

OpEd Primer – Andrea Gore, Texas AAUP Conference, andrea.gore@icloud.com, 2-27-23

1. Identify a topic that you're passionate about and ideally for which you have professional/personal expertise/experience/credentials.
2. Consider timeliness – relate to a current event
3. Who is your audience? This will frame the argument and also guide where to submit.
4. Every publication venue has information on word limits and how to submit. Most are 550-800 words.
5. Your OpEd starts with a “lede” – an opening statement that sets up the entire article and draws the reader in.
6. The rest of the OpEd is a series of logical statements supporting your opinion. It's good to mention the counter-arguments to be balanced or to refute them. Use hyperlinks to provide credibility to your statements. Avoid jargon or define terms that are not in common parlance. Tell your story.
7. The end of the OpEd is often a call to action or a statement about why change is needed.
8. When you're ready to submit, prepare a pitch. The subject line should be catchy, and call attention to a time-dependent subject. The pitch itself introduces you, asserts your credentials, and underscores the novelty of the points you are making. For example,

Subject line: Timely submission: UT Austin Prof on academic freedom in research

Pitch: I am an NIH-funded neuroscientist at UT-Austin, and also a fierce advocate for academic freedom. There may not seem to be much connection between my neuroscience research and academic freedom, but in this OpEd I argue that without the latter, Texas would not be the research powerhouse it is. I believe my piece provides a unique way of thinking about the unintended consequences of current legislation that proposes to abolish academic freedom in the classroom.

You should attach your OpEd as a MS Word or PDF document. I also paste it into the body of the email itself, right after my signature.

9. Be prepared to get no response or a rejection, and be resilient and submit elsewhere. If you send a pitch and get no response, write a follow up a few days later on top of the original submission email. For example: “I am following up on my OpEd submission of XXX date. I am hopeful that you are interested in this topic, but if I do not hear from you by XXX date [e.g. in 2-3 days] I plan to submit this elsewhere.” Move on from there. If you're lucky, the second email will provoke a response.