Photography Tips & Tricks

UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

Photographing a Speaker

At speaking events, you may notice that professional photographers take several shots. The main reason for this is because it is difficult to capture good expressions of people while they are speaking.

- A trick of professional photographers that you can use is to arrive early and take setup shots of the speaker at the podium prior to the actual event. This way, you can get closer to the subject (5 to 6 feet away), better control the photo and not disrupt the flow of the speaker's presentation.

- The flash will not be sufficient to light the room, so the best strategy is to use available light. If you have a small flash unit to attach to your camera, you can try pointing the flash to the ceiling (make sure the ceiling is white) and bouncing light off it so it spreads more light.

Tip Keep in mind that the flash on your point-and-shoot camera is of little use when photographing a speaker from a distance in a large room.

Group Shots

Your point-and-shoot camera is not ideal for photographing groups of people in motion, e.g., clapping hands, shaking hands, presenting awards. You will be better off taking a posed group shot where the subjects are standing still.

- Try to limit the group to three to five people and keep the group at least 10 feet away from a wall or other background.

- Available light is best, but you can also try some shots with the flash.

- Don't be reluctant to fill the frame with people.

- If time permits, experiment alternative ways to capture group shots, such as photographing someone else taking the photo of the group or the group taking a "selfie" shot.

This is an internal document and should not be shared without permission from Institutional Communications.

Photography Tips & Tricks

UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

Individual Portraits

How you photograph an individual will depend on whether you are shooting indoors or outside.

- When shooting indoors, try to use indirect window light. Avoid using a flash, which can cause red-eye and shadows.

- When shooting outdoors, open shade or an overcast day is best for avoiding shadows. Place the subject in an area with a nondescript, generic background at least 10 feet away from a wall, tree, etc. Be conscious of avoiding lines in the background—poles, lines on a building, utility wires, etc.—that can look like arrows bisecting the subject's head.

- Don't be reluctant to fill the frame.

Tip When appropriate, take an environmental portrait of the individual that shows the subject in his or her usual environment, such as where they work or live.

Composing a Photo

When deciding where to place your subject(s), try to avoid centering, which can result in a static, boring photo. Rather, keep in mind the universal rule-of-thirds.

The Rule of Thirds is a general "rule of thumb" or guideline on how best to compose an image. Imagine a grid dividing the image into nine equal parts, with two equally-spaced horizontal lines and two equally-spaced vertical lines.

Also keep in mind that the viewer's eye will be drawn to whatever is brightest in the frame.

This is an internal document and should not be shared without permission from Institutional Communications.