

**Tips for Writing and Submitting an Op-ed**

The media relations team works with faculty on pitching their thought leadership as it relates to their scholarship or research interest. An op-ed is an opinion piece, ideally written on a topic that is in the news (or should be). The process of submitting an op-ed is as much art as science, and expectations must be managed as the competitive playing field is vast based on the publication. Each op-ed must be offered exclusively to one media outlet at a time, and proper processing time must be taken into consideration. There is a nuance with each media outlet and certain circumstances dictate submission by the author. The media relations team at Syracuse University can assist in this process. Feel free to reach out to media@syr.edu when you first consider authoring an op-ed.

Some tips for writing them:

* Craft a clear message, focus tightly on one idea or argument and tell readers, high up in the piece, why they should care.
* Make it timely. Tie your piece to the strongest possible news peg when possible, and deliver it as far in advance as possible.
* Keep sentences and paragraphs short and simple. Editors love punchy copy. So do readers.
* Weave in relevant facts and statistics to bolster your case, but try to avoid using too many of them.
* If you have a good graphic to drive home a point, offer it.
* Steer clear of jargon, obscure acronyms and technical terms; if readers (and editors) have to labor to figure out what you’re saying, you’ve lost them.
* If you’re focusing on a problem, propose ways to fix it.
* Finish on a note that reinforces your message.
* ​Aim for a length of 600-700 words. (Even that may be too long for some media outlets.) Keep in mind that editors reserve the right to edit or condense contributions.
* Many publications prefer the author submit their own op-eds. The media relations team can help you find the right editors to contact.
* Most newspapers and commentary sites post guidelines and addresses for submitting op-eds electronically. Include text within the body of an e-mail – attachments are usually discouraged.
* ​Some newspapers ask for your picture, so please include a high-resolution image along with the piece.
* Submissions need to be exclusive to one media outlet, so don’t approach a second publication until you’ve been declined at the first one. You may stipulate at the top of your piece that you will offer it elsewhere if you don’t hear back within a certain period of time – three business days, for example.
* Major newspapers are often flooded with far more submissions than they can possibly print, so try to target your piece strategically. The Media Relations Office may be able to help identify the most appropriate outlets for your piece.
* Make sure to include your contact information and a brief line on your credentials.

Here are a few great places for higher education faculty/expertise to get placement outside of the traditional daily publications. Each responds very well to direct pitching from academics.

* [Monkey Blog at The Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/10/about-monkey-cage/)
* [The Conversation](https://theconversation.com/us/pitches) – *distributes content to sources all over the world.*
* [Truthout](https://truthout.org/submission-guidelines/) - *distributes content to sources all over the world.*
* [Project Syndicate](https://www.project-syndicate.org/pages/submission-guidelines) - *distributes content to sources all over the world.*

[**The Op-Ed Project**](https://www.theopedproject.org/submission-information) offers a great site for access to regional and national publications, with email address and pertinent information to submit your piece.

Seeking reach? Here’s a listing of the top publications for which to target your op-ed.

1. USA Today - 1,621,091

2. The Wall Street Journal - 1,011,200

3. The New York Times - 483,701

4. New York Post - 426,129

5. Los Angeles Times - 417,936

6. The Washington Post - 254,379

7. Star Tribune (Minneapolis) - 251,822

8. Newsday - 251,473

9. Chicago Tribune - 238,103

10. The Boston Globe - 230,756

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