Brain Science
► Biological Sciences
► Environmental Science; ecology
► Affiliated hospitals

Corrie Pikul
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What I do for the School of Public Health

► Field media requests
  ► Vet publications and outlets
  ► Consult faculty on media opportunities
► Develop and pitch SPH ideas to the media
► Report, write, edit, produce and pitch news stories
News from Brown

https://news.brown.edu/
News stories vs. press releases

To engage journalists, we speak their language.

► News format: hed, dek, nut graf
► Narrative vs. bulleted 5 W’s (transitions, attribution)
► Quotable quotes
► Associated Press style (e.g., no endowed professorships)
► Original photography (when possible) vs. headshots
► Published when news happens *(can be sent out ahead of time…more on that in a minute)*
Expanding Medicaid led to decreased postpartum hospitalizations

A new study conducted by researchers at Brown and NYU provides additional evidence that expanding Medicaid can contribute to better health for new parents.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. [Brown University] — According to health care experts, the benefits for brand-new parents and their infants having access to health care during pregnancy as well as during the postpartum period are indisputable. Even so, many patients — including a third of women with pregnancy coverage...
Why tell stories?

More compelling for the reader. More control for the communicators.

► You get to tell your story!
► Easy (and fast) to republish and reuse
► Stories stand alone as compelling content
► Standard practice among peer institutions
What makes a good Brown News item?

TIMELINESS! Must be news.

► Hasn’t already happened
  ► This isn’t news: A study published last month
► Isn’t happening in the far-off future
  ► This isn’t news: a five-year research grant (but there are exceptions!)
  ► This isn’t news: An event that’s happening next week

There are other options: connect with Caroline Claflin at SPH to learn more!
What makes a good Brown News item?

Must be Brown’s news to share

► Brown funding and/or IRB review and approval
► Lead or corresponding author is at Brown

But we can coordinate with the other institutions.

► We can adapt lead institution’s story
► We can talk to partner institutions about story potential
► We can coordinate with lead institution to pitch media
What makes a good Brown News research story?

Must have a story – something that people need to know

► Newsworthy – aligns with news cycle
► Findings of significance
► Research (vs. opinions)
► Different from previous research stories (i.e., can tell the story in a different way)
► Potential for mainstream news pick-up (i.e., accessible)
► Contributes to great mix of stories on Brown News that show the breadth and depth of research across the life sciences
Here’s what you can do

► Let us know as soon as the study is accepted in the journal
  ► Send to Caroline Claflin and Corrie Pikul (corrie_pikul@brown.edu)

► Connect CP with other stakeholders
  ► Share emails from journal
  ► Share contact information for lead author at another institution
  ► Share important funding information
Advance notice is greatly appreciated

- Gives us time to evaluate the study for coverage
- Gives us time to come up with a communications plan
- Gives us time to add to master editorial calendar
- Gives us time to build a strategic media list
- **AND**: Increases chances of media pick-up
Pitch me!

In a few sentences, please tell me about your study:

► Why are the findings significant? Why should the average person be interested?
► Why is this good news for Brown?
► Why is this timely or newsworthy? Why is now a good time to be talking about this?
► Don’t forget to share the accepted manuscript and supplemental information.
Let’s get your story out there

After a story gets the green light from News, here’s what happens:

► Interview (via Zoom): You + writer
► Coordinate with journal: CP
► Coordinate with other institutions: CP
► Draft: Writer
► Review: You + additional study authors (sometimes from other institutions)
► Top edit: Associate Vice President for News and Editorial Development
► Build in CMS: CP
► Publish: CP
► Pitch: CP
► Coordinate with media: CP + you
Brown News stories work like press releases

Brown News stories lead to other stories

► We identify relevant reporters and editors and send the Brown News story to them (with a note as well as contact information)
► Advance notice: “under embargo”
► We post Brown News on EurekAlert!
  ► Nonprofit news-release distribution platform operated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science as a resource for journalists and the public
  ► Members agree to follow embargo rules
Prepare for media interest

What you can do

► Share your availability for the day the story goes live, as well as the next day
► Designate a media contact
► Craft your talking points, gather supporting materials
► On pub day, check your email and your phone
► Be prepared for interviews via phone, Zoom or in person
But...external media coverage not guaranteed

Many variables affect media coverage

- Timing: season, month, week, day, time
- News cycle
- Reporter's coverage beat and personal interests, relationships
- Editorial mix
- Editorial priorities
- Bandwidth of reporter and editor
- Competing ideas
- Strength of pitch
- Nature of story
- Etc.
News from Brown newsletters

Weekly digital newsletter of recently published stories and impactful media hits

► Approximately 100,000 weekly recipients
► Audience: Alumni, parents of current undergraduates, faculty, current graduate students and medical students, staff, faculty, community organizations, businesses, neighbors and others
Example: “A type of simple, DIY air filter can be an effective way to filter out indoor air pollutants”

► The Jan. 20 NfB newsletter included a NfB web story about a study led by Joseph Braun about the effectiveness of Corsi-Rosenthal cubes on filtering indoor air pollutants.

► The previous week, the Jan. 13 NfB newsletter featured external media coverage of this study.

► All told, this news generated nearly 1,200 clicks through the newsletter.
News from Brown isn’t the only option

There are other effective ways to amplify your news

- Media pitch (in absence of story)
  - Can work for op-eds or white papers, or papers where lead author isn’t at Brown
- Media advisories
  - Can work for upcoming events
- Social media
- SPH-based communications