Interacting with the Media in a Nutshell

Preparation

• Know the basics of how journalism works (see, e.g., https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/what-is-journalism)
• Get media training from your institution’s press/news/media/communications office
• Know your interviewer (do a little online research)
• Know your audience and shape your message and language accordingly
• Practice, practice, practice!

The Message: Content

• Focus on a few main points
• Repeat your main points in different ways
• Create clear and concise messages
• Include methodology/processes
• Avoid too much information
• Qualify when necessary
• Put message into perspective (answer the “so what?” question)

The Message: Style

• Use examples, analogies, metaphors; give meaning to numbers
• Use clichés sparingly, and make sure they’re appropriate/inoffensive
• Visualize: Use pictures, graphics, tables, animations, and movies
• Talk from the heart; show passion and enthusiasm
• Use humor

The Message: Language

• Use simple and short words and sentences
• Avoid jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations
• Use sound bites