

Media: Working With Press

A growing number of right-wing groups have sprung up on college campuses nationwide. These well-funded groups promote anti-feminist, anti-abortion, and anti-lesbian and gay messages on campus. Part of an FMLA's job on campus is to redirect the media's attention from these right-wing groups and provide a feminist perspective on local, state, and nationwide events. In order to achieve this goal, FMLAs must develop and deliver effective media messages.

First, ask the question "What do we want the headlines in the paper to say?" When working with the media, your message must be clear, consistent, and concise to get the results you want.

Compare These Messages

- If we lose affirmative action, public jobs and educational opportunities for women and people of color are on the line!
- Affirmative action programs seek to remedy past discrimination against women and people of color by increasing the recruitment, retention, promotion, and on-the-job training programs. Dismantling affirmative action programs could adversely affect the opportunities for, and progress made by women and people of color in education and the workplace.

Your group's spokesperson should have a sound byte to use when speaking to reporters. Sound bytes are only about eight seconds of TV or radio time and only a few lines of print. The first quote is a much better sound byte. While the spokesperson should know the background of the issue on which she is speaking, a sound byte should not include that information. It should be very short and simple.

Press Chair

The Press Chair is an elected position of leadership in the FMLA. The Press Chair acts as a liaison to campus and community press, garnering press coverage for the group whenever there is an opportunity. The Press chair coordinates the media strategy for each event with the Public Relations chair. The Press Chair should contact a Campus Organizer for suggestions about getting press, developing press lists, writing media advisories and press releases, and setting up interviews for the spokesperson. The Press Chair is responsible for collecting all press clippings to send to the Campus Team.

Create A Press List

Contact campus and local newspapers and ask for the names of reporters who cover women's and feminist issues. Take note of TV stations, newspapers, and reporters who have given reliable and favorable coverage of these issues in the past. If your campus has a public relations office, ask them for a list of local media.

Contact other progressive organizations to see if they have press contacts. Collect all names and contact information. The Press Chair should keep and frequently update this file.

Inform The Press

Inform members of the press about your group's events and actions. Mail, deliver, fax and e-mail media advisories three to four days before the actual event. Call all of your press contacts. Ask them to cover your events. Follow up with your press contacts as the event approaches. Write a press release to give to press at your event. Include it in a folder, or a press kit, with other FMLA materials. Reiterate your message in all of your materials.

Contact a member of FMF's Campus Team to take action today!

Created by the Feminist Majority Foundation. For more information, call 1-866-444-FMLA.
www.feminstcampus.org