**IMC 585 - FEATURE STORY PACKAGE PROPOSAL ASSIGNMENT:**

**MEDIA TIP SHEET, STORY PITCH, AND WAKELET**

**Overview.** Read through all pages of this document before getting started. The completed document for this assignment should run at least four pages and include three items (Parts A, B & C):

1. a two-page media tip sheet (list of story ideas);
2. a 2-3 page story pitch (proposal); and
3. a viewable link to a relevant Wakelet

Save this document as .docx, .rtf, pdf, etc. Upload it into the “Story packages” Box folder by 11:59 pm Sunday, Sept. 17. The last page describes a major (optional) extra credit project that builds on this assignment.

**PART A: MEDIA TIP SHEET** (20 points)

A “tip sheet” can be a powerful way to get free publicity for a client or cause. While 90% of news releases end up in the trash, tip sheets are far more likely to be kept and used. Tip sheets also are frequently shared on websites or via email, to make them more accessible to reporters. To promote a health campaign, a coordinator could send out a tip sheet of newsworthy story ideas to area media outlets, to promote the campaign and its objectives (health advice, raise awareness, promote engagement with an activity/event, etc.). Overall, media tip sheets:

* Are often sent as aformattedlist of story ideas, using informal/conversational language;
* Help reporters explore proposed story ideas by contacting suggested interview sources;
* Are sent to media outlets on a schedule that fits with the health campaign’s timeline and goals;
* Require less time to develop than full stories or traditional news releases.

Your tip sheet should inspire feature stories that could directly or indirectly promote your chosen health issue, greater awareness of relevant issues, and/or your health advice.

**Focus:** Develop at least 5 specific, different community-level ideas for interesting or unique feature stories that highlight your chosen health topic or advice. All 5 ideas should:

* *Health issue*. Highlight the community health issue you are promoting through your campaign;
* *Local angle*. Include a community-level angle, such as a local organization, program, recent local event or incident, interview source, etc. For example, a tip might suggest interviewing a particular UM researcher or graduate student about a recent research project that’s relevant to your campaign topic; or explore how someone (or a group) solved a problem, overcame a challenge, or developed an innovative way of doing something; profile a leader, researcher, community organizer, patient, etc.
* *Newsworthy/timely angle.* Each story idea should reflect at least one “TIPCUP” news value that makes it newsworthy: **T**imeliness, **I**mpact (affects a lot of people), **P**roximity (hits close to “home”); **C**onflict (explores different viewpoints, or controversy); **U**niqueness (fresh angle); and/or **P**rominence (reputation, fame, achievement, etc.). It should be timely (fresh), interesting, and newsworthy – an idea for a real/factual story that could be covered in local news, not a hypothetical situation. It should highlight something new, not rehash info that most people already know.

**FORMAT**

1. *Page design*. Create a document, and type your full name at the top, flush right. Type today’s date, flush left. Insert the logo you created for the social media assignment – and center it.
2. *Outlets*. Space down, and type “Targeted outlets,” flush left – then list the names and locations of at least 3 relevant news outlets that might run your proposed stories (specific newspapers, TV/radio stations, etc. that serve your chosen community). Choose media outlets that your target audience members already pay attention to. For example, a campus/student-targeted campaign might try to get a story into the *Daily Mississippian*, *Oxford Eagle*, *Hotty Toddy News*, *NewsWatch*, *Rebel Radio*, etc.
3. *Tips.* Space down and begin typing your single-spaced news “tips.” Each tip = a boldfaced descriptive headline + a long paragraph. Insert a space between each tip. Each tip paragraph should include a story idea description, names/contacts for at least 3 interview sources, 1 open-ended question you might ask each source, ideas for story photos/images, and suggested background resources (see detailed instructions below).
4. *More/30*. At the bottom of the first page, insert **--MORE--**. Then after the last tip, type **--30--** (an AP style symbol that means “the end”)

**Six things to include in each tip**: Each tip (story idea) on your tip sheet should consist of a boldface headline plus a detailed paragraph that includes all of these items: story description, 3+ interview sources, 2+ interview questions, 1+ image ideas, and 1+ online resources.

1. *Headline* (boldface, flush left) – should concisely describe the story focus using a subject and verb, in present tense.
2. *Story idea description*(plain text, flush left): Each tip/story idea paragraph on the tip sheet should briefly provide all of this info. This long paragraph (plain text) should use full sentences in third person voice, past tense, active voice, and objective language. Avoid using bullets, acronyms, and abbreviations within the tip paragraph.

* *What* – Explain what the proposed story would explore or focus on – and its significance, importance, or impact.
* *Who* – Mention the key “players” in this story – or who is being helped or harmed.
* *Where* – Explain how the story will highlight the chosen town or community where your campaign audiences live or work. (For example, a story about childhood obesity might quote the nutrition director for a local school or a local pediatrician.)
* *When* – Mention when something relevant has happened – or may happen/be decided soon. For example, a local meth lab explosion sparked community concern about the drug, a local school outreach program for teen addicts will be launched in March, etc.

1. *Sources*:For each tip, include the names of at least 3 sources (specific people who would be interviewed for the story). At least one source for each tip should be an expert. Provide first and last name, title, organization, and contact info (e-mail address or phone number) for at least 3 knowledgeable people that reporters could interview to develop this story. Suggested sources might include experts, leaders, researchers, activists, representatives of nonprofits or businesses, patients, and others affected by the health issue, etc.

Here are some ways to find sources:

* Search websites of local or regional organizations that address your chosen health issue, to find specific people who might talk to reporters.
* Search eGrove.olemiss.edu – and/or olemiss.edu or umc.edu search bars/directories – to find relevant researchers and other experts.
* Search within any websites for your targeted media outlets, to see if they have done similar stories in the past; these stories might quote people who could provide interviews for your proposed stories, as well.

1. *Interview questions*: Suggest at least one open-ended question for each suggested interview source (at least two questions total). These questions will help frame your story angle and explore “why” or “how.” For example: Why or how is a health issue playing out locally or being addressed? What are/were the steps for achieving a goal, or how does something work? How does a new local initiative work, and what goals do they hope to achieve?
2. *Image ideas*: Suggest at least one idea for creating or obtaining original images to accompany the story – action photos, headshots, videos, infographics, diagrams/flow charts, maps, graphs of trends/statistics, photos/videos from researchers, artistic illustrations, etc. For example, reporters might contact an interview source to obtain relevant images, or reporters might take their own photos/videos in a specific place or create graphs from existing numbers, etc.
3. *Online resources*: Provide a URL for a good online resource where journalists could get essential background information for developing the suggested story. This resource might be a website, article, report, video, or page reporting relevant statistics or other numbers.

**PART B: MULTIMEDIA FEATURE STORY “PITCH”** (20 points)

*Overview.* Part B is to develop a brief proposal for a feature story to promote a key message or goal of your health campaign. Your proposed story must be based on actual/real people, events, etc. – not on a creative idea or other hypothetical topic. In other words, propose a a story that could run in a local newspaper or other media outlet. You could expand a tip you developed for your tip sheet – OR use a completely different story or angle.

*Instructions.* Space down to the next page, below your tip sheet. Type responses to all questions below (B1-B9), and then delete the instructions and keep the numbered headings (ex: 1. Story idea, 2. Paper, etc.).

1. **Story idea.** Answer the following questions in 1-2 paragraphs, to describe your story:

* *Headline.* Propose a headline for the story, using a subject and verb in present tense.
* *Topic.* Describe specifically what your proposed story would explore or focus on – and its significance, importance, or potential impact.
* *Stakeholders*. Describe the “who” of the story – broad stakeholders involved (populations, groups, problem solvers, key “players,” etc.). These stakeholders might include people at risk, those benefitting from something or not, who is being helped or needs help, etc.
* *Timeliness*. Explain what is timely or currently important about your story – or why people should care about it right now. You might describe something that happened recently or that may happen or be decided soon. For example, a story about opioid abuse prevention mentions a couple of relevant events – a local opioid-related tragedy and a campus outreach program for opioid addicts to be launched in June.

1. *Newspaper.* Your proposed story should be publishable in a relevant newspaper, such as the [Daily Mississippian](https://thedmonline.com/), [Hotty Toddy News](https://www.hottytoddy.com/), [Oxford Eagle](https://www.oxfordeagle.com/), or a paper located in the community that your campaign focuses on. Which paper would you submit your feature story to, and why?
2. *Local angle.* What info could you highlight to create a local angle for the story? This might be quotes from a local expert or researcher, a reference to a recent incident or event, activities of a local clinic or organization, etc. (For example, the local angle for a story exploring PTSD among veterans mentions that a UM pharmacy professor is developing a drug treatment for the condition. Then the story explores this research and incorporates relevant stats and advice about new and traditional veteran PTSD treatments.)
3. *Interview sources.* Provide info about at least 3 knowledgeable or authoritative people you could realistically interview for the story. At least one should be an expert or leader/official. Each contact should include the person’s full name, title or role, organization, and email address or phone number. At least one proposed source in your list must be a researcher or other expert from UM or UMCC (med school), such as a faculty member or other employee. To find UM researchers and other experts, try homepage search bars at olemiss.edu or umc.edu, search within UM department pages, include “olemiss” in Google searches to find UM experts, search within eGrove (<https://egrove.olemiss.edu>), or browse UM research centers: <https://www.research.olemiss.edu/centers-institutes>

In addition to suggesting an expert source, you might propose other knowledgeable people such as officials, leaders, patients, activists, researchers, policymakers, healthcare workers, teachers, or representatives of nonprofits, agencies, or businesses, etc. For example, a story about childhood obesity might quote the nutrition director for a school district or a pediatrician. Or a story about a new diabetes treatment might quote a patient about their experiences. You might search within organization websites that address your health issue, or within newspaper websites to identify who was quoted in similar stories, etc.

1. **Interview questions.** Briefly list your three proposed interview sources below, along with their complete contact info (name, title, organization, and email address or phone number). Then next to each source in this list, suggest at least one open-ended question you might ask them. Here are four basic types of exploratory questions you might develop:

* *Description.* Ask them to describe their work or knowledge about the story topic – or explain goals, challenges, solutions, or how they got started.
* *Explanation.* Ask them to explain key concepts relevant to their work or role -- or share a detailed anecdote about a relevant experience, event, or memory.
* *Interpretation.* Ask them to explain or contextualize a specific percentage, number, trend, statistic, or other data point.
* *Context.* Ask them to explore a “why” or “how,” such as a broader context for their work or expertise, how a health issue is affecting a particular community or population, predictions for the future, recommendations for action, policy, etc.

1. **Background.** In a feature story, at least half of the content comes from quoted material from interview sources. Some remaining content can be informative background info. Describe background info you could include in the story, to help get readers “up to speed” on your topic, provide health advice or statistics, help contextualize your interview material, etc. Provide at least one relevant background info resource (website, article, report, etc.) you might quote within the story (website name, organization, and URL) – and briefly describe the info you would include in the story from this resource.
2. **Image ideas.** Describe 3 specific images that could accompany your proposed story – such as original photos, candid action shots, or other images your interview sources might create or provide to a reporter. Describe what each image would show, rather than insert an actual image. These image descriptions would help reporters illustrate the story you are proposing using their own images or content provided by interview source(s). Avoid suggesting “boring” photos that would merely show a “headshot” of someone or inanimate objects such as buildings, landscapes, equipment, etc. that do not include people. Try to think of interesting, informative, or engaging images such as photos, video clips, infographics, simple graphs, maps, flow charts, artistic illustrations, diagrams, etc. Also explain how you would create or obtain these images.
3. **Video segments.** Describe at least 3 specific video segments (elements) that you might include in a short video piece to accompany the story. Elements might include things like b-roll footage (candid clips showing people doing relevant things), a demo clip showing someone explaining something while doing it, original graphics, data visualizations or animations, still images accompanied by audio narration (your voice or a source’s), video footage obtained from a particular interview source, or a video clip of you or other people talking or answering questions on camera, via a Zoom recording, etc. Be specific in describing what each segment/element would show within your proposed video piece. Also explain how you would create or obtain these video clips.

**PART C: WAKELET LINK** (10 points)

This creative assignment will help you explore additional aspects of the story proposal you developed in Part B, including more background info and a broader perspective than the story angle. Post a publicly viewable link to your Wakelet at the bottom of your document, under the story proposal. Before uploading your document to Box, log out of Wakelet and then click the link in your document (and in the discussion thread), to make sure others can see it.

STEPS TO CREATE A WAKELET TO ACCOMPANY YOUR FEATURE STORY:

**1. Set up a Wakelet account.** First, watch these two quick tutorials: <https://youtu.be/VRlT3XCtUGo> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGhCjFWM2C0>

Then download the free Wakelet app (blue and white icon) on your computer by going to <http://wakelet.com> – or download the app to your device from an app store. Enter in your personal info to set it up.

**2. Create a new “collection.”** Your Wakelet is called a “collection.” Click the “+” button to get started. Click the paint pallet icon in the upper left corner to view layouts. Make sure you’re using the default -- the “media” layout. Do not select a different one, because other layouts may not fully display all your text, images, etc. Make sure your full name appears at the top of your collection – or type it into a text box at the top.

**3. Wakelet topic.** Your Wakelet should explore your story topic in a different or broader way – or go beyond the story’s local angle – to include national articles and other relevant content. Be creative! Here are a few ideas for a wakelet focus, but you’re not limited to these approaches.

* *Explainer.* Explain a key concept mentioned in your story proposal – or a relevant idea or strategy that readers might not be familiar with.
* *Listicle.* Use Wakelet to develop a Buzzfeed-style “listicle” related to your health advice -- and then find online content to support each item in your list. For example, 5 safety tips for drinking responsibly, 10 simple things you can do now to relieve anxiety, etc. If you choose this approach, make sure you include the minimum number of items listed below in the assignment.
* *Big picture.* Explore a particular aspect of the story in greater depth in the Wakelet, such as a relevant state or national trend, relevant statistics over time, research, new discoveries or treatments, etc.
* *Relevant campaigns or initiatives*. Explore how communities or info campaigns have promoted your health topic or advice. For instance, you might highlight one or more campaigns you identified in your earlier campaign plan assignments.
* *“Best practice” example*. Highlight a relevant program or initiative (campus, local, regional, national, etc.) by finding different kinds of content about it.
* *Relevant event or policy*. Highlight an incident or past event – or a new/proposed law or policy – that illustrates why your topic is timely, controversial, important, etc.

**4. Descriptive title.** Before adding things to your Wakelet, draft a catchy or descriptive title at the top that reflects your Wakelet focus and that will engage readers. If you want to use a headline-style title, include both a subject and verb. You can always go back later to refine it. Use keywords in the title that reflect the Wakelet content.

**5. Cover image.** Add a relevant cover image at the top of your Wakelet that reflects its focus/topic. It could be an image from an article you found, an image you found through a Google Images search, a screenshot from a video, a representational or metaphorical image, etc. Save your chosen image to your device and then click the “Cover Image” link in Wakelet near the top of the screen to upload it.

**6. Descriptive summary** – A concise, one-paragraph summary of your chosen issue/topic into the “Description” bar under the cover image at the top. If this doesn’t work, you can instead click the green “Add an item” bar and click “Write a note.” Tap the blank box and Paste your text, then click the Save button. Then move the definition to the top, as the first entry.

**7. Online research.** Find items for your Wakelet using keyword searches in Google, Google Scholar, library databases, Twitter, etc. For example, for a story focused on binge drinking at UM, a Wakelet might highlight the national college binge drinking scene, to include things like articles about factors that contribute to binge drinking during Covid, what other universities are experiencing or doing to prevent binge drinking, well-known tragedies, etc.

*Content to include in your wakelet***:** Below is a checklist of the items to include beneath the title, cover image, and summary paragraph. You may put these items in any order you choose, to create a logical flow. Then add your own commentary, as described in #7:

1. Links to at least 2 articles that discuss or define your Wakelet topic
2. Link to at least one article that helps explain a relevant key idea or concept
3. Include at least 5 informative tweets relevant to your Wakelet topic.
4. Link to at least one article or web page that include statistics or other numbers that are relevant to your Wakelet topic, to show why it is significant, changing, etc.
5. A link to at least 2 videos that highlight something relevant to your topic.
6. An infographic or chart. This could be a Google image, a cropped screenshot from a popular or research article, etc. Research articles can be downloaded as pdfs via the UM library databases.
7. REQUIRED: In your own words, add descriptions and other comments above and/or below every Wakelet item, to introduce or help explain what the item is about or how it relates to the wakelet focus or the story, or to relate an item to other items. Use complete and conversational sentences. These intro comments should help to explain or clarify the items, improve the flow, and pull curated items together to tell a readable narrative about your chosen topic.

**8. Add and rearrange items** within your Wakelet:

* *Add items*: For each item you want to add to the Wakelet, copy the URL for the item on the web and then switch to Wakelet to insert it. Click the blue “save the link you copied” bar that appears at the top – or click the green “Add an item” bar and click “add a link” to post the article, etc. into the Wakelet. Or post items you bookmarked by clicking the green “Add an item” bar and then “Add from bookmarks.”
* *Rearrange items*. You will need to move items around, to arrange them into a logical order. Tap on the three dots in the upper right corner, and then tap “Reorder” to move the items around.

**9. Check the Wakelet link**: After you create your Wakelet, save/publish it so the link is viewable by others (unlisted or public view). To check the link visibility, copy/paste the link, log out of Wakelet, and then paste the link into a browser and hit Return. The link should not have the word “edit” in it. After you post, click the link in the Blackboard discussion thread, to make sure everyone can see it. If not, you will need to go back to Wakelet to change the setting to unlisted or public view.

**MAJOR EXTRA CREDIT (optional):** You are not required to develop this story proposal into a feature story. However, for up to 50 extra points, you may email a complete newspaper story and an acknowledgment email from a newspaper editor to [kaswain@olemiss.edu](mailto:kaswain@olemiss.edu) by 11:59 pm Wed, Oct. 4. The story must run at least 500 words, have a strong local angle, and include direct and paraphrased quotes from at least three knowledgeable interview sources. This extra work is strongly recommended for any student who has missed posting on-time discussion board replies or who has not submitted a weekly assignment on time. Dr. Swain will help you revise the draft story before you submit it for publication or submit the story on your behalf. Having a published story in your portfolio could help you find jobs, internships, or people who could write reference letters.

To get full credit, submit all of the following five things to [kaswain@olemiss.edu](mailto:kaswain@olemiss.edu) by Oct. 4:

1. **Feature story** (40 points): The first item is a double-spaced, fresh, newsworthy story. At least half the content should consist of direct and paraphrased quotes from 3 or more knowledgeable people you interviewed in person, via zoom, or by phone. Do not rely on email to solicit quotes. The lead (1st paragraph) should emphasize a local angle. It could be descriptive (highlighting a scene or anecdote) – or summarize the basic who-what-when-where of the story.
2. **Source list** (2 points): Below the story, list everyone you interviewed and quoted in the story (full name, title, organization, contact info for each person). Also list full citations for any background information used in the story.
3. **Image** (2 points): Below the source list, insert at least one relevant image you either produced yourself or obtained from an interview source (not downloaded from the web);
4. **Wakelet** (3 points): Below the image (at the bottom of the document), insert a visible link to your Wakelet, revised/updated to accompany your story.
5. **Email** (3 points, required). Forward an email reply from a newspaper editor that confirms your story submission, to [kaswain@olemiss.edu](mailto:kaswain@olemiss.edu). You are not required to get your story accepted for publication, but you must submit it to a newspaper to get any extra credit points.