THE CONVERSATION & University of Nebraska at Omaha
Our mission

Promote truthful information and strengthen journalism by unlocking the rich diversity of academic research for audiences across America

Our Charter: https://theconversation.com/us/charter
Who we are

• An independent source of news, analysis and expert commentary, written by academics and researchers working with professional journalists

• We commission short (~800 - 1000 word), pieces on current affairs, new research, and topics of interest

• We make it easy: Our journalists collaborate, advise, edit and provide support that you won’t find elsewhere

• Author approval: pieces must be signed off by the author before we can publish them

• All content is Creative Commons licensed: free to read, and free for other media to republish

• Authors get access to metrics to show the readership and reach of their articles

• Editors provide training, providing academics with the skills and confidence to bring their expertise to a wider audience
UNO’s Office of University Communications began actively encouraging faculty members to submit articles to The Conversation in September 2020 and became full members in October.

The Editorial and Media Relations team set a goal to publish at least one article a month and reach 500,000 reads after a full year of membership.

After a year of aggressively pursuing writing opportunities with faculty and strategic promotion of the platform, UNO published nearly twice the number of articles and amassed nearly twice the amount of reads than our original goal.

Key Metrics
- 976,456 Reads
- 22 Articles
- 17 Authors

Global Reach (Top 5)
- United States (49%)
- Indonesia (14%)
- United Kingdom (8%)
- Australia (6%)
- Mexico (6%)
UNO faculty published by The Conversation as of October 2021

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• Authors must be a current faculty member or researcher at an accredited U.S. college or university. (PhD candidates can also write with us if they write on the subject of their research dissertation.)

• Authors must provide links to research or other evidence throughout their stories to back up their statements.

• Authors must fill out a disclosure form listing any conflicts of interest.

• Authors have control over the editorial process: We cannot publish a story without final approval from the author.
Why you should write for The Conversation
The kinds of stories we publish

- Explanatory journalism pieces (not op-eds)
- Stories that add context/more depth to events in the news (news commentary and analysis; historical perspectives)
- Describe new discoveries/research (as traditional stories or Research Briefs)
- The science of the every day (Curious Kids, Significant Figures, basic explainers)
- Stories that provide insight (by saying something others in the media aren’t)
What we look for in a pitch

- Is the story of interest to a general audience?
- Is the story timely (i.e. why should a general reader care about this now)?
- Is the author an expert on what they’re pitching?
- Can the angle be covered in 1,000 or fewer words?
Common reasons pitches are rejected

- Reads like an opinion piece or too speculative
- Too niche/not for a general audience
- Not timely/Not right subject for current editorial priorities
- Not focused enough
- Pitch contains too much jargon
- Forced stretch being made to tie to current events
- Full draft sent instead of a pitch
- Already have a similar piece in the works
- Pitch was not a new take on the subject
- Expert already found/commissioned (for Expert Request)
Not considered a pitch...

• A blog post or link to a story that has already been published

• “Professor X is an expert in the field of microeconomics. Do you want her to write for you?”

• A university press release or grant announcement

• A completed article or outline

• “Our university is part of a consortium that’s studying plant disease X. See this webpage for more information.”
How to Get Started

1. Search The Conversation to see if a similar story has already been published. Your pitch needs to be new and unique*

2. Write your pitch following these prompts:
   - What’s your story? (50 words or less)
   - Why is it interesting/significant for non-academic readers? (100 words or less)
   - What is your expertise in the subject and why is now a good time to do this article? (150 words or less)
   - (Optional) Do you have any photos, video, audio, graphs, or other material to help illustrate? (200 words or less)

3. Submit your pitch – you may do this in one of two ways:
   1. Directly to The Conversation (click here)
   2. Ask UCOMM to review and submit on your behalf (click here).

*Not sure? Contact UCOMM at unonews@unomaha.edu.
UCOMM Contacts

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UNO News
You may also contact UNO’s Editorial & Media Relations team by contacting unonews@unomaha.edu