Shameless Self-Promotion

Finding, telling and promoting high-impact stories
At UW-Madison

Brian Mattmiller, assistant dean
UW-Madison College of Engineering
Anatomy of a good story

• Being relevant to the public
  – The ‘big three’: Jobs, health, education
• Satisfying a curiosity
• Solving a problem
• Debunking ‘conventional wisdom’
• Being different, compelling, fun
Fertile ground for story ideas

- Scholarly papers, presentations
- New faculty, staff hires
- Patents, spinoffs
- Direct community impact
- The Wisconsin Experience: Students
  - Learning communities, service learning, FIGs, research, internships, study abroad
What’s your news hook?

• Answer the question: Why Now?
  – Published work
  – Contribution to breaking news
  – Milestone or anniversary
  – Illustrate a trend (academics, student life)
  – New product, patent, business
Elements of the story

• Think visual: Multimedia approaches
• Integrating the student voice
• Provide context
• Keep it simple and accessible
Getting the story out there

• Diversify your pitch
  – *Different media have different needs*

• Give the story away

• Consider tips
  – Targeted vs. mass appeal
Case study: DARE

• Hook: ‘Z’ finally within sight

• Pitch: Associated Press

• Results: Full feature in more than 200 national dailies

Chicago Tribune
National Public Radio
The Guardian (UK)
Case Study: Language and Immigration

- Study confronts myths about early immigrants and English adoption
- Strong relevance to the current immigration debate in U.S.
- Results: diverse mix of coverage

National Public Radio
Toronto Star
Arizona Republic
Huffington Post

Joseph Salmons, UW-Madison professor of German
Questions, comments?