

How to Write a News Release



This document will guide you through the process of writing a news release. Please note that once you write one, all news releases must be sent to Linda Olson, Executive Director of Communications, Eastern University Communications Office, Ott Hall. All news releases are reviewed, edited as needed, and sent to the media by Communications, which is the official voice for the University and the only office authorized by the Board of Trustees to issue news to the public and media. On Page 3, you will find an example of a press release that was distributed by the Eastern University Communications Office.

Write the headline. It should be brief, clear and to the point. It tells the reader immediately what the news release is about.

HEADLINES ARE WRITTEN IN ALL CAPS AND CENTERED.

Example: FALL MUSICAL AT EASTERN UNIVERSITY OCT. 12-14

Write the news release body copy. Start with the date/ city in which the release is originated. (St. Davids, PA, January 13, 2009:).

The lead, or first sentence, should grab the reader and say concisely what is happening. The next 1-2 sentences then expand upon the lead. Avoid using very long sentences and paragraphs.

Feel free to include quotes from individuals pertinent to the story.

Timing. The media requires as much lead time as possible. For example, newspapers must receive your news release at least 3-4 WEEKS before the event.

Include a "call to action" in your release. This is information on what you want the public to do with the information that you are releasing. For example, do you want them to come to an event? Enroll in a course? Be specific.

Communicate the 5 Ws and the H. Who, what, when, where, why, and how. Then consider the points below:

What is the actual news? Why is this news?

The people, dates and other things related with the news. Who is doing it? What makes that person/group special?

The purpose behind the news. What is it for? What is/are the goal(s) of the news or the event?

Who is sponsoring the event? Who is invited?

The length of a press release should be 250-550 words. The more newsworthy you make the press release copy, the better the chances of it being selected by a journalist or reporter. Make sure to hook your reader.

Include information about your office or department and any other company or organization mentioned.

The Communications Office has standard paragraphs about Eastern University that it will insert for your news release.

You can use a paragraph to describe your department or group.

At the end of this section, point to your website. The link should be the exact and complete URL without any embedding so that, even if this page is printed, the link will be printed as it is. For example: http://www.your_company_website.com. Companies which maintain a separate media page on their websites must point to that URL here. A media page typically has contact information and press kits.

Tie it together. Provide some extra information links which support your news release.

Send the Press Release to Linda Olson in the Office of Communications. Make sure Linda has the tools, contact information, and all other pertinent information to be a link between the media and your people. Linda can be reached at lolson@eastern.edu or 610.341.5930.

Sample News Release:**EASTERN PRESENTS CHEKHOV NOV. 12-16 (headline)**

(dateline) St. Davids, PA, October 29, 2008: (Five W's) Eastern University Fine and Performing Arts division presents the classic, bittersweet comedy "Three Sisters," November 12-14 at 8 p.m., November 15 at 1 p.m. and 8 p.m., and November 16 at 3 p.m. in McInnis Auditorium. Eastern University is located at 1300 Eagle Road in St. Davids, PA, and there is ample free parking on campus.

Written by Anton Chekhov and adapted and directed by Liz Carlson '06 and Eastern's Director of Theatre Mark Hallen, this production attempts to unleash the comic richness originally intended by the playwright, which more traditional productions mute, dilute or miss entirely. "I gave them a vaudeville," Chekhov once complained, "and they turned my characters into crybabies!"

(quotes) Mark Hallen, co-adapter and director, compares the comedic style to that of the hit TV show *The Office*. "It's been like a jeweler's glass with which to see and release Chekhov's comic diamonds in the rough," says Hallen. "The characters in both "Three Sisters" and *The Office* want so desperately to be seen as they want to see themselves but they OVERDO every attempt. They act on contradictory impulses to be generous and tough, happy and honest, totally kind and totally truthful, unique and selfless, to love and be loved back in the same measure. In *The Office*, Ricky Gervais and Greg Daniels have resurrected the comedy of incongruity, awkwardness and discomfort that Chekhov invented."

(what you want the reader to do – buy tickets!) Tickets for all performances are \$10 for general admission, \$8 for seniors and students, and \$5 for anyone with an Eastern University ID. Seating is limited. Tickets can be reserved by calling the Eastern University Theatre and Dance Box Office at 610.225.5545 or by e-mailing your name, the date and time of the show you would like to attend, and the number of tickets you need to: easternutheatre@gmail.com.

The Eastern University theatre program is designed to help students be creative stewards of the prophetic imagination, develop and train passionate, skilled, self-possessed emerging artists for continued training and work in theatre and related fields; and to integrate theatre as a catalyst for collaborative creativity in other vocations. For more information about theatre at Eastern University, visit: <http://www.eastern.edu/academic/cas/depts/theatre/index.html>.

For more information about "Three Sisters", visit www.myspace.com/easternuniversitytheatre.

(this symbol signals the end of your release)

If you have any questions about writing, sending or posting a news release to the Eastern University Web site, please contact: Linda Olson (lolson@eastern.edu) or 610.341.5930.