What’s News?

In the coming weeks and months, Kapiʻolani Community College will be streamlining its communications with local news organizations as a means of enhancing the college’s prominence in the community and ensuring that prospective students and their families get a better understanding about the depth and breadth of what Kapiʻolani CC has to offer. As part of this effort, we will work to establish a steady flow of news releases, sourcing suggestions and other communications with local media. Key to this effort your cooperation in helping us to identify potential news stories related to Kapiʻolani CC and its faculty, staff and students. Below are a few things to consider when evaluating a potential story idea.

What Makes Something Newsworthy?

When news editors make decisions on which stories to pursue and how much “play” (length, placement, etc) to given them, they typically evaluate each idea on a set of criteria sometimes referred to as TIPPI: Timeliness, Impact, Proximity, Prominence and Interest.

Timeliness: News should be new. This is especially true given the heightened demands of news consumers in the modern 24-hour news cycle. Thus, the latest developments of an ongoing issue are favored over retrospective reportage of the originating event. The older the issue or event, the greater the need for new information or fresh insight.

Impact: If timeliness is a pre-requisite for consideration, impact is the most direct justification for news coverage. People are most powerfully drawn to news or information that directly affects their lives. (This explains the heavy emphasis on weather reporting in local broadcast media.) In general, the breadth or severity of the impact will correspond with reader or viewer interest, which in turn determines the story’s value to a news agency. Thus, an approaching hurricane is much newser than a power outage that affects 20 customers. When considering the impact of a potential story, it is always advisable to consider what measures are available to quantify its impact.

Proximity: The principle here is “the closer to home an issue is, the more likely we are to care about it.” This explains why a boulder falling on a house in Hawaiʻi Kai will get more local news attention than a bus crash that kills 50 people in Africa. This is a useful consideration when pitching a local angle to a national or international story. It is also useful when targeting a particular population via a particular news medium.
**Prominence:** The news value of virtually any issue or event can be elevated via connection to something else that happens to be very prominent in the public’s consciousness. While news editors often think of the criterion in relation to famous people (an event featuring a prominent actor, singer, politician, etc. has more news value than one that doesn’t), the concept also applies to prominent issues (rail transit, gay marriage), events (the presidential inauguration) or trends (gluten-free diets).

**Interest:** Some stories are published or broadcast solely on the basis that their subject is unusual, exemplary, or otherwise interesting. A story about a lost cat who travels hundreds of miles to find its owners offers no real impact to the community at large and the birth of octuplets in France does not appeal to proximity yet both have news value because it is likely that readers or viewers will find the stories interesting enough to read or watch.

**What Does Kapiʻolani CC Have to Share?**
Kapiʻolani Community College is home to scores of innovative programs that are helping to redefine the role of community colleges, hundreds of highly qualified faculty and staff who have unique insights into their disciplines and who are engaged in a wealth of community activities, and thousands of students representing a diverse cross-section of the world. In short, we have no shortage of great, newsworthy stories to share with the rest of the state. In addition, we have a wealth of expertise that can be tapped to provide valuable insight and perspective on issues beyond our campus. Whether it’s a three-part series on the evolution of online instruction or a one-paragraph item about an upcoming art exhibit, every mention of Kapiʻolani CC in the news media is another opportunity to remind potential students and their families that Kapiʻolani CC is a vital, diverse and invested presence in the community. Here are just a few of the different types of stories that you may be able to develop based on your department’s everyday activities and considerations.

- Fairs and exhibitions
- New research
- Recent publications
- Service projects
- Creative uses of technology
- Trends in your discipline
- Promotions
- Faculty, staff or students with experiences relating to current news events
- Institutional trends (enrollment, etc)
- Demographic trends
- Guest speakers or lecturer

What interests our reader?

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