

## Working with the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications

### Why bring information about your news, event, or story idea to the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications?

Because our staff can assist with promotion and produce media releases, which will inform the community, enhance visibility, and attract participants. A media advance (or release) is the College's way of inviting outside interest in our work, so the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications wants to make sure we have anticipated all possible questions before we send one out.

We can use this information to promote feature stories and/or have briefs, calendar notes, or public service announcements (PSAs) covered by newspapers, websites, radio, and television. Additionally we may promote through the College's social media channels and in some instances through paid advertising.

If you want to let folks in the Becker community know what's going on, don't forget about **Daily Announcements** email, which is a convenient way to inform the members of the Becker community. Email [Lauren.Christy@becker.edu](mailto:Lauren.Christy@becker.edu) to post a listing.

### What information does the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications need?

We have developed a **Publicity Request Form** to walk you through the most common questions we have.

### When should you bring your information to the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications?

As soon as possible. For a scheduled event, no later than two weeks beforehand. For instance, if it's September and you've just nailed a date for an event in January, use the Publicity Request Form to tell us about your event immediately.

Publicity Request Forms must be completed and submitted to the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications at least two weeks before your scheduled event. We need that much time to garner the maximum exposure for your event. If we receive them last minute, we may not be able to accommodate your request due to the number of requests received by our office.

#### Publicity Request Forms are available:

- In the Resources section of the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications webpage
- In the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, President's Office Building, 61 William Street

Email your **Publicity Request Form** to [marketing@becker.edu](mailto:marketing@becker.edu) or for questions, contact: Carolyn Assa, 508.373.9534, [carolyn.assa@becker.edu](mailto:carolyn.assa@becker.edu), or Sandy Curewitz, 508.373.9529, [Sandy.Curewitz@becker.edu](mailto:Sandy.Curewitz@becker.edu).

### Editorial Style Guide and Visual Identity Guide

The College's **Editorial Style Guide**, instructs on Becker's methods of choice for grammar and punctuation.

The College's **Visual Identity System**, instructs on Becker's rules regarding use of logo, colors, fonts, and graphics.

## What makes a good story?

Good story ideas abound at Becker. If you are aware of one, or even the possibility of one, let us know. Below are a few tips about what makes a good story.

When the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications prioritizes publicity requests, we first look to see how the potential story supports Becker's brand promise one or more of its themes:

- Becker College is an innovative, entrepreneurial institution (examples: [MassDiGI](#), [Agile Mindset](#), Social Impact Investing)
- Becker College prepares students to:
  - Thrive, contribute, and lead in a global society (examples: [Mission](#), [Global Citizenship](#))
  - Contribute to a greater good (examples: Social Impact / [Positive Social Change](#), [Core Values](#))
  - Navigate change and create new value in the hyper-connected, automated world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Leverage the uniquely human skills of empathy, divergent thinking, entrepreneurial outlook, and social and emotional intelligence ([Agile Mindset](#))
  - Solve real-world problems and create self-sustaining business solutions that have social impact ([Yunus Social Business Centre @ Becker College](#))

These themes reinforce what is unique about Becker. They underpin the College's brand promise: "A transformational educational experience that prepares students to thrive, contribute to, and lead in a global society. Story ideas that demonstrate these themes will jump to the head of the list because they position Becker in a competitive educational marketplace.

### **Brand themes aside, all good stories share some things in common:**

- **Visual Hook** - an aspect of the story that can be photographed or videographed. If your story is a game testing session for an early childhood game, let us know if there will be an opportunity to take photographs of children playing. Sometimes the newspapers/television can't send a reporter to cover the story, but they will send photographers/camera crews if the visuals sound interesting. Make sure that your participants are okay with this possibility before allowing them to be photographed or interviewed.
- **Correctly Spelled Names** - organizations, individuals, places, etc. If you submit a photo, please include the correctly spelled names of all people in the picture. Also give us a sentence that tells us what's happening in the photo.
- **Interesting Participants** - if you have a nationally recognized speaker or a performer with an interesting history, get us that person's resume or provide us with some way to contact that person. Let us know what makes that person famous, an expert, or otherwise newsworthy. Did they grow up in Central Massachusetts? Do they sit on a lot of local boards? What major awards did s/he win? Please don't assume that "everyone knows" this person already.
- **Location, Location, Location** - let us know where your main speakers, award recipients, etc. live and/or work. This may sound unnecessary, but it's not. If a newspaper knows that some speaker, professor, or award recipient lives or works in their readership area, they may make the extra effort to cover the story.

### **What else does the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications need from me?**

In addition to responding to your need for publicity, the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications must respond to unsolicited inquiries from the media, produce advertising copy, keep the website populated and updated, and create the college's major publications. These tasks require more targeted, compelling stories—something that makes the reader sit up and listen. In this regard, your help is integral. The Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications is asking you to be on the lookout for testimonials, profiles, and experts that will raise Becker's profile.

- **Testimonials** - short, first-person accounts of the Becker experience. These can be used in a variety of ways: profiles in view books, President's Reports, on the website, advertisements, and more. Often, we will ask for a photo or video to accompany the testimonial. We ask that you always make sure anyone solicited to give a Becker testimonial first sign a Model Release Form so that we can use their likeness in ads, publications, etc. A Model Release Form can be found:
- **Profiles** - longer feature pieces that focus on one person's experience as a Becker student, faculty member, staff member, and/or alum. Profiles are longer than testimonials and written by someone other than the subject. The Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications might write a profile for a college publication. Outside reporters like to produce profiles if the person is truly interesting in some way. If you know of someone who would make a good profile, please let us know who he or she is, why he or she is exciting, and how we can contact him or her. Also, make sure that he or she is okay being written about.
- **Experts** - on any given day, a reporter may call the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications to get an expert to comment on some news event or feature-type story. The creation of a Becker experts list will enable us to address these requests quickly and credibly. This is good on two levels. First, it allows us to promote Becker's wealth of intellectual expertise to the public via the media. Secondly, it establishes a good working relationship between Becker and the media. If Becker has provided the television or newspaper reporters with a good source on one story, we may be called upon to do it again in the future. Reporters remember sources who produce good material. We'd like them to remember Becker that way.

### **How do we develop an expert's list?**

This is not a simple matter of tapping the department heads to talk about their titular areas of expertise. That's often a good idea, but it's not the only way to go about it. For instance; perhaps you are a business professor at Becker but off campus you have written a book about organic gardening or have started an organic gardening cooperative. When a story about genetically engineered vegetables hits the national wires, Becker might get a call asking if there's anyone here who can comment on it. That person is you.

Or, you might have done some specialized research within your field of study—say you are a literature teacher who generally teaches freshmen writing but you have also done extensive research on Middle-English. If some Middle-English text is discovered in the basement of the municipal Public Works building and we get a media request for someone with Middle-English expertise, we can connect the two parties.

### **What are the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications' tools?**

Here are the major options that our Office uses to publicize events and stories:

- **Media Release** - a one-page invitation to the press to ask questions. Those questions could lead to a fairly small (but very helpful) news brief/calendar item or they could lead to a much longer (and more noticeable) hard news or feature story. Whatever their ultimate goal, press releases must put some information out there fairly quickly. Within the first two paragraphs, they must tell the reader everything that **MUST** be known. For instance: who's speaking, who's invited, who's eligible, what's happening, when it's happening, is there a registration deadline, where is it happening, how much does it cost, etc.

Beyond the first two paragraphs, the press release may convince an assignment editor that your story is worth covering as a feature story or as a hard news story. For this reason, we may put in a quote, biographical tidbits, some interesting background information. We will refrain from going any longer than one page because the second page is notorious for getting lost in most newsrooms. To help us write your release, please fill in the **Publicity Request Form** and be available for any follow-up questions we may have of you.

- **Feature Story** - when the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications hears of a good story opportunity, we might call a reporter and pitch it directly. Our first indication of an interesting story is the Publicity Request Form. In addition to calling the reporters/editors/news producers, we may also want to email them a quick note with back-up information—hence why we need the **Publicity Request Form**.

- **Public Service Announcements (PSA)** - brief (30 words or less) news items sent to local radio stations. Anything longer will not be read on the air. Because radio stations are in the business of selling airtime (ads) they are looking for PSAs that provide clear public benefit. We interpret this strictly, meaning clear public benefit at no cost to participants and having no direct benefit to the institution.

- **Cable Calendar Listings** - local television and cable access channels offer "community calendars" or bulletin boards as a community service listing items of interest. Copy for these is similar to a PSA: short and to the point. Cable stations are often lightly staffed or run with the help of volunteers, and need a lot of lead time—at least two weeks. Marketing & Strategic Communications needs to have your information prior to that (4-6 weeks is ideal). Cable stations are not required to air the listings we send them, but often do when submitted well enough in advance.

- **Radio/Cable Appearances** - local news directors and program directors are hungry for local news. Their shows are often a question & answer format, where you, as the guest, will be given a chance to answer questions about some aspect of your work or your program's mission. Sometimes, viewers/listeners get to call in and ask questions. If there is a program on which you think you or some other Becker representative should be a guest, please let the Marketing and Strategic Communications staff know. We will pitch the story to the appropriate station employee and work with you to finesse your message.

- **The Daily Announcements** - this electronic newsletter that is emailed every day during the academic year, and weekly during summer to Campus faculty and staff. It is a great way to highlight an upcoming event or the hiring of a new staff member.

#### **A few more ways to get the word out, and editorial policies for:**

##### **MEDIA**

**Press advisory** – When requesting press coverage of an event. Not intended to be published. Provides the 5 Ws: Who, What, When, Where, Why. Uses a compelling headline.

**Press release** – Facts for external publishing: announcements, event details, appointments. Should be 100 percent publishable. Include photo when possible.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Twitter** – Primary audience is media, companies, organizations. Students and families are a smaller audience. Short illustrations of strategic messages. Promotion of initiatives that align with Becker mission/brand.

**Twitter (@BeckerPrez)** – Demonstrates the President's thought leadership.

**Facebook** – Our news channels; cover what is happening.

**Instagram** – Illustrates campus life, student engagement, some event coverage.

## **WEBSITE**

**Website** – Does it support enrollment and retention, fundraising, or enhance brand.

**Highlight** – High profile announcement.

**Home page slide** – Promotes Becker and its current initiatives.

## **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**All Campus Email:** Substantive non-emergency communication of interest to campus community emailed to faculty and staff (campus distribution list) and/or students (student distribution lists). May be sent by president's office or other administrative office (requires approval from appropriate vice president). Communications to Board of Trustees, Corporators, Alumni Board are sent by President's Office (For emergency notifications, see Emergency Operations Plan).

**Daily Announcements** – A compilation of announcements about Becker people, news, and events, to keep faculty and staff informed. Announcements must be approved by the appropriate vice president and marketing staff prior to distribution. Emailed daily during the academic year and weekly during the summer by Lauren Christy, contact [lauren.christy@becker.edu](mailto:lauren.christy@becker.edu)

**Headlines & Headliners** – Becker College in the news. Compilation of published news stories about Becker and its people, programs, and initiatives.

**Becker Buzz** – Targeted to students, distributed by Campus Activities and Student Leadership (CASL)

## **How do you talk to reporters?**

Many times, a press release will generate an interview request from a reporter. Marketing & Strategic Communications is happy to field as many of these questions as possible, but we prefer to send them to the people who really know something. That's you—the expert. Sometimes, the press will skip us and call you directly. In this case, we ask you call us as soon as the press calls. If nothing else, we will be able to better track the story if we know it is coming, and we can let you know if there might be some additional motive behind the reporter's call.

## **When speaking to the press, please keep the following in mind:**

- If the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications has referred a member of the press to you, please return the reporter's call promptly. Reporters are working on deadlines. If they have to wait more than a few hours, they might find another non-Becker source to quote. If you think you will not be able to return a reporter's call, call the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications so we can line up another interview.
- If you know a press call is coming, be prepared. Have background information ready and decline to immediately answer a question if you need to get additional information. If you say you are looking something up, please do so, and then call the reporter back with the answer.
- Never exaggerate the facts.

- Avoid saying, "no comment." Instead, say "I don't know," or "I'll have to get back to you on that." If you say you'll get back to the reporter, please do so.
- Never release student names, phone numbers, or addresses. Contact Marketing & Strategic Communications if you wish to put a reporter in touch with a student. It is important to have the student's permission.
- Never release home telephone numbers or addresses of College employees.
- If you have been asked to be a guest on a local TV or radio show, you might be nervous about making a gaffe. Do not panic. Come to the Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications and we'll help prepare you. Remember that not all publicity is good publicity. If it is determined that a television, radio, or newspaper offer is bound to bring controversy or is just not worth the tension it's causing you, we don't have to do it.