



## YOUR GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL PHOTO SHOOT!

Over the years, while photographing at many academies, colleges and universities around the country, I've learned a lot about creating efficient schedules and taking advantage of as many opportunities as possible in a short amount of time. Here are a few thoughts that will help us get the most out of our time together.

**My Homework:** I want to learn as much as possible about your photography needs, ideas and goals. I'll study your website and your existing publications, and I'll talk with key people involved with the project. My objective is to have a clear idea of your needs and the project's goals *before* I start selecting lenses and creating images.

### Questions that I'm asking:

- What are the messages that you want to communicate to your target audience?
- Are there key students and faculty that we need to feature?
- What special buildings, places or programs should we focus on to visually help you communicate your message?

**Campus Guide:** Please have someone from your office with us during the day to answer questions, to help my assistant and me find the right people and locations, and to help solve unexpected problems. This makes a big difference in the success of the photo shoot.

**In the Morning:** I like to get started by 8am. The morning light is often beautiful and can offer us the opportunity to create some really pretty, wide shots of campus. If students are going to an early class, or to and from the dining hall, even better! It is important to include people in these images whenever possible.

**Think Diversity:** When scheduling students and faculty, be sure to look for a good diverse mix that is representative of your campus.

**Interior Set-ups:** When you are scheduling interior shots, try to leave 45 minutes for each set-up. That will give us time to set up lights as necessary, find the angles and shoot a variety of different images, and then pack everything back up again. If we are in a lab, we likely need closer to 60 minutes depending on how much time is required to set up the scene.

Make sure we have permission to come in and photograph a class (or lab) well in advance of the shoot. Most profs are pretty amenable – and often excited to be featured – but it is important to check with them ahead of time and avoid situations such as major exams.

**Outside Set-ups:** We need students! If we are going to be photographing outside, we'll need 2-3 groups of students (4-5 in each group is perfect) each for an hour to stage a variety of scenes. This allows us to see them interacting within the campus environment. If possible, schedule 1-2 faculty members to be available for 15 minutes of each hour. By creating these kinds of opportunities, we can also showcase the faculty/student interaction outside the classroom.

If we are headed out into the field with, for example, a biology or geology class, then we'll need a full hour when we account for travel time. It's best if we travel independently from the class so we can leave when we are finished photographing.

**Bright Colors:** Ask students and faculty to wear bright colors and dress comfortably for the photo shoot. Stay away from all black or dark solid colors, and all white.

**Props:** Ask students to bring with them things that they might normally carry during the day, including books, laptops or iPads, backpacks, a bike or long board, and even a favorite water bottle or coffee mug. By having people and props, we can recreate a lot of what typically happens on campus in a somewhat controlled setting with an eye on good light and composition. Also, bring along a collection of bright shirts and sweatshirts from the campus bookstore. These can really help if we need more color in a group or even if someone shows up with shirt with a different school's logo emblazoned across the front.

**Soft Light:** Morning and afternoon light can be soft and beautiful, while mid-day light can be rather harsh and bright. If at all possible, try to schedule the outside shots on either end of the day and save the middle of the day for the interior shots.

**Profiles:** Is there a need for environmental portraits of either students or faculty? These are often helpful when profiling people in publications or on the web.

**Lunch:** Please build 45 minutes into the schedule for lunch. These days are busy and fast-paced, and a mid-day break is important.

**What Have I Missed?** Check the campus calendar. Are there any social events going on while we are there? Any sporting events? Even any typical afternoon activities that we can recreate? Any popular corners or places on campus where students like to hang out? Is there a favorite coffee shop or similar place in town where we could take some students?

**Golf Cart:** If your campus is spread out, a golf cart can really speed the process of moving between locations. We may not always need it, but a golf cart can be a real asset.

**Contact & Remind Participants:** Don't assume that everyone will remember that they signed up for the photo shoot. Text them. E-mail them. Call them. Send out friendly reminders. In other words, make certain that they show on time. And keep their cell numbers handy so if there is a change in the schedule, we can do our best to get hold of them.

**Sample Schedule:** Again, we will generally start the day by 8am. Please schedule the last shot by 5:30pm. If there is an evening event that you would like covered, let us know and we will do our best to accommodate. Our evening is typically filled with downloading and reviewing all of the images from the day, safely backing everything up on separate hard drives and then cleaning equipment for the next day.

Here is an example of a schedule that was very successful. Though it was well structured, it was also flexible enough to allow us to find and set-up some unplanned extras such as an outdoor class and some students playing Frisbee and just hanging out in the afternoon sun.

Monday

- 7:50 Meet with contact in office. Review the day's schedule.
- 8:00 Outside shots of students going to first class.
- 8:15 Meet 5 students for exterior set-ups.
- 9:00 – 9:45 English Lit Seminar. Dr. Smith. Reed Hall, Rm 121 Great windows & sunlight!  
\*\*\* Class Change \*\*\* Watch for lots of students on campus.
- 10:00 - 11:00 Electron Microscope with Dr. Elliot and student. Roger Hall, Rm 18 Staged lab scene. Professor will have necessary props.
- 11:00 - 12:00 Painting Studio. Prof. Tuttle. Anderson Hall, Rm 9
- 12:00 - 12:30 Campus activity / students going to lunch.
- 12:30 - 1:15 Lunch
- 1:15 - 2:00 Dr. Wells with student in his office. Emery, Rm 22
- 2:00 – 2:45 Staged Economics Class with 8 students and Dr. O'Rourke. Emery, Rm 119 Need both close-up shots of students and a profile of Dr. O'Rourke at board.
- 3:00 – 3:45 Meet 5 students for exterior set-ups. (Must be different from morning group.)
- 4:15 - 5:15 Men's Varsity Soccer -- lower field. Women's Soccer – adjacent field.

Flexibility is the name of the game here, and I'm happy to respond to unexpected schedule changes and unplanned events. Let's review your schedule before the shoot so that we can fine-tune it together. Thanks in advance and please let me know if you have any questions!



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