



**To: Mark Eyerly**  
**From: RW Jones Agency**  
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**Subject: Public Scholar Program**  
**CC:**

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In an era of declining public support for higher education, it's never been more important to make academic research and expertise relevant and accessible to the public. Scholarly papers and books are written by Lafayette faculty each year, many with value to audiences beyond the academy, yet most publications and their ability to influence change go unheard.

This is not a unique problem for Lafayette. Communicating new ideas and findings are often afterthoughts for many scholars or researchers. Some find it inappropriate—or distracting from their “real” work—to take an active role in advancing their work outside academic circles. Yet when scholars hold important expertise and insights that would benefit the common good, they are obligated to reach the largest audience they can. Without good communication, many important works do not achieve the desired result of advancing knowledge and creating new dialogue.

It's clear that Lafayette College recognizes the need to help support and train faculty members to use their research and expertise to enrich public debate. RW Jones Agency is well positioned to provide support and expertise in the cultivation and training of faculty to do this work.

For more than 30 years, RW Jones Agency has been a leading strategic communications partner for higher education clients across the country. We are the largest full-service public relations firm in the country with a specialized focus in colleges and universities.

Moreover, we have direct experience in helping to put together programs similar to the one being proposed at Lafayette. At the University of Denver, we have helped to establish the Public Impact Fellowship, a program to bring greater awareness to the meaningful research by faculty by giving them the tools and skills to engage with lay audiences. We developed a year-long curriculum of workshops, lectures and networking opportunities to cultivate skills in messaging, media interviews, op-ed writing, policy and legislative work, social media engagement and fundraising.

Previously, we worked with Michigan State on an effort focused on helping to establish a select group of their top researchers become more visible public intellectuals. Through the program, we helped solidify MSU's research reputation, while exposing otherwise arcane research in a tangible way to a lay audience. Our efforts helped generate broad attention in top-tier national media.

### **Public Scholar Program: Scope of Work**

#### **Workshops & Training**

Communicating new ideas, findings and expertise are often afterthoughts for scholars, who assume or merely hope that their reports, research or books will somehow find their way to key audiences, be read

with anticipation, and launch the scholar into professional or public discourse. We know differently. Learning to communicate scholarly research and expertise to the public requires skill and a commitment of time. We propose a series of workshops – two per semester -- that will help scholars shape their message, tell their story, advance public dialogue and create meaningful change. The following ideas reflect our capabilities and can be adapted to your needs and expectations.

### ***Communicating Outside the Academy***

- Our foundational workshop introduces the faculty cohort to the tools and knowledge to connect their research and ideas with people and institutions outside the academy. It includes understanding how their research and expertise fit into public conversation, identifying key audiences and explaining their research in different contexts and to audiences outside their field.

### ***Working with the Media and Writing for the Public***

- This workshop introduces faculty into how the media works, what the media want from scholars and how to write and publish op-eds.

### ***Preparing for Media Interviews***

- A half-day media training provides more in-depth information on how to respond to media requests and how to be confident and comfortable in media interviews in both print and on camera.

### ***Meet the Media***

- A panel discussion invites faculty to hear from and engage directly with media. A panel of invited local and regional reporters shares advice on working with the media and answers questions from faculty.

### ***Being a Public Scholar***

- A presentation and guided panel discussion invite participants to hear from their faculty colleagues on their experiences as public scholars, both good and bad.

### ***Communicating with Social Media***

- This workshop helps faculty understand the value of a digital presence, determine the social media platforms that work best for their research and goals, build a network and get the most out of social media. (Also recommended to include faculty guest speakers to speak on their own experiences.)

## **Public Scholar Media Relations Strategy**

In addition to the curriculum, we would work with faculty individually to develop their own personal public engagement strategies and help them meet their communications goals, whether that's connecting with reporters covering their fields, placing a high-profile op-ed, or simply feeling more comfortable with the media. Additionally, we would layer these individual strategies into the broader college media relations strategy to advance the visibility and reputation of the scholars and Lafayette College.

As part of each of these strategies, we would be looking at the following tactical elements:

***Proactive Media Relations***

High-impact national media relations provides readers and viewers with real insights into Lafayette's research and faculty expertise through communication activities that are carefully selected and produced, including expert commentary, media interviews and research and book features. We will provide targeted outreach to top-tier media contacts who are most likely to be interested in a particular scholar's work or expertise.

***Op-ed Program***

One of the quickest ways to create or advance the national dialogue on an important issue is by writing an opinion article for a major newspaper, magazine or website. In addition to formal workshop training, we will provide ongoing counsel, editorial support and placement of by-lined commentary and opinion by faculty in the program.

***Reactive Media Relations***

RW Jones Agency has deep and lasting relationships with many reporters. They come to us regularly for sources because they understand we can deliver high-quality experts to speak intelligently in their field. We will share any relevant media requests that come to us with faculty participants.