How to Be Prepared for a Media Interview in 5 Minutes or Less

Is a reporter on the phone asking for statistics, information and an interview about your Plus 50 Encore Completion program – right now?! These tips can help:

- **Stay calm and collected.** If you need time to collect your thoughts, connect with your public information officer (PIO), or refresh your memory on key details, ask the reporter if you can return his or her call in 30 minutes. Ask if he or she is on deadline and what their deadline is. Most reporters will allow you some time, especially after you’ve acknowledged that you are aware of their deadlines too.

- **Contact your PIO.** Let your college PIO know that a reporter is requesting an interview and what the story is about. Seek his or her guidance. Follow your college protocols for interacting with the news media.

- **Be neat.** If you are doing an on-camera interview, go to the bathroom and look in the mirror. Tidy your hair. Solid colors and shirts with a collar are generally best. Borrow a sweater or jacket from a colleague if needed.

- **Relax.** Take a deep breath and remember – you are the expert. That’s why the reporter called you. Whether you are a student or a staff member, you are going to answer questions about your studies, the program you manage, or the college you work at. These are all things you know well!

- **Don’t be afraid of questions you can’t answer.** If the reporter is asking for information you don’t know, say that you will check on the information and get back to him/her promptly. Never say “no comment.”

- **Know basics.** Memorize the following: ____________ Community College is part of the Plus 50 Encore Completion Program through the American Association of Community Colleges. We help adults over 50 earn high-value degrees or certificates in fields that give back, with a focus on careers in education, health care and social services. At our college, we are [cite example of what the college is doing]

- **Offer help.** Reporters are often working on tight deadlines. Offer to put him/her in touch with a student or another source, with the help of your college public information officer. Direct the reporter to your website for information or AACC’s website (http://plus50.aacc.nche.edu). Volunteer to email statistics or additional information that day if possible.