

Media/Internet Coverage Advisory

To: SLS Student Organizations

From: Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Communications and Public Relations

Re: Guest speakers and coverage by reporters and bloggers

Dear Student,

The Law School values the educational opportunity afforded by the many guests who are invited to speak here by student organizations. From time to time, news reporters also find value in covering some of the talks that you organize and they will attend an open event. Please remember to set clear expectations for your guest speakers with regard to potential media coverage, blogging and tweeting so that your guests are fully informed before they speak on campus.

To avoid confusion, we suggest that you relay some caveats to your guests and clarify the “admission” policy of the event on the SLS website event calendar.

The Calendar

Since the Stanford Law School calendar is public, it’s possible that anyone—including reporters—could show up to your event. You can avoid misunderstandings by spelling out the admission/entry policy clearly when you request a room for your event. On the room request page view, use the open text field titled “admission” to manually enter one of these choices:

- This event is open to the public and to the press.
- This is a Stanford community-only, educational event.
- This is a Stanford Law School private, educational, invitation-only event.

The Caveats

The Law School adheres to a very basic media policy: If the general public is invited to the event, the news media will not be barred from covering that event. Before you advertise your event as “*open to the public*,” you should make sure your guests know ahead of time that newspaper reporters could cover their talk. Once you advertise the event as “open to the public,” you can’t backtrack to bar press coverage. (The one exception: We may bar news cameras if they will be disruptive or can’t be accommodated, due to venue space constraints.)

If the event is designated as a “*Stanford community event*,” anyone on campus or among our alumni community, including a student reporter from the Stanford Daily or a reporter from the Stanford News Service, could show up and file a story that is published online and/or in print. Opening the event to the campus effectively opens the event to media coverage. What’s more, social media (blogging, tweeting, mobile phone video uploads, etc.) makes it possible for anyone in the room with a wireless device to make a speaker’s comments instantly public. You may not be able to prevent this from happening, even when the event is open to SLS students only.

Following are some suggestions to help you set expectations for your guest speakers, and to make the intended nature of the talk clear to the audience:

1. Before your guest speaks, share the advisory that we've pasted below. You can tailor it for your guest.
2. Be sure you have clearly indicated the entry policy on the SLS calendar and anywhere else you've advertised the event (e.g., posters).
3. For a private event:
 - Require attendees to register in advance so you know who is coming and so you can communicate the reporting/blogging policy to registrants in advance.
 - Put signs up at the entrance and on the whiteboard.
 - Before the speaker begins, during your introduction, ask those in the audience who are from the professional press or who plan to blog or tweet the talk to make themselves known. If there's a reporter in the room during a clearly marked private event, please be diplomatic and talk to the reporter privately, outside the venue. Call Stephanie Ashe at 650-723-2232 if you need on-the-spot help.
4. Make sure you let your speaker know that, while you've made every effort to clarify the nature of the talk for folks on campus, the public and/or for the press, there's always the chance that someone in the room may blog, tweet or otherwise record and broadcast their comments.
5. If you have a high-profile speaker, please let Holly Parrish know so that others at the law school can be alerted as appropriate.

If you have questions or need advice about media relations, please contact:
Stephanie Ashe, Director of Media Strategy, Stanford Law School. Office: ground floor,
Room 129; desk phone: 650-723-2232; media@law.stanford.edu

Sincerely,
Stephanie Ashe

Advisory About Media/Internet Coverage

Dear Guest Speaker:

On behalf of our student organization, I want to thank you for agreeing to speak at Stanford Law School. We value the effort you are making to share your career experience, expertise and insights on leading legal matters.

Because of the compelling nature of your talk and because there is frequent public interest in events held at Stanford Law School, we want to make you aware that it's possible your comments could be reported by the news media or shared via social media.

It is Stanford Law School's policy to list events on a publicly available calendar on the school's website at <http://law.stanford.edu/calendar>.

In keeping with your wishes, we have publicized the event at which you will be speaking as follows:

[Student organizations should indicate the appropriate choice for the speaker.]

PUBLIC EVENT – Open to the general public and therefore open to the traditional news media and “citizen journalists” who blog, tweet and write articles.

STANFORD COMMUNITY-ONLY EVENT – Open to the campus community (students, faculty, staff, affiliates of Stanford Law School and Stanford University). At these types of events, writers from the Stanford News Service and the student-run Stanford Daily may cover your talk as a campus event. Their stories are available online and frequently get picked by the regular media. Opening the event to the “campus community” effectively opens it up to the news media.

STANFORD LAW SCHOOL PRIVATE/INVITATION ONLY EVENT – Open to Stanford Law School students and invited guests. This type of event has been characterized as follows: “This event is intended to serve as an educational opportunity for Stanford Law School students and invited guests only. Not open to citizen journalists or professional press.” We will put up temporary signs at the main entrance to remind those attending that yours is a private event.

Please note that even though we have made every effort to promote your event as being open only to the Stanford community or as a private event, it is an unavoidable reality in the era of digital technology, social media and citizen journalism that someone in the room may blog, tweet or otherwise record and broadcast your comments.

Thank you for your participation,
(Student organization representative)