

News Release Style & Procedures

(also online at <http://www.umcrookston.edu/relations/newsreleasestyle.htm>)

Use the following criteria when composing news releases:

Timeline: Calendar events and activities (date, time, brief descriptions only) need to be written 6 to 8 weeks in advance. News releases should be drafted at least 4 to 5 weeks in advance.

Credibility: Write accurately, objectively, clearly, and concisely to create credible news releases. Present the subject of the news release so that the reader feels the subject is important, correct, and sufficiently described.

Brevity: News releases should only be as long as is necessary to impart vital, accurate information – who, what, when, where, how, and cost – and background information that explains why the release was produced. Use active verbs and make your point in the first sentence – why is this program/service/event/opportunity important to the audience.

The writer should always remember that the reader may not be familiar with the release's subject. If there is any doubt about readers understanding programs, policies, or other aspects of a release, explain them. Spell out the first reference for any abbreviations, e.g. the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC)..

Correctness: Spell-check and proofread EVERY news release.

Objectivity: Refrain from hyperbole or speculation. Attribute perspectives or opinions about a news release to someone, unless there is consensus about it. For instance, everyone agrees that the University of Minnesota, Crookston campus is pretty, so you can write, "The SIFE club plans to hold its fundraiser on the scenic UMC campus." By contrast, not everyone may agree that UMC's Natural Resources Club is the best in Minnesota. If the head of the Natural Resources Dept. thinks so, you can state it via attribution, such as, "I'm pleased the Natural Resources Club is having another fundraiser," said Natural Resources Dept. Head Dan Svedarsky. "These students have formed the best natural resources club in the state."

Contact info: Include a department or office contact names, title, phone number, and email.

Procedure: If you have an idea for a news item, you can run it by University Relations (either Andrew Svec or Elizabeth Tollefson) and we'll help you decide if it has a media angle. If you have a news release to send out, visit <http://www.umcrookston.edu/relations/> and click on News Release Form and fill out the details. Department releases will not be releases until a final approval is given by the office or department contact.