

SCRIPPS  HOWARD

F O U N D A T I O N

Roy Howard  
Community Journalism  
Center

## ROY HOWARD COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER GRANT

### **Louisiana State University School of Mass Communication**

#### Dean/Director

Roxanne Dill

Tel: (225) 578-9295

rdill1@lsu.edu

#### Person submitting this request

Roxanne Dill

Tel: (225) 578-9295

rdill1@lsu.edu

**A Grant Proposal for a**

**Roy Howard Community  
Journalism Center  
at Louisiana State University**

Submitted by the

Manship School of Mass Communication

Louisiana State University

July 31, 2023

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# Introduction

Newspaper and TV reporters rarely venture past crime and occasional community events in covering urban minority neighborhoods. And rural news outlets are dying, with little revenue left to hire reporters, cover basic news beats and create digital content needed to engage new readers.

We believe that by creating innovative partnerships among universities and news sites in Baton Rouge and across Louisiana, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center can deploy several dozen student journalists a year to cover both types of underserved communities. Our plan will provide a huge influx of community news throughout Louisiana, give students invaluable experience and start to rebuild trust in the media in communities that have been buffeted by misinformation and are either news deserts or close to becoming them.

Rather than pouring \$3 million over three years into one or two communities and lifting them far above the rest of the state in news coverage and the civic vibrancy and political accountability that come with that, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at LSU will build a new collaborative model that will have much greater impact and could be replicated in any state.

Under our proposal, eight to 10 students at LSU and Southern University, an historically Black school in Baton Rouge, will be paid to cover the Black community in Baton Rouge. Students at two other HBCUs – Dillard and Xavier – and at Loyola University, where half of the journalism students are people of color, will cover the minority community in New Orleans. And student journalists in up to 10 smaller cities and rural areas will cover their communities and other towns nearby. As Dr. James Stewart, the chairman of the journalism department at Nicholls State University in southeast Louisiana, told us, a small community like his is not just a news desert, “it’s the Gobi Desert.”

Given the urgency, we think the quickest way to have an impact is to work with existing news outlets, which have credibility in their communities that usually goes back for generations. And rather than add to the burdens on editors who are already overwhelmed – some in both urban and rural areas are struggling to do all the reporting, editing and layout work themselves – the Howard Center will pay stipends of up to \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year to journalism professors who will serve as the main advisers at their universities, recruiting and training students, discussing ideas with news-site editors and pre-editing the stories for publication.

Each university will have a core group of students who will cover beats and write features part-time for \$12 an hour during the school year, and 15 to 20 students will qualify for full-time internships, funded by the Howard Center, with their news sites in the summer. Professors also

will send the best stories from their classes to the sites, with the Howard Center paying a \$100 freelance fee to the students for each story published.

The main focus of our Howard Center will be to place more boots on the ground, with students covering critical beats – city, town and parish governments, schools, health care and local businesses – and producing written, video and audio features about interesting people and community groups. The students will be a visible presence in each community, in person and on social media, giving more residents a chance to get to know journalists and gain trust in what they do. The students’ work will expand over time into deeper accountability and solutions stories.

The Howard Center also will create a “Digital Booster Shot” program, training up to a dozen LSU students at a time to help community news outlets develop e-newsletters, analyze audience data and create stronger engagement strategies. The rural population is aging, and publishers tell us they cannot afford to hire digital staff or consultants even though they need to attract younger audiences to survive. Our students could bring the enthusiasm, creativity and digital know-how needed to help sites make this critical transition.

Taken together, these approaches will enable us to push the bulk of the grant money into the field. Under our proposed budget, more than \$1 million will go to pay, train and equip students over three years. Roughly \$760,000 more will go to pay faculty members at partner universities and a small group of retired news editors who will edit stories when faculty members cannot, and if you add in a portion of the salaries for the Howard Center personnel for when they are directing Baton Rouge coverage, more than \$2 million will be spent directly on newsgathering and editing. And while no news sites will receive any money, the Scripps Howard Fund will be making a major investment in community journalism and the continued viability of local news organizations across the state.

As you can see from Appendix A, with 29 letters from the presidents of the LSU and University of Louisiana systems, journalism department heads and professors, and editors of urban and rural news sites, we have discussed this plan with many people who will be involved. Everyone is enthusiastic about it and ready to work together to put it in place.

One thing that makes the plan so cost-effective is its decentralized nature. As the flagship university, LSU will host the Howard Center and hire experienced journalists as its director and deputy director. They will create training courses and build a website featuring all the stories from around the state and discussions of lessons learned. They will set basic performance standards for all participants and provide oversight and financial support to other schools. They also will run the Digital Booster Shot program and the Baton Rouge news operation, working with a Southern University professor to mentor the LSU and Southern students and with news partners that will include a Black weekly, a Black monthly, the city’s daily paper and a local TV station. And while the Howard Center officials will provide advice and coordination, they will let

the professors and news editors in the rest of the state decide on the mix of stories and social media that work best for them.

Louisiana's population of 4.6 million people is 58% white, 33% Black and 8% Latino and Asian-American. Our state has the second-highest poverty rate and the fourth-lowest median household income in the nation, and it embodies the problems facing community news outlets everywhere. At the Summit on Rural Journalism in Kentucky in June, publishers of rural weeklies said they are so strapped financially – and so desperate for reporters – that they are training senior citizens and high school students to cover meetings. One couple who own weeklies in Kansas created an online training course for citizen reporters, and we were astonished to hear that 18 state press associations have already licensed it for use by member papers.

There's no question that college journalism students could do a better job, and doing this work in school could make some more interested in working in community news after they graduate. But many students – especially those from diverse backgrounds – need part-time jobs to get by, and we'll need to pay them to free them up. We also want to point out that two to four well-trained students could produce enough stories to transform the limited news space in most rural papers – and that we will have enough students on the ground in Baton Rouge to make a major difference. We have budgeted to start the program in Baton Rouge and six other locations in 2024 and expand to up to 12 sites overall, though we are open to adjusting those plans to have the most impact.

We also are confident that our plan will meet Scripps's goals because we piloted it this summer in two towns in Louisiana – Hammond and Eunice. Hammond has a roughly equal mix of white and Black residents, and a group of students from LSU and Dillard University wrote more than a dozen front page stories for the paper there and helped manage its Facebook account, dramatically increasing audience engagement. The students also created the first video stories that both papers ever published on their websites.

“The program in particular enabled us to reach underserved communities in a way we haven't been able for years,” Connor Raborn, the editor of The Daily Star in Hammond, wrote in a letter included in Appendix A. “The interns contributed in-depth, informative stories about Black business owners, Juneteenth organizers, underpaid teachers, concerned farmers and disadvantaged students. They gave voice to community figures such as a city council clerk who moonlights as an inspirational self-help author and citizens who didn't want their pocketbooks to suffer in order to keep their access to recycling services.”

Instead of relying as much as he usually does on news releases from community groups, Raborn added: “The work of the program's interns enhanced The Daily Star for two months, allowing bylines – reporter-driven stories – to fill the front few pages of our publication.”

# 1. Project Description

*– The proposal should explain how the Center will accomplish each of the three stated goals. All proposed activities should clearly contribute to one or more of the following three goals:*

## **Goal 1: Trust Building**

*– Actively experiment with trust-building, establishing best practices that can be shared across educational institutions and media organizations.*

People in minority and rural communities are skeptical of outsiders portraying how they live or telling them what they need to do. They complain that national or regional journalists parachute in when there is bad news (and often come with stereotypical views), and this has added to their distrust of the media. But people in these communities typically respect universities in their areas, and faculty members and students are part of the fabric of local life. That will help provide credibility to the student journalists in our clusters, as will partnering with news sites that have long been among the main sources of information in these communities. In addition to placing more reporter boots on the ground, our Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will take the following steps to build trust and establish best practices:

**Host community listening events:** Student journalists and faculty advisers in each community will start by hosting an informal event in which civic leaders and members of a diverse mix of community groups meet the students and the staff members of the local news outlet. The reporters and editors will explain how they work, respond to concerns by community members and invite them to talk about enhancements to coverage they might like to see. The students will collect contact information and story tips and invite community members to fill out an online poll afterward rating the news outlet’s coverage in key news and feature areas.

Our Howard Center will pay for two events a year in each of the news clusters. We will co-host some of the events with respected nonpartisan organizations — the NAACP Louisiana State Conference and the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation have agreed to work with us, for instance — and with local organizations and partner universities. We also will create events that provide helpful information, such as health advice from local hospitals and job tips from employers, to help build a sense of community. We hosted a very successful Mix and Mingle event at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond in July as part of our pilot program with the Hammond Daily Star (see Section 5 for more on our pilot).

**Emphasize transparency, reporting in person and interviewing diverse sources:** As teachers and journalists, we have kept up with research by groups like Trusting News, Better News and the Solutions Journalism Network, and we will train our student journalists to employ – and effectively test – many of their recommendations.



One key, of course, is for journalists to spend time in the communities they serve, and many students in Louisiana go to universities near where they grew up and understand the local culture. Besides gathering facts with an open mind, we will encourage our students to be upfront about their reporting goals, conduct most of their interviews in person and seek a range of sources by race and gender. We and our partners will assign many of the students to beats so they get to know sources and topics well, and we will teach them to listen to people who have complaints about news coverage. We also will urge each news outlet to disclose its ethics policies or write an article or an editorial describing the ethics code of the Society of Professional Journalists and its willingness to be held to it.

**Expand audience engagement and trust through social media posts and our Digital Booster Shot program:** Helping community news organizations expand their digital presence will help restore trust by extending the reach of their fact-based news reporting, including that provided by our students, and offset misinformation in readers’ social media feeds. Stronger digital connections will promote greater interaction with audiences, attract younger people and help minority and rural papers gain more digital subscribers.

**Expand the Manship School’s news literacy program into communities.** Our school is the first in the nation to endow a chair in media literacy with a goal “to make Louisianians smarter.” The school built a website, [detectfakenews.com](http://detectfakenews.com), distributed thousands of wallet-sized “Don’t Get Faked Out” advice cards, organized panels on fake news and COVID misinformation, and guided high school teachers with resources to help students evaluate information sources.

Professor Len Apcar, who holds that endowed chair, developed that material and has taught courses on combating misinformation. He will speak about fake news at a library in Hammond on Aug. 8. During the grant period, he will help train several LSU Howard Center Media Literacy Ambassadors to visit high schools and libraries in our news hubs to talk to teachers, students and other residents. We will partner with nonpartisan groups (such as Together Louisiana, the Louisiana Farm Bureau, LSU Ag-Extension, News Literacy Project) to conduct some of these teach-ins with student journalists and the editors of local news outlets.

## **Goal 2: Experiential Learning**

***– Teach students fact-checking/debunking and local/community reporting skills in a hands-on way.***

LSU’s Manship School and our university partners around the state will take a layered approach to teaching fact-checking/debunking and local/community reporting. It will include online and in-person training as well as changes in existing courses. The Manship School also will create a new digital media course to further train students, including those who will work in the Digital Booster Shot program. We also recognize that the best way to learn journalism is to do it, one story at a time, under the guidance of a professional mentor. Writing for publication, with its strict demands for accuracy and fairness, is the best way for students to internalize the

pressures and build confidence. Center leaders at LSU and the faculty members at other schools will roll up their sleeves and work closely with the core students, discussing story ideas and potential sources as well as how to approach interviews, assess information and handle any difficulties that come up in the reporting.

**Online reporting course:** During the startup period, LSU journalism professors will create an online introductory course to ensure a uniform reporting standard. All students selected to participate as paid reporters in any of the community hubs will complete the course. It will review basic reporting skills, including how to cross-check information, and the fact-based reporter's ethos. It also will describe a news organization's role in a community, review AP Style and grammar, and include a module by Professor Apcar on how to recognize and debunk misinformation.

**Windshield tour:** All new student journalists will receive a driving tour of the areas they will cover from their professor or a local editor and an introduction to sources on their beats.

**Core reporting teams:** We have budgeted for eight to 10 LSU and Southern students to earn \$12 an hour covering the Black community in Baton Rouge for an average of 10 hours a week during the school year – and for two to four student journalists to work part-time in each of 11 other possible communities. (The Howard Center director will determine the final number of communities and students in each.) We have found in other experiential programs, including our pilot in Hammond, that recruiting a core group of motivated and reliable students – and keeping it to a manageable size – produces the best results. Each student will be able to work enough hours to truly experience community journalism and expand his or her skills and output, and the professors will have time for one-on-one coaching and mentoring.

**Classroom instruction:** Most students will have taken introductory news reporting classes at their schools, with instruction on interviewing and writing basic news stories and features, and some will be further along in the progression of journalism skills classes. At LSU, we will adjust our advanced print and broadcast reporting, in-depth reporting and capstone journalism courses to produce additional stories of interest to the Black community in Baton Rouge. We also will encourage the other universities to change or add courses to include more emphasis on community reporting and debunking misinformation. The Howard Center will pay up to a \$100 stipend to each student at any of the schools whose class story is published by a news partner.

By the start of the second year of the grant, the Howard Center director or deputy director will have created a course that he or she will teach at the Manship School to train students for the Digital Booster Shot work. It will teach a variety of digital media skills, including how to create e-newsletters, eye-catching social media posts and videos, and reports on audience analytics. Over the second and third years of the grant, Howard Center staffers will send training modules

to help all partner schools teach accountability reporting, including how to use public records and adopt a solutions journalism approach.

**“Report for Louisiana” internships:** The Howard Center will pay \$12 an hour for up to 40 hours a week to 15 to 20 students to work as summer reporting or digital interns at partner community news sites or in their hometowns (with professors or Howard Center personnel continuing to edit the stories). With the cutbacks in jobs and internships at news organizations, some journalism schools are now creating their own summer internships for students to work on news stories. The Manship School has only been able to do this for a few students, and it is almost impossible for smaller universities in Louisiana to find the funds. So having the Howard Center provide such intensive hands-on learning experience to students from most or all of the partner universities will be a game changer for students and community news sites alike.

**Faculty mentoring:** Faculty members in charge of the news partnerships at each university will mentor the part-time students over and above their interactions with students in regular classes and will edit stories before sending them to news editors. The Howard Center director and deputy director will handle this work at LSU. The faculty advisers at other schools also will play critical roles, and we have budgeted \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year to pay each of them. Faculty members at the smaller universities generally earn \$60,000 to \$85,000 a year, and several told us that a stipend in this range will provide a strong incentive (along with their desire to help their students and communities) to make this work a priority. One faculty member will handle everything at some schools, while in others places, the center might need to split the stipend between two instructors based on their specialties and availability for summer work.

**Professional contract editors:** We will have three or four retired news editors on part-time retainers to handle first reads and line edits of student content when the professors or the Howard Center staffers, who will be the first backups for professors around the state, cannot do it. This will ensure that students have strong, positive interactions with an editor and that local news editors do not bear the burden of editing the student content.

### **Goal 3: Local Reporting**

***– Provide valuable journalism for an underserved community.***

We have heard – over and over again – from Black residents in Baton Rouge and New Orleans and from rural residents, education leaders and editors across Louisiana that there is so little news available in their communities. Given the difficult economics in the business, even the leaders of the state’s largest paper, The Advocate, and a Baton Rouge TV station, WBRZ, acknowledged that they do not adequately cover the Black community in Baton Rouge; they also told us they would love to use some of the stories that the LSU and Southern students produce. Recognizing how great the need is, WBRZ’s station manager, Trey Schmalz, said he will create a special space on the station’s website for written stories and streamed video and will include the best video pieces in news broadcasts. In Hammond, we were surprised to learn that

— even though the Daily Star has the relative luxury of one full-time news reporter — it hardly reports on something as important as the K-12 schools. All the reporter has time to do is cover the city and parish councils, local political and crime news, and occasional features. (And as we’ve found in other places, the word “Daily” in the Star’s name is misleading, as it now prints only three days a week.)

From what we have learned in through conversations across the state and in our design grant pilot, this is how we will provide valuable journalism to urban minority and rural communities (which have varying mixes of white and Black residents):

**Start with simple news and feature stories and a strong system of beats in as many places as possible:** All the editors tell us they could use immediate help covering public meetings and events and finding feature stories so they do not have to rely on press releases from community organizations for so much of their news. “I need help with everything,” said Ivory Payne, the publisher and editor of the Weekly Press, the main Black newspaper in Baton Rouge. “I need coverage of the Metro Council and the mayor’s office. I need stories about people in the community. I need help with social media, and I’d appreciate anything you could do to help me with the website.” An editor in a rural market told us in response to a survey we conducted in preparing this grant application: “We don’t have bodies to cover things. My department depends on freelancers, who can only work certain hours. Because of this, we miss all kinds of stories.”

Journalism students know how to write basic news stories and features. If we couple those skills with a strong beat system, we have no doubt that the students will make a huge difference almost immediately in improving community news and reader trust across the state. In Baton Rouge and New Orleans, the students will initially focus on basic stories about local government (city, parish, schools, etc.) tailored for news consumers in the Black communities, while students in the rural areas will take on similar beats that are hardly being covered. Other basic stories will include obituaries, business openings and closings and features about interesting people, community groups and events. The Howard Center journalists also will devote time to topics — like inadequacies in housing, novel efforts to stem gun violence and the daily impact of rising food and energy costs — that are of great concern in underserved areas.

**Gradually add more enterprise and accountability reporting, including the use of data, public records and solutions journalism:** Over the second and third years of the grant, our Howard Center staff will help train faculty members and students to report and write stories with more depth. Editors tell us they would like to have data-based stories and records-based stories about government and school budgets and questionable dealings involving public officials. For example, student journalists in one or multiple Howard Center markets may review lawsuits against local law enforcement agencies to find patterns in the problems alleged. Faculty advisers will consult with the Howard Center director or deputy director, who then can help put together

students and faculty members from multiple sites to work on investigative or data stories relevant to all of those communities.

We also believe that the approach used by the Solutions Journalism Network fits well with coverage of minority and rural communities, and we have talked to SJN officials about training possibilities. Focusing on possible solutions, instead of just describing problems, and using data to do it will help counter complaints by people in minority and rural communities that so much of the coverage of their lives is negative. Student reporters can travel to a similar community in Louisiana or another state that addressed and fixed a problem such as student truancy – to highlight possible solutions.

**Encourage partner universities and news editors to decide on the mix of print, digital and video stories and social media posting that works best for them:** Every community is a little different, every university in the state has a somewhat different mix of courses and every newspaper editor has his or her own priorities. So as long as there is a strong basic beat structure and a gradual addition of stories with more depth, our Howard Center will let the faculty advisers and the editors at the news sites decide what mix of student journalism works best in their community.

LSU and several other universities have excellent broadcast students who can supply video stories to websites willing to use them to engage a larger audience. We also expect the Howard Center to develop relationships with TV stations in New Orleans and other cities. Students can easily improve the social media at any of the news sites with snappier posts, photo displays and video clips. Jerry Raehal, the executive director of the Louisiana Press Association, told us that he has quite seriously told local newspaper publishers that they need to create news videos on TikTok to engage with younger people if they want to survive. “There’s what’s important and what’s relevant,” Raehal said. Better local news better coverage is important for all readers, he tells publishers, but providing news and features in popular digital formats is also relevant to attracting younger readers.

## **Curriculum**

***– The proposal should outline a proposed curriculum and document how the program will use experiential learning to develop in students the critical skills needed for community journalism, trust building and combatting mis/disinformation in local media.***

We discussed curriculum in our response to Goal 2 above, noting that we will encourage all of the schools to adjust courses as needed to introduce students more specifically to community reporting. All but one of the universities offer bachelor’s degrees in communications; the other school, LSU-Eunice, has a two-year communications degree. All of the schools teach basic news and feature writing, and most also teach digital/multimedia and broadcast journalism.

## **Learnings**

***– The proposal should include a clear plan for sharing learnings across the journalism industry and journalism education.***

**Social media, blog and e-newsletters:** The Howard Center will promote its activities and student work daily in social media channels branded to the center. The director and the deputy director will discuss the work and what they are learning in a blog on the Howard Center website. They also will send a monthly e-newsletter to leaders in journalism, journalism education and the nonprofit world around the country, providing updates and sharing best practices as they emerge. They will invite feedback to ensure that the project remains a living laboratory.

**Professional publications and conferences:** The Howard Center director and deputy director will pitch to trade publications such as CJR and the Poynter Institute. LSU faculty with connections at mainstream publications such as The New York Times will pitch trend stories about developments in community news – stories in which the Howard Center and its students can figure. The Howard Center officials also will attend national conferences, such as News/Media Alliance and Online News Association, each year to gather best practices and connect the center to other thought leaders.

**Academic publications and conferences:** The Howard Center director and deputy director will work with academic faculty and graduate students at theanship School to do surveys and content analysis and conduct focus groups to measure the center’s performance (as described in Section 6 below). This should lead to academic articles and presentations at academic conferences about best practices.

## **Collaboration**

***– The proposal should include plans for collaboration across disciplines and/or with external partners and other universities. It should also include as an addendum any letters of commitment from key partners.***

In addition to the collaboration with other universities and news organizations (see addendum with letters) that is central to our plan, the Howard Center at LSU will provide experiential learning opportunities for otheranship School students studying public relations and advertising – in our Digital Booster Shot program to increase local news organizations’ confidence and competence in digital spaces *and* in initiatives to spread awareness about the Howard Center. We also will encourage students at LSU and the other universities to interview a diverse mix of sociologists, urban and rural economists, health-policy specialists and other experts on their campuses for their stories.

## **Timeline**

***– The proposal should include a timeline with milestones for launching the Center and producing work.***

## **Design Grant Period**

*Through July 31, 2024*

**June-July:** Eleven LSU students mentored and edited by LSU journalism faculty – and paid from design grant funds – test-drove a community news organization partnership with the Eunice (Louisiana) News and Hammond (Louisiana) Star. (See Appendix B for examples of the students' stories, photos and videos.)

**July 27:** Staged a community meeting in the student union at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond attended by Hammond Star staff, LSU student reporters, LSU instructors, Southeastern instructors and representatives of community organizations. Event was organized by students, promoted in the Star and in social media as a listening and get-acquainted session, and attended by two dozen local residents.

**Aug. 8:** LSU faculty member who is an expert in misinformation and fake news will present a "Detect Fake News" workshop at a Hammond, Louisiana, public library. The workshop will be open to the public.

## **Start-up Period**

*Through June 30, 2024*

### **November-December 2023**

- Grant awarded.
- Search committee established for recruitment of Howard Center director.
- Prospective partner universities and community news organizations informed that grant has been awarded to LSU.
- LSU journalism faculty member or Manship School administrator appointed as Start-up Period manager to guide operations until director is hired.

### **January 2024**

- Job posting published for Howard Center director.
- Formal discussions begin with university and community news organization partners, including as needed the drafting of MOU's outlining expectations.
- LSU journalism faculty member designated to create initial online training material to be used as the baseline orientation material for the first class of Howard Center student journalists in the fall of 2024. Deadline: June 1.

### **February-March**

- Search Committee conducts preliminary interviews for Howard Center director.
- Informal meeting between faculty members from LSU and other schools to share ideas about changes in courses, the best add-in learning modules and how to recruit the best students for the core reporting groups.
- Marketing materials created for all participating universities to use in recruiting students.
- SOP worked out with finance offices on procedures for paying participating students and faculty at multiple universities.

### **April**

- Finalists for Howard Center director visit LSU for in-person interviews.
- MOU's completed with fall 2024 partners (six or seven in all).
- Recruitment of contract editors begins.

### **May**

- May 1: Offer extended for Howard Center director.
- Students selected and notified as fall 2024 Howard Center community reporters.
- Preliminary website stood up at [lsu.edu/howardcenter](http://lsu.edu/howardcenter). The website is temporary until development of a website at [howard-center.org](http://howard-center.org) is created.

### **June**

- Online training material completed.
- Advisory board membership is finalized.

## **Year 1**

*July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025*

### **July**

- July 1: Director starts.
- In-person meeting at LSU of fall 2024 partners – university representatives, news organization editors, LSU participants.
- Job postings published for deputy director and program coordinator.
- First contract editors (two or three) are selected.
- Advisory board meets (in person or via Zoom).

### **August**

- Howard Center reporters complete training module, meet with their faculty mentors at their respective universities for additional orientation.
- First Howard Center student reporters start work.
- Distribution of weekly Howard Center e-newsletter begins (more detail in “Capacity” section).

### **September**

- Deputy director search committee, supplemented by the director, conducts preliminary interviews with deputy director candidates.
- Director interviews program coordinator candidates.
- Work begins to onboard more universities and community news organizations for the spring 2025 semester, including execution of MOU's.

### **October**

- Finalists for Howard Center deputy director visit LSU for in-person interviews.
- Program coordinator starts work.
- Advisory board meets (in person or via Zoom).

### **November**

- Nov. 1: Offer extended for Howard Center deputy director.
- First community meetings held in some markets.



- MOU's completed with universities and community news organizations coming aboard for the spring 2025 semester.

### **December**

- Monthly Howard Center e-newsletter begins (more detail in "Capacity" section).

### **January**

- Jan. 1: deputy director starts.
- Monitoring and evaluation report for first six months of Year 1 is completed.
- Work begins to onboard any remaining universities and community news organizations for the fall 2025 semester, including execution of MOU's.
- Howard Center website launches at howard-center.org.
- Second semester Howard Center cohort starts with the addition of three to four more university and news organization partners.
- Planning and development of Digital Booster Shot program begins to prepare for fall 2025 launch, including development of training materials, marketing collateral for student recruitment and discussion with the Louisiana Press Association for assistance in recruiting media partners.
- Advisory Board meets (in person or via Zoom).

### **March-April**

- One student and, with help from the Louisiana Press Association, one community news organization selected to test drive the Digital Booster Shot program in May and June.
- Community meetings held in some markets.
- First class of Howard Center summer interns is selected.

### **May**

- Recruitment of fall 2025 student cohort for Digital Booster shot begins. First cohort of eight students will be from LSU.
- MOU's completed with universities and community news organizations coming aboard for the spring 2025 semester.

### **June**

- Digital Booster Shot test drive in a single market ends.
- Digital Booster Shot training material is completed.

## **Year 2**

*July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026*

### **July**

- Monitoring and evaluation report for all of Year 1 is completed.
- Community news organizations statewide invited with help from the Louisiana Press Association to work with student participants in the Digital Booster Shot Program.
- In-person meeting at LSU of fall 2025 partners – university representatives, news organization editors, LSU participants. Advisory board members also are invited.

### **August**

- New Howard Center reporters complete training module, meet with their faculty mentors at their respective universities for additional orientation.
- New and returning Howard Center reporters start work in Baton Rouge and in 10 or 11 more communities.

### **November**

- Community meetings held in some markets.

### **January**

- Monitoring and evaluation report for first six months of Year 2 is completed.
- Eight Digital Booster Shot students work with community news organizations to implement digital plans.
- Planning and development of Solutions Journalism training program begins to prepare for fall 2026 launch.
- Advisory board meets (in person or via Zoom).

### **March-April**

- Community meetings held in some markets.
- Second class of Howard Center summer interns is selected.

### **May**

- Recruitment of fall 2025 student cohort for Digital Booster shot begins. First cohort of eight students will be from LSU.

## **Year 3**

*July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027*

### **July**

- Monitoring and evaluation report for all of Year 2 is completed.
- In-person meeting at LSU of fall 2026 partners – university representatives, news organization editors, LSU participants. Advisory board members are invited.

### **August**

- New Howard Center reporters complete training module, meet with their faculty mentors at their respective universities for additional orientation.
- New and returning Howard Center reporters start work in Baton Rouge and in 10 or 11 more communities.

### **January**

- Monitoring and evaluation report for first six months of Year 3 is completed.
- Twelve Digital Booster Shot students work with community news organizations to implement digital plans.
- Planning and development of an online Public Records training program begins to prepare for fall 2027 launch.
- Advisory board meets (in person or via Zoom).

**March-April**

- Community meetings held in some markets.
- Third class of Howard Center summer interns is selected.

**June**

- In-person meeting at LSU of fall 2026 partners – university representatives, news organization editors, LSU participants.

## 2. Community Served

### Community Need

***– The proposal should build a strong case of community need, including data, that shows the community lacks significant news coverage and faces threats from misinformation and disinformation.***

As with so much of the United States, Louisiana suffers from shrinking access to – and declining faith in – local news coverage.

Reductions in staff and publication frequency mean that news consumers everywhere, but especially in underserved areas, have access to less fact-based news reporting. Five of the 64 parishes no longer have a newspaper, and a dozen papers have reduced print frequency. “The Morgan City Review now has a managing editor/reporter/photographer/layout guy and a features page editor,” one editor said in response to our survey. “We’ve also cut back from weekday-daily publication to twice a week. The things we should do while we’re busy feeding the beast makes me want to cry.”

We heard that concern repeatedly across rural Louisiana and in underserved north Baton Rouge, and the lack of availability of news has contributed to a decline in readership and trust.

For the past several years, researchers at LSU’s Manship School have tracked Louisiana residents’ use and perceptions of local news media organizations through statewide surveys. The results are stark. In a 2022 survey of Louisiana adults, just 23% said they follow local news “very closely,” shy of the 31% among all Americans revealed in a national survey fielded around the same time. And while nearly half (47%) of Louisiana residents follow local news “somewhat closely,” roughly one-third (30%) said they follow local news “not very closely” or “not at all closely.” Unsurprisingly, then, Louisianans lack the fundamental information about local politics and public affairs necessary for a healthy civic life; in fact, just 25% said local news media keeps them well informed about these topics.

The deprivation of local news in Louisiana is particularly strong in rural areas of the state. In a 2018 survey of Louisiana, Manship School researchers asked respondents to name any media outlet they turn to for news about their local community. Among respondents in rural areas of the state, 46% could not name a single outlet. Another 39% named a local television station based in a metropolitan area at the core of the media market that encompasses their local rural area. Just 15% of rural respondents named a local outlet more directly rooted in their area.

It’s difficult to follow news reports where there are no or fewer outlets. And, where there are few journalists and little news is reported, consumer distrust can grow. Manship School researchers measured perceptions of local news trustworthiness and accuracy in 2018 and 2022. The share of state residents with little to no trust in local news media (i.e., who trust “not

too much” or “not at all”) ballooned from 21% to 50% over those four years. At the same time, the share of Louisiana adults who said local media deals fairly with the various sides of an issue dropped from 36% to 26%.

Trust in local media dropped the most among Republicans, especially conservative rural whites. Sam Hanna Jr., the publisher of three weekly papers in northeast Louisiana and a conservative columnist, told us that while media criticism of President Donald Trump fueled some of the dismay, Trump may have gone too far with his “fake news” claims, prompting some of his supporters to back away from local news outlets as well. But trust in the media also declined among Democrats, in part because many minority residents feel ignored and believe that voting and civic engagement are pointless.

In short, access to local news is shrinking even as skepticism about local news media is rising in Louisiana. As a result, they have less of the information about local issues vital to the effective civic life of a community – information once traditionally found in vigorous coverage by local media outlets.

The results of these surveys support the need to have the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center facilitate and oversee news clusters across the state through partnerships with smaller universities and their rural news outlets. Our goal is to build trust by giving residents of underserved areas access to news that allows them to become active participants in their communities.

## Target Audiences

*– The proposal should identify a specific target audience or audiences and document how consumer research was used to determine how to best serve that audience.*

The target audience comprises carefully selected news clusters that will work within rural and racially underserved communities throughout Louisiana where local news is minimal or nonexistent. Journalism directors at colleges and universities in most of the possible clusters have committed to engage their students in news gathering, storytelling and



social media production (their letters of support are in Appendix A). Each cluster has at least one media outlet that has agreed to work with Howard Center student journalists. At the time of this proposal, these universities and neighboring media organizations have expressed a firm interest in partnering with the Center to produce news for their communities:

- Baton Rouge, Louisiana (state capital), with Howard Center coverage focused on predominantly Black north Baton Rouge
  - Louisiana State University (home of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center)
  - Southern University (HBCU)
    - Media Partner: The Weekly Press (Black-owned newspaper)
    - Media Partner: The Drum (Black-owned monthly paper)
    - Media partner: The Advocate (Daily newspaper)
- New Orleans, Louisiana (targeting Black audiences)
  - Dillard University (HBCU)
  - Xavier University (HBCU)
  - Loyola University
    - Media Partner: New Orleans Tribune (Black-owned newspaper)
    - Media Partner: The Louisiana Weekly (Black-owned newspaper)
    - Media Partner: Verite News (digital site for minority news)
- North Louisiana
  - Grambling State University, Grambling, Louisiana (HBCU)
    - Ruston Daily Leader, Ruston, Louisiana
  - University of Louisiana Monroe, Monroe, Louisiana
    - Media Partner: The News Star, Monroe, Louisiana
    - Media Partner: The Ouachita Citizen in West Monroe, Louisiana
- Northwest Louisiana
  - Northwestern State University (Natchitoches, Louisiana)
    - Media Partner: The Natchitoches Times
    - Media Partner: The Coushatta Citizen
    - Media Partner: The Natchitoches Parish Journal
- Southeast Louisiana
  - Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana
    - Media Partner: The Hammond Star
  - Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, Louisiana
    - Media Partner: The Daily Comet, Thibodaux, Louisiana
    - Media Partner: The Houma Courier, Houma, Louisiana
- Southwest Louisiana
  - LSU-Eunice (two-year university), Eunice, Louisiana
    - Media Partner: The Eunice News
    - Media Partner: The Ville Platte Gazette

- University of Louisiana-Lafayette
  - Media Partner: The Lafayette Advertiser
  - Media Partner: The Advocate, Lafayette, Louisiana
  - Media Partners: Also smaller papers near Lafayette
- Central Louisiana
  - LSU-Alexandria, Alexandria, Louisiana
    - Media Partner: The Town Talk

In addition to the news clusters at strategic areas of Louisiana, we have commitments from the Louisiana Farm Bureau and the LSU Agricultural Extension Service, which have active constituents and a presence in communities and schools in all 64 state parishes. These organizations have committed to work with us as we engage in telling stories from rural communities – especially in those areas with no significant news coverage.

The Farm Bureau and Ag Center will assist us in hosting community and school events where we can build relationships with rural and racially underserved communities through news gathering and news literacy workshops. The Farm Bureau can be an alternative network for distribution and promotion of the Center’s journalism with rural audiences. The Bureau has agreed to distribute our students’ stories of interest through multiple channels to its rural audience. The Bureau’s daily email, “The Daily Voice,” sends news to 5,000 members with a 40% open rate. The Bureau’s weekly show “TWILA,” or “This Week in Louisiana Agriculture,” airs on stations across the state and has a faithful audience. A regular podcast also breaks down TWILA stories, including legislative issues affecting the agricultural community.

Our efforts at quantitative research this summer through a simple survey for our rural and underserved audiences were not as successful as we hoped. We went to the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation’s 101st annual convention in June where more than 1,500 farmers, ranchers and their families from across the state attended to discuss public policy and best practices, and to reconnect with friends and colleagues. This opportunity allowed us to meet one of our primary audiences and gauge its opinion on local news. We created a poll asking six basic questions: How closely do you follow local news, how well do local media keep you informed about local stories of the day, do local media cover agricultural issues well, do local media include people like you in their stories, do local media cover the area where you live or a nearby city, and do you have additional comments. The poll was available online via a QR code and as a paper version.

Attendees were not eager to stop and take even a short survey. However, they were willing to answer questions, discuss their role in the farming community, meet and learn about our proposed center, and share their feedback about important stories of interest. We learned that as we move forward, qualitative methods, such as focus groups or relaxed conversations in natural settings, work best for the audiences we hope to serve. This is especially true in rural

settings where building the public's trust in the media is crucial if we hope to produce stories that are important and impactful to our audiences.

## **Distribution Methods**

***– The proposal should document what distribution methods or channels and marketing efforts will be used to make sure the journalism produced reaches the communities in need of news and information.***

Student work produced at our partner universities will be available for publication in the community news organizations' print and online publications. Each university journalism department will work with its neighboring news editors to determine the types of stories they will accept and the process students will use to cover and submit the stories.

Students will also assist their news partners in boosting their social media presence, particularly on Facebook, generally the most popular and visited social media site for information in rural and underserved areas. For those rural areas with no news presence, our goal is to use other forms of publication, such as Facebook community groups and non-subscription email newsletters. Our Roy Howard Community Journalism Center website will post student content from each news cluster, which will be available statewide free of charge.

We will share the processes we streamlined in our Hammond Daily Star pilot program for both print-based and social media distribution. These include story pitch spreadsheets and the system we devised in which LSU faculty mentored reporters and edited stories before they were sent to the Hammond editor. Student reporters also devised a practical social media plan and monitored the Facebook views our pilot stories produced for the Daily Star. However, we expect each university to modify our processes so that they are most effective for each editor/partner.

Our LSU-Southern University-Baton Rouge news cluster will, in addition to providing news coverage, engage LSU public relations and advertising students, who work each semester on capstone projects that highlight and promote a real-world "client." Our faculty have indicated a willingness to assist the Howard Center in marketing and promoting its work. This will also be an option for our partner universities.

Also, the Howard Center director and deputy director will send a weekly e-newsletter to a mostly in-state audience that, among other things, highlights the work of its student journalists in the past week across all markets.

Additionally, our program goal is to plan up to two annual meetings in each of the news outlets' markets where community and organization leaders can share their ideas of underreported stories and can learn how to submit their information to their community news editor. We'll share how we planned, communicated and conducted our "Mix and Mingle" event this summer with the Hammond Star's community.



Finally, we've learned that public libraries are willing partners in assisting us in hosting community meetings. The space is free of charge to state institutions, and even small libraries will assist in promoting events through fliers and other communication. As part of our pilot, the Hammond Branch Library is hosting "Detect Fake News," the program featuring Prof. Apar's media-literacy discussion on Aug. 8.

### 3. Students Trained

***– The proposal should include current student demographics and graduation rates for your school's journalism program with a clear explanation of how it serves a group or groups that are under-represented in journalism.***

In spring 2023, 14.3% of the LSU Manship School's 718 undergraduate students were Black and 29.0% were students of color. Journalism, with 160 students, is the second biggest area of study in the Manship School after public relations, and its enrollment is consistent with the school's overall diversity.

The Manship School's diversity is trending upward. Of 452 Manship School pre-majors in 2022 (the most recent year available), 36% were students of color.

Nearly 94% of Spring 2022 Manship School graduates began as freshmen at LSU. (This statistic reflects the percentage of students who graduate after being formally admitted into the Manship School. The school does not directly admit students upon entering LSU. Students must meet Manship academic standards for admission and typically are admitted after completing their first year at LSU.)

Approximately 70% of the Manship School's students cite Louisiana as their home state. The majority are from East Baton Rouge Parish, where LSU is located. Other parishes represented include Acadia, Iberia, Lafayette, Lafourche, Orleans, St. Tammany and Washington, which are also where some of our news clusters will be located.

The school works to recruit and support minority students for its top organizations. For example, the Association of Black Communicators was named one of LSU's Organizations of the Year and is now an official student affiliate chapter for the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ). In May 2022, LSU's student chapter of NABJ received significant support from CBS Director Mark Grant, an LSU alumnus and member of its Hall of Fame. He created the Mark Grant NABJ Support Fund and committed \$20,000 over the next five years – \$4,000 a year with matching support from the Manship School. The funds have enabled students of the chapter to travel to the national organization's annual summer conference for the past two years to participate in skills-building workshops, networking opportunities for internships and jobs, and more.

Also, the Manship School received the Southern States Communication Association's Minority Recruitment and Retention Award, which honors institutions that have demonstrated noteworthy commitment to recruiting and retaining minority students. The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication awarded its inaugural Diversity and Equity Award to the Manship School. We were cited for our comprehensive diversity plan, fundraising for diversity, organized efforts to recruit faculty and students, constant attention to the classes we offer, faculty research and service to other universities, journalists and their public through its Forum on Media Diversity.

In March 2022, Manship School faculty approved a three-year diversity plan that will hold our school accountable for achieving its aspirations of being a premiere institution of true diversity. From core classes to specialty reporting courses, the Journalism Area incorporates perspectives related to diverse cultures in a global society.

Among the other universities who will work with the Howard Center to provide more community news, the four HBCUs—Southern, Grambling State, Dillard and Xavier—have mostly Black students. Loyola’s student body is 45% white, 20% Latino and 19% Black. And 29% to 43% of the students at the other state universities are people of color.

## **Recruiting and Selection Plan**

***–The proposal should include a student recruiting and selection plan that ensures:***

- 1) Qualified participants from diverse backgrounds and fields of knowledge, and***
- 2) At least some students are from the community being covered.***

***The proposal should include a plan for mentorship and career development for students.***

We will reach out to Manship students from all backgrounds for applications for reporters and social media managers as we get the center started in its inaugural months. However, we can be more strategic during the following years. We have found the following recruitment and selection processes work well for our other Manship School programs and can be used, with modifications, at our partner universities:

- Identify students early in their first media writing course. While most of these students are new to mass communication, we find many are quick learners who are enthusiastic about joining a media team and practicing their storytelling skills. This is the broadest pool possible, as it includes print, broadcast, public relations, advertising and political communication students. Some can focus on storytelling while others can apply their skills to social media and Howard Center promotions.
- Recruit students in succeeding classes where they practice print, digital, broadcast and other communication skills. At this juncture, they are focused on building their resume of practical experience.
- Partner with Louisiana HBCUs to recruit student and faculty participation to ensure the center has qualified participants from diverse backgrounds. We will also reach out to campus minority groups such as local chapters of the National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The center will provide marketing collateral (flyers, tip sheets for promoting the community reporting opportunities to students and faculty, sample slides for professors to include in lecture slide decks, etc.) to all participating colleges and universities to assist them in recruiting students.

Once we have identified the students who will contribute to and work as Howard Center journalists, we will educate and train them to meet the real-world expectations outlined by our

professional media partners. These expectations include, but aren't limited to, generating story ideas, interviewing sources, writing copy, covering beats, making sources, improving visual storytelling and using social media. The training will provide uniform standards and goals for partner universities across the state's reporting areas.

Prior to each semester, students just coming aboard as Howard Center journalists will complete an online reporting course that we develop during the start-up period. The course will not replace skills classes already taught at participating universities but will ensure that all students start with the same basic grounding. The online course will address:

- The fact-based journalist's ethos.
- Basic reporting and beat management skills.
- Where and how to find story ideas.
- How to cross-check information.
- A community news organization's role in its market.
- How to recognize and combat misinformation.

For some students, this online course will be a review of material covered in introductory courses at their universities. For others, it will provide guided introductory steps to give them confidence as they move forward.

Additionally, once students are assigned to their media outlet, there will be a one-day, in-person training for all students in their respective clusters. This training will build on information provided in the online modules. This in-person workshop will include the following:

- Q-and-A session specific to the media partners in their clusters.
- Introduction to specific sources and resources to the communities they'll serve.
- "How To" overview of covering local government, courts and parish-wide organizations.
- Guided "market tour" introducing students to neighborhoods and other sources/resources they'll cover.
- Practice in writing a brief story from the area they cover.
- Review of best practices in visual storytelling and social media.

Once they start reporting, students will work with the designated faculty mentor at their university. Mentors will review and edit their work, offer advice on story/content and provide feedback that will help advance their growth in the program and ensure content for our partners meets professional standards.

In addition, student work sometimes will be edited by one of three or four retired editors that the Howard Center will hire across the state. These editors will back up faculty mentors in handling first edits to ensure students receive coaching and feedback. These editors' participation also will ensure that editors at community news outlets are not burdened with student work that, sometimes, will need remedial editing.

Supplemental training will come from the classroom. Participating colleges and universities will provide instruction and program-related assignments in their senior capstone journalism, digital

and public relations courses as well as in other classes where students are tasked with creating content that reflects the goals of this program. Where appropriate, community leaders will be invited to speak in these classrooms in a “town hall” fashion so that students can learn more about the neighborhoods they’ll cover, gain greater understanding of community concerns and get story ideas for future content.

The Manship School will add a digital media class during Years 2 and 3 of the program, addressing the needs of our professional partners. This course will be taught by either the center’s director, deputy director or a professional working closely with the Center.

As we learn more, we will bring in professionals who can also provide extra insight, expertise and training for additional cluster-based workshops throughout the semesters. We will pursue mentors, speakers and community leaders who offer a full range of experiences. These mentors will be rotated periodically to ensure our student journalists benefit from fresh and varied perspectives. Ultimately, faculty from participating colleges and universities will be our best resource for identifying rising stars in our lower-level courses as well as reliable student employees from our higher-level courses.

## **Where Journalism Graduates Work**

**–The proposal should show, using data, how many graduates in the past two years have gone on to work in local news roles within 200 miles of the school.**

The Manship School does not have hard data for those students who work within 200 miles of the school. We do capture some information in a brief exit survey, but that asks if they are employed or unemployed at the time of graduation. Graduates have the option of sharing their post-graduation contact information, but that is entirely dependent on the students’ willingness to participate. The Manship School has a 38% response rate for fall 2022. The Olinde Career Center conducted its first “destination survey” with spring 2023 graduates to gather job and location information post-graduation. However, this data won’t be available until mid-October 2023. The school’s assistant dean and communications coordinator are currently working on updating our survey system.

## **Tracking Howard Center Graduates**

**– The proposal should include a plan to track student career progress for three years after graduation.**

The Howard Center will be proactive in tracking students after graduation through phone calls and email surveys following Years 1, 2 and 3 to determine the job title, hiring organization, geographic location and career progress since leaving. Communicating the “why” of our efforts with our Center graduates to track their progress should help motivate participation. We will be especially interested to see how many go into community journalism after being introduced to it through their work for community news outlets.

The Center has the option of partnering with the LSU Foundation and the LSU Alumni Association, which could allow us to glean information from systems in place. We will also encourage students to “like” and “follow” the Center’s social media accounts. This connection allows for direct messaging when university-based email accounts expire post graduation and/or contact information changes. Many of our student media directors have found this option helpful.

## 4. Capacity

LSU's Manship School of Mass Communication has the capacity to launch and sustain the project plan outlined in this application. In addition to the capacity elements that the Scripps Foundation application guidance asks for, we offer these capacity assets:

- The support of the larger Manship School to recruit students from their earliest classes as freshmen to work as Howard Center journalists; to provide administrative support; and to increase the center's influence within the LSU academy.
- Diverse students. The Manship School has more than 700 students, with more than a third from historically underrepresented groups. In addition, LSU, as a flagship university, draws students from each of Louisiana's 64 parishes. It also draws significant numbers of students from across the nation but especially from Texas, Georgia and other Southern states.
- Strong existing relationships with newspaper editors, television news directors and news websites statewide from a decade of experience in distributing enterprising student journalism from our Statehouse and Civil Rights Cold Case reporting programs through the Manship School News Service. Our Scripps application proposes the creation of new, geographically focused community news reporting in multiple markets, *not* an expansion of the news service. But the relationships developed through our work with the news service have given us cache and credibility with the community news organizations that have long published news service content and with which we will partner through the Howard Center – an intangible but formidable asset.
- Partnerships with other universities, including HBCUs. The partnerships are integral to our plan. They will broaden the Howard Center's reach to prospective students statewide – a significant capacity asset.
- Libel protection. In Louisiana, all public universities and colleges are self-insured. As a result, public universities working through the Howard Center will be protected against assertions of libel.
- LSU journalism faculty with experience in Louisiana journalism or with experience as community editors or publishers. LSU faculty members have lived the community editor experience, faced the decisions community editors face, and know and deeply appreciate the role of community news.
- LSU journalism faculty with prior experience in national news organizations, including The New York Times and The Washington Post, whose national connections are an asset for recruiting talent and promoting the Howard Center.

### Howard Center Personnel

*– The proposal should include qualifications of, and recruiting plans for finding, the Center's Director and other key personnel and their proposed levels of compensation and job responsibilities.*

**Director, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center  
Professional-in-Residence, Manship School of Mass Communication**

**Position description:** The director is the senior professional staff member with responsibility for operation of the Center at LSU to fulfill Scripps Howard Foundation's goals to provide experiential learning for student journalists in reporting news for underserved Louisiana communities and, through their work, build trust in local news. The director's scope of work includes direct, hands-on engagement with LSU and Southern University students providing coverage through the Center to the underserved area of north Baton Rouge. The director also builds and sustains relationships with faculty at participating colleges and universities and with editors and news directors at community news organizations – and provides guidance, support, training and more for these stakeholders. The director stays current on community news trends nationally, especially other collaborations between universities and community news organizations.

**Reporting structure:** The director reports to the dean of theanship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University.

The director takes a hands-on approach, working with the Howard Center deputy director, to do the following:

- Act as a hands-on coach and editor for LSU students participating as Center journalists covering the underserved area of north Baton Rouge. With the deputy director, the director will recruit and coach LSU students and edit and distribute student-produced news coverage.
- Forge and sustain relationships with partner colleges and universities across Louisiana to meet budgeted site expansion goals and to provide rich experiential learning for students at all participating institutions.
- Forge and sustain relationships with partner community news organizations across Louisiana to meet budgeted site expansion goals and to deepen local news coverage tailored for their markets.
- Develop a roadmap for faculty at partner colleges to ensure similar engagement with Center student journalists across multiple colleges and universities.
- Develop training curricula to prepare students from all participating universities to work with community news organizations, to ensure baseline consistency for Center participants statewide. Adjust the curricula based on feedback from partners, students and community editors.
- Collaborate with faculty and deans at LSU and partner colleges to identify ways to align existing journalism curricula where possible to assist Center goals.
- Visit all partner colleges and community news organizations, including news organizations in Baton Rouge, at least once each year to 1) strengthen relationships, 2) receive feedback, 3) ensure that college and news organizations goals are aligned, and 4) identify areas for improvement.
- Assist partner colleges and local news organizations in staging at least one event each year in markets with partner news organizations. The events will bring together news



organization staff, partner college staff, student journalists, news consumers, newsmakers and others.

- Stage at least one community event each year in north Baton Rouge that brings together news organization staff, partner college staff, student journalists, news consumers, newsmakers and others.
- Recruit and hire contract editors to provide first reads and line edits of student content for community news organizations in conjunction with partner college instructors.
- Develop additional programs to provide experiential learning for students and additional services for community news organizations: 1) Digital Booster Shot to pair students and news organizations to leverage students' affinity for digital content to increase news organizations' digital competence (Year 2); and 2) solutions journalism as one way to build trust in local news media (Year 3).
- Teach one or two classes per semester on topics that align with the needs of journalism students and the Center.
- Create a website branded as the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center to highlight student journalism and promote the Center's initiatives.
- Communicate regularly with the Center advisory board and plan one annual in-person meeting of the board.
- Communicate with and be responsive to the Scripps Howard Foundation.
- Develop metrics and ensure their collection to assess the Center and its partners in meeting Scripps Howard Foundation goals.
- Prepare the quarterly status and financial reports due to the Scripps Howard Fund in Year 1 and the semi-annual status and financial reports due in Years 2 and 3.
- Hire and supervise LSU students to work part-time in the Center.
- Complete other tasks as needed and/or assigned.

**Qualifications:** Extensive experience as journalist and top leader in community news organizations in small and mid-size markets. Track record of coaching inexperienced journalists to competence. History of connecting with community stakeholders, including people and groups beyond newsmakers and those with ready access to local journalists. Record of lifting community news organizations' digital performance and competence. Prior experience in financial budgeting and reporting. Teaching experience is a plus. Master's degree preferred.

**Budgeted salary:** \$140,000

**Recruitment plan:** The director will be recruited through a national search started in late 2023 using a search team appointed by the dean of theanship School of Mass Communication at LSU, with members to include journalism faculty members from LSU, the executive director of the Louisiana Press Association (representing community news organizations), a designee from at least one partner college or university, and a person chosen by the Scripps Foundation Fund. Target start date: July 1, 2024

## **Deputy Director, Howard Center**

### **Professional-in-Residence, Manship School of Mass Communication**

**Position description:** The deputy director is the No. 2 professional staff member at the Howard Center at LSU working to fulfill Scripps Foundation goals to provide experiential learning for student journalists in reporting news for underserved Louisiana communities and, through their work, build trust in local news. The deputy director works in a hands-on way with LSU and Southern University students providing coverage through the Howard Center to the underserved area of north Baton Rouge. The deputy director engages daily with partner universities and community news organizations providing coverage outside of Baton Rouge. The deputy director leads the Howard Center's digital initiatives.

**Reporting structure:** The deputy director reports to the director of the Howard Center.

The deputy director's duties include to:

- Develop and stand up the Digital Booster Shot program starting in Year 2.
- Teach one or two classes per semester on digital news and content topics that align with the needs of journalism students and the Howard Center.
- Forge and sustain relationships with partner colleges and universities across Louisiana to meet budgeted site expansion goals and to provide rich experiential learning for students at all participating institutions.
- Forge and sustain relationships with partner community news organizations across Louisiana to meet budgeted site expansion goals and to deepen local news coverage tailored for their markets.
- Act as a hands-on coach and editor for LSU students participating as Howard Center journalists covering the underserved area of north Baton Rouge. With the deputy director, the director will recruit and coach LSU students and edit and distribute student-produced news coverage.
- Develop a roadmap for faculty at partner colleges to ensure similar engagement with Howard Center student journalists across multiple colleges and universities.
- Develop training curricula to prepare students from all participating universities to work with community news organizations, to ensure baseline consistency for Howard Center participants statewide. Adjust the curricula based on feedback from partners, students and community editors.
- Collaborate with faculty and deans at LSU and partner colleges to identify ways to align existing journalism curricula where possible to assist Howard Center goals.
- Visit all partner colleges and community news organizations, including news organizations in Baton Rouge, at least once each year to 1) strengthen relationships, 2) receive feedback, 3) ensure that college and news organizations goals are aligned, and 4) identify areas for improvement.
- Assist partner colleges and local news organizations in staging at least one event each year in markets with partner news organizations. The events will bring together news

organization staff, partner college staff, student journalists, news consumers, newsmakers and others.

- Stage at least one community event each year in north Baton Rouge that brings together news organization staff, partner college staff, student journalists, news consumers, newsmakers and others.
- Recruit and hire contract editors to provide first reads and line edits of student content for community news organizations in conjunction with partner college instructors.
- Develop additional programs to provide experiential learning for students and additional services for community news organizations: 1) Digital Booster Shot to pair students and news organizations to leverage students' affinity for digital content to increase news organizations' digital competence (Year 2); and 2) solutions journalism as one way to build trust in local news media (Year 3).
- Create a website branded as the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at LSU to highlight student journalism and promote the center's initiatives.
- Develop metrics and ensure their collection to assess the Howard Center and its partners in meeting Scripps Foundation goals.
- Assist the director in preparing the quarterly status and financial reports due to the Scripps Howard Fund in Year 1 and the semi-annual status and financial reports due in Years 2 and 3.
- Hire and supervise LSU students to work part-time in the Howard Center.
- Complete other tasks as needed and/or assigned.

**Qualifications:** Extensive experience as journalist and news organization supervisor in small and mid-size markets. Track record of coaching inexperienced journalists to competence. Record of lifting community news organizations' digital performance and competence. History of connecting with community stakeholders, including people and groups beyond newsmakers and those with ready access to local journalists. Teaching experience a plus. Master's degree preferred.

**Budgeted salary:** \$110,000

**Recruitment plan:** The deputy director will be recruited through a national search started in mid-2024, after the arrival of the director, using a search team appointed by the dean of the Manship School of Mass Communication at LSU. The preferred candidate will be presented to the Scripps Foundation before an offer is made. Latest target start date: Jan. 1, 2025.

### **Program Coordinator**

**Position description:** The program coordinator performs clerical and administrative support for the Howard Center, including to:

- Onboard Howard Center student employees at LSU and partner universities.
- Process stipends and other payments to partner universities.

- Coordinate event logistics for community meetings and other gatherings in markets served by partner news organizations.
- Coordinate event logistics for in-person and videoconference meetings of the Howard Center Advisory Board.
- Assemble and collate data for the quarterly status and financial reports due to the Scripps Howard Fund in Year 1 and the semi-annual performance measures and financial reports due in Years 2 and 3.

**Reporting structure:** the program manager reports to the director of the Howard Center and provides staff support.

**Budgeted salary:** \$45,000

**Recruitment plan:** The program manager will be recruited through a local search led by the Howard Center director with input from the business manager and administrative coordinator for the Manship School of Mass Communication at LSU. Target start date: Oct. 1, 2025.

## **Key Personnel in Preparing the Grant Proposal**

These people prepared the grant proposal and will be involved in planning and execution during the start-up period.

**Len Apar,** Wendell Gray Switzer Jr. Endowed Chair in Media Literacy and a professional-in-residence in journalism, Manship School of Mass Communication.

**Mike Bosworth,** assistant dean for finance, Manship School of Mass Communication.

**Cindy Carter,** professional-in-residence in journalism and Tiger TV adviser, Manship School of Mass Communication.

**Roxanne Dill,** senior instructor and journalism area head, Manship School of Mass Communication.

**Christopher Drew,** Fred Jones Greer Jr. Chair in Media Business and Ethics and a professional-in-residence in journalism, Manship School of Mass Communication.

**Jeff Gauger,** professional-in-residence in journalism and Reveille/Isureveille.com adviser, Manship School of Mass Communication.

**Michael Henderson,** Ph.D., Tom Jarreau Hardin professor, Manship School of Mass Communication. Former director of the LSU Public Policy Lab.

**Lisa Frazier Page,** professional-in-residence in journalism, Manship School of Mass Communication.

## **Advisory Board**

***– The proposal should explain the Center’s Advisory Board, including who will serve on the initial board and how many members it will consist of.***

The Howard Center advisory board will have 15 members representing all stakeholders, including news consumers. The board will meet quarterly in the first year and every six months in Years 2 and 3 and will receive regular email updates from Howard Center staff. At least one meeting each year will be conducted in person with the site to rotate between LSU’s Baton Rouge campus and partner universities. The Howard Center director will provide staff support for the advisory board.

### **The board’s members:**

1. Executive director, Louisiana Press Association.
2. President/CEO, Louisiana Association of Broadcasters.
3. Editor or publisher, community newspaper or digital-only news organization that has partnered with the Howard Center.
4. News director, Louisiana television station that has partnered with the Howard Center.
5. Dean of the Manship School of Mass Communication, LSU, or an associate dean designated by the dean.
6. Journalism professor, LSU. Appointed by the dean of the Manship School of Mass Communication, LSU.
7. Representative from Southern University in Baton Rouge (dean, associate dean, department chair or communication professor/instructor), an HBCU and a partner with LSU in coverage of underserved north Baton Rouge. Appointed by Southern University.
8. Representative from a partner college or university (dean, associate dean, department chair or communication professor/instructor) aligned with a partner community news organization. Appointed by the partner institution.
9. Recent graduate of LSU or a partner university who served as a student journalist through the Howard Center (to be appointed by third year).
10. A professional journalist who graduated from LSU or another Louisiana college or university and works for a small-market print, digital or broadcast news organization.
11. Engaged citizen and news consumer in a community with a partner news organization. Selected with input from the local editor or news director.
12. Engaged citizen and news consumer in a community with a partner news organization. Selected with input from the local editor or news director.
13. Scripps Howard Fund designee.
14. Scripps Howard Fund designee.
15. Scripps Howard Fund designee.

## **Marketing and Promotion**

***– The proposal should include plans for marketing and promoting the Center to ensure broad awareness of the Center and enable the program to recruit top students and faculty.***

The Howard Center will market and promote its efforts statewide and nationally. It will, among other things:

- Stand up a website to promote the center, its mission, its university and community partners, and its students and their work. The website will have the URL [howard-center.org](http://howard-center.org) or another approved by the Howard Center. It will be created in the start-up period. See below for more about the website.
- Create marketing and promotion models that our partner university and community news organizations can adjust to fit their scope and audience.
- Stage community meetings once or twice a year in each market with a partner news organization. The meetings will bring student reporters, their faculty guides and local news organization representatives together with local news consumers, newsmakers and trusted institutions such as the Farm Bureau.
- Distribute an e-newsletter, the LSU Howard Center Weekly, promoting the latest student and news organization work (sent weekly).
- Distribute an e-newsletter, LSU Howard Center Innovations, aimed at journalism professionals, educators and edge thinkers nationally promoting center activities, developments, lessons learned and new initiatives and highlighting attention the center has received elsewhere (sent at least monthly).
- Mail a letter each summer describing Howard Center activities to incoming students who have signaled an interest in majoring in journalism and/or mass communication and inviting students to information sessions on each campus.
- Publish regularly to a blog at the Howard Center website highlighting its activities.
- Send the Howard Center director or deputy director to three to four national conferences each year to gather best practices and to connect the center to other thought leaders.
- Pitch the director and deputy director to conference planners as workshop and presentation leaders at national conferences.
- Create and frequently publish to social media channels (TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn, others) branded to the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at LSU.
- Pitch and then produce articles for trade publications such as CJR, the Poynter Institute and the Chronicle of Higher Education. When and as appropriate, LSU faculty with connections at mainstream publications such as The New York Times will pitch trend stories about developments in community news – stories in which the Howard Center and its students could figure.
- Promote Introduction of the Roy Howard Community Journalism website via Facebook community groups and partner media organizations.
- Produce news releases, created by students, to go to media organizations and community leaders.

## Website

LSU will create a website branded as the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at LSU using the URL howard-center.org (howardcenter.org is in use) or another name approved by the Scripps Foundation.

The website will have two broad purposes. They are explained below with feature lists, although the lists are not intended to be complete.

**Purpose 1:** Promote the Howard Center, its mission, its university and community news organization partners, and students.

- Overview of the Scripps Foundation and the community journalism grant program, detailing the initiative's goals.
- At-a-glance descriptions of each community news organization partner.
- At-a-glance descriptions of each university partner.
- One-paragraph bios with photo of each student journalist for the current semester, to change semester to semester.
- A landing page featuring each university partner, the work by its students and the partner community news organization. All student work will be published to the website, although publication at the center's website will occur after publication to community news organization websites.
- An interactive map showing where participating news organizations and universities are situated, permitting viewers to click through to the news organization websites and to information about the university.
- One-paragraph bios of the center director, deputy director and program manager with photos of each.
- A list of members of the Howard Center Advisory Board with headshot photos.
- Blog highlighting Howard Center activities.
- Solicitations to sign up for Howard Center newsletters, of which there will be at least two: 1) LSU Howard Center Weekly promoting the latest student and news organization work (sent weekly), and 2) LSU Howard Center Innovations, aimed at journalism professionals, educators and edge thinkers nationally about center activities, developments, lessons learned and new initiatives and highlighting attention the center has received elsewhere (sent at least monthly).

**Purpose 2:** Provide a main distribution channel for local reporting about north Baton Rouge that is produced by students from LSU and Southern University, both in Baton Rouge.

As planned in smaller communities served by students from the Howard Center's partner universities, we'd prefer to collaborate with a local news organization. We'll partner with the Weekly Press in Baton Rouge and the monthly Drum, both of which target Black news

consumers. We anticipate that the volume of content produced by Southern and LSU students will overwhelm the newspapers' capacity to publish it all, even online. So, we will create a news website solely focused on presenting student coverage of north Baton Rouge.

The Baton Rouge website will have its own URL with a name to be determined. That URL will redirect to a section at [howard-center.org/nametobedetermined](http://howard-center.org/nametobedetermined) and will have website sections such as News, Business, Features, etc. That section will appear as a news website and will receive separate branding, marketing support and social media promotion. Combining it with [howard-center.org](http://howard-center.org) will permit the Baton Rouge content to appear in the news-focused sections and on the LSU and Southern University landing pages but to draw from one content database, eliminating the need for double entry.

Student journalism about north Baton Rouge will be distributed to the local daily newspaper, The Advocate, and to the market's network-affiliated TV stations. The daily newspaper has told us it will publish some of the student content, but not all of it. We expect some of the TV stations will publish more of the student journalism online. Creating a branded website for student work will ensure that the content has more utility for consumers, greater impact, more visibility and broader reach.

## **Oversight and Governance**

***The proposal should describe how the Center will be organized and operated in the hierarchy of school oversight and governance.***

The center's director will report to the Manship School dean, just as other comparable and well-integrated centers at LSU report to deans of the schools relevant to their missions.

The director will supervise the work of the deputy director and program coordinator and will coordinate and assist the advisory board.

The director also will monitor performance by partner universities and news organizations to ensure that they continue to meet the grant's funding goals and that they meet the obligations of their memorandums of understanding with the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.



## 5. Design Grant

### How We Used the Design Grant

*– A design grant report must show how the grant was used to gather information for the development of the full proposal.*

### Design Grant Summary

We executed pilot partnerships in June and July 2023 with results that indicate positive outcomes in future partnerships throughout the state. We met with editors of the Hammond Daily Star and the Eunice News, two smaller outlets with minimal staff where we could place our students who either lived nearby or could easily travel there. Both editors were delighted to work with us. We recruited students available for summer work and established a system – from story pitches to editing to publication – that eased the workload for the overburdened editors. Each week, one of our faculty team members served as a “point person” to communicate last-minute story ideas, edit student work and solve problems. Students also updated the Star’s Facebook page, boosted posts and worked with the editor for “Person on the Street” interviews. Students experienced success in a professional setting and their storytelling noticeably improved as the program developed. Faculty representatives met with rural farmers to learn about their story ideas and built relationships with Black community leaders. Through these meetings we established partnerships that will continue long past our pilot program. We also staged a pilot “Mix and Mingle” with the Hammond editor and his staff that attracted 25 residents.

### Pilot Program Details

Our LSU team set up a pilot of the statewide community news clusters outlined in our proposal. We wanted to test the practicality of our plan to boost community news coverage by immersing eager student journalists in a news desert to find and write stories for a community news publication. To set the pilot in motion quickly, we used mostly LSU students (and one student from Dillard University) and identified an easily accessible area with diverse underrepresented populations.

We focused our pilot on the city of Hammond, a college town with 21,588 residents, about 47% of whom are white, 45% Black, 6% Hispanic and 2% other races. Hammond is the largest city in Tangipahoa Parish, a mostly rural jurisdiction of 137,048 residents about 40 miles east of LSU in Baton Rouge. The Daily Star newspaper, based in Hammond, is the hometown paper that covers the city and its outlying areas as much as possible. But like most newspapers across the nation, the Star’s staff and resources have shrunk dramatically, making thorough community coverage extremely difficult. The paper enthusiastically welcomed a pilot partnership with us.

In its heyday, The Daily Star newsroom consisted of six reporters, three editors and a photographer. Today, the paper’s current editor, Connor Raborn, operates with a single reporter

and one sports reporter/editor to cover the entire market. Raborn began working at the paper as an intern in the fall of 2016 and was hired full-time as a reporter the next summer. At the time, the newspaper had four reporters (three covering news and one assigned to sports). By the time the pandemic forced the paper's staff to begin working remotely in March 2020, the sports reporting position had been dissolved. When the staff returned to the office two months later, one of the news reporter positions had also been dissolved. The shrinking continued, and Raborn, who left the paper briefly, was rehired as editor in January 2022. As the staff decreased, the paper's production also declined from six days a week in 2017 to its current three-day schedule — Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

We quickly assembled a group of five student reporters from LSU and a student reporter from Dillard University (an HBCU in New Orleans) who lived close enough to work part-time in Hammond. We also brought in two LSU students, who had just graduated in May with digital advertising or public relations concentrations, to enhance The Star's social media and community engagement. Nearly all of the students were juggling their work in Hammond with other summer jobs, so our pilot also was a realistic test of how students in core reporting groups could balance classes and reporting during the school year.

Several members of our faculty, all former reporters and editors, agreed to take turns as mentors/editors of the students to avoid creating more work for The Star's already overworked editor. The LSU student reporters and editors met with Raborn and his staff at The Daily Star's office on June 13. He gave us background on the newspaper's coverage area and provided key sources, and we agreed on a two-way process for story ideas. Students would get out into the community and come up with their own ideas, and Raborn also could suggest story ideas. We created a story pitch spreadsheet in Google Docs so that everyone could keep track of proposed stories, those that Raborn had greenlighted, the assigned reporter and the anticipated publication date. We also agreed that the faculty members would help guide the students on their stories, do an initial edit and either return the story to the student for revisions or move the story to Raborn by 10:30 a.m. on his production days (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays). Our student journalists were paid an hourly wage from the design grant, just as we propose for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

Our team learned that Raborn's sole reporter was out of town the day of our meeting and would not be able to cover an important city council meeting, so one of our students volunteered to attend the same evening. Thus, the first story produced by a student in our pilot program appeared on the front page of The Daily Star on Thursday, June 15, just two days after our planning meeting with Raborn. That story, which detailed the council's decision to delay a planned trash collection hike, ran with a photo that our student reporter took at the meeting.

The following Saturday, another of our student reporters and a student photographer covered the community's Juneteenth celebration — coverage the newspaper would not have been able to provide without our students. Our photographer produced beautiful photos and captions of the event for our social media team, which posted a spread on Facebook the same day. Since

there is no Sunday edition of the paper, our reporter's Juneteenth story ran on the front page on Tuesday, June 20, with several photos on A1 and inside. Our social media team promoted the story on Facebook with a video that the reporter shot at the parade. Facebook analytics showed that the first Juneteenth post reached 8,566 accounts, 94% more than the paper's 50 most recent posts. Also, the post received 103 reactions and comments, as well as 12 shares — 96% more engagement than the paper's most recent 50 posts. These statistics confirmed early on that our students' community news coverage already was making a significant difference.

We completed a smaller pilot in Eunice (population 9,754), in southwest Louisiana. An LSU broadcast student from Eunice was able to work a day or two each week, so we connected her with Harlan Kirgan, editor of The Eunice News. He is a one-man show on the news side of the paper, which also has a sports editor and a lifestyles editor. Kirgan was thrilled to have our student produce the first video community news stories to ever run on his website.

In Eunice, our student's first video story was coverage of that town's Juneteenth celebration. Again, this community event, which was widely celebrated in the African American community, would not have been covered without our reporter, and Kirgan said it sent a strong signal to Black residents that the paper cared about them. The student reporter produced a video story on gun violence in Eunice for the website and was working on another video story at the time of this proposal.

Our processes worked smoothly throughout the six-week pilots. Our Hammond students produced 13 front page stories with two waiting to be published at the time of this report. One of our broadcast students also produced a video story for The Star's website, the first the newspaper had ever published. It featured a partnership between the African American owners of a family farm and 4-H clubs in rural Tangipahoa Parish. The farm owners give underprivileged students who want to join the 4-H club but don't have access to farm animals a chance to get hands-on experience and mentorship on the farm. This was an important story to underrepresented farmers who rarely receive this kind of news coverage.

In addition to our reporting efforts in Hammond, our social media team posted regularly on Facebook, which Raborn said he was only able to do on his own sporadically at best. One of our social media team members twice went into the community to conduct person-on-the-street video interviews to engage viewers about how they planned to celebrate the Fourth of July and what they were doing to stay cool during a period of record-breaking heat. The social media team practiced paid boosting of posts on Facebook. Copies of the stories and social media posts are in Appendix B.

We were thrilled with the outcome of our pilot. It worked as we envisioned, and we believe detailed planning was the key to its smooth operation. We brainstormed, developed processes for the flow of stories from idea to publication, created electronic forms to track the progression of stories and students' work hours, and outlined clear expectations of all parties. We also gave the students two Trusting News tipsheets on strategies that reporters could use to earn trust

and talked to them about interviewing. During the pilot, the faculty members also were busy working on this proposal, teaching summer courses and traveling, and we found that it did not take much time for them to talk over story ideas with the students, edit story drafts and give other feedback.

Our pilot confirmed that the strategy we have outlined in our proposal is not just doable but easy to implement given how eager community news editors are for news stories and greater digital engagement. It also could help to transform community journalism across many markets. Through a community journalism center, we could share best practices and assist college journalism programs and community news outlets across the state (and the country) in establishing partnerships. With our approach, everybody wins. Our university partners win because their students get hands-on training, mentoring by seasoned professionals and the work samples they need to make their professional portfolios stand out. Our community news outlet partners win because they get ambitious student reporters in their communities to find and write good stories for them — at no cost to news outlets. Most of all, our communities win, particularly underrepresented populations, because they can finally see themselves and the things that matter to them represented more often in newspapers and websites and on social media.

## **How Faculty and Students Were Involved**

***– The report should detail how faculty and/or students were involved as well as how the design grant team engaged local news stakeholders and the community to be served to obtain input for the full proposal.***

LSU faculty met several times to brainstorm and outline every facet of the pilot. Faculty members recruited student participants they knew would be reliable (a key component of a successful program), reached out to the two newspaper editors to secure their participation in the pilot, served as mentors to the students and edited their work. Meanwhile, our faculty team members also reached out to more than two dozen university leaders, journalism/mass communication professors and community newspaper editors throughout the state to share our concept of community news clusters, solicit their support and answer their questions. We also talked to Black leaders in Baton Rouge and studied the best research on how to save local news. One of our professors attended the Summit on Rural Journalism in Lexington, Kentucky.

Our students provided boots on the ground in our pilot areas. They got out into the communities, met people, came up with good story ideas, reported and wrote the stories. A smaller team of students worked exclusively on social media and community engagement. This enabled us — and will enable partners in future news clusters — to expand participation by drawing from the large pool of non-journalism majors in mass communication departments.

To engage the Hammond community, our team also hosted a “Mix and Mingle” with The Daily Star on Thursday, July 27, at 5:30 p.m. on the Hammond campus of Southeastern Louisiana

University. Our social media/community engagement students emailed invitations and called community leaders and Daily Star sources and posted an invitation on social media. The event was advertised as “a unique opportunity for members of our community to connect with local journalists and community leaders in an informal setting.” The invitation also said the event will “assist individuals and organizations in sharing their stories effectively.”

Our faculty members, student participants, and Daily Star employees networked with 25 community members and heard about their story interests and concerns. We also gave community groups handouts on how to write better press releases and submit photos to The Daily Star.

Our team also has planned, in partnership with The Daily Star, a lecture by Professor Len Aparcar, our endowed chair in media literacy, on Aug. 8 at the Hammond branch of the Tangipahoa Parish library. He will talk about how to spot inaccurate information, protect yourself from fake news, and how to point it out to your fellow community members.

## How the Design Grant Funds Were Spent

*– The report should detail how the design grant funds were spent.*

The grant funds were spent as follows:

Category	Grant Proposal	Actual Costs	Comments
Summer stipends for LSU student reporters, social media managers	3,000	2,500	This actual cost should go up slightly as some student timesheets are outstanding at this time.
Accommodations to meet with potential partners	2,000	950	Pilot project community meeting at Southeastern Louisiana University.
Professional services, partnership stipends	2,500	1,134	Travel by a faculty member to the Rural Journalism Summit in Lexington, Kentucky.
Leadership, administrative support services	6,000	6,000	Stipends for three LSU faculty who worked on design grant. Other faculty worked under regular salary arrangements.
Miscellaneous	1,500	191	Survey handouts, flyers for Farm Bureau; photo tutorials for community partners; Facebook promotional boosting
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>10,775</b>	

## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan

*– The proposal should include a clear Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plan that will be used to measure the impact of the Center’s work.*

Beyond providing quality local news to underserved communities and training students in the practice of professional journalism, an important benefit of the Howard Center’s work will be to provide examples of effective practices to other institutions and media organizations that may pursue such work in the future. To that end, it is important to monitor not only the center’s activities but also the effects of those activities. We present a monitoring, evaluation and learning plan that includes measures of the center’s work and measures of its effects, as well as a research design mixing qualitative and quantitative approaches for tracking these measures.

### Specific Measures

*– The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plan should include a set of specific measures that support one or more of the Center’s three stated goals:*

#### Goal 1: Trust Building

Measure 1.1: Meet at least twice a year with groups of community members and local stakeholders for the purposes of identifying undercovered stories of interest as well as holding training workshops in news literacy in targeted communities.

Measure 1.2: Qualitative feedback on perceived usefulness and effectiveness of local meetings and trainings/workshops among participants.

Measure 1.3: Average level of trust in local news (including perceptions of fairness, accuracy and relevance to community concerns expressed by the populations served).

#### Goal 3: Local Reporting

Measure 3.1: Number of stories by the Center’s journalists appearing in local media partners’ platforms.

Measure 3.2: Number of beats/issues covered in stories by the Center’s journalists appearing in local media partners’ platforms.

Measure 3.3: Frequency with which consumers access local news reporting provided by the Center.

Measure 3.4: News consumers’ awareness and knowledge about community issues and topics covered in the Center’s reporting.

To track these measures, the Center will use a multi-method approach including the following strategies:

Content analysis: The Center will track the content of the news stories its journalists produce. Specifically, we will code stories according to the beats/topics covered. [Measure 3.2]

Additionally, we will conduct a similar coding of news stories that appeared in any local media outlets available in the community during the year prior to the Center’s work. We will access the earlier stories with resources from Louisiana State University’s library, which includes archives of local print news from throughout the state and access to online stories through databases such as NewsBank and NexisUni. Comparing local news coverage in the Center’s work to prior news coverage will allow us to ensure we are expanding coverage across topics previously underreported in these communities.

Online data analytics: We will work with our local media partners to monitor online site visits, clicks on individual stories and social media responses (e.g., “likes” and “shares”). [Measure 3.3]

Surveys: We will collaborate with survey research organizations – specifically, YouGov, Qualtrics, and LSU’s Public Policy Research Lab – to conduct panel surveys by sampling individuals in our target communities. We will interview these samples and follow up with them annually over the period of the grant’s support to track their use of local news media, their trust in local news media and their level of knowledge about local public affairs covered in the Center’s journalism. [Measures 1.3, 3.3, and 3.4.] Additionally, we will administer brief surveys after specific training/workshop interventions to assess effectiveness. [Measure 1.2.]

Focus groups: Because quantitative survey data cannot yield all the nuance of media use and trust, we will pair our surveys with focus groups conducted in these communities. These groups will include local stakeholders and community leaders as well as news consumers. [Measures 1.3, 3.3, and 3.4.] Additionally, we will conduct focus groups of meeting and workshop participants after these interventions to gather data on effectiveness [Measure 1.2.]

## **Measures Excel Table**

***– Measures should be presented in an Excel table that will be used to quantitatively monitor the outputs of the Center’s activities. This updated table should be included with each Progress Report.***

Below are measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the center's work. Underneath the measure are specific strategies in which these measures will be identified. General analysis should be written in line with the overall measure, while more specific data can be included in line with the strategies. Measurements should be taken every six months.

	7/1/2024	1/1/2025	7/1/2025	1/1/2026	7/1/2026	1/1/2027	7/1/2027
<b>1.1: Meet with community to identify undercovered stories.</b>							
1.1: Training workshops							
<b>1.2: Qualitative feedback on perceived usefulness and effectiveness</b>							
Surveys after training/workshop interventions to assess effectiveness							
Focus groups of meeting and workshop participants after these interventions to gather data on effectiveness							
<b>1.3: Average level of trust in local news</b>							
Surveys with interviews and follow ups annually to track the use of local news media, their trust in local news media and their level of knowledge about local public affairs covered in the center's journalism							
Focus groups with local stakeholders and community leaders as well as news consumers							
<b>3.1: Number of stories by center's journalists</b>							
<b>3.2: Number of beats/issues covered</b>							
The center will track the content of the news stories its journalists produce. Specifically, we will code stories according to the beats/topics covered							
<b>3.3: Frequency that consumers access local news reporting by center</b>							
Monitor online site visits and clicks on individual stories and social media responses							
Surveys with interviews and follow ups annually to track the use of local news media, their trust in local news media and their level of knowledge about local public affairs covered in the center's journalism							
Focus groups with local stakeholders and community leaders as well as news consumers							
<b>3.4: News consumers' awareness and knowledge about community issues and topics covered in center's reporting</b>							
Surveys with interviews and follow ups annually to track the use of local news media, their trust in local news media and their level of knowledge about local public affairs covered in the center's journalism							
Focus groups with local stakeholders and community leaders as well as news consumers							



## 7. Budget

### Budget Justification

Journalism requires human labor, even in the new age of AI-generated content. That's especially true in community journalism, where no single community is blessed with dozens of news organizations creating commodity content that, as in national reporting, is packaged and repackaged by some content "creators" who didn't complete a lick of original reporting. Reporters for community news organizations must show up – at governmental meetings, crime scenes, parades, funerals, businesses and ball games and in people's living rooms and places of worship and schools – because there are no other news outlets' reports to repackage. Reporters showing up is the most basic premise of our plan. Our proposed budget reflects that premise.

Placing student reporters' boots on the ground in Louisiana communities will cost money. That's why a third of projected spending will go to students as wages at \$12 an hour and as freelance payments, reporting grants, payments for participants in our Digital Booster Shot program, and travel and other expense reimbursements.

Another \$760,000 will pay for services that directly support student work: stipends for faculty mentors at universities other than LSU and payments to a handful of contract editors. And, as we expect half of the Howard Center director and deputy director's time to be devoted to hands-on interactions with LSU and Southern University students covering north Baton Rouge, half of the amounts budgeted for their salaries also will provide direct student support – another \$500,000.

All told, nearly \$2.3 million of the Scripps Fund's investment in community news will go directly to students or to those working directly, and one-on-one, with students.

And *that* sum will represent an investment in the news deserts of rural, mixed-race and socio-economically challenged rural Louisiana and in predominantly Black and socio-economically challenged north Baton Rouge and parts of New Orleans. No grant money will go directly to the community news organizations where students from LSU and a dozen other universities will work. But the news organizations and the residents of their underserved communities will benefit – and greatly so – from the Scripps Fund's investment in Louisiana community news.

### Budget Spreadsheet

***– Complete the provided budget template. The budget should be complete, easy to understand and realistic to support the Center's goals, staffing and curriculum. Indirect costs should not exceed 3% of the grant.***

The budget spreadsheet appears on the next page.

**Roy Howard Community Journalism Center**  
**Louisiana State University**  
**Three-Year Budget**

Expenditures	Start-Up January-June 2024			Year 1 July 2024-June 2025			Year 2 July 2025-June 2026			Year 3 July 2026-June 2027			Total January 2024-June 2027			Notes			
	Grant-Funded	Cost Sharing*	Total	Grant-Funded	Cost Sharing*	Total	Grant-Funded	Cost Sharing*	Total	Grant-Funded	Cost Sharing*	Total	Grant-Funded	Cost Sharing*	Total				
	Scripps Howard Foundation	Louisiana State University		Scripps Howard Foundation	Louisiana State University		Scripps Howard Foundation	Louisiana State University		Scripps Howard Foundation	Louisiana State University		Scripps Howard Foundation	Louisiana State University					
Please budget narrative for more detail about each expenditure line																			
<b>Personnel**</b>																			
Director (Manship School professional-in-residence)	0	0	0	93,800	0	93,800	93,800	0	93,800	93,800	0	93,800	93,800	0	93,800	281,400	0	281,400	Starting July 1, 2024. Foundation is expense is two-thirds, LSU expense one-third.
Deputy Director (Manship School professional-in-residence)	0	0	0	36,850	0	36,850	73,700	0	73,700	73,700	0	73,700	73,700	0	73,700	184,250	0	184,250	Starting Jan. 1, 2025. Foundation is expense is two-thirds, LSU expense one-third.
Program Coordinator	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	45,000	0	45,000	45,000	0	45,000	45,000	0	45,000	120,000	0	120,000	Starting Oct. 1, 2024. No teaching load. Foundation expense is 100%.
Start-up Period Payroll for Existing LSU Faculty (start-up period only)	25,000	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25,000	0	25,000	Start-up period only to permit faster program start at each partner arrives.
Employee Related Expenses (Benefits)	11,000	0	11,000	70,686	0	70,686	93,500	0	93,500	93,500	0	93,500	93,500	0	93,500	268,686	0	268,686	Excludes student wages.
Stipends for faculty/staff at partner universities	0	0	0	150,000	0	150,000	180,000	0	180,000	200,000	0	200,000	200,000	0	200,000	530,000	0	530,000	\$15k stipend for one faculty member each year at each partner school
Stipends for contracted editors	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000	80,000	0	80,000	100,000	0	100,000	100,000	0	100,000	230,000	0	230,000	\$10,000 per editor. Expecting to have half as many community editors as partner universities.
<b>Student Support</b>																			
Student Workers and Journalists	6,240	0	6,240	166,320	0	166,320	216,000	0	216,000	234,720	0	234,720	234,720	0	234,720	623,280	0	623,280	See accompanying spreadsheet in the Budget Narrative for year-by-year detail on this expense.
Scholarships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	See Reporting Grants
Reporting Grants/other direct costs	0	0	0	25,000	0	25,000	50,000	0	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	125,000	0	125,000	Budgeted in lieu of scholarships to avoid having scholarships zero out other financial aid.
Student travel and other reporting costs/Community Sites	1,000	0	1,000	25,000	0	25,000	55,000	0	55,000	55,000	0	55,000	55,000	0	55,000	136,000	0	136,000	\$5k per year per community site for mileage, public records requests and miscellaneous
Payments for student coursework accepted for publication	0	0	0	5,000	0	5,000	7,500	0	7,500	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	22,500	0	22,500	Up to \$100 per story produced in regular classes, including captioned, as an inducement in addition to a publisher
Stipends for Students in Digital Booster Shot Program	0	0	0	5,000	0	5,000	25,000	0	25,000	40,000	0	40,000	40,000	0	40,000	70,000	0	70,000	To support separate initiative starting in Year 2 to pair digitally savvy students with not digitally savvy community
Student travel for Digital Booster Shot Program	0	0	0	6,000	0	6,000	18,000	0	18,000	30,000	0	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	54,000	0	54,000	See Booster Shot stipends under Personnel.
Howard Center Student Support Network	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,000	0	4,000	8,000	0	8,000	8,000	0	8,000	12,000	0	12,000	Stipends to Howard Center graduates who act as mentors for current students.
<b>Operations**</b>																			
Supplies	2,500	0	2,500	5,000	0	5,000	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	12,500	0	12,500	Higher expense projected for Year 1 to create, acquire initial store of supplies
Equipment purchases, replacements and repairs (cameras, etc.)	6,000	0	6,000	20,000	0	20,000	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	46,000	0	46,000	For still and video cameras, repairs and maintenance.
Marketing, promotion and recruitment	2,500	0	2,500	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	32,500	0	32,500	Year 1 includes recruiting costs for director and managing editor. Included for all years are promotions collateral.
Website design, buildout and maintenance	10,000	0	10,000	15,000	0	15,000	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	30,000	0	30,000	Includes setup costs and annual licenses and vendor fees.
Training curriculum development	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	20,000	0	20,000	Create basic training modules common to all colleges, as baseline and to supplement coursework
Facilities Use	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The Manship School will provide space for the Howard Center at LSU.
Non-student travel	12,500	0	12,500	15,000	0	15,000	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	67,500	0	67,500	Includes money for director finalists to visit LSU for interviews in Startup period and for deputy finalists in Year 1.
Community meetings in news organization markets	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	26,000	0	26,000	26,000	0	26,000	26,000	0	26,000	72,000	0	72,000	\$2,000 per partner community news organization per year
Annual partners meeting	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	12,000	0	12,000	To pay for an annual meeting of all college and news org partners in one location.
Independent assessment of monitoring and evaluation reports	0	0	0	4,000	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	12,000	0	12,000	\$4,000 per year to pay an independent party to review monitoring and evaluation reports.
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>84,740</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>84,740</b>	<b>760,656</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>760,656</b>	<b>1,024,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,024,500</b>	<b>1,116,720</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,116,720</b>	<b>1,116,720</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,116,720</b>	<b>2,986,616</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,986,616</b>	
<b>Indirect Costs (capped at 3% of Direct Costs)</b>	<b>2,542</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,542</b>	<b>22,820</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22,820</b>	<b>22,820</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22,820</b>	<b>30,735</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,735</b>	<b>30,735</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,735</b>	<b>25,362</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,362</b>	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>87,282</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>87,282</b>	<b>783,476</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>783,476</b>	<b>1,024,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,055,235</b>	<b>1,116,720</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,116,720</b>	<b>1,116,720</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,116,720</b>	<b>3,011,978</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,011,978</b>	
<b>Revenue Sources</b>																			
Scripps Howard Foundation			0			0			0			0			0			0	
Louisiana State University			0			0			0			0			0			0	
<b>Total Revenue Sources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>(87,282)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(87,282)</b>	<b>(783,476)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(783,476)</b>	<b>(1,024,500)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,055,235)</b>	<b>(1,116,720)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,116,720)</b>	<b>(1,116,720)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,116,720)</b>	<b>(3,011,978)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,011,978)</b>	Please submit a balanced budget.

Please add or remove line items under each category to reflect your program's expenses. Any expenditure descriptions that are pre-filled are provided as examples and you may change them as needed. Remember to double check formulas after adding or removing lines.  
 \*\*Personnel: Salaries/benefits related to fully funded and shared personnel. Please be specific.  
 \*\*Operations related to the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center, such as:  
 -Recruitment  
 -Marketing/Advertising  
 -Facilities  
 -Equipment and supplies  
 -Data/Records Acquisition  
 -Non-student travel

\* The LSU cost sharing is pending approval by LSU officials.

## Cost Narrative

*– Each section in the budget template should be clearly explained in a separate Cost Narrative section.*

### Personnel Expenditures

**Professional Staffing.** We budgeted for a staff of three. Year 1 salaries are prorated based on anticipated start dates. (Job descriptions are in the “Capacities” section of the grant application.)

- Director, to be recruited during the Start-Up Period to start work on July 1, 2024. Budgeted salary is \$140,000. LSU will cover one-third of the salary and benefits cost because the director will hold a dual appointment as a professional-in-residence with LSU’s Manship School of Mass Communication and will teach.
- Deputy Director, to be recruited in the first half of Year 1 to start work on Jan. 1, 2025. Budgeted salary is \$110,000. LSU will cover one-third of the salary and benefits cost because the deputy director/managing editor will hold a dual appointment as a professional-in-residence with LSU’s Manship School of Mass Communication and will teach.
- Position 3. Program manager, to start work by Oct. 1, 2024. Budgeted salary is \$45,000. Will handle administrative tasks, including onboarding Howard Center student employees, processing stipends and other payments to partner universities, handling event logistics for community meetings and other gatherings, and assembling performance metrics.

### Employee-Related Expenses (Benefits).

Benefits and other employee-related expenses are calculated using the figure provided by LSU. That figure: 44% of annual salary. It is calculated for the center’s professional staff only. Payroll for student workers employed as journalists through the Howard Center will not carry employee-related costs.

**Startup Period Payroll for Existing LSU Faculty.** We forecast placing students from LSU and partner universities in the field starting in Fall 2024. For that to happen, LSU journalism faculty will need to finalize partnership agreements and complete logistical planning before the Howard Center director starts work. These stipends will recompense LSU faculty for that work – completed in addition to normal teaching and, in some cases, for summer work completed by normally nine-month academic faculty – during the Start-Up Period. These payments will be the only payments during the three-year grant period to existing LSU faculty.

**Stipends for Faculty at Partner Universities.** An annual stipend of \$15,000 to \$20,000 to each partner university to support faculty engagement with students working in Howard Center placements with community news organizations. This money is in addition to the wages paid participating students. The larger stipend amount will go to a few schools that field the most students or work with multiple news partners. We expect to have one main point person on the

faculty at most schools, though we are willing to have schools split the stipend among two faculty members if, for instance, one will edit written stories and the other will oversee student video or social media work or a different faculty member will work with students during the summer internships. The basic \$15,000 stipend is based on \$5,000 for each semester—fall, spring and summer.

**Stipends for Contracted Editors.** Payments to editors across Louisiana contracted through the Howard Center to conduct first reads and line edits of student journalists' work. These editors will ensure that usually over-burdened editors at community news organizations don't have to provide remedial editing of student work themselves and will provide an additional layer of professional coaching for student reporters. The contracted editors will work closely with faculty at participating universities. We expect that we'll have to experiment to find the right ratio of contracted editors to participating community news organizations.

## **Student Support**

### **Student Workers and Journalists.**

Most of this expense, nearly \$600,000 over the grant period, is for wages for students from LSU and partner universities who will work as reporters for community news organizations. The year-by-year expenses are based on the anticipated number of partner universities and news organizations and our projections about the number of participating students – all detailed in the spreadsheet presented after this budget narrative. The projections assume that student journalists earning \$12 per hour will work part time during fall and spring semesters, when they also carry class loads, and that a smaller number of students will work full-time in summers in 12-week placements that will provide an internship experience. In addition to paying students for their work, this expense will represent a direct investment in news coverage in underserved Louisiana communities and in students from LSU and all other participating universities.

The remaining expenditure in this line, or 5.8%, is for part-time LSU students to work in the Howard Center providing administrative support.

**Scholarships.** We budgeted nothing for scholarships because LSU advised us that parents must report scholarships on federal financial aid forms and that, as a result, scholarships prompt offsetting reductions in other forms of student financial aid. We have, as a result, budgeted money under a new Operations expense line, "Reporting Grants."

**Reporting Grants.** These grants will provide additional financial assistance to students who need it so that all students, regardless of financial means, can work as Howard Center reporters. Examples: 1) assist students who don't have cars in getting to assignments, 2) buy laptop computers or other basic reporting equipment.

**Student Travel and Other Reporting Costs/Community Sites.** \$5,000 per year per community news organization to cover mileage and some other expenses, such as public records requests.

We acknowledge that this figure will need to be adjusted after the first year to reflect actual experiences in the field.

**Payments for Student Coursework Accepted for Publication.** Payments of up to \$100 each to students whose journalism completed in fulfillment of regular class assignments is accepted for publication by a partner community news organization. We'll treat the payments as freelance fees. They will be available for students at all participating colleges and will include classes across the journalism curriculum from introductory courses to senior capstones. These payments will encourage faculty to promote the Howard Center and its mission and to align classwork where possible with the needs of partner news organizations. The payments will reward students who produce publication-worthy journalism, including stories, photos, videos and other content. And they will increase the number of students who participate in the Howard Center's reach into Louisiana news deserts.

**Stipends for Students in Digital Booster Shot Program.** Payments for each student participating in the Digital Booster Shot program, to be test-driven in the second half of Year 1 and to start in Year 2. Digital Booster Shot will pair digitally savvy students with digitally challenged community news organizations to assist editors in addressing a digital need. Examples: launching a newsletter, creating or improving social media presence and promotion, increasing audience engagement, building trust. Students will receive training, will profile the communities served by the news organizations they're paired with, and will spend four days in market implementing and training. Travel expenses and curriculum development for this program are budgeted under operating expenses.

**Student travel for Digital Booster Shot Program.** \$1,500 per student participant (eight in Year 2, 12 in Year 3) to pay for mileage, hotel and meals. Program described in more detail in the Personnel Expenditures section.

**Howard Center Mentorship Network.** annual \$1,000 stipends to be paid to students after graduation to top-performing students who completed a semester or more as a Howard Center journalist and have gone on to work as professional journalists, to mentor current students through college and into their first post-graduate jobs.

## **Operations**

**Supplies.** \$2,500 in Start-Up Period, \$5,000 in Year 1, \$2,500 in Years 2 and 3. Budgeted amounts assume more expense early to lay in the initial store of supplies.

**Equipment Purchases, Replacements and Repairs (cameras, etc.).** For purchase of still cameras and lenses and video cameras and for repairs and maintenance. The start-up period expense is to equip the Howard Center's professional staff with computers.

**Marketing, Promotion, Recruitment.** This expense line covers a range of activities, including vendor fees for e-newsletters, regular mailings to incoming students, the production of flyers and other information to be distributed on all participating campuses. The budgeted amounts

are estimates and may need to be adjusted with experience. Additional marketing promotion expenses, such as creating a Howard Center website, are covered in other expense lines.

**Website Design, Buildout and Maintenance.** \$25,000 to create a Howard Center at LSU website, spread across the Start-Up Period and Year 1. \$2,500 each in Years 2 and 3 to pay for site licenses, vendor fees, etc.

**Training Curriculum Development.** \$5,000 in the Start-Up Period and in each year to create basic training modules common to all participants at all colleges, as baseline and to supplement coursework, apportioned as follows:

- Start-Up: community reporting module.
- Year 1: Digital Booster Shot module.
- Year 2: solutions journalism module.
- Year 3: public records module.

**Facilities Use.** We do not anticipate facility expenses. We have provided possible spaces to house the Howard Center at the Manship School of Mass Communication. The Manship School will provide the space and will cover associated utilities, network fees and maintenance costs.

**Non-Student Travel.** In-state travel, including some overnights, for Howard Center Director and/or Deputy Director to visit partner universities and news organizations for relationship building and community events. Additional money in Start-Up Period and Year 1 will assist with visits by finalists for the Director (Start-Up) and Deputy Director (first half of Year 1) roles. Also: travel for the Director and/or Deputy Director to national conferences.

**Community Meetings in News Organization Towns.** \$2,000 per partner per news organization to fund annual community meetings in their markets aimed at building trust and promoting the Howard Center partnerships. Intended to pay for facilities rental, catered food, etc.

**Annual Partners Meeting.** \$3,000 per year to fund an annual in-person meeting of Howard Center partners, including news organizations representatives, university representatives and student journalists.

**Independent Assessment.** \$4,000 per year to pay an independent party to review monitoring and evaluation reports.

## Calculation Detail for Student Pay | 3-Year Grant Period

This spreadsheet details our assumptions year by year about the number of participating partner universities and partner community news organizations and the number of students served – to assist in budgeting student wages and stipends for faculty at universities other than LSU. LSU faculty will receive no stipends after the start-up period.

<b>Startup</b>					
Howard Center Student Workers	Jan 1-June 30			Total	
Number of Hours Per Week	20	-	-	20	
Weeks	26	-	-	26	
Hourly Rate	12	-	-	-	
Total Startup for all Student Journalists	6,240	-	-		6,240
<b>Year 1</b>					
<b>Baton Rouge w/ LSU</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Students	4	6	4	14	
Hours Per Student Per Week	10	10	40	-	
Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Baton Rouge Expense	7,200	10,800	23,040		41,040
<b>Community Partner Sites</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Sites	6	10	10		
Number of Students @ Each	2	2	1	42	
Hours Per Student Per Week	10	10	40	-	
Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Community Partner Expense	21,600	36,000	57,600		115,200
<b>Howard Center Student Workers</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Hours Per Week	20	20	20	-	

Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Howard Center Expense	3,600	3,600	2,880		10,080
Total Year 1 for all Student Journalists					166,320
<b>Year 2</b>					
<b>Baton Rouge w/ LSU</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Students	8	8	6	22	
Hours Per Student Per Week	10	10	40	-	
Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Baton Rouge Expense	14,400	14,400	34,560		63,360
<b>Community Partner Sites</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Sites	11	11	11		
Number of Students @ Each	2	2	1	55	
Hours Per Student Per Week	10	10	40	-	
Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Community Partner Expense	39,600	39,600	63,360		142,560
<b>Howard Center Student Workers</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Hours Per Week	20	20	20	-	
Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Howard Center Expense	3,600	3,600	2,880		10,080
Total Year 2 for all Student Journalists					216,000



<b>Year 3</b>					
<b>Baton Rouge w/ LSU</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Students	10	10	8	28	
Hours Per Student Per Week	10	10	40	-	
Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Baton Rouge Expense	18,000	18,000	46,080		82,080
<b>Community Partner Sites</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Sites	11	11	11	-	
Number of Students @ Each	2	2	1	55	
Hours Per Student Per Week	10	10	40	-	
Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Community Partner Expense	39,600	39,600	63,360		142,560
<b>Howard Center Student Workers</b>	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total	
Number of Hours Per Week	20	20	20	-	
Weeks	15	15	12	42	
Hourly Rate	12	12	12	-	
Total Howard Center Expense	3,600	3,600	2,880		10,080
Total Year 3 for all Student Journalists					234,720
<b>Total for Grant Period</b>					<b>623,280</b>

# **Appendix A**

## **LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

## About the Letters of Support

The following pages present letters from LSU President William F. Tate IV, partner news organizations and universities from across Louisiana, and retired professional editors who will help students working with the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. The letter writers:

### Senior Louisiana university leaders

- William F. Tate IV, president of LSU and three regional LSU campuses in Shreveport, Alexandria and Eunice
- Jim Henderson, president and CEO, University of Louisiana System with nine colleges: Grambling State University, Louisiana Tech University, McNeese State University, Nicholls State University, Northwestern State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, University of Louisiana at Monroe, University of New Orleans

### Louisiana university journalism and communication department chairs and instructors

- James Stewart, head of the Department of Mass Communication, Nicholls State University
- Shaniece B. Bickham, associate professor and program coordinator for mass communication, Dillard University
- Yolanda, Campbell, associate professor and interim chair of the Department of Mass Communication, Southern University
- Ashanti Mason-Chambers, professor of mass communication, Grambling State University
- Nick Taylor, associate professor of new media, journalism and communication arts, Northwestern State University
- Megan Mosher, instructor, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Southeastern Louisiana University
- Jessica M. Thacker, chair of the Department of Communication, Languages, and Arts, Louisiana State University-Alexandria
- Judith Roberts, associate professor, Department of Communications & Media Studies, Louisiana Tech University
- Stephenson Waters, assistant professor, Department of Communications, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- Sheryl Kennedy Haydel, interim dean, College of Music and Media, Loyola University
- Christa Bell, assistant department head, Department of Mass Communication, McNeese State University
- Shearon Roberts, associate professor of mass communication, director Exponential Honors Program and faculty member in African American and diaspora studies at Xavier University of Louisiana

### Louisiana news organizations

- Terry Baquet, editor-in-chief, Verite

- Renette Dejoie-Hall, publisher and president, Louisiana Weekly
- Connor Raborn, editor, The (Hammond) Daily Star
- Harlan Kirgan, editor, The Eunice News
- Celeste Holley, publisher, Ruston Daily Leader
- Sam Hanna, publisher, Hanna Newspapers (Concordia Sentinel, The Franklin Sun, The Ouachita Citizen)
- Anitra Brown, managing editor, The New Orleans Tribute
- Nora Drenner, editor, Natchitoches Times
- Misty Castile, senior editor, Gannett Louisiana newspapers
- Fred Kalmbach, managing editor, The Advocate
- Trey Schmaltz, general manager, WBRZ-Channel 2 in Baton Rouge
- Jerry Raehal, executive director, Louisiana Press Association

**Retired professional editors**

- Stanley Nelson, retired editor of the Concordia (Louisiana) Sentinel and other newspapers
- Freda Dunne, retired journalist, The (Baton Rouge) Advocate and an adjunct instructor at LSU
- Kelly Kissell, former long-time Associated Press editor and metro editor for The Advocate



June 20, 2023  
The Scripps Howard Foundation  
312 Walnut Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

To the Selection Committee:

I am writing to endorse the LSU Manship School's grant application for the establishment of The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at LSU. This center embodies the essence of what our flagship university stands for – engaging in public service and education to empower and uplift communities across Louisiana.

The Manship School has been at the forefront of journalism education and is ideally poised to address the challenges faced by rural media outlets, which are often understaffed and unable to adequately cover vital issues affecting their communities. The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center aims to bridge this gap by engaging in trust-building initiatives and ensuring comprehensive news coverage through the dedicated efforts of student journalists across the state.

Furthermore, The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is aligned with my initiatives to promote scholarship in agriculture, biotechnology, the coastal environment, defense, and energy – areas that are crucial to Louisiana's well-being. LSU, being a respected institution throughout the state, can contribute to instilling trust in local news operations. The establishment of The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will augment these efforts by providing essential information and insights through journalism.

Your support through this grant will be instrumental in the realization of a vision that has the potential to transform communities and shape the future of journalism in Louisiana. I request your favorable consideration of our application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. F. Tate IV". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William F. Tate IV LSU President



Clayborne Building | 1201 North Third Street | Suite 7-300 | Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
P 225.342.6950 | F 225.342.6473  
www.LUSystem.edu

July 20, 2023

Grant Review Committee for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center  
Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in enthusiastic support of Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication and their proposal to establish the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. As a journalism graduate myself, I wholeheartedly endorse their vision to expand with trust-building journalism in underserved communities and believe that they are well-suited to achieve the goals set forth by the Scripps Howard Grant.

As explained in their proposal, Louisiana faces significant challenges in community journalism. Many regions are experiencing a lack of reliable and robust news coverage, leading to the rise of misinformation and the erosion of trust in local media. The Manship School has demonstrated a deep understanding of these issues and has outlined a comprehensive plan to address them.

One of the key strengths of the proposed Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is its focus on expanding partnerships with news outlets, nonpartisan civic groups, and other universities to create a statewide network of coverage. The Universities of Louisiana look forward to working with the Manship school to build relationships and trust within our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim B. Henderson".

Jim Henderson  
President and CEO  
University of Louisiana System

Grambling State University • Louisiana Tech University • McNeese State University  
Nicholls State University • Northwestern State University • Southeastern Louisiana University  
University of Louisiana Lafayette • University of Louisiana Monroe • University of New Orleans



**Contact Information:**

The Daily Star

Connor Raborn, Editor

985-254-7834

editor@hammondstar.com

To whom it may concern,

The LSU Manship School of Journalism’s student correspondent pilot program has been an enormous benefit to The Daily Star newspaper this summer and, by extension, to the communities we serve.

As has been the case with many newspapers in recent years, The Daily Star has endured severe cutbacks in staffing. What was just five years ago a newsroom of six journalists is now a newsroom of three – myself, a reporter and a sports editor/reporter. While we strive to cover as much of our market area as possible, we are the only “daily” paper serving Tangipahoa Parish, which consists of eight distinct municipalities, more than 30 public schools and a population of around 135,000 which is increasing rapidly. Priorities must be set, and too many news items about social advocates, nonprofits, community groups, local events and grassroots goings-on inevitably fall to the wayside.

While our staff by necessity focuses primarily on the most breaking news, such as crime and government business in our hometown of Hammond, the work of the student interns from LSU Manship allowed our newspaper to once again ensure that more of our readership saw their stories within our pages. The program in particular enabled us to reach underserved communities in a way we haven’t been able for years. The interns contributed in-depth, informative stories about

Black business owners, Juneteenth organizers, underpaid teachers, concerned farmers and disadvantaged students. They gave voice to community figures such as a city council clerk who moonlights as an inspirational self-help author and citizens who didn't want their pocketbooks to suffer in order to keep their access to recycling services.

The work of the program's interns enhanced The Daily Star for two months, allowing bylines – reporter-driven stories – to fill the front few pages of our publication. No longer did I have to rely primarily on press releases and community-submitted photos, which are always appreciated, but much less consistent and less bound to the deadlines and AP style on which our business relies.

The faculty of LSU Manship was pivotal in this endeavor, graciously serving as intermediary editors, handling the dispensing of story assignments to students and the initial copy-editing of their work, meaning that not only did I reap the benefits of a tripled staff, I did not take on any additional management responsibilities which would have adversely affected my typical editorial duties. The faculty team were in constant contact with me and worked tirelessly not only to ensure that the pilot program was a success, but also to go above and beyond by giving back directly to our paper and community, organizing an information session/meet and greet for our community contributors and delivering a public seminar on identifying false news and misinformation.

Providing the next generation of student journalists the hands-on learning which in this profession can only come from experience in the field, while also financially compensating them at a level impossible for already-underfunded news outlets, is imperative. In a time when too many newsrooms are woefully understaffed, too many communities are becoming news deserts and too many citizens are unsure where to turn for dependable, consistent, professionally-vetted local news, the program proposed by LSU Manship is a crucial step forward in protecting democracy and the flow of public information at the local level in Louisiana.



# The Eunice News

465 Aymond St.  
Eunice, Louisiana

July 25, 2023

Grant Review Committee for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

This letter is in support of Manship School of Mass Communication's application for a Scripps Howard grant.

For years, the Louisiana State University journalism program has provided news coverage of the state legislature and enterprise reporting which has included reporting on cold cases from the often violent Civil Rights Era struggle in Louisiana.

This summer a student from Eunice, Louisiana, has produced video coverage for The Eunice News website, [eunicetoday.com](http://eunicetoday.com). The student, Layne Miller, provided the first video stories ever on the website. The Eunice News is a twice-weekly newspaper with a news staff of three — an editor, community news reporter and a sports editor. Any addition, such as Ms Miller, is always welcome and helps build content in print and on our site.

I understand there is a plan for local universities, which includes a two-year campus of LSU at Eunice, to provide student reporting guided by journalism faculty is exciting. This effort is particularly important as news staffs dwindle. There are stories going untold here and across our region. Empowering local universities to help fill this void would be in the public's interest.

Sincerely,

Harlan Kirgan  
Editor  
The Eunice News  
Eunice, Louisiana  
[harlan.kirgan@eunicetoday.com](mailto:harlan.kirgan@eunicetoday.com)  
337-457-3061



July 28, 2023

Scripps Howard Fund  
312Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Grant Committee Members:

I am writing to support the LSU Manship School's creative proposal to provide more community news across Louisiana and start to rebuild trust in journalism. As the executive director of the Louisiana Press Association, I work closely with 90+ newspaper publications around the state, and I see how much they are struggling to hold on, especially in minority and rural communities. Five of the 64 parishes no longer have a newspaper, a dozen newspapers have cut print frequency over the last several years and some of the weeklies survive mainly on revenue on legal notices and plenty of submitted content and press releases. Nearly all the papers have had to cut staff, and few of them have the time or money to create the kinds of digital content and distribution channels that they will need to survive.

LSU's willingness to share the grant money with universities around the state -- and fund several dozen student journalists to produce written and video news stories and expand audience engagement through better use of social media - looks like the best hope to turn things around. I also like the Manship School's plan to train students to help news sites create e-newsletters and expand their engagement strategies. That is a major focus of ours, but it has been difficult for many papers to implement given the cost and how small and overworked their staffs are.

There is no question in my mind that if Scripps Howard embraces the proposal to create the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at LSU, it would give many papers a much-needed lifeline and dramatically change the landscape in community journalism here. Scripps also could provide a model that could revive community journalism in other states and help ensure its survival.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Raehal", written over a white background.

Jerry Raehal  
Executive Director



July 31, 2023

The Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th Floor  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

**Re: The Louisiana Weekly | LSU Support Letter**

To Whom It May Concern:

*The Louisiana Weekly* is one of the oldest Black-owned newspapers in the country. As we approach our 100th anniversary, and as is the case with other community newspapers across the nation, we are struggling to stay afloat.

Diminished advertising, shrinking budgets and increases in production costs over the years have made it difficult to hire and maintain adequately staffing of reporters, photographers and digital media experts – both full-time and freelance – to cover community in the way our audiences expect and deserve.

Therefore, we are eager to support the LSU Manship School of Communication's proposal to partner with New Orleans-area and other Louisiana-based universities. We believe this partnership is an opportunity to breathe new life into community journalism by utilizing student journalists to assist in the coverage of underrepresented communities in the city and across Southeast Louisiana.

The stories submitted by the student journalists would be a great asset to *The Louisiana Weekly*, allowing us to provide our readers with a broader range of news, both in print and digitally. It is through our existing partnerships with community news rooms that we have been able to survive these tough economic times – a partnership network that can only be enhanced by the addition of the LSU Manship School of Communication that *The Louisiana Weekly* is well-prepared to fully embrace.

If we can answer any questions or provide any additional information, please feel free to reach out to me directly at 504-282-3705, or via email at [rdh@louisianaweekly.com](mailto:rdh@louisianaweekly.com).

Sincerely,

Renette Dejoie-Hall  
Publisher & President  
The Louisiana Weekly



I

Grant Review Committee for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

To whom it may concern:

Verité, a Black-led, independent, non-profit online news organization that launched in New Orleans in late July 2022, is interested in receiving and publishing content from the LSU Manship School of Mass Communication's proposal for a Scripps Howard Fund grant to expand community news reporting through local college journalism programs.

The initiative perfectly coincides with Verité's mission to provide information and give voice to underrepresented and underserved communities in the New Orleans area while also training the next generation of minority journalists. Verité's commitment to a diverse staff that looks like the communities we cover includes a fellowship program that gives recent college graduates a year of full-time reporting in a professional newsroom.

The LSU program would help supply us with hyper-local content that serves our readers and gives our growing staff more time and resources to work on in-depth investigations and storytelling. At the same time, it would help us connect with students and faculty at our local HBCUs, Dillard and Xavier, and other schools to identify talent that needs only opportunity and experience to contribute to our mission and the field of solutions-based community journalism in New Orleans and beyond.

We believe the LSU proposal has potential to immediately enhance local reporting and produce long-term results by lifting the voices of those who have been too long pushed to the margins.

We support the LSU proposal and hope to work with the students, faculty, college advisers and local leaders in growing much-needed resources in the New Orleans area.

Sincerely,

Terry Baquet  
Editor-in-Chief  
Verité

Tim Morris  
Editor-at-large  
Verité/Deep South

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# HANNA NEWSPAPERS

P.O. Box 758, West Monroe, LA 71294 • (318)396-0602

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July 31, 2023

Grant Review Committee, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center  
Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing you today to humbly ask you to favorably consider the Manship School of Mass Communication's grant application from the Scripps Foundation.

It is my understanding the Manship School at LSU would utilize the grant funds to help provide news coverage in areas of Louisiana that are not served by a local newspaper as well as assist existing community newspapers in our underserved areas by helping provide solid news coverage of the communities they serve. As an owner and publisher of three community newspapers in northeastern Louisiana, I can personally attest to the struggles we face day in and day out in adequately covering our communities. Often times, we simply do not have the resources and the personnel to do the job in a satisfactory manner. The Manship School could be a difference maker on that front if the school landed the Scripps Foundation grant.

As a 1993 graduate of the Manship School, I often recall the lessons I learned as a student there. My time at the Manship School was one of the best periods in my life. Yet, time and space do not permit me to go into detail about how impactful the Manship School was for my career.

I would be remiss if I did not point out that my father, the late Sam A. Hanna, Sr., was a 1955 graduate of the former J-School at LSU. In 1993, he was inducted into the Manship School of Journalism Hall of Fame. For him, it was the most prestigious honor he received in his career, which spanned more than 50 years. Over the course of that 50-plus year career, he was recognized countless times for his commitment to community journalism, but it was the Hall of Fame designation at the Manship School that meant the most to him.

In closing, I urge you to award the Scripps Foundation grant to the Manship School. Something tells me you will not be disappointed.

Yours truly,



Sam A. Hanna, Jr.  
Publisher

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*Concordia Sentinel • The Franklin Sun • The Ouachita Citizen*



July 31, 2023

Attention Scripps Howard Fund grant review committee:

I'm writing to you today in support of the proposal by Louisiana State University for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at LSU. As Louisiana's flagship university, faculty and students are well positioned to help shine light on issues in communities within news deserts.

My support for the program is backed by WBRZ television, where I serve as general manager, and the television station's local owners – the Manship family. The Manship family also supports the LSU journalism program: The Manship School of Mass Communication.

Our company's lineage in community journalism dates back more than a century through a popular local newspaper, followed next by radio and eventually television. With such an iconic legacy in serving the community, we are uniquely positioned to understand – and believe – in the importance of the Scripps Howard Fund's mission to help bring underserved communities to the forefront.

LSU has a creative proposal that could be a gamechanger in many of our communities in Louisiana and a foundation for Scripps to build upon across the country.

WBRZ and I are backing our support with a pledge to participate! We will join with LSU to help expand the reach of the students' work through digital news offerings, streaming video segments and television broadcasts. As the area's only locally owned and operated news station, we value the power of change we can help foster in the places where we live.

Thank you for continuing the mission to save local news with a focus on important communities. Please join us in making LSU's proposal a reality.

Sincerely,

Trey Schmalz

General Manager

POST OFFICE BOX 2906 • BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA • 70821-2906  
TELEPHONE: 225-387-2222 • FAX: 225-336-2246



July 31, 2023

Scripps Howard Fund  
Cincinnati, OH

The Natchitoches Times and Coshatta Citizen are interested in partnering with LSU Manship School Statehouse Bureau and Northwestern State University for print reporting of local news for both community newspapers.

Thank You



Nora Drenner  
Editor  
Natchitoches Times  
Coshatta Citizen

July 25, 2023

Grant Review Committee for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center  
Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

To Whom it May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the community journalism proposal being submitted by the LSU Manship School of Journalism.

Gannett sites near universities in the state would love to participate, as we fully believe in cultivating the next generation of journalists, as well as seeing an urgent need for more community coverage. The 10 Gannett papers in Louisiana have published some of Manship's statehouse and cold case stories for years, and I feel confident in their ability to do good work and help maintain trust in the papers.

In conclusion, I fully support the efforts of the LSU Manship School of Journalism as they seek external funding to support a program designed to grow local journalism and engage communities in meaningful and thoughtful ways.

Sincerely,

Misty Castile  
Senior Editor  
Gannett Louisiana





# RUSTON DAILY LEADER

318.255.4353 • 212 W. PARK AVENUE • RUSTON, LA

July 27, 2023

Professor Drew,

We look forward to working with you all and hope that you do receive the grant from the Scripps Howard Foundation.

We are eager to work with area universities and colleges. We feel that this grant would be a win-win for everyone involved, providing much needed experience for the students as well as additional content for us.

Please let us know if we can help in any additional ways.

Best,

Celeste Holley

Publisher

Ruston Daily Leader

318-255-4353

[publisher@rustonleader.com](mailto:publisher@rustonleader.com)

The New Orleans  


2317 Esplanade Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70119  
[www.theneworleanstribune.com](http://www.theneworleanstribune.com)  
504-945-0772

Friday, July 21, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure and considerable enthusiasm that I write this letter of support on behalf of the Louisiana State University Manship School of Mass Communication as it continues to work toward the creation of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.


As a small, Black-owned monthly newsmagazine located in New Orleans, our publication and staff are committed to the serving as an unfettered voice and source of information for our readers and followers. We are equally as familiar with the challenges that small, understaffed publications like ours often face in pursuit of that goal. On an almost weekly basis, I expect to receive a few phone calls from individuals asking to speak to a reporter in our business news, city desk or features department. My response is to chuckle a bit before saying "I can help you."

At *The New Orleans Tribune*, I am the managing editor and the only full-time editorial employee. I have only a handful of regular freelance writers, who, unable to support themselves on what our publication is able to pay them alone, often juggle any reporting and writing assignments they accept around other jobs. It does not matter which of our news "departments" an unsuspecting caller requests access to, I am the person to whom they will speak, as I cross my fingers and hope that I can tap a freelancer with time and interest in the story.

That is why we support LSU's Manship School's application to The Scripps Howard Foundation for funding that would allow the School's faculty, staff and students to create a hub for community journalism to help reach small and underserved communities with news and information vital to their lives. We work hard to have a far-reaching impact, but limited resources make that goal a difficult task. To that end, we greatly anticipate partnering with the Louisiana State University Manship School of Mass Communication, as it would allow us to augment our coverage and better serve our communities. With this funding and the creation of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center, I believe LSU's Manship School of Communication will be at the forefront of the future of community journalism and vital to helping keep small, community-based publications alive.

Thank you for your consideration. If I can be of additional assistance, please feel free to contact me at [abrown@mckennapublishing.com](mailto:abrown@mckennapublishing.com).

Best regards,

  
Anitra Brown, Managing Editor  
The New Orleans Tribune

July 26, 2023

Grant Review Committee  
Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut St., 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear committee members:

As managing editor of The Advocate in Baton Rouge for 15 years, I've worked extensively with Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication. We often publish the work of their students through various programs the school runs -- most recently a week ago on our front page, one from their Cold Case Project.

Their current proposal is based on a similar model. Having editors managed by LSU shepherd stories from student reporters works well for us. We can publish the material digitally and in print with confidence that it will be timely and meet our standards.

We have a robust presence in Louisiana, with fully staffed newsrooms in Baton Rouge (The Advocate), New Orleans (The Times Picayune) and Lafayette (The Acadiana Advocate), and we recently opened one in Shreveport (The Shreveport/Bossier City Advocate). We deliver daily newspapers in the first three markets and have websites in all four.

Each market has universities that could be tapped. As a statewide news organization, we're interested in getting stories from outlying areas and smaller towns where we don't have staffing. What LSU is proposing would help us fill those news deserts. We'd be thrilled to marry our reach with student journalism to help keep readers informed about their communities.

Even where we are well established, we can always use more smart reporting. For example, we'd welcome stories by LSU and Southern University students about people and trends in North Baton Rouge and other traditionally underserved communities.

If you need any more information from me, please don't hesitate to email or call.

Fred Kalmbach  
Managing editor



**Department of Mass Communication**

P.O. Box 2031 | Thibodaux, LA 70310 | 985.448.4586 | 985.448.4577 [F]

June 29, 2020

Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation  
312 Walnut Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Members of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Grant Selection Committee,

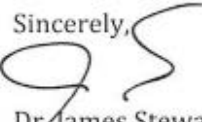
Nicholls State University' Department of Mass Communication enthusiastically supports the application of Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication for a Scripps Howard Fund grant that would support community journalism in our region.

LSU's mass communication school has shown tremendous leadership in promoting local journalism through programs like its Statehouse Bureau, in which college students are afforded to opportunity to hone their craft through professional experience and the public benefits from having more reporters gathering and sharing information. The bureau has received high praise across the state.

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center would allow for an excellent expansion of those efforts.

Not only would LSU be able to coordinate an operation to bring much-needed journalistic content to a wider audience, the center would allow for participation from sister intuitions. Far too many of these schools operate in regions with limited options for offering similar learning opportunities to their students and with potential audiences hungry for improved news coverage.

Certainly, the students at Nicholls State and the citizens of our service area would benefit greatly from such a program.

Sincerely,  
  
Dr. James Stewart,  
Department Head



---

**Department of Mass Communication**

W.W. Stewart Hall - Room 220  
Southern University  
Baton Rouge, LA 70813

Phone: 225-771-2198

Fax: 225-771-4943

July 28, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

As Interim Chair of the Department of Mass Communication at Southern University and A&M College, I am excited about the opportunity to collaborate with LSU's Manship School of Communication in its endeavor to implement a statewide community news program geared towards covering underserved communities. In the pursuit to cover these communities, it is of extreme importance to have a diverse group of students who may be products of those same communities share in the storytelling. As the only Historically Black College System in the world, our faculty and student participation could add to this needed diversity. Simultaneously, our students would be able to have the unique chance to proposition a story not usually covered by the gatekeepers of mainstream media and gain invaluable work experience all prior to their graduation.

With approximately 250 students currently matriculating through our program, more than half of those students will have either a broadcast or print journalism concentration. For those students especially, this community news program would be a huge benefit for their specific career preparation.

Therefore, our Department is fully on board and believes there's a strong need for such a program in our communities all across the nation. With the support of Scripps Howard, we look forward to collaborating with LSU Manship and being a part of its beginning right here in Baton Rouge.

Please feel free to contact me via the information below if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolanda Campbell', is written over a light blue circular background.

Yolanda Campbell, Ph.D.  
Interim Chair and Associate Professor  
(225) 771-2625. Office  
(225) 936-4379. Cell  
Yolanda.Campbell@sus.edu

[subr.edu](http://subr.edu)



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES / MASS COMMUNICATION

July 19, 2023

Lisa Frazier Page  
Journalism Building  
Louisiana State University  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

RE: Letter of Support for Manship School Community Journalism Initiative

Dear Mrs. Page:

Thank you for the opportunity extended to Dillard mass communication student J'Brionne Helaire to cover stories as part of the Manship School's Community Journalism Initiative pilot program. Opportunities to expand our work beyond the campus and into communities are always welcomed.

As you continue to expand your initiative, I would be happy to connect you with J'Brionne and other Dillard mass communication students who would be eager to cover local stories and gain experience to add to their resume and journalism portfolio. Community news coverage would also be an added plus to our campus newspaper, *The Courtbouillon*, and is one of our focal points as we move into the next academic year.

I look forward to our work in the future. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can be of further assistance.

Best regards,

Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor and Program Coordinator  
Mass Communication

# GRAMBLING

STATE UNIVERSITY®

## DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

July 31, 2023

**To Whom It May Concern:**

Grant Review Committee for the Roy Howard Community  
Journalism Center  
Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

I am writing to express the firm intention of the Mass Communication Department at Grambling State University (GSU) to collaborate with Jeff Gauger, a professional-in-residence in journalism at the Manship School of Mass Communication, Louisiana State University (LSU). We are thrilled to collaborate with the Manship School of Mass Communication, provided LSU secures funding for experiential learning in community news organizations through the Scripps Foundation's grant.

Grambling State University has more than 100 Journalism students, and participating in this program spearheaded by LSU holds potential for our institution and the wider community. The city of Grambling currently relies on the Grambling State University paper and the Ruston Daily Leader for non-broadcast news coverage. Through this partnership, our students can enhance their writing skills, create an impressive portfolio of published work, and develop a deeper understanding of their field. Exposure to working professionals will undoubtedly enrich their learning journey and prepare them for successful journalism and mass communication careers. Additionally, this initiative will foster a stronger bond between GSU and the local community by providing relevant and quality news coverage, further bolstering the region's information ecosystem.

We firmly believe that this collaboration between GSU and LSU, facilitated by the Scripps Foundation grant, will be transformative for our students and the communities we serve. We look forward to the opportunity to work with Jeff Gauger and LSU to pursue this shared vision.

Sincerely,



Ashanti Mason-Chambers

Professor

Grambling State University, Mass Communication Department



July 14, 2023

To whom it may concern,

As advisor to both The NSU-TV News Service and Northwestern State University's Hispanic Student Journalist Association, I am able to both support and take part in activities outlined, by PI's from Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication, in the application for the Scripps Howard Grant. As an Associate Professor of Northwestern State University's Department of New Media, Journalism, & Communication Arts, I have access to students, news gathering equipment, and studio space allowing us to perform all responsibilities required by the grant.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics states there will be a significant decline in broadcast journalism job openings over the next decade (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/reporters-correspondents-and-broadcast-news-analysts.htm>). Beyond declining jobs, post-secondary multimedia students will graduate into a career field experiencing shrinking newsroom budgets and lowered crew demand. With all the challenges facing multimedia graduates, experiential learning, building of professional networks and guidance from mentors are critical when preparing students to make the leap from college learner to professional journalists. Opportunities, such as those proposed by this grant application, are necessary in the training of highly skilled, career-ready post-secondary students.

Students from NSU-TV News Service and NSU's Hispanic Student Journalist Association will be able to aid grant funded activities in a variety of ways, to include (but not limited to)

- Help The Natchitoches Times and other local newspapers by promoting social media, producing online news stories and writing articles for print
- Providing broll, interviews, VOSOTS, and news packages for regional television stations
- Providing professional audio interviews or news features for use on radio or through grant connected media outlets
- Conducting interviews on location and in-studio
- Produce bilingual (English/Spanish) print, radio, and broadcast media
- Other media tasks as required.

I enthusiastically give my support to this application and look forward being part of this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Nick Taylor*

Dr. Nick Taylor  
Associate Professor, NSU NMJCA  
956-451-9235





Jeff,

I was pleased to speak with you regarding LSU's grant opportunity with the Scripps Foundation. I was particularly intrigued to hear the ways that this grant can address several problematic areas in the field of journalism today.

We would be excited to partner with LSU'sanship School of Communication to provide news coverage to underserved communities, provide initiatives to build consumer trust in fact-based journalism and provide experiential learning experiences for student journalists. Many of our students at Louisiana State University of Alexandria are residents of small, rural communities, so this unique opportunity would be even more beneficial to help them serve the places they hold most dear.

Please keep us posted on the progress of the grant, and we look forward to working together in the future to provide quality instruction to our students.

Sincerely,

**Jessica M. Thacker**  
Chair, Department of Communication, Languages, and Arts  
Instructor, Communication Studies  
College of Liberal Arts  
Louisiana State University of Alexandria, [www.lsua.edu](http://www.lsua.edu)  
PH: 318-473-6573



## Communication and Media Studies

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY

RE: LSU Application for Scripps Howard Grant

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Megan Mosher and I am a journalism instructor at Southeastern Louisiana University in the Department of Communication and Media Studies. I have spoken with our Department Head Dr. James O'Connor, and we would like to offer our support of the program proposed in this grant application.

Albert Einstein has been credited with saying that "the only source of knowledge is experience." After talking with Chris Drew, his team and his students, as well as members of the Tangipahoa Parish community and *Daily Star* staff at the community Mix and Mingle event, I firmly believe this is what LSU's proposed program would provide journalism students across the state of Louisiana - invaluable experience working directly in underserved news areas. And, as a former journalism student from a small community, I know firsthand how much value such experiences can bring to someone's career, as well as how much such a partnership could benefit small news publications.

During my undergraduate career at Southeastern, I worked at our local newspaper, the *Daily Star*, for 10 hours per week for one semester through our internship course. Once my internship was over, I was offered the opportunity to continue freelancing with the paper for the year and a half I had left until graduation. Because I had been given experience in the field and because the paper had experienced working with me, I was hired right out of college as the city beat reporter. In addition, the skills and the network I built continued to benefit me through grad school, five years in public relations at a chamber of commerce, and even now as an instructor.

LSU's proposed program would provide students at universities across the state similar opportunities not only to work in their chosen field throughout their undergraduate experience, but also to be paid while doing so.

In addition to the benefits students would see, this program would also greatly assist underserved news areas and small publications who may not have the staff to fully cover the needs of their community or to keep up with the demand for content in an increasingly digital age. The LSU students I spoke to had been working with the *Daily Star* throughout this summer, covering important school board meetings, earning page one bylines, working with social media and even creating video content.

As an instructor, I would be thrilled if we could offer students at Southeastern these same experiences and, ultimately, the well-earned knowledge that comes with it. So, we graciously ask that Scripps Howard consider funding this grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Megan Mosher

Instructor, Department of Communication and Media Studies  
Southeastern Louisiana University

Cardinal Newman Hall 206 | 985-549-3121 | [megan.mosher@selu.edu](mailto:megan.mosher@selu.edu)



July 30, 2023

To the Scripps Howard Committee:

I would like to give my endorsement of excitement for this proposal. We at Louisiana Tech are looking forward to working with Chris, Jeff, and their team and schools on this project. If they are awarded the grant, we in the department of communication and media studies would want to participate and would assist in any way we could.

To date, we have more than 100 majors in the department who can choose between concentrating in journalism or communication studies. We also started a master's program last fall, and it has grown by more than 100 percent in a year. Additionally, we have faculty who are involved heavily in the media, including myself, who is co-publisher of a media outlet in Lincoln Parish.

If you have further questions regarding the grant or for our school, please don't hesitate to reach out at [jroberts@latech.edu](mailto:jroberts@latech.edu).

Sincerely,

Judith P. Roberts, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Louisiana Tech University  
Ruston, LA



College of Liberal Arts  
Department of Communication

P.O. Box 43650  
Lafayette, LA 70504-3650  
Office: (337) 482-6103  
Fax: (337) 482-6104  
Webpage: [comm.louisiana.edu](http://comm.louisiana.edu)

*Université des Académies*

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is intended to indicate the interest of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Communications Department in working with the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

We are interested in working with Louisiana State University and the Howard Center to bring journalism to under-served communities, as well as strengthening journalism education and media literacy in South Louisiana.

Thank you for the opportunity, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephenson Waters".

Stephenson Waters  
Assistant Professor  
[stephenson.waters@louisiana.edu](mailto:stephenson.waters@louisiana.edu)



**XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION**  
DIVISION OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

1 Drexel Drive • Box 299  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125-1098  
(504) 520-5092 • Fax: (504) 520-7919

07/31/2023

I write in support of the proposed initiative to create a Community Journalism Center among partner institutions that will serve the needs of residents of the Greater New Orleans area, and the state of Louisiana. Since 2015, I have led a partnership with local Black-owned news publications where students in the Department of Mass Communication at Xavier University of Louisiana have covered the surrounding community and the state enhancing the quality and consistency of local news, particularly for African American communities.

Through this partnership, I saw how this was mutually beneficial both for academic institutions and for community news publications. Students at our historically Black university valued the opportunity to write positive and impactful stories about the African American community, all while growing as journalists and media professionals and gaining important clips for their portfolios that shaped their careers in media industries. Altogether, the partnership has produced over 500 stories. For our news publication partners, this relationship allowed for them to expand coverage in areas and on subjects that their limited staff was unable report on with consistency.

While such an endeavor has been vital for the community, I was able to see firsthand the limits of its scope, because it lacked the resources to take off, outside of the confines of a few reporting courses. Through this Community Journalism Center, such academic-industry partnerships can become consistent and strengthened by the resources needed to move it out of the pilot stage, and sustain this work with strategic investments to support student journalists, college advisors and ultimately the publications that benefit from filling their news coverage holes, due to the constraints of community news outlets, particularly in diverse communities.

As a prospective partner in this endeavor with the LSU Manship School and Professor Lisa Frazier Page, we have seen where such a partnership has impact, having piloted this with local community-publications over the past decade at Xavier. We are eager to collaborate on an initiative that provides resources and structure to sustain this work and ultimately serve communities of color where news and information is vital in the pursuit of equity and justice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shearon Roberts".

Shearon Roberts, Ph.D.  
Director, Xavier University Exponential Honors Program  
Associate Professor of Mass Communication  
Faculty Member in African American and Diaspora Studies  
Xavier University of Louisiana  
1 Drexel Drive, P.O. 299, New Orleans, La. 70125

July 28, 2023

Dear Scripps Howard Foundation,

Will you join us? Will you invest in the next generation of journalists?

As the only Jesuit university with an accredited journalism program, we are committed to training the next generation of editors, reporters, and industry leaders. As one of a handful of student-run newspapers that have won eight Pacemakers, we are invested in excellent journalism that can be measured against any school.

The School of Communication and Design will launch a student-driven digital newsroom reporting on New Orleans this fall. Our students will cover news deserts, breaking news and add context to narratives often ignored or sporadically covered by mainstream media outlets. Rene Sanchez, the editor of the Times-Picayune/The Advocate, has agreed to publish our students' work, demonstrating the desire and communal need for extensive coverage. More importantly, it underscores how student journalists can play a pivotal role in reporting these stories. It expands our industry. It reengages marginalized community stakeholders. And it operationalizes the role of journalism.

The Hub is an immersive experience in advanced news-gathering and digital production skills. It will be a media lab designed to enhance and accelerate students' professional development in theory and practice. The Hub will be a fast-paced, dynamic environment that demands excellence and provides skills training outside a traditional classroom format. Diversity, equity, and inclusive practices are the standard.

Partnering with LSU's Manship School of Communication will give our state and region an expansive network that will elevate college journalism and provide a pipeline to industry careers. With the help of Scripps Howard funding, we could serve as the model for reimagining how not just to sustain our industry but enhance the infrastructure needed to fill our newsrooms with well-trained journalists from diverse lived experiences who tell stories through a different lens yet trained with highest journalistic ethical standards.

Will you join us? Will you invest in the next generation of journalists?

We are counting on you to assist us in filling a void in our communities, address the nagging issues of shrinking resources, and recruit editors and reporters.

We stand at the intersection of a defining opportunity. Your investment will allow numerous students to sharpen their journalism acumen and excel as industry leaders. The funding will undoubtedly be an invaluable asset to Manship and Loyola and bring immense pride to the Scripps Howard Foundation's legacy of philanthropic giving.

If you need any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Sheryl Kennedy Haydel  
Interim Dean  
[skhaydel@loyno.edu](mailto:skhaydel@loyno.edu)

6363 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70118

July 24, 2023

Scripps Howard Grant Committee

To the members of the committee:

I am writing to express support for LSU's proposal to increase statewide access to journalism through cooperation with student newsrooms and journalism programs in Louisiana.

McNeese State University is a regional university that primarily serves a five-parish area in southwest Louisiana. Our Department of Mass Communication trains students in the principles of journalism, reporting, writing and digital media.

McNeese's five-parish area has a population of about 300,000 people, of which approximately 80,000 are in Lake Charles, the home of McNeese. This area is served by one daily newspaper - the American Press. The weekly Southwest Daily News in nearby Sulphur, Louisiana, is also controlled by the American Press. Some of the smaller outlying communities are served by small weekly newspapers.

In cooperation with LSU, McNeese would be happy to provide support to this statewide effort to supplement local news coverage in areas where many local stories get little or no coverage, either because they have no newspaper or because the newspaper lacks the staff to cover these stories.

McNeese students currently work in many local newsrooms through our internship program. McNeese students often hold full-time jobs while working on their internship, limiting the time they can spend working in those areas. With the support of the grant, students will be able to devote more time and resources to local newsrooms that often cannot afford to pay students.

The McNeese State University Department of Mass Communication would be happy to support and participate in LSU's effort to promote local news coverage and provide opportunities for students and for local communities.

We look forward to working with LSU and with student journalists throughout the state to help make newspapers a vital source of information for local communities in Louisiana.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Christa C. Bell

Assistant Department Head  
McNeese State University  
Lake Charles, LA

**Letters of support from retired professional editors who will help students working with the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center**

July 26, 2023

Grant Review Committee  
Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Committee,

I am writing to offer my support and services to edit stories produced for the Howard Center for Community Journalism, which is being proposed by the LSU Manship School in its grant application to your committee.

I retired as editor of the *Concordia Sentinel*, a weekly in Ferriday, LA, in 2021, a position I had held since 2006. I edited another Louisiana weekly prior to that. The weekly newspaper industry in our state has been decimated during the past years. Some weeklies no longer exist. Those that do are struggling to pay bills and keep at least one reporter in the field, but they face many obstacles.

There is one weekly in northeastern Louisiana that was purchased several years ago by a local person with little experience in the newspaper business. The publisher tries hard to put out a good paper without a reporter, but it is an impossible task.

Consequently, the readers are the ones that lose out. And it is a fact that the poorest parishes are more likely to either no longer have a weekly newspaper or have one that doesn't serve them.

If this grant is approved for LSU, I would be happy to help edit stories and work with LSU to help fill this news vacuum in the state.

I will also note that parishes without newspapers or good newspapers are losing population and becoming more impoverished. Without good reporting to highlight the needs of rural areas in particular, this decline will continue.

Sincerely,

Stanley Nelson  
235 Jesse Jr. Road  
Clayton, Louisiana 71326



Freda Yarbrough Dunne, Adjunct Instructor  
LSU Manship School of Mass Communication  
Journalism Building, Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
July 30, 2023

Dear Scripps Howard Fund Grant Committee:

Getting the news that the Manship School of Mass Communication was a finalist for the grant to create the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center could not have come at a better time for me. At the time of the phone call, I was working on certificates of achievement for more than 70 students enrolled in Baton Rouge's Big Buddy program called Tool Time who took journalism classes I taught during June and July.

In Tool Time, Baton Rouge students take professional and personal development courses once a week over eight weeks as well as work as interns at local businesses. In addition to work skills, they also take mental health courses such as stress management, goal setting, coping mechanisms, and self-awareness. The purpose of Tool Time is to strengthen skills these students are developing at their internship sites, as well as learn new skills that they may not have been exposed to before – in my case, journalism.

Because this program reaches a lot of high school students in areas underserved for summer jobs for teens and job training, my students ended up teaching me a great deal about areas of Baton Rouge I'm unfamiliar with. They learned from me that bringing change to their communities means they need to know where to find out what's going on locally, nationally and around the world. Several of the students want to be journalists, while most said they had no idea how many sites existed online to show them the world. While I expected many of the students to be anxious to leave for lunch or their jobs, I was frequently surprised by students who stayed between classes so they could talk about career opportunities.

I spent 40 years at The Advocate newspaper in Baton Rouge as an editor, reporter and web site director for both the newspaper and their then sister television station, WBRZ-TV. Most of my editing and reporting was spent in features covering both entertainment and science through the years. In 2013, I retired to what was supposed to be lots of play and travel. By the spring of 2014, I was beyond bored and when the Manship School called and asked if I was up for teaching basic media writing, I jumped at the chance. That was nearly 10 years ago and accepting that call was one of the best things I've ever done, leading me to work on amazing student projects within the Manship School and in cooperation with other departments on the LSU campus.

If the Manship School is chosen for the Scripps Howard project, I would love to be involved as one of the retired editors who could help edit stories as needed and working with students covering areas of Baton Rouge, which seem to get coverage only when the story involves crime. There are so many areas in and around Baton Rouge that feel abandoned to regular news coverage. If you're from Baton Rouge, you can draw a border starting at the Mississippi River, then east to west down Florida Boulevard and north to south down Airline Highway with anything outside of that border getting little attention.

While Baton Rouge is a city with several media companies, there are numerous areas within the city which are news deserts. If the high school students I just spent my summer with are any indication, that needs to change – and soon.

Sincerely,

Freda Yarbrough Dunne  
LSU Manship School  
Adjunct Instructor  
[fyarbroughdunne@lsu.edu](mailto:fyarbroughdunne@lsu.edu)  
225-505-2250



Post Office Box 2906  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-2906

Scripps Howard Fund  
Cincinnati, OH

To Whom It May Concern:

I fully support the effort by LSU's Manship School of Mass Communication to boost community journalism throughout Louisiana and pledge to assist it as a retired editor who could backstop faculty members or in any advisory role it would have for me.

The LSU School of Journalism afforded me opportunities I never imagined while growing up the son of a chemical plant laborer and switchboard operator. It's been a great ride.

Away from my paying jobs, I've served as a national board member of the Society of Professional Journalists and currently sit as a site team member for the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

In the month I graduated, I became the LSU J-school's first winner of the William Randolph Hearst Foundation's national collegiate writing championship and began a 34-year career with The Associated Press. After 24 years directing AP operations in Arkansas and Oklahoma, I retired and returned to Baton Rouge to settle my parents' estate and served four years as metro editor of my hometown paper.

And since retiring from there, I've freelanced at a TV station where my mom worked as a receptionist. Counting the years since I first hung out with reporters while my mom worked the phones, I've been in newsrooms a little more than five decades.

That tenure has let me see how great our needs are today, and the Manship School through its legislative coverage has already helped address them. Looping it in to provide additional community journalism is a natural fit.

Please reach out if you'd like to know more.

Kelly P. Kissel  
BAJ '84  
kpkspj12@gmail.com

Telephone: 225-387-2222 Fax: 225-336-2246

# Appendix B

## STUDENT WORK FROM DESIGN GRANT PERIOD

### About the student content

Appendix B presents work produced by student journalists from Louisiana State University and Dillard University during a summer pilot project conducted to test and refine the LSU proposal for a Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

Eight students worked part-time to create stories, photos, a [video feature](#) and social media promotion for the Hammond Daily Star.

One student worked part-time to create these [two videos](#) that ran on the Eunice News website.

Editors for the two newspapers approved all content ideas in advance. LSU journalism professors coached the reporters and edited the stories before publication.

# THE DAILY STAR

TUESDAY, June 20, 2023 • Vol. 64, Issue 73 • 12 PAGES • 75¢



## Patient found dead; facility to be investigated

The Louisiana Department of Health announced on Monday it is investigating Ochs Behavioral Hospital in Hammond following a weekend incident in which a man walked out of the facility and was later found dead. Tracy Kennedy, 79, was reported missing on Saturday, and, after a search that lasted nearly 24 hours, his body was found behind a vacant warehouse near the facility, Hammond police officials said. LDH officials did not

release many details regarding the investigation. Kennedy had been diagnosed with dementia and Alzheimer's. The cause of his death is under investigation, but officials suspect no foul play is involved.

### Bomb threat suspect arrested

On Saturday night, at approximately 8 p.m., officers with the Amite City Police Department responded to

Winn-Dixie in reference to a bomb threat. Within minutes, Amite City Police Department arrived on the scene along with the Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office, Independence Police Department, Roseland Police Department and Amite Fire Department. Amite officers and other officials assessed the scene, and it was determined that no bomb or object resembling a bomb was in or around the store. Officers were able to identify Ebony Harrison, 25,

of Independence, as the suspect, police said. Officers Dustin Davis and Virgil Dyon quickly located Harrison in a nearby parking lot where she was apprehended. Harrison was charged with communicating false information of planned arson.

### Hammond man gets 35 years for sexual battery

LIVINGSTON — On June 14, David Anthony Czacki,

38, of Hammond, pleaded guilty to five counts of sexual battery and was sentenced to serve 35 years with the Department of Corrections, according to 21st Judicial District Attorney Scott M. Perrilleux.

Czacki also must register as a sex offender for life. He was sentenced by Judge Jeffrey S. Jaram with Assistant District Attorney Craig Murphy as prosecutor.

See CRIME, page K2

## Local teachers react to mixed raise

By ALLISON ALLSOP and POET WOLFE  
LSU Maricopa School News Service

Teachers in Tangipahoa Parish are criticizing state lawmakers for reducing a proposed \$2,000 permanent pay raise to a one-year stipend.

The change, which came in the last minutes of the legislative session on June 8, could complicate efforts to deal with a shortage of teachers locally and across the state.

Aime Klein, a teacher at Hammond High School, said lawmakers "can see the number of teachers, especially certified teachers, who are bailing on the profession or bailing on the state."

She also said that downgrading the raise to a stipend was "just inequitable" given how the cost of living has increased, especially after Hurricane Ida in 2021.

Klein said teacher morale and retention are both affected by pay, and she and other teachers are concerned about whether lawmakers will follow up on promises to consider a permanent raise next year.

"It seems like they always find a way to wiggle out, and they string us along," Klein said.

Teacher shortages have affected schools across the nation, and Louisiana saw an increase in teachers leaving during the 2021-2022 school year, according to a report by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The percent of teachers leaving increased to 14 percent from 11 percent in the previous year.

A 2022 report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that there had been a net loss of 600,000 educators in public school systems across the country over the previous two years.

Louisiana's average teacher pay is more than \$3,000 less than the Southern regional average of \$55,676.

See TANGI, page K2

## Amite adopts deficit budget for 2023-24

By RICHARD MEEK  
Staff Writer

Amite is scheduled to be operating in the red for at least the next year after city council members adopted a 2023-24 budget with a deficit of more than \$500,000 during a special meeting Monday.

The adopted budget forecasts total revenues of \$1.649 million and another \$4.364 million in fund transfers. But with expenses to clock in at \$6.013 million, the city's expected operating deficit is forecast at \$512,289.

Council members, without discussion, approved the budget 3-2, with Damon Ellroy and Jonathan Foster dissenting.

Later during the meeting Ellroy said the city needs to identify ways to reduce costs.

"That needs to be addressed big time within the city," he said.

Following the meeting, an attempt to interview Ellroy was unsuccessful.

Also, the city council unanimously approved a cooperative endeavor agreement involving the city and Tangipahoa Parish Fire District No. 1, which serves the Amite area, at least temporarily bringing to a halt a feud which had been building since earlier in the year.

But the agreement, which calls for the Town of Amite City to pay the district an annual base amount of \$320,000, has a five-year span and will have to be addressed again after that window of time.

See AMITE, page K2

## Juneteenth event marks freedom, promotes culture

By J'BRIONNE HELAIRE  
LSU Maricopa School News Service

HAMMOND — The 117th annual Juneteenth Freedom Day event was a three-day community celebration Saturday at the Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum.

After years of having separate, smaller Juneteenth celebrations for Hammond and the surrounding communities, three community leaders — Brandi Jones of Urban Market Experience (UMX), Sylvia Hunt of the African American Heritage Museum and Corine Doherty of J. Rucker's House of Soul — came together to organize a single day of events. They spent about two months planning with help from other members on their committee.

"This is a day for us to come together in remembrance of what happened in 1865, when all slaves nationwide were officially freed," Jones, executive director of UMX, said about the significance of the celebration.

Juneteenth marks the date — June 19, 1865 — when a Union Army General arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced that enslaved people were free. This came more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, officially freeing the enslaved.

The Saturday celebration started at 10 a.m. with a parade, led by Independence High School's band. The parade included Justice Williams' Boss Queen Little Dyon, Desiree Fontenot as the grand marshal and Kaia Trepagnier as Queen of the Krowe of Soul



ABOVE: McLaurin Academy of Contemporary Arts dancers line up in formation Saturday, June 17, 2023, prior to their performance during the First Annual Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration at the African American Heritage Museum in Hammond. LEFT: Juneteenth Freedom Day master of ceremonies Kaia Eskar speaks to the audience Saturday during the First Annual Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration at the African American Heritage Museum. Photos by French Dins (LSU Maricopa School News Service)

from Pochatrasia. The parade started at the Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum and made the block around Mooney Park. The Juneteenth program started at 11 a.m. with a prayer and the singing of the

Black national anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing." After Jones spoke about the meaning of Juneteenth, there were several indoor performances by The McLaurin Academy of Contemporary Arts, Asia Dillon CEO of Saucy A. Creatives, Boss

Queen Little Dyon, Triple M Lynn and DLF Lutz. Horsehoes, spades and dominoes tournaments were held between performances, allowing spectators to travel between the events.

See JUNETEENTH, page K1

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PARKER LAYRISSON



The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)

June 17 at 3:23 PM · 🌐



Urban Market Experience presented Tangipahoa Parish's first Juneteenth celebration at the Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum in Hammond today.

This Juneteenth celebration, directed by Brandi Jones, allowed space for 30 vendors to participate while displaying the work of local dance companies, entertainers and visual artists.

Attendees enjoyed a variety of foods and competitive spade games.

Enjoy our photographer's photos from the event!



👍❤️ You, Christopher Drew and 67 others

2 comments 13 shares

❤️ Love

💬 Comment

➦ Share



# THE DAILY STAR

THURSDAY, June 22, 2023 • Vol. 64, Issue 74 • 14 PAGES • 75¢

## Tangi wins in new budget bills

SLU to get \$21M

By POET WOLFE  
LSU Weekly School News Service

Spending bills passed by the Legislature include millions of dollars for renovations at Southeastern Louisiana University and the Lonerger Branch library and for health services, tourism, and economic development in Tangipahoa Parish.

An infrastructure bill, House Bill 2, directs \$21 million to Southeastern,

including over \$20 million to renovate D. Vickers Hall, approximately \$700,000 for new sports complexes and \$600,000 toward construction of a campus nursing building.

Also in the Lonerger Branch library and for health services, tourism, and economic development in Tangipahoa Parish.

An infrastructure bill, House Bill 2, directs \$21 million to Southeastern,

will support locating the library next to the Lonerger High School campus for use by students and members of the public.

The infrastructure bill also will direct \$225,000 to improving roadside drainage in Hammond.

The main budget bill, House Bill 1, prioritizes funding in Tangipahoa Parish for mental health services, with the Florida Parishes Human Services Authority on tap for around \$26 million. The authority provides services related to

substance abuse, developmental disabilities and mental health in multiple Florida parishes, including Tangipahoa.

The Legislature approved the budget measures — about \$45 billion in the main budget bill and \$11 billion for infrastructure — earlier this month for the 2023-24 Fiscal Year. The measures await Gov. John Bel Edwards' signature. He has the authority to strike some spending through line item veto.

Roads and building renovations were the main

priorities of House Bill 2, authored by State Rep. Stuart Riser.

Muscarello — who voted to approve House Bills 1 and 2 — said nothing was cut for Tangipahoa Parish during the spending session.

But next year, he said, the election of a new governor and some new legislators will encourage a different model for funding. For now, colleges like Southeastern are not equally funded, he said.



MUSCARELLO



## Riser: Hammond forever a special place

By RICHARD MEEK  
Staff Writer

Matt Riser paused, pondering his new gig as baseball coach at Memphis University while allowing his thoughts to drift a few hours down I-55 to Hammond, a place that has left an indelible mark on him and his wife.

Riser, the second-winningest coach in Southwestern Louisiana University history with 320 wins, spoke to the Daily Star on Tuesday afternoon as he settled into his new role as the curator of the Tigers' distant hometown, hired only two weeks after he was fired at SLU in a move which created ruckus among Lane faithful.

As it turned out, the dismissal led to a prestigious opportunity, from a program he built into national prominence to a Division I school that already has stellar histories on the gridiron and the hardwood.

"The good Lord works in the right way," Riser said. "You have to trust in his plan. As unfortunate as some situations may seem in life, keep trusting it, keep doing what you know is right regardless of the situation."

"All of a sudden he presents the best opportunity you could possibly have."

While excited for the new chapter along the third base line, Riser said he will miss the people of Hammond and the relationships he has built.

"That community is a special place to us and our family," he said. "All three of our boys were born in Hammond, so it will always have a special place in our hearts."

"That is what we will miss the most, to be able to see these folks on a daily basis," he added. "We still keep those relationships."

Technology will make it easier to maintain those relationships, along with the relative proximity of Memphis to Hammond.



RISER



## SUMMER CHILLIN'

ABOVE: Six-year-old Bruler Jaoubert climbs out of the swimming pool at Zermurray Park in Hammond on Wednesday afternoon. Jaoubert attends Chappawala Kids Camp. Camp counselor Colino Balchior said the 110 to 140 youngsters from the camp swim at the park every week.



LEFT: Children from Chappawala Sports Park swim alongside other youngsters at Zermurray Park, all under the watchful eyes of 17-year-old Shane Gardner, a Hammond High football player when not serving as lifeguard.

Photos by Richard Meek / The Daily Star

## School board raises stipends, adds to dress code

By ALLISON ALLSOP  
LSU Weekly School News Service

AMITE — The Tangipahoa Parish School Board voted unanimously Tuesday to update its salary schedule to include higher stipends for satisfactory teaching and for custodians.

The previous schedule included yearly stipends for teachers based on performance. The new schedule raises those amounts and adds stipends for non-core areas like music and physical education.

Also on Tuesday, the policy committee voted to ap-

ply changes to the student dress code, including restrictions for protective and casual hairstyles for people of color.

Through the pay changes, teachers who are deemed "highly effective" in core areas like math and reading will receive a \$1,000 stipend. Core teachers deemed "effective proficient" and "effective emerging" will receive \$500 and \$250, respectively. Non-core teachers will receive \$500, \$250 and \$125 depending on how they score.



Ron Garcia, the assistant school superintendent, speaks to the Tangipahoa Parish School Board Tuesday.

Allen Meek / LSU Weekly School News Service

See BOARD, page A2

See TANGI, page A2

# THE DAILY STAR

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, July 1-2, 2023

Vol. 64, Issue 78 • 14 PAGES • \$1.75

## 2 shot, non-fatal, in Hammond

Two people were shot late Thursday night in Hammond, and police are searching for two teenage suspects in connection with the shootings.



WHITE



McFARLAND

people firing handguns. The two victims sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

Armed 11 p.m. Thursday, Hammond police responded to Club 135, located at 1456 Corbin Road, in a report of two people being shot.

Upon arrival, officers learned that a verbal altercation resulted in several

After speaking with witnesses at the scene, detectives identified two of the shooters as Tiquious White, 18, and Lameka McFarland, 18, both of Hammond.

Warrants have been issued for both White and McFarland for two counts each of attempted second-degree homicide and one count each

of illegal discharge of a firearm, according to police.

Anyone with information about these individuals or their whereabouts is asked to contact Detective Darin Williams with the Hammond Police Department Criminal Investigations Division (985-277-5755 or Williams\_D@hammond.org), the Hammond Police Department's Facebook Page or Crime Stoppers of Tangipahoa's anonymous tip line at 1-800-554-JAIL (5245). Be part of the solution and you may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$1,000.

### TFSO seeks medication theft suspect

Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help identifying a suspect of medication theft. TFSO reported that on May 2, a female called her way into receiving a refund on merchandise she previously stole from the Dollar General on Windline Road in Hammond. The woman stole an amount of medication from one Dollar General and attempted to obtain a refund



Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help identifying a suspect of medication theft.

See DMMR, page K1



## Residents voice concerns at parish design meeting

By ALLISON ALLSOP  
LSU Maritime School News  
2023

RESIDENTS gathered Thursday evening at a community design meeting to voice what they'd like parish officials to consider in a long-term plan for the area.

The Tangipahoa Parish Planning Department is creating a comprehensive plan for the parish for the next 25 years. The planning process, which seeks comments from residents, would lay out goals and visions for managing growth.

A comprehensive plan is a tool for the parish to use when deciding how to move forward with development. It is a recommendation created for everyday use with the people's interests and longevity of the parish kept in mind, officials said. However, the parish does not have to follow it if it chooses not to.

These plans are supposed to be updated every five years. The last comprehensive plan for the parish was made in 2008.

About 40 people attended the meeting at the Florida Pavilion Arena in Amite to hear initial results of the process and make suggestions.

Residents at the meeting were not afraid to ask questions and voice their concerns as to how the parish is developing.

Nichole Lizza, a resident and reader, said that economic development is where everything begins. She said that the parish has already done a good job of addressing that, so it is time to address other concerns like education and recreation.

Education was one of the main topics residents are worried about. One of the biggest concerns is overcrowding and a lack of schools in the areas with the most population growth.

See DMMR, page K1

## Suspect in 2020 Target robbery gets 25 years

On June 20, Walter Albritton III, 44, of Ponchartraine, pleaded no contest to seven charges related to the 2020 robbery in which he drove a vehicle into the Target in Hammond, according to 21st Judicial District Attorney Scott M. Perillous.

Albritton pleaded no contest to first-degree robbery, two counts of attempted first-degree robbery, terrorism, terrorizing, false explosive device and aggravated criminal damage to property.

He was sentenced to serve 25 years with the Department of Corrections by Judge Jeffrey S. Johnson, and Assistant District Attorney Taylor Anthony represented the prosecution.

On June 5, 2023, the Hammond Police Department was notified of a vehicle which was driven into the Target by a criminal subject and of possible shots fired.

HPD responded to the scene where Target employees and customers were fleeing from all exits.

Officers made contact with the suspect inside the store and commanded him to surrender and show his hands. The suspect responded by saying, "you're going to have to kill me," while showing large amounts of cash from the customer service register into his pockets.

The subject then evaded the officers by entering a room which, unknown to the officers, had exterior exits.

Officers stationed outside the building saw the suspect flee through the west side exit.

They chased the suspect as he attempted "shoot me, shoot," with a possible explosive in his hand. They were able to neutralize him with a taser then return to the scene to investigate further. They discovered a makeshift bomb near the suspect's vehicle and immediately evacuated the store.

See DMMR, page K1



Photo by Peter O'Brien / The Daily Star

In the midst of an ongoing heat wave, two staffers from Hammond cool off in the splash pad at Zephyrus Park Friday afternoon.

## Near-record heat wave could start cooling, but slowly

By CONNOR RABORIN  
LSU

The unusually high June temperatures felt in Tangipahoa Parish and across the Southeast may start a downward trend this weekend, but slowly enough that there are still some dangerously hot weeks ahead, according to the National Weather Service in Slidell.

The heat index, or how hot

it feels due to factors such as humidity, will continue to hit triple digits into the middle of next week, forecast to be 100 to 105 degrees by July 5, a slight drop from this past Thursday's 114 to 117 degrees and Friday's forecast 115 to 121.

For this weekend, southeast Louisiana residents can expect highs in the upper 90s and the heat index to potentially drop by a few

degrees. "The moisture may be slightly lower, the temperatures slightly cooler, but still around 105 and 110 both days," National Weather Service meteorologist Jared Klein said, adding that still qualifies for a heat advisory.

NWS looks at temperature and heat index to issue two levels of heat warnings. A heat advisory is issued for a heat index around 108 de-

grees. A heat index of 113 or higher calls for an excessive heat warning, such as the one NWS issued for southeast Louisiana through Friday night.

And while temperatures over the past week have hovered in the mid- to upper 90s, the heat index has regularly pushed that number 10 or more degrees higher.

See DMMR, page K1

## City discussing options in Hauck case

By RICHARD MEEK  
LSU

Hammond legal officials are discussing their next course of action in the case of Lt. Janine Hauck of the Hammond Police Department, after the Hammond Municipal and Police Civil Service Board ruled that Hauck can present her case to the board.

Hammond city attorney

Andre Coulvain said the most likely route will be to appeal the board's decision to the state court. He said in that event a petition could potentially be filed to delay Hauck's hearing before the civil service board while the appeal is pending.

Coulvain said the city is also considering going the federal court route. On March 3, 2022, Hauck filed a written complaint

with the civil service board claiming she was passed over for a promotion because of her gender. She initially said the action was discriminatory and in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

Hauck later changed that legal argument, claiming what she believes is a gender discrimination action was a violation of state law.

After extended legal wrangling, the civil service board on May 9 denied the city's position the board has no jurisdiction to hear Hauck's claim because no corrective action was taken against her.

Attorney Brad Stevens, also representing the city, said being passed over for a job does not constitute discrimination.

See DMMR, page K1

## Council delays vote on trash price hike

By ALLISON ALLSOP  
*130 Minutes School News Service*

The Hammond City Council tabled a vote Tuesday on raising the cost of trash services for residents by at least \$6.40 a month.

Council members all agreed to push back the vote until they could explore more options. The council also was supposed to vote on whether to keep recycling services.

Members were looking

at either a \$6.40 or \$8.90 monthly increase, depending on whether they decided to keep recycling.

The potential increase comes after the city changed its garbage pick-up provider in September to WastePro. It is more expensive than the previous provider, and the city has fronted the costs since September.

Currently, residents are billed \$14.08 for twice-weekly trash collection. The new rate of \$20.48, or \$20.98

with recycling, would be similar to the prices paid by residents in surrounding areas, according to City Administrator Lacy Landrum.

"Seven dollars may not seem like a lot to you...but for someone that may be their medicine, that may be bread, and with today's prices it may not even cover the eggs," said Tracy Washington, a resident of District 3 in Hammond.



Hammond City Administrator Lacy Landrum speaks to Hammond City Council members Tuesday about a possible increase in the cost of trash collections.

See COUNCIL, page A3



## Juneteenth celebration set for Saturday

Urban Market Experience will host their first Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration at the Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum this Saturday, June 17, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A parade will kick things off at 10 a.m., featuring the Hammond police and fire departments, business owners and Grand Marshal Denise Fontenot.

The Juneteenth program will start at the museum at 11 a.m. with an educational piece explaining the history of the holiday and featuring performances. Afterwards, a spades, dominos and horseshoes tournament will be held.

Kaka Baker will serve as host for the event, which will also offer food and musical entertainment.

The event is free. Proceeds from tournament registration will go to nonprofit organizations to fund community events and support Hammond area businesses.

Those interested in being vendors are asked to call 985-205-1466.

For more information, email tangipahoa.juneteenth@gmail.com or support@urbanmarket.org.

Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum is located at 1600 Phoenix Square, Hammond.

### Protect your pets from heatstroke: Essential tips for a safe summer

BATON ROUGE — As temperatures soar and the hot summer months approach, it's crucial to prioritize the safety of your beloved pets.

Heatstroke can have dev-

## POTTERY AND PARK TIME

Students at Woodland Park Magnet School enjoy their summer in 21st Century Learning Camp. The students spend the day learning aspects of pottery on a field trip to Push Paint. After creating their own mug, they had a relaxing lunch and playtime at Cafe Street Park. Painting a finished mug are Demi Puffin and Jada Booker.

Photos courtesy of Mikela Burke



LEFT: Nadya Mukhtary and Hezekiah Williams paint their mugs. RIGHT: Taking a break on the swingset are Ms. Eunice Bonomo and Jada Booker.





# Three arrested in high-speed chase

By RICHARD MEEK  
*Staff Writer*

Three out-of-state suspects wanted in a rash of car burglaries were arrested Thursday afternoon following a high-speed chase which snaked its way through Hammond, Ponchartraine and Metairie and involved federal, state, and local law agencies.

Facing multiple charges are Tavaris Oliphant, 30, of Miami; Alton Burris Jr., 22, of Fort Lauderdale, Flori-



**OLIPHANT BURRIS MOORE**  
 da, and Jan's Moore, 34, of North Lauderdale, Florida. Each suspect is facing the following charges: six counts of simple burglary, six counts of flight from an officer, two counts fugitives from another jurisdiction,

two counts illegal carrying of a weapon, two counts felony possession of marijuana and two counts aggravated flight from an officer, according to Hammond Police Department. During a press conference at police headquarters Thursday, Chief Edwin Bergeron said the three suspects are also facing charges in other jurisdictions but will not be extradited until they have answered for their crimes committed in Tangipahoa Parish. Bergeron said Thursday's incident stemmed from a July 3 report in which HPD was notified of a suspicious vehicle in the parking lot of a popular health club where multiple car break-ins were reported. He said his officers had a one-minute response time but the suspects had fled. HPD released a description of the vehicle, a white

Chrysler 300 with out-of-state plates, which was a rental car. Bergeron said through the investigation, the department issued press releases and alerted officers and Crime Stoppers. He said at 12:32 p.m. Thursday, HPD received a tip from Crime Stoppers that the suspects' car was seen in the parking lot of a discount store on Morrison Boulevard in Hammond.

See CHASE, page A1



# Detectives recover \$7K in stolen property

Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office announced the arrest of 47-year-old Joseph Hollingsworth of Tickfaw after he was found to be in possession of nearly \$7,000 worth of stolen property.

TPSO said that early last week detectives received a Crime Stoppers Tip regarding Hollingsworth committing burglaries throughout southeast Louisiana. At the time of the tip, detectives were unaware of any cases involving Hollingsworth within Tangipahoa Parish.

This past weekend, the Picayune Police Department published a press release asking the public to help identify the suspect of a Walmart burglary. According to the details of the article, the suspect was seen on security cameras going in and out of the store on June 27, stealing items in a seven-hour period.

According to investigators with the Picayune Police Department, the suspect dressed as a Walmart employee and walked through the store during business hours. At some point during the day, he disabled the fire exit in order to return overnight and enter the store.

As detectives with the Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office began coordinating with the Picayune Police Department, they were able to verify that the suspect vehicle in the Walmart security footage matched the vehicle described in the tip, and detectives conducted a search warrant of Hollingsworth's home on U.S. Highway 51 in Tickfaw.

Upon arrival, Hollingsworth provided a full confession and was wearing the same shoes seen in the Walmart security footage. Also located was the Walmart employee uniform he was wearing during the burglary, according to TPSO.

See CRIME, page A1

# Future service in doubt, but devoted recyclers persist

By ALLISON ALLSOP  
*LSU Membership School News Service*

HAMMOND — Last Sunday morning, cars flowed into the city maintenance facility to drop off aluminum, cardboard, paper and plastic for recycling. Workers emptied the vehicles, taking occasional breaks to pack down the pile of everything that had been collected.

By the end of the morning, 131 cars and trucks had rolled in to drop off enough materials to fill a big blue dumpster. The city collects recyclables twice a month, but the city council is considering stopping the service because of a new, higher cost contract to collect garbage and keep the recycling service going.

Last September, the city negotiated a contract with WastePro that is more expensive than the previous agreement. Since then, the city has been covering the difference in cost.

City workers Robert "Red" Taylor and Jermaine Aaron, who are responsible for unloading the cars at the recycling service, agree that the residents who use the service are passionate about it. They



Robert "Red" Taylor and Jermaine Aaron unload a vehicle during Saturday's recycling drop-off service.

believe that residents will be upset if the service ends. Virginia Campo, a Hammond resident of 50 years, uses the services about once a month. She said that she does

not want to see these services eliminated. "I'm afraid if we don't recycle we're going to have land-fill problems," Campo said. Jeffrey Starnes, a Hammond

resident who uses the service twice a month, said, "I would be disappointed if they did [discontinue the service] because I think myself and others gain a lot from it."

Joy Peterson, who resides just outside the Hammond city limits, said that eliminating these services would be

See RECYCLE, page A1

# Possible tornado flips camper from campsite

By RICHARD MEEK  
*Staff Writer*

Sitting in the coolness of his truck, away from the brutal sight, Darryl Dahlquist surveyed what was left of his camper, mourning what he had lost but grateful for what he gained.

Eyewitnesses in the area reported seeing a tornado touch down at Singh Campground in Hammond on Wednesday shortly after 7 p.m., which lifted Dahlquist's camper from its campsite and blew

it two sites over, leaving it tumbled on its side, a total loss. Fortunately, while the camper was airborne, Dahlquist was well out of harm's way, sitting with his wife who was awaiting surgery at Our Lady of the Lake Hospital in Baton Rouge.

"If my wife had not had surgery, I would have been in there, upside down," said Dahlquist, a Lafayette resident who spends Monday through Friday in Hammond working for the United States Department of Agriculture at

the Sanderson Farms plant. "If I had been in there I probably would not have come out," he said.

Although the National Weather Service in Slidell and a Tangipahoa Parish official said there were no reports of a tornado in the Hammond area Wednesday night, some residents spotted a funnel cloud as it touched down in the campground and passed over a nearby empty field before lifting.



A piece of LSU memorabilia looks forlornly at other collectibles which were damaged when a storm flipped a camper in a Hammond campground Wednesday.

See TORNADO, page A1

# THE DAILY STAR

TUESDAY, July 18, 2023 • Vol. 64, Issue 84 • 12 PAGES • 75¢

## SLU team monitoring Lake Maurepas

By RICHARD MEEK  
Staff Writer

As Air Products continues with the permitting process for its carbon dioxide sequestration project in Lake Maurepas, at least for the next two years a team from Southeastern Louisiana University will be monitoring the lake for any unusual changes.

SLU professor Dr. Kyle

Piller said SLU has been hired to be the independent biological team who will monitor the fish community, shrimp and clams.

But the scope of the monitoring will extend far beyond just aquatic life and will include wetland plant growth, sediment changes in terms of land loss, ecology collection data and other potential hazards to the fragile wetlands. Additionally, stress metrics

in alligators will be monitored using a matrix that will be determined from extracting blood to determine if the gators are under stress.

An SLU chemist will also be monitoring the chemical composition of the water column and chemicals in the sediments, particularly in relation to any dredging that occurs should Air Products bring in equipment when and if sequestration begins, Piller

said. He added that dredging stirs up the sediment at the bottom of the lake.

Outreach and education is also part of the project.

Governmental agencies such as the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are also involved.

"As you might expect working with a global com-

pany, government and state agencies, nothing proceeds quickly," Piller said.

He said the contract with Air Products was initially intended to start in January but was not finalized until late March. Then the university began to hire up to 18 people, mainly post-doctorate researchers, to work on the project.

"See LAKE, page A2



## Suspect shot during drug search

The Hammond Police Department Criminal Investigations Division is leading the investigation of an officer-involved shooting that occurred Saturday morning.

At the end of the investigation, the facts will be presented to the 21st Judicial District Attorney's Office for review, according to an HPD release.

Per HPD policy, all officers involved have been placed on administrative leave, and an internal administrative investigation will also be conducted.

See SUSPECT, page A2

## Urban Market Experience boosts Black businesses

By J'BRIONNE HELAIRE  
LSU Marshing School News Service

In 2018, Asia Dillon, 31, was determined to help her younger sister, Amyra, soothe her chapped and peeling lips. Amyra had eczema, and the usual brands caused her lips to feel like they were burning.

Asia, who loved science and mixing things together, researched natural ingredients and was able to create a formula that moisturized and soothed her sister's lips. That success led Asia, with help from her mother, Latrice, to create a business, now named Sassy A Cosmetics.

For the first two years, the mother-daughter duo did what they could to grow the business. But in 2020, they attended an expo, sponsored by a business development company, called Urban Market Experience (UMX), and learned there is more to entrepreneurship than creating a successful formula.

UMX has helped the Dillons with the financial components of operating a successful business, such as writing grants, creating a limited liability company, or LLC, and securing the appropriate insurance.

"I would say we have seen about a 60 percent increase in clientele since we started working with UMX," Latrice Dillon said.

UMX has assisted more than 1,000 small businesses and entrepreneurs in Louisiana, primarily on the Northshore, since its founding in 2020, according to Executive Director Brandi Jones, a Hammond native.

The business development company was created by Hammond's community leaders shortly after the murder of George Floyd in May



Lisa Pleasant, co-owner of an herbal remedy business called MGV, allows customers to smell her natural soaps at this year's Juneleventh Freedom Day at the Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum. She is a loyal client of UMX.



Asia Dillon is the young CEO of Sassy A Cosmetics. She says UMX has helped her business grow.

2020. Community leaders, including Geno Smith and Brandi Jones, reacted to the ousting of emotions in the community by calling a meeting on June 1 to discuss ways to bring calm.

The expo was one of the ideas that survived the brainstorm. The committee began

planning a seven-day event that would include panels with police officers, doctors and lawyers, and a showcase by Black business owners and entrepreneurs.

Despite the pandemic, the first UMX Expo, held at the Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum, was a

success with more than 100 vendors participating, Jones said. Both sides of the museum were filled with members of the community.

The committee then decided to continue the initiative of serving local entrepreneurs and small businesses and named Jones as the ex-

ecutive director. UMX began offering business development classes free of charge to those interested in 2021. The classes were facilitated by experts in the topic, Jones said.

Through cooperative endeavors with different companies that have similar missions, UMX aims to provide its clients with free service as much as possible.

But UMX also offers fee-based consultations for grant writing, business logos, website designs and much more. The consultations vary in price, but Jones' goal for 2025 is to be able to provide these services to business owners free of charge.

Latrice Dillon attributes the success of Sassy A Cosmetics to the business development classes and other services offered by UMX. While Asia is the face and brand of Sassy A Cosmetics, her mother handles the paperwork and business side of their operation.

"The classes help you to look into the future, so we changed our name from Sassy A Lip Gloss to Sassy A Cosmetics," Latrice Dillon said.

Sassy A Cosmetics now offers a variety of lip products, including gloss, glitter, pencils, scrubs, lipsticks and oils.

Lisa Pleasant, an entrepreneur, is another loyal client of UMX. She is co-owner of a company called MGV, an herbal and natural remedies storefront in Slidell.

She attended the organization's classes about finances, grants and marketing and left with lots of information and ideas. From the classes she was able to derive the official name for her and her

See BUSINESS, page A2

## Parish council precinct mergers, canvass complete

AMITE — Audi Mathew and the Tangipahoa Parish Registrar of Voters Office completed the annual canvass and the final round of precinct mergers for the Tangipahoa Parish Council that was approved on July 10, 2023.

If a registered voter had a change to their precinct,

Video Story by Layne Miller for the Eunice News: <https://youtu.be/pucUI0qDQfw>



**Eunice celebrates Juneteenth**

# THE DAILY STAR

TUESDAY, June 27, 2023 • Vol. 64, Issue 76 • 12 PAGES • 75¢

## Gubernatorial candidates speak to farmers

By LAUREN MADDOEN  
LSD Morning School News Service

Before the evening teleconference Friday, the Louisiana Farm Bureau convention in New Orleans, six gubernatorial candidates took the stage and told a room full of farmers what they most wanted to hear. They promised to invest in Louisiana and support agriculture including preserving the state's tax subsidies for farming.

At least that's true for six of the seven candidates; Attorney General Jeff Landry was missing in action. "Our priorities are mixed up in our leadership in this state, of course one of them is the attorney general who's not here," said attorney Hunter Landy, a political independent from Lake Charles. "He doesn't do his day job either, much less come to the farms that we're having," said Landy.

The crowd was mostly silent, until Republican business lobbyist Stephen Waggoner handed the moderator, journalist Greg Hibson, a koozie he grabbed from the Landry campaign table outside, suggesting Hibson question the koozie in place of Landry. A chuckle rippled through the audience, then silence resumed.

While there was unanimity on farm issues, two candidates, Democrat Shawn Wilson, the former transportation secretary, and Landy, declined to commit to letting the temporary \$0.45 state sales tax roll off the books in two years despite the recent run of budget surpluses.

"It's important to understand where those dollars go," said Wilson. "...which you don't often get out of Baton Rouge is talking about what's not going to be done with those government dollars when they disappear."



Six of the current seven candidates raising for governor of Louisiana this fall speak at the Louisiana Farm Bureau convention in New Orleans Friday.

Waggoner said, "If we do our job right, elect the right leader, we go in and grow our economy so we have economic growth, you shouldn't need to extend that temporary tax."

Landy compared himself as a trial lawyer to David in the David and Goliath Bible story and suggested he would have "godly priorities" as governor.

Later, it became a debate over

See CANDIDATES, page A2

## Hammond council clerk publishes 3rd book

By LAUREN MADDOEN  
LSD Morning School News Service

In a hot summer day in 1990, a woman gave birth to God. Now, 33 years later, she continues living in this promise — and has written three books about it.

The Hammond City Council clerk, Lisa White-Cockerham, 58, made this hot summer day promise, and she does more than attend bi-weekly council meetings and keep record of all the proceedings. She's a mother of two daughters, grandmother to twin granddaughters, minister, friend and three-time self-published author.

See BOOK, page A2



Lisa White-Cockerham shows the books she has penned and published, including her newest, "An Inextinguishable Hunger for God: Reading in His Gaze."

## FUMC Hammond to present 'Fiddler'

Audiences will take a trip to 1905 Ukraine in First United Methodist Church Hammond's Wing and a Prayer Players' upcoming production of the "Fiddler on the Roof," with lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, music by Jerry Bock and book by Joseph Stein.

The show follows the Jewish dairyman Tevye (played by Chris Lily) his wife Golde (Liz Addington and Sandra Holley) and his five daughters, Tzeitel (Jessica Blaine), Hodel (Trinity Melvin), Chava (Kirsten Melvin), Bielka and Shprintze (shared roles played by Beth Asperger, Olivia Cochran, Ryan Hoover, Makayla Hernandez, Miriah Hernandez, Isabella Pellicchino and Corrina Pellicchino) as their lives become challenged by changing times, cherished traditions and their deep religious faith.

Performances are Friday, June 30; Saturday, July 1; Thursday, July 6; and Friday, July 7, at 7:30 p.m., with matinee performances on Sunday, July 2, and Saturday, July 8, at 2:30 p.m.

There is no admission charge, but a free will offering will be taken, a portion going to UMCOR-Ukraine Relief and the Louisiana Methodist at Children's Home. A nursery will be available.



Richard Holley as Lazar Wolf and Chris Lily as Tevye say goodbye as LAZAR leaves Anafanika for Chicago in a scene from FUMC Hammond's production of "Fiddler on the Roof," which opens Friday, June 30, at 7:30 p.m.

See FIDDLER, page A2

Tangi Today

## TPSO seeks burglary suspect

Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help finding 34-year-old Charles Anthony Hagans of Hammond, who has been identified as the suspect of a burglary at the Dollar General Store on Louisiana Highway 22 east of Ponchatoula.

TPSO said that, on June 18, Hagans forced entry into the front door of the Dollar General Store on Highway 22 near Ponchatoula High School around 3:30 a.m. Security footage shows Hagans throwing a rock through the front glass, at which time he crawls through the door and proceeds to the cigarette case.

Hagans is seen trying to break open the case by punching the glass but is unable to do so. Hagans then retrieves the rock used to break the front door and throws it into the cigarette case to gain entry, police said.

After gathering an arsenal of merchandise, Hagans exits the store and leaves on foot. Through the course of the investigation, Hagans now has an outstanding warrant for burglary of a business.

TPSO is asking anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of Hagans to contact Detective Bobby Bradberry at 985-902-2045, or, if you wish to remain anonymous, please call Crime Stoppers of Tangipahoa's anonymous tip line at 1-800-554-5245 or visit [www.tangicrimestoppers.com](http://www.tangicrimestoppers.com) and click on the P3 Tips icon or Submit A Tip. You may be eligible for a cash reward.

## Juvenile arrested in four-wheeler theft

TPSO Chief Jimmy Travis reported that a juvenile was arrested Saturday afternoon in connection with the theft of a four-wheeler June 17.

Travis said the juvenile was booked into the Florida Parish Juvenile Detention Center.

The four-wheeler was also recovered.

TPSO said that after midnight on June 17, the suspect walked into the open garage of a Carolina Court residence in Ponchatoula and stole the owner's four-wheeler.

Security footage showed the subject to be a white male wearing a baseball cap and no shirt.

# THE DAILY STAR

TUESDAY, July 11, 2023 • Vol. 64, Issue 81 • 12 PAGES • 75¢

## No-skirt policy may be delayed

By RICHARD MEEK  
Staff Writer

A controversial proposal by the Tangipahoa Parish School Board to ban skirts for female students in fifth grade and above will likely be delayed for a year, according to board member Rose Dominguez.

Dominguez told The Daily Star late Monday afternoon that she does not believe enough board members will vote for the change to close

to the start of the new school year.

Additionally, Superintendent Melissa Stillely revealed to board members results of a recent survey showing that district principals were split in their support of the policy, with 51 percent opposing it and 49 percent in favor.

"We will likely not (approve) it tomorrow night, but it is not off the table," Dominguez said. "It's not something that is going to disappear unless students

start adhering to the policy." The board is scheduled to have their regular meeting at 6 p.m. today at the school system's central office at 59656 Palestine Road, Amite.

Stillely could not be reached for comment. In June the board's policy committee unanimously approved the proposal which would ban skirts and shorts for females from fifth grade through their senior year. The proposal has drawn criticism from many parents for myriad

reasons, including religious.

"The religious part really hits home with us," said Rebecca Soley, whose family is evangelical. "Every day we get up to get dressed, our (skirts) are an expression of our worship, our modesty."

Soley, a Hammond resident, talked to the majority of the school members to voice her opposition and said some have listened to her concerns. She is hopeful enough will reconsider their original vote and approve the proposal.

School officials have said students will be able to apply for exemptions at their individual schools, but at this point no guidelines have been established.

"To request an exemption, we have a strong opposition against that," Soley said. "I do not feel I should have to fill out an exemption for our freedom to worship."

Dominguez said principals had approached the

See PRICY, page A2



## Sheriff's office seeks theft suspect

Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help finding 44-year-old Samuel Wayne Cutrer of Hammond, who has been identified as the suspect in a theft which occurred in January.



T P S O said the theft occurred at a residence on Macedonia Road in Ponchatoula, where Cutrer removed property from a residence which included gaming systems, gaming accessories and clothing.

The total value of the items taken was over \$1,500.

TPSO is asking anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of Cutrer to contact Detective Ricky Madhough at 985-902-2040, or, if you wish to remain anonymous, please call Crime Stoppers of Tangipahoa's anonymous tip line at 1-800-554-5245 or visit [www.tangicrimestoppers.com](http://www.tangicrimestoppers.com) and click on the P3 Tips icon or Submit A Tip. You may be eligible for a cash reward.

### Help needed to ID hanging lines

It's been almost two years since Hurricane Ida ripped through Tangipahoa Parish, and Parish President Robby Miller is asking for the public's help identifying the many hanging utility lines that remain across the area.



Photo courtesy of TRACC

Tangipahoa Reshaping Attitudes for Community Change, TRACC coalition, held its annual town hall meeting regarding youth substance use in the parish on Friday, June 23, with over 45 guests in attendance.

## TRACC coalition aims to lower vape use

By POET WOLFE  
LSU Maritime School News Service

The coalition is seeking to reduce substance use among Tangipahoa Parish youth — with a particular focus on the risks of e-cigarettes and their striking rise in popularity.

A 2020 report by the State Epidemiology Workgroup found that approximately 22 percent of Tangipahoa Parish youth in sixth through

high school used alcohol in their lifetime, compared to the state youth average of 24 percent.

Electronic cigarettes have been used by 18 percent of Tangipahoa youth — only about a 4 percent decrease from the state youth average for e-cigarette usage.

Tangipahoa Reshaping Attitudes for Community Change (TRACC) is a coalition that works directly with law enforcement to stop these per-

centages from rising.

In 2008, TRACC launched with the mission to reduce impaired driving. Tangipahoa Parish's rate of impaired driving crashes and violent crimes linked to alcohol use was in the top 10 of Louisiana parishes, according to data during that time.

Since then, the coalition's goal is to spread awareness about the risks of tobacco, marijuana, fentanyl and opioids. TRACC looks at

community calendars for events — like prom and graduation season — which often involve underage drinking. From there, the coalition requests an increased presence of DUI saturation patrol and Juvenile Underage Drinking Enforcement at the events.

TRACC Director Bridget Bailey says that substance abuse in Tangipahoa Parish stems from community acceptance.

"If it's not looked at nega-

tively or it's not frowned upon to do it, it's looked at as being acceptable," Bailey said.

Paula Zachary, a representative of TRACC and Mothers Against Drunk Driving, has been directly impacted by the risks of drunk driving. An alcohol-related crash killed her son over a decade ago. Since then, Zachary wants to spread awareness about the risks of substance use.

See TRACC, page A2



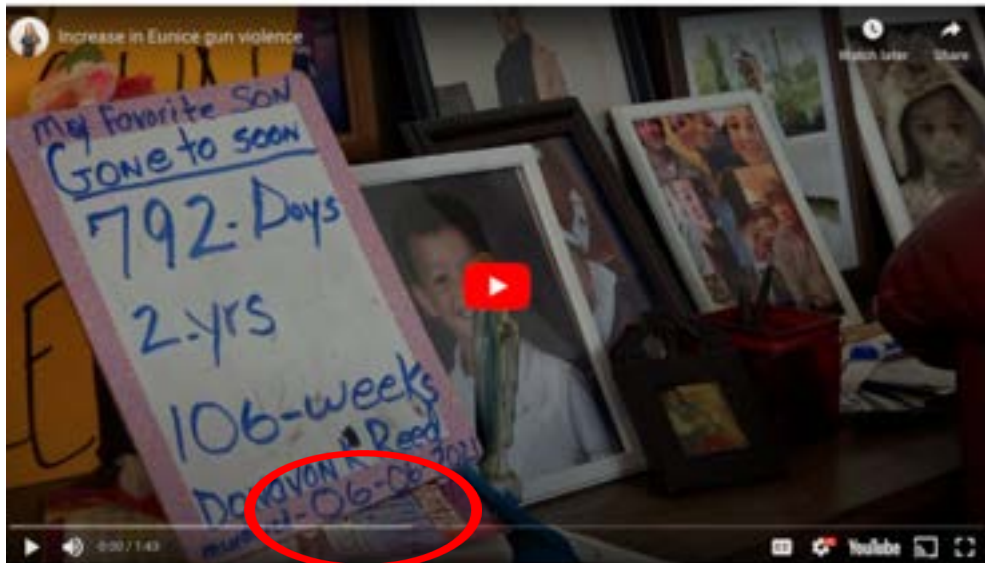
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## Gun violence in Eunice

First verified on Tuesday, July 6, 2021



Mississippi News Service reporter and Eunice native Layne Miller interviews victims of gun violence and Police Chief Kyle LeBlond.

action  
Eunice

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# THE DAILY STAR

THURSDAY, July 27, 2023 • Vol. 64, Issue 87 • 14 PAGES • 75¢

## Council tosses garbage proposal

By RICHARD MEEK  
Staff Writer

A proposed garbage rate increase in Hammond was reduced to rubbish Tuesday night after the City Council voted down the measure.

For it to appear before the council for additional discussion and another potential vote, a council member would have to re-introduce the measure and the process would begin anew. As a result of the vote, the council must now address what is estimated to be a \$500,000 shortfall in the recently adopted budget. By

voting down the measure, the city is on the hook for the increase which was incurred when a contract was signed with WastePro this past fall to replace AmWaste.

"If we want to continue to pick up the tab (as the city has been doing since October) and not pass it on to the customers, we need to amend this budget to the

amount of about 500,000 (dollars)," Councilwoman Carlee Gonzalez said as she held up a binder containing the budget.



## Leaders call for answers in shooting

By RICHARD MEEK  
Staff Writer

Hammond City Councilman Devon Wells continues to seek answers in an officer-involved shooting in his district that left a Hammond man hospitalized.

On July 15, Lisenell Jackson was shot as officers attempted to serve a narcotics warrant. Jackson suffered facial injuries and remains hospitalized.

Jackson has retained criminal rights attorney Deryl Washington of Dallas.

During the council meeting Tuesday night, an impassioned Wells said he does not know what is taking place or what is going on regarding the incident. He said officials talk about technology, such as body cameras and radios, but he is frustrated that still nothing seems to be forthcoming from the city.

"I don't expect the chief (Edwin Berggren) to come talk to me," said Wells, who represents District 3. "I expect the mayor (Pete Panepinto) or the second person in charge, at least tell me something. If it all doesn't tell me nothing, what am I supposed to tell the neighborhood?"

"Because what I see from what happened, from what I heard, that could be anybody in District 3. Get your door knocked down, and get shot."

Berggren had no comment, and Panepinto could not be reached for comment on Wednesday.

A city spokesperson has previously said that HPD will mount an internal investigation and the officers involved have been placed on administrative leave, as is protocol for all officer-involved shootings.

Mike Showers, director of the Tangipahoa Parish NAACP, said the silence from the administration "further angers people."

"People want answers as to what happened," Showers said.

The arrest report obtained by the Daily Star does not identify the officer involved in the shooting nor

See COUNCIL, page A2

See TAMM, page A2

## Loranger teen dies in ATV crash

Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office reported Tuesday the death of a teenager following a single-vehicle crash.

According to TPSO, deputies responded to Gliderport Road shortly after 2 p.m. on Monday, July 24, following an all-terrain vehicle crash which ultimately claimed the life of a 14-year-old boy and seriously injured a 13-year-old passenger.

The initial investigation revealed the two teenagers were operating an ATV on Gliderport Road and lost control leaving the roadway. The ATV struck a culvert and several fence posts where it then ignited into flames.

The mother of the deceased as well as a passerby attempted to save the 14-year-old but were unable due to the extent of the fire. The mother sustained serious burns and was transported to St. Tammany Parish Hospital for treatment, TPSO said.

The 13-year-old was transported to North Oaks Medical Center where he was taken into surgery for severe injuries. After undergoing surgery and being stabilized, he was transported to Children's Hospital where he will remain for further treatment.

The crash remains under investigation by the Sheriff's Office Major Crash Investigation Team but speed is believed to be a factor, TPSO said.

The names of the victims will not be released as they are minors.

## CAMPERS CANOE ZEMURRAY



Young campers canoe with Hammond Recreation Department on Zemurray Pond last Wednesday, July 19.

## Local farm partners with St. Helena Parish 4-H youth

By MADELINE PISTORIUS  
LSU-Monroe School News Service

A few months out of every year, young people in the Helena Parish spend their time at Muse 3 Farm brushing, feeding and preparing their animals for 4-H livestock shows and competitions.

For several students, this is possible thanks to a local partnership between the 4-H club and Muse 3 Farm.

Senior Kason Bickham, 14, works with and shows a pig.

At home, Kason doesn't have the space to keep a large animal. This reality would normally prevent Kason and several of his peers from participating in livestock competitions.

However, a few years ago, Muse 3 Farm began sponsoring students by providing livestock for them to work

with. Members of the 4-H club routinely visit the farm to groom these animals and prepare them for the show areas.

Chris Muse said he and his brothers Bonnell and Allen created Muse 3 with the intention of giving back to their community.

"We provide the land, the space, the animals and the facilities that they use to train those kids," Chris said. This opportunity created a

shift in the 4-H club, one that St. Helena 4-H Director Angela Myles has been proud to witness.

"Under my leadership, this was our first year being able to bring home a grand champion and a reserve," Myles said.

In fact, seven students were sponsored this past year with the help of Muse 3 Farm.

"Every day after school, they would come to our farm," Chris said. "We would

help them with the animals, help them with their showmanship, take them to the shows and work with them at each of the livestock shows while they were showing the animals."

Myles indicated that the partnership allows these students to discover their full potential.

"When some of the kids started, they were scared and

See FARM, page A2

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TOP STORY

## Local farm partners with 4-H youth

Reporting by Madeline Pistorius, 4-H Membership School News Service for The Daily Star Jul 26, 2023



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# THE DAILY STAR

WEEKEND EDITION

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, July 22-23, 2023

Vol. 64, Issue 86 • 14 PAGES • \$1.75

## Layrisson responds to claims about PD

By RICHARD MEEK  
Staff Writer



LAYRISSON

Ponchatoula Police Chief Bry Layrisson said he is proud of his 25 years of service to the community and that he has "never had any complaints of racism" against him.

Layrisson's comments came in response to a story The Daily Star published July 15 in which former Ponchatoula officer Melvin McGary said racism was prevalent in the department, pointing out that one racial epithet and another derogatory racial term had

been used in the past by other officers. He also alleged that racially offensive photos of Black women and one of a Black man had been passed around the department.

Layrisson pointed out that the City of Ponchatoula had received four notices of investigations from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

But the EEOC had dropped all four of those cases, Lay-

risson said during an Oct. 17 meeting with Tangipahoa NAACP President Michael Showers and local attorney Vanessa Williams, one of McGary's attorneys for his defamation suit against the department.

Layrisson had met with Showers and Williams that day to discuss employees' concerns.

The police chief said he informed Showers and Williams the investigations had been closed in "less than 30 days."

An EEOC notice of dismissal dated April 28, 2021, said

the dismissal "does not mean the claims have merit."

Showers told The Daily Star that he and Williams met with Layrisson to inform the chief that the three of them could hopefully handle the situation at the lowest level possible.

"Subsequently, that did not happen," Showers said.

Captain Albert Sharp, another former officer, was identified as the individual who had circulated the offensive photos, McGary said he met with Layrisson concerning those actions.

In his comments to The Daily Star, the police chief said

he told McGary and Captain Jeff Miller, who is also Black, they had the authority to discipline the offending officer for any violation.

"However, McGary and Miller refused to take any disciplinary action against their subordinates," Layrisson said. "McGary committed neglect of duty for failing to take comprehensive action."

In a report of an internal affairs investigation dated May 26, 2021, Layrisson said during a May 17, 2021, meeting he had notified Sharp

See PD, page A3



## Hammond PD shooting investigation continues

By RICHARD MEEK  
Staff Writer

An investigation into an officer-involved shooting in which a Hammond man was shot is continuing, according to Hammond police and city officials.

The suspect, Lionel Jackson, continues to recover from injuries he sustained during the July 15 shooting. Jackson has retained criminal rights attorney Daryl Washington of Dallas.

In the arrest report, which The Daily Star obtained through a public records request, the identity of officers involved in the shooting was not released.

However, Detective Ramsey Domiano wrote that on July 15, Hammond Police Department narcotics officers served a search warrant at Jackson's residence on Natchez Street. During the course of serving the warrant, the report stated personnel with HPD discharged a weapon.

The subject of the search was struck in the neck and transported to North Oaks Medical Center, according to the report.

No other details as to what led to the shooting, if Jackson resisted officers, or if he brandished a weapon and threatened officers, were provided.

The report also did not specify if officers announced their presence before entering the residence.

Washington said that based on the information that has been provided to him, he believes there was "simply no reason for deadly force" to have been used. Washington said he has been told that Jackson was asleep in his residence when the officers entered.

According to the attorney, Jackson was not armed, nor did he make any gestures that would make it appear he was armed.

Washington said Jackson is fortunate that he survived but added he is facing an extended recovery time.

Washington is calling for HPD to release body

See INVESTIGATION, page A3

## Hammond man wins in 'Hot Wheels' TV contest

By POET WOLFE

Staff Writer

A Hammond man has been selected a winner in NBC's "Hot Wheels: Ultimate Challenge" TV show with a car celebrating his love for Louisiana.

Nick "The Professor" Harrison was named winner in the show that aired Tuesday for his Chevrolet Monte Carlo which had been tricked out to resemble his dream Hot Wheels car. He'll get \$25,000 and perhaps a chance to compete for a bigger prize.

"It was just a very emotional time," Harrison said in an interview after the show aired. "Because it's a family thing. Winning that episode and winning the cash prize goes towards providing for my family."

The new NBC series, hosted by car aficionado Ruffedge Wood, pits two contestants against each other. Each chooses an ordinary car that holds a significant meaning to their life. The contestants then



Nick "The Professor" Harrison, right, and Ruffedge Wood, host of NBC's "Hot Wheels: Ultimate Challenge," sit in Harrison's Chevy Monte Carlo for which he was named a winner Tuesday on national television.

partner with "The Car Pool" — a team of car experts — to transform the ordinary vehicle into their dream Hot Wheels cars.

Terry Crews, an actor, television host and former football player, and other celebrity guest judges work with Wood and car experts Hertzsch E-

gove Jr. and Dale Elzeboth to determine which transformed car is better. The winner takes home \$25,000.

From there, three winners

are selected to compete in a two-part finale to design a new car. The final winner will receive \$50,000, and the winning car will become an official Hot Wheels die-cast car.

The Hot Wheels challenge wasn't Harrison's first time on television. He has been featured on CBS's "The Greatest Home Videos" and "WWII: Friday Night SmackDown" on Fox. He's also on the radio in New Orleans for ESPN. And he's a content creator who has garnered 1.5 million followers on TikTok and over 250,000 followers on Instagram.

Harrison had no prior experience designing cars. But the NBC show's advertisement online seeking contestants drove him to apply, he said, because of his childhood love for Hot Wheels cars.

He said every detail of his winning car has a strong connection to his family and home.

Harrison grew up in north

See WHEELS, page A3

## Project manager Havis to run for Tangipahoa Parish Council

Project manager and entrepreneur Joseph Havis has announced his candidacy for the District 4 seat on the Tangipahoa Parish Council.



HAVIS

The Independent native and lifelong resident of Tangipahoa Parish is running for the seat that will be vacated at the end of this term by longtime Councilman Carlo Bruno, who announced last week that he is not seeking re-election.

Havis said his decision to

run was not made lightly. "God laid it on my heart to run for this seat, and He has laid everything up in my life for me to be dedicated to doing this," Havis said.

In the process of making this decision, Havis started attending Parish Council meetings more than a year ago.

"I have been listening, learning and building a positive relationship with our incumbent Parish Council members, as well as with key members of the Parish Government team," Havis said, adding that this was time well-spent. "I wanted to be proactive and take steps

so that my learning curve would be minimal. This prep time means that I will be ready to go to work immediately after I'm elected."

Havis said his professional life has also prepared him to work as an effective parish councilman. In his role as a project manager for an engineering firm, Havis is responsible for the financial performance of the projects assigned to him.

"I manage \$20 million annually in revenue for our company, plus I'm responsible for personnel assignments, subcontractor costs, and I am expected to build

long-term value with our customers," Havis said.

In his "off-time," Havis and his wife Tina own and operate a popular Hammond restaurant, Cheviot's.

"My wife handles the day-to-day activities, and I manage the administrative duties," Havis said.

As District 4 Councilman, Havis said he will listen to the residents and keep their concerns at the forefront.

"I plan to continue to build on the great work that has been set forth by Mr. Bruno and assure the completion of projects he started, like helping coordinate the merger of

the Eastern Heights Water Works into the Tangipahoa Water District," Havis said.

"I'm looking forward to continuing his vision in the construction of the new Lorange Library," he said.

"We will continue his work in identifying canals like Sweetwater Creek and Davis Branch that are outside the drainage district and need to be remediated after Hurricane Ida."

"I'm also looking forward to the completion of two water towers — one in Lorange and one on the west side of

See HAVIS, page A3

# Local family needs donor for 14-year-old on dialysis

By Allison Allgood, LSU-Monroe School News Service Jul 28, 2012



Edgar Mendez plays with Legos following his dialysis treatment Wednesday. Allison Allgood, LSU-Monroe School News Service

INDEPENDENCE -- Legos and school are the two things that help one 14-year-old boy get through treatment for kidney disease.

Edgar Mendez, whose family has lived in Independence his whole life, receives dialysis three times a week and needs a kidney transplant. His mother, Isabel Mendez, said he was diagnosed with kidney disease while she was still pregnant with him. At the time, doctors could not predict when it would begin to affect him.

Like many 14-year-olds, Edgar likes to play with Legos. He will build any and every set, as evidenced by his latest creation - a Harry Potter set. But when asked if he liked the movies or books, he said he only liked the Legos.

To go along with his preteen mentality, Mendez said that her son's favorite word right now is "weird." To him, everything and everyone is weird at his age.

However, unlike many kids, one thing he does not find weird is school. Edgar likes going to school. Mendez said that his teacher is the driving factor behind that. Edgar, who has autism, is shy and distant with new people, said his mother. However, once he has been around a person for a while, he opens up.

Edgar said that he likes coloring at school the most.

But due to dialysis, Edgar can only attend school twice a week. Mendez hopes to find a living donor for Edgar so he can resume a normal schedule and go back to school every day.

Edgar went through his first 13 years without any major problems from his kidney disease. But at 13, his kidney function began to decrease.

"He used to love to be outside," Mendez said. "Now, we have to push him. 'Come on. Let's go do something.'"

Mendez said he would reply that he was too tired to go outside. She said she knew her son's kidneys had begun to fail when she saw this shift.

Doctors tried one medication to slow the decline of his kidney function, but that did not work, Mendez said. Now, just a year later, Edgar receives dialysis treatment three times a week.

"I don't even know, and I don't want to ask," Mendez said about how long her son can live on dialysis. "I'm afraid to even ask the doctors."

Kidneys are responsible for removing waste products from blood. However, in cases like Edgar's, the kidneys are not able to do this job. Dialysis cycles a person's blood through a machine to remove the waste products.

Mendez brings Edgar from their home in Independence to Children's Hospital in New Orleans for each treatment.

To pass the time, Edgar brings his Legos with him.

Edgar's kidney disease has led to much discomfort in his and his family's life. Edgar has to have a catheter in at all times for his dialysis treatment. His mother said that he once pulled it out. As a result, she does not leave his side at night.

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## TODAY'S E-EDITION



## NEWSLETTERS

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## LATEST NEWS

- Parishwide names Disaster, Money honored
- Subject arrested in St. Helena arson investigation
- ITP hit and on life 3
- PACKING UP FOR SCHOOLS
- Daily Star wins general excellence, other LMA awards
- Parishwide gives State of the City address

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## Facebook Posts by our Student Social Media Team


 **The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)** June 21 · 🌐

In case you missed it, here's a link to the full story that ran in yesterday's paper about Tangipahoa's Juneteenth celebration this year.




HAMMONDSTAR.COM

**Juneteenth event marks freedom, promotes culture**  
HAMMOND — The Hammond area celebrated Juneteenth Freedom Day under a three-way ...

 **The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)** July 18 at 1:02 PM · 🌐

Meet Asia Dillon, the young CEO of Sassy A. Cosmetics. Read the story below to learn how a business development organization, called UMX, helped her business grow.

[https://www.hammondstar.com/.../article\\_f859d952-78d4...](https://www.hammondstar.com/.../article_f859d952-78d4...)



Play 0:12 / 0:17

👍❤️ 2

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share



The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)

June 27 · 🌐

...

In this article, Lisa White-Cockerham, author of the book "An Insatiable Hunger for God: Resting in his Gaze," shares how writing for herself turned into a journey of self-discovery and expression. White-Cockerham is also the author of the books "Wounded Butterfly" and "I Feel Like Going On". Read more about how White-Cockerham's experiences inspired the content of her books. Her books can be found on Amazon.



HAMMONDSTAR.COM

### Hammond council clerk publishes 3rd book

On a hot summer day in 1990, a woman gave her life to God. Now, 33 years later, she conti...

👍 13

2 comments 1 share



The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)

July 11 at 10:12 AM · 🌐

...

Electronic cigarettes have been used by 18 percent of Tangipahoa youth. The alcohol and drug coalition, Tangipahoa Reshaping Attitudes for Community Change (TRACC), is trying to stop this percentage from rising. The coalition affirms that the community's acceptance of drugs and alcohol directly contribute to the substance abuse in Tangipahoa Parish. Read more to learn about the members of TRACC, and how their own personal tragedies led them to being members of this coalition.



HAMMONDSTAR.COM

### TRACC aims to lower vape use

An alcohol and drug coalition is working to reduce substance use among Tangipahoa Paris...



The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)

10h · 🌐



The Non-Profit Organization 4-H works in partnership with Muse 3 Farms to allow the youth of St. Helena Parish to work directly with farm animals. These children are members of the 4-H organization and help prepare these animals for the 4-H Livestock competition. To understand more about this program watch the video, and/or click the link to read the story. And please comment below your best cow names while like and sharing the video.  
<https://www.hammondstar.com/news/local-...> **See more**



The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)

June 27 · 🌐



Six of the seven Louisiana governor candidates spoke at the Louisiana Farm Bureau convention in New Orleans on Friday. Attorney General Jeff Landry was the only governor candidate to not be present at the convention. The governor candidates' discussion pressed on without Attorney General Landry, and it included an improvised comedic bit about Landry's absence, one politician making biblical analogies about himself that avid Sunday School attendees would enjoy and critiques of... **See more**



HAMMONDSTAR.COM

### Gubernatorial candidates speak to farmers

Before the evening talent contest Friday at the Louisiana Farm Bureau convention in New Orleans, six gubernatorial candidates took the stage and told a room full of farmers what they



## “Man on the Street” Interviews by our Student Social Media Team

 **The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)** July 3 at 1:30 PM · 🌐

The sun may be determined to burn a hole through the Earth during this current heat wave, but that will not stop residents of Hammond from celebrating The 4th of July. Comment below, or tag us in your 4th of July post to share with us how you will be celebrating this upcoming holiday. Please make sure you practice firework safety and most importantly stay hydrated during your celebration.



Play 0:09 / 0:38

You, Christopher Drew and 3 others 1 share



The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)

2d · 🌐



The sun may be determined to burn a hole through the Earth during this current heat wave, but that will not stop residents of Hammond from celebrating The 4th of July. Comment below, or tag us in your 4th of July post to share with us how you will be celebrating this upcoming holiday. Please make sure you practice firework safety and most importantly stay hydrated during your celebration.





The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)

July 14 at 1:30 PM · 🌐



We are back on the streets of Hammond to ask her residents what are their must-haves for a hurricane. The season is ramping up and we want to hear what you pack to prepare for the storms. Please share some of your must-haves in the comments below, and please make sure your hurricane preparedness kits are ready in the event of a hurricane.



👍❤️👏 5

1 comment 1 share



## Student-created Promotional Pieces for the Hammond Daily Star “Mix and Mingle” Community Leaders Event on July 27, 2023:

Press Release



### Contact Information:

The Daily Star

Connor Babara

985-254-7834

[editor@hammondstar.com](mailto:editor@hammondstar.com)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### The Daily Star Presents Hammond Daily Star Mix and Mingle: A Networking Event

[HAMMOND, LA]—The Daily Star is pleased to announce the Hammond Daily Star Mix and Mingle, which will take place at Southeastern Louisiana University Student Union in Room 2202 at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 27 featuring networking and collaboration opportunities among various media organizations.

The Hammond Daily Star Mix and Mingle event is a unique opportunity for members of our community to connect with local journalists and community leaders in an informal setting. This collaboration will assist individuals and organizations in sharing their stories effectively.

Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with experienced journalists and esteemed community leaders. The Daily Star aims to provide attendees a chance to learn about the various ways to get their stories and photos noticed by a wider audience.

Whether you represent a local organization, have an exciting story to share, or have a passion for community engagement, the Hammond Daily Star Mix and Mingle welcomes you to join in engaging discussions over snacks and drinks. We want your news and will work with you to help you tell your story in our community.

To secure your spot, RSVP by Tuesday, July 25 by going to this link:

<https://forms.gle/fPbfua1V1EPVGH8Q7>

For more information about the Daily Star Mix and Mingle Event, call 985-254-7834 or email [editor@hammondstar.com](mailto:editor@hammondstar.com).

###

Flyer

**Hammond Daily Star**

**MIX  
AND  
MINGLE**

Whether you represent a **local organization** or have an **exciting story to share**, we welcome you to join us in working to amplify **your stories** over snacks and drinks.

**YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR NETWORKING EVENT**  
**Thursday, July 27th at 5:30 pm**  
**SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION EAST BUILDING**  
(above the Bookstore)  
**303 UNION AVE, HAMMOND, LA 70402**  
**RSVP WITH THE LINK BELOW**  
**BY TUESDAY, JULY 25**

## Boosted Social Media Post

 **The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)** 3d · 🌐

Haven't RSVP'd yet to the The Daily Star Mix and Mingle event? No problem. RSVP is still open for those who want to come to the Mix and Mingle. This event is a chance for members of local communities to connect with local journalists and community leaders in an informal setting. We are excited to see all who can make it. Food and beverages will be provided.

RSVP with this link: <https://forms.gle/fPbfuaTVIEPVGH8Q7>

We hope to see you there!



**Hammond Daily Star**

**MIX  
AND  
MINGLE**

YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR NETWORKING EVENT

**Thursday, July 27th at 5:30 pm**

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION EAST BUILDING  
(above the Bookstore)  
303 UNION AVE, HAMMOND, LA 70402  
RSVP BY TUESDAY, JULY 25

**The Daily Star (Hammond, La.)** 

**Tutorial for Sending Photos/Cutline Information to the Daily Star Managing Editor**

**THE DAILY STAR**  
SERVING HAMMOND AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS

## How to send photos to The Daily Star

### Step 1

Before taking the picture, make sure your device is set to the correct picture capturing setting.

This step is mostly for those who use Apple and Samsung products to capture photos

For iPhone users, go to your Settings>Camera>Format. Here you will see the options "Most Compatible" and "High Efficiency." Make sure your Format is set to "Most Compatible"

For Samsung users, go to your camera, and click on settings in the top left corner. Then go to Picture Formats and make sure it is set to "Most Compatible"

Remember to complete this before you take a picture. This will not change the pictures you have already taken.



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## How to send photos to The Daily Star

### Step 2

After taking the photo, locate the photo on the device you took it with.

If you took the photo on a phone, go to your camera roll to locate the photo.

If you took the photo on a digital camera, take out the camera's SD card and insert it into a PC or laptop. Open the SD card's content on your computer device and locate the photo.



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## How to send photos to The Daily Star

### Step 3: Preparing the Email

After you locate the photo on your chosen device, you will prepare to email the photo to The Daily Star.

**For Mobile Phones Users:** Press the "Share" option on the photo, and then press the "e-mail" option. If your email is set up on your phone, when you press this option, you will be taken to an email window.

If your email is not set up on your phone and you do not wish to set your email up on your phone, you can upload the photos to Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive, or other cloud storage services to access the photos on another device you feel comfortable emailing from. If this device is a computer, then access the cloud service you uploaded the photos on, and save the photos onto your computer. This is necessary for the next step.

**For Desktop Users:** Locate the photos in whatever folder you saved them on, then go to your email and use the attachment option to add the photos you took to the email.



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## How to send photos to The Daily Star

### Step 4

Once you have created the email draft, direct the email to [editor@hammondstar.com](mailto:editor@hammondstar.com).

In the subject line, write a basic description of what the story is. In the body of the email write who is in the photo(s), what the photo(s) is/are and where the photo(s) were/was taken, and then your name.  
 Example Subject Line: Mayor Mini Godding  
 Example Body Text: Mayor Pete Panepinto plays Mizigolf at Black Lake.  
 Photo by Rachel Peters

Be aware that there is a data limit per email. If your email does not send due to data size, send multiple smaller emails. To indicate you are sending multiple smaller emails please put, "Part 1" at the beginning of the subject line to the corresponding email.



**Roy Howard Community Journalism Center**  
**Louisiana State University**  
**Three-Year Budget**

Expenditures	Start-Up January-June 2024			Year 1 July 2024-June 2025			Year 2 July 2025-June 2026			Year 3 July 2026-June 2027			Total January 2024-June 2027			Notes
	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing* Louisiana State University	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing* Louisiana State University	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing* Louisiana State University	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing* Louisiana State University	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing* Louisiana State University	Total	
	Please budget narrative for more detail about each expenditure line															
<b>Personnel*</b>																Starting July 1, 2024. Foundation is expense is two-thirds, LSU expense one-third.
Director (Manship School professional-in-residence)	0	0	0	93,800	0	93,800	93,800	0	93,800	93,800	0	93,800	281,400	0	281,400	Starting Jan. 1, 2025. Foundation is expense is two-thirds, LSU expense one-third.
Deputy Director (Manship School professional-in-residence)	0	0	0	73,700	0	73,700	73,700	0	73,700	73,700	0	73,700	221,100	0	221,100	Starting Oct. 1, 2024. No teaching load. Foundation expense is 100%.
Program Coordinator	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000	35,000	0	35,000	35,000	0	35,000	105,000	0	105,000	Start-up period only to permit faster program start, before director arrives.
Start-up Period Payroll for Existing LSU Faculty (start-up period only)	30,000	0	30,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	Excludes student wages.
Employee-Related Expenses (Benefits)	13,200	0	13,200	89,100	0	89,100	89,100	0	89,100	89,100	0	89,100	280,500	0	280,500	\$15k stipend for one faculty member each year at each partner school \$10,000 per editor. Expecting to have half as many community editors as partner universities.
Stipends for faculty/staff at partner universities	0	0	0	150,000	0	150,000	200,000	0	200,000	150,000	0	150,000	500,000	0	500,000	
Stipends for contracted editors	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000	90,000	0	90,000	80,000	0	80,000	210,000	0	210,000	
<b>Student Support</b>																See accompanying spreadsheet in the Budget Narrative for year-by-year detail on this expense.
Student Workers and Journalists Scholarships	6,240	0	6,240	200,000	0	200,000	200,000	0	200,000	200,000	0	200,000	606,240	0	606,240	Budgeted in lieu of scholarships to avoid having scholarships zero out other financial aid.
Reporting Grants/other direct costs	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000	35,000	0	35,000	40,000	0	40,000	110,000	0	110,000	\$5k per year per community site for mileage, public records requests and miscellaneous.
Student travel and other reporting costs/Community Sites	1,000	0	1,000	25,000	0	25,000	55,000	0	55,000	55,000	0	55,000	136,000	0	136,000	Up to \$2.00 per story produced in regular classes, including capstones, as an inducement in addition to a published byline to produce professional-caliber work.
Payments for student coursework accepted for publication	0	0	0	7,500	0	7,500	7,500	0	7,500	10,000	0	10,000	25,000	0	25,000	To support separate initiative starting in Year 2 to pair digitally savvy students with not digitally savvy community news organizations.
Stipends for Students in Digital Booster Shot Program	0	0	0	5,000	0	5,000	25,000	0	25,000	35,000	0	35,000	65,000	0	65,000	See Booster Shot stipends under Personnel.
Student travel for Digital Booster Shot Program	0	0	0	15,000	0	15,000	18,000	0	18,000	30,000	0	30,000	63,000	0	63,000	Stipends to Howard Center graduates who act as mentors for current students.
Howard Center Student Support Network	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,000	0	4,000	8,000	0	8,000	12,000	0	12,000	
<b>Operations**</b>																Higher expense projected for Year 1 to create, acquire initial store of supplies.
Supplies	2,500	0	2,500	5,000	0	5,000	4,250	0	4,250	1,750	0	1,750	13,500	0	13,500	For still and video cameras, repairs and maintenance.
Equipment purchases, replacements and repairs (cameras, etc.)	6,000	0	6,000	20,000	0	20,000	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	46,000	0	46,000	Year 1 includes recruiting costs for director and managing editor.
Marketing, promotion and recruitment	2,500	0	2,500	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	32,500	0	32,500	Included for all years are promotions collateral.
Website design, buildout and maintenance	10,000	0	10,000	15,000	0	15,000	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	30,000	0	30,000	Includes setup costs and annual licenses and vendor fees.
Training curriculum development	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	20,000	0	20,000	Create basic training modules common to all participants at all colleges, as baseline and to supplement coursework. Start-up: create community reporting module. Year 2: create Digital Booster Shot module. Year 3: create solutions journalism module. Year 3: create public records module.
Facilities Use	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The Manship School will provide space for the Howard Center at LSU. Includes money for director finalists to visit LSU for interviews in Startup period and for deputy finalists in Year 1. All years include money for center faculty to travel to community and university partners (mileage, hotel, meals).
Non-student travel	12,500	0	12,500	15,000	0	15,000	15,000	0	15,000	15,000	0	15,000	57,500	0	57,500	\$2,000 per partner community news organization per year.
Community meetings in news organization markets	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	60,000	0	60,000	To pay for an annual meeting of all college and news org partners in one location.
Annual partners meeting	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	12,000	0	12,000	\$4,000 per year to pay an independent party to review monitoring and evaluation reports.
Independent assessment of monitoring and evaluation reports	0	0	0	4,000	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	12,000	0	12,000	
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>91,940</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>91,940</b>	<b>876,100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>876,100</b>	<b>999,850</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>999,850</b>	<b>970,850</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>970,850</b>	<b>2,938,740</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,938,740</b>	
Indirect Costs (capped at 3% of Direct Costs)	2,758	0	2,758	26,283	0	26,283	29,996	0	29,996	29,126	0	29,126	58,167	0	58,167	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>94,698</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>94,698</b>	<b>902,383</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>902,383</b>	<b>999,850</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,029,846</b>	<b>999,976</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>999,976</b>	<b>2,996,907</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,996,907</b>	
<b>Revenue Sources</b>																
Scripps Howard Foundation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Louisiana State University	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Revenue Sources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>(94,698)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(94,698)</b>	<b>(902,383)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(902,383)</b>	<b>(999,850)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,029,846)</b>	<b>(999,976)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(999,976)</b>	<b>(2,996,907)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,996,907)</b>	Please submit a balanced budget.

## ROY HOWARD COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER GRANT

### **North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University**

#### Dean/Director

Laura Marshall

Tel: (510) 388-9183

lhmarshall@ncat.edu

#### Person submitting this request

Laura Marshall

Tel: (510) 388-9183

lhmarshall@ncat.edu

# North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication



Proposal for the Scripps-Howard  
Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism

July 31, 2023



NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL  
AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY

Proposal for Roy Howard Community  
Journalism Center at North Carolina A&T  
State University



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## Project Description

### *Our community needs and wants to trust the media.*

The mission of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will be to serve a community lacking reliable and robust local news coverage (Greensboro, North Carolina). Through student and faculty engagement with local communities in and around A&T's, and through cooperative and collaborative projects and research, the Center and A&T's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication hope to improve trust and give the community tools to spot mis- and disinformation.

Community leaders have told us they want local news that has “accuracy and in-depth information,”<sup>1</sup> much as is done by national media. National outlets our respondents mentioned as reliable sources of “in-depth information” included the New York Times (app or website), as well as the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. The Executive Editorial Page editor of the local newspaper, the Greensboro News and Record, told us that “everybody needs someone keeping an eye out—that just makes for a healthier civic atmosphere in a community when you have that watchdog.”<sup>2</sup> Unsurprisingly, some community members also distrust media because of their awareness of misinformation and disinformation. One small business owner we contacted said “There’s a lot of ‘fake news’ going on—you have to kind of weed through what’s true and what’s fake.”<sup>3</sup>

Those needs inform this proposal for The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Our Center will work with research faculty in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication to experiment with ways to build trust in local journalism, while engaging A&T students to cover our local communities and connect with leaders of those communities.

### *The Center’s goals are to:*

- Actively experiment in the community and research new methods to build (or rebuild) trust in local news organizations. When our practical and academic research efforts bear fruit, we will share those successes with peer universities, media organizations, academic research organizations and via conferences, public relations efforts, and meetings.
- Teach students who work with the center or who are in A&T courses how to spot inaccurate information and counter it when they find it. We can educate experientially, having the find “fake news” and try their debunking skills, and share the findings of our students with the local community in a hands-on way.
- Provide valuable journalism for the underserved communities in Greensboro, North Carolina, both by supporting and aiding existing local news organizations and by getting our journalism students more engaged with those communities. As a benefit of this work, we hope to also establish credibility within Greensboro of A&T Student Media outlets, including the Register and Aggie News, and make those outlets available to the larger community outside the University.

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<sup>1</sup> Pastor and North Carolina Representative Amos Quick

<sup>2</sup> Allen H. Johnson, Executive Editorial Page Editor for Greensboro News & Record and Winston-Salem Journal

<sup>3</sup> Queena Mackay, Owner and Operator of the Queen’s Royal Beauty Bar, Salon, and Boutique

# Proposal for Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at North Carolina A&T State University



## Trust Building

As students meet with and learn to actively listen to community leaders, they will hear about “fake news” often enough to get a sense of what those leaders see as misinformation, and how they recognize “fake” claims or made-up data in something they see online or on the air. At the same time, researchers in the Department will work with students to examine and test new methods for finding and correcting misinformation, and ways to inform the community about those methods. Ideally, the Center’s website will eventually feature downloadable resources for community members to keep in the smartphones or on hand on a piece of paper to help them spot and resist inaccurate “stories.”

When our students encounter a community member who has a possible news story to share, that trust building and experiential learning should help them accurately describe events they cover, and know how to compose and edit their own stories to be objective, accurate, and fair.

Through internships, short courses, and travel to cover important events, students will learn experientially how to best debunk false information in local communities. They will gain practical skills in confirmation of facts and the importance of source credibility as they seek to expose the sources of misinformation. The JOMC Department already has relationships with local television news operations and with the Greensboro News & Record, and those will be strengthened as a result of the Center’s work. A goal of this project is also to increase the visibility and use of A&T’s existing student news operations—the A&T Register, Aggie News and its video newscasts, several student podcasts that focus on newsworthy events—such that they might also contribute to the larger community rather than just serve as campus news. The Daily Tar Heel, at the UNC-Chapel Hill campus, is an example of such a student newspaper.

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at North Carolina A&T has adopted a mission to produce journalists, multi-platform content creators and strategic communicators who tell stories from diverse perspectives and produce high-caliber professional work. The unit endeavors to do so by engaging in cutting-edge teaching, research, practice and public service. Our vision is to be recognized as an influential source in shaping the direction and make-up of mass media and their impact on society.

The internal structure of the Center can be inaugurated with its opening ceremonies. Processes like setting up regular meetings of Center faculty and staff in which students reflect on the stories they cover and the people they’re getting to know will help inform coursework and student projects for journalism, mass media, and public relations projects. Center students who serve as interns or help facilitate projects can also train younger student journalists as mentors. Ideally, these three groups—students, faculty, and community—will act synergistically to help increase trust in Greensboro journalism and engagement of the University with the city and its neighborhoods.

## Experiential learning involves the community

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will connect A&T students and faculty with the Greensboro community on a regular basis, and will contribute to new teaching approaches in several ways.

The most obvious—and most relevant to this proposal for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center—is student learning on the job, quite literally experientially, as they participate in a non-profit locally-focused newsroom. Center faculty will critique students’ work in real time and teach them how to spot inaccuracies and misleading statements made by news sources. Researchers at the Center will explore and test new methods for fighting “fake news” at the same time as students learn to spot and

Proposal for Roy Howard Community  
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combat it. The students' experiences of action and interaction with local leaders, businesses, and citizens (reporting) will occur while their course work and faculty interactions focus on examination of the influence of the media in the local community. Reporting and newswriting assumptions and debunking techniques will be tested by researchers, and students will learn from those results what has been shown to improve accuracy with their own writing.

One example of the Center's programs and projects will be to establish regular short courses for A&T students that will feature local professionals guiding them in producing a chosen news program or public affairs campaign. For instance, inviting a local journalist to lead a two- or three-day course on finding and verifying stories at the state legislature that will affect a local community in Greensboro, or having a public relations professional from a local agency challenge students to promote a local business or non-profit. These courses could and should include meeting with members of the community or intended audience for a communication effort so as to define their specific needs and confirm the accuracy of the data important to fleshing out the story.

#### Local reporting

The teaching will be both internal—beginning with our own students—and external—extended to the community, as well as other institutions and media organizations. Teaching will encompass issues related to reporting and content creation techniques, the Center and Department will offer sessions that invite the public to learn about audience reception of messages, and A&T researchers will study the psychological and sociological factors that influence how an audience decodes messages. It is our belief that this is a significant missing piece in efforts to gain and build audience trust. Consumers of content need to be aware of themselves and grow in their understanding of how that shapes their reactions and responses to issues of our time. This type of effort can and should involve partnering with colleagues in psychology and sociology, among other disciplines, to develop community centered teaching modules that invite the public to have a greater sense of ownership of these issues.

Our teaching efforts will be informed through research that faculty and other partners will conduct on issues related to news development and consumption. The methods will range from surveys, content analyses and case studies to interviews and focus groups. Through practice, the unit will have the opportunity to experiment with various formats and approaches to developing and delivering content but also creating avenues for gathering and analyzing feedback.

It will be important for the center to be viewed as a public-service entity. Each semester, the department enrolls about 500 students majoring and minoring in multimedia journalism, mass media production and public relations; the center will succeed by employing experts from each of these areas. Multimedia journalism students will assume leadership in areas related to news gathering; mass media production students will aid in expanding the ways of delivering content to the public; public relations students will develop strategies for promoting awareness of the effort and the content it will assist in developing. With these efforts, the center also will look to the Business College for input and expertise related to developing sound business models and projections. Relationships already exist with marketing students and faculty, particularly in regard to the unit's public relations concentration.

Through a grant with NBC Universal, the department began during the 2022-2023 school year to develop a series of bootcamps and master classes designed to strengthen current teaching models and serve as potential models for future courses in areas, such as data journalism, investigative reporting, documentary filmmaking, and drone-based photography. The underlying motivation was to place a heavier emphasis on solid reporting skills. This initiative sets the stage for the center to build forward on

efforts to teach fact-checking and community reporting skills. These skills are important to students aspiring to become media professionals but also important to the public. The center will offer community workshops designed to promote conversations about such matters while also providing community members practical skills.

Through the range of activities being imagined for the center, there will be opportunities to gather and interpret data that helps to identify underserved communities. Few scholars have, in the past, researched the ways people of color and other marginalized groups are served by news media, how they would like to be served, and how they access and interpret what they read, hear and view. This Center aims to change that, with research that determines the current status of such efforts and a path forward and with actions within our own community to put research findings to use.

*Proposed curriculum:*

**A Media Literacy Curriculum**

Social media are the source of news for many Americans, not least for college students. We propose a focus on the issues around social media and its thoughtful use as central to the mission of the Center.

This approach may have particular resonance for our students: Smith, Wade and Jowers<sup>4</sup> (2023) had students examine the categories of content they posted on their social media pages. The study revealed that 68% of their content was associated with entertainment, 17% uplift and 14% empowerment. There was clearly too much emphasis on entertainment and not enough focus on using social media/the Internet as a means of improving their lives. The results suggest that one of the ways to combat disinformation and misinformation is through social media literacy education. They need social media literacy skills to help them think critically about the media they consume. As they become empowered, they may make wiser choices about media and learn to critically analyze sources of information. Creating an empowering and uplifting social media culture results in a group of people less likely to be influenced by disinformation and misinformation.

Here is a list of courses/workshops we plan to offer under a Media Literacy curriculum.

*JOMC 2XX: What is Media Literacy?* This course challenges students to acquire the skills needed to assess media reports and data sources for their accuracy, credibility, and validity. It's intended as an introduction to junior- and senior-level courses listed below. The class will have as outcomes the understanding of media literacy and why it's important to society; development of critical thinking skills as regards discernment of accurate information and trustworthy media sources; examination of the impact of the news media on culture, politics, entertainment, and public opinion; applying an ethical model to the use of or response to inaccurate information; creation and development of responsibly-researched media content.

*JOMC 2X2: Community Journalism.* This course introduces students to the concept of "community journalism" in an era of cuts in local newspapers' staffs, fewer active news rooms at local radio stations, and syndicated news offered on local television stations by large media conglomerates such as Sinclair Broadcasting. A brief history of the decline of local news will be followed in the coursework by tactical lessons in new local news operations functioning partly or exclusively online, with guest speakers who've founded such sites. Student projects will include: meeting with community leaders and creating stories

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<sup>4</sup> Smith, K. Wade, J., Jowers J., From Entertainment to Empowerment: A Call for Social Media Literacy Education at an HBCU (In Press)

# Proposal for Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at North Carolina A&T State University



from what they hear; enterprising a local news story about a community journalism project of their choosing; determining how the demographics of their audience influences the content of the news.

*JOMC 3XX: Misinformation and Disinformation in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Media.* This intensive course is designed for students who already have content creation skills (i.e. journalism majors in their junior or senior years, other communication majors who voice an interest in mis- and disinformation). Using interactive lectures—including with members of Greensboro communities, experts from journalism and law—this course will employ experiential learning using hands-on exercises and case studies to apply skills acquired in the previous class (which will be a prerequisite for Misinformation and Disinformation in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Media).

*JOMC 3XX: The Impact of Social Media on our Lives.* This course will use case studies, exercises, and facilitated class discussions to generate an understanding of how social media can affect our perception of events, and how journalists' use of social media as a source of news stories and information must be thoughtful, ethical, and skeptical. This class's outcomes will give students an understanding of the impact of social media on our own biases and the on the agenda-setting of news organizations as they determine what to cover and what to ignore. It will also help students develop strategies for verifying information they find on social media platforms, as well as for responding to audiences ethically and effectively.

*JOMC 4XX: Case Studies in Media and Public Engagement.* This senior-level seminar-style course will dig deep into current examples and case studies of how news media affect—and are affected by—public engagement in the news. This seminar class will be for journalism majors only, and will include examination of students' own work for A&T news outlets even as they are researching and producing stories. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to knowledgeably evaluate the effectiveness of different media strategies in mobilizing communities to act to positively effect change, and will learn the skills associated with dispassionately examining their own work before submitting it for publication. The class will center on the work students are doing for the Center as well as for community news outlets and A&T's own media services.

## Community Served by the Roy Howard Center:

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication will focus its efforts on Greensboro, where the university is located, as well as the surrounding area known as the Piedmont Triad. Two local newspapers have served the area for decades, but each has seen its staff shrink to a fraction of its previous levels, and common ownership of the two means stories are often less specifically local or original to each outlet.

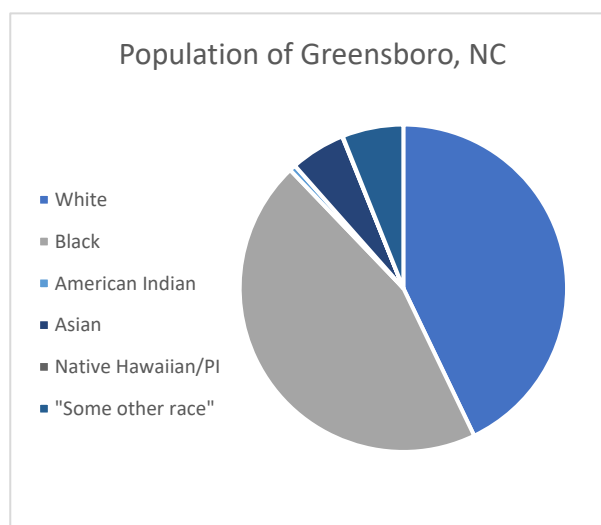
Our Center would focus largely on Greensboro and its home county (Guilford). At the same time, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at A&T sees an opportunity to create a news hub that could partner with many, if not all, of the other local news organizations in the North Carolina Piedmont to provide more rigorous coverage of the region. The initial conversations about partnerships have centered on the News & Record of Greensboro and the Winston-Salem Journal, both of which are owned by Lee Enterprises. Lee also owns several smaller papers in the region. The Greensboro editor oversees all of Lee's owned outlets.

### Greensboro demographics

If a marketer wanted to target the audience about which the Center is most concerned, they might create a “persona,” a representation of someone who has the most prevalent characteristics of the group of people who make up the focus of a campaign’s communication efforts.

For our audience, the community that could benefit from better local journalism, that persona would be a 36-year-old Black woman who may have one or more immigrant parents, and likely has friends who are from other countries. She is more likely to be single than married (42.4% of Greensboro residents over 15 have never been married, as opposed to 37.3% who are, per 2021 U.S. Census data<sup>5</sup>). Her income is likely lower than what friends of hers might make in the same jobs if they lived in Raleigh or Charlotte. She probably makes between \$30,000 and \$49,000 per year.

The city of Greensboro is home to more than 307,000 people, according to census data. Those residents are, on average, younger than the state’s overall. The median age in Greensboro is 36.3; in North Carolina as a whole, it’s 39.4. There’s a higher percentage of immigrants in Greensboro than in the state, 11.7% to 8.2%. Fewer veterans, proportionally, live in Greensboro than in North Carolina as a whole, and poverty is more common. The median household income of residents of Greensboro according to the most recent Census data was \$51,825; North Carolina’s median household income is \$10,000 dollars higher, at \$61,972.



The poverty rate in the city is 14.5%, one percent higher than in the state overall.

The city's residents are 41.4 percent Black, 38.6 percent White, 5.4 percent Asian, and 10.2 percent Hispanic with 4.4 percent identifying with two or more races.

Women account for 54 percent of the city's population.

The greater Triad (Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point, North Carolina) is home to roughly 1.7 million people and comprises 10 counties. Greensboro is the largest city in the region. White people account for 62% of the Triad's population; Black people account for 21%; Hispanics make up 12 percent and Asians 3 percent. Women are 52% of the Triad's population.

### Greensboro news media

#### **Print**

The Greensboro/Winston-Salem metropolitan area has two local newspapers, the *Greensboro News & Record* (N & R) and the *Winston-Salem Journal*. The Greensboro N&R has its roots in two newspapers established around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the *Daily Record* began publication in 1890 and the

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau city profile for Greensboro, NC. Accessed July 15, 2023.  
[https://data.census.gov/profile/Greensboro\\_city,\\_North\\_Carolina?g=160XX00US3728000](https://data.census.gov/profile/Greensboro_city,_North_Carolina?g=160XX00US3728000)

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*Greensboro Daily News* in 1909. The two merged in 1982 to become the News & Record with morning and afternoon editions; the afternoon paper stopped publication four years later, in 1986. The N & R launched its online edition, News-Record.com, in 1995.<sup>6</sup>

Over time the N&R has lost readers as its staff has been cut. Just ten years ago, in 2013, the N&R employed 23 journalists and had bureaus in High Point, Asheboro, and Eden. Today it employs just six journalists and its copy desk creates content for multiple newspapers, leaving the likelihood of inaccurate information making its way into published stories much higher than it was a decade ago. Many stories come from wire services or reporters working for other outlets, and Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan said in 2022 that “There are days when you open up the paper and find no original reporting.”<sup>7</sup>

According to the newspaper’s own website, the N & R’s print circulation makes it North Carolina’s third-largest newspaper with 21,510 papers sold daily, including subscribers and individual papers sold. Its online readership is much higher; in an average month, it earns 669,316 visits to its website.

The *Winston-Salem Journal* was founded in 1897, seven years after Greensboro’s N&R. The different market focus includes High Point, North Carolina, the third of the three cities that make up the Triad. The *Journal* also publishes a monthly magazine, the *Winston-Salem Monthly*, that appears on the *Journal*’s website with a layout and format similar to its parent daily newspaper. The *Monthly* focuses on more affluent readers, with sections like “Around Town,” “Creative Collective,” and “Sips & Spirits.”

The *Journal*’s own story of staff cuts and ownership changes started small, in 2007, when the paper eliminated five positions, including two in the newsroom. Three years later owner Media General dropped all copy editors and designers from the *Journal* staff, consolidating that work in centers out of state; that same year, 2010, the *Journal* fired another 18 employees, closing its copy desk.

The New & Record and *Journal* are owned by the same company, Lee Enterprises, which runs a single news operation that provides content for both newspapers and their websites—a situation that diminishes the focus on either city’s government or local concerns and results in two news outlets that are, essentially, the same.

The *Journal*’s website (<https://journalnow.com/>) mirrors the N&R site visually, with the same dark background, same serif fonts and sizes, and often the same content. Comparison of the two sites at the same time shows their similarity of the two newspaper’s interface and content. (Figures 2 and 3)

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<sup>6</sup> Greensboro News & Record “About Us” webpage, accessed July 28, 2023.  
<https://greensboro.com/site/about.html>

<sup>7</sup> Moffett, M. Below the Fold: North Carolina’s third-largest city, Greensboro, once had a thriving newspaper in the News & Record. What’s left after years of media-conglomerate cuts is a shell of the paper’s former self. August 9, 2022. *The Assembly* <https://www.theassemblync.com/media/the-news-and-record-below-the-fold/>





Figure 1 Greensboro News & Record website, July 28 2023



Figure 2 Winston-Salem Journal website, July 28 2023

### Broadcast media

Traditional television (non-streaming) and broadcast radio are measured against each other in DMAs, or Designated Market Areas. The Greensboro/High Point/Winston Salem area has a total population of television households of 739,970 as measured by Nielsen, a decades-old company that ranks local and national television and radio shows, national networks, and local television stations by viewership.<sup>8</sup>

As the world has increasingly sought information online, broadcast outlets have used the websites and posts to social media to draw viewers, and those rankings are available through numerous consumer-facing website. MuckRack.com, a company that provides public relations tools and resources, also offers rankings of television and newspaper websites by online use. Those rankings show that the top four TV websites in Greensboro, by number of visits to its website in a month, are:

1. WGHP-TV, in High Point, North Carolina, affiliated with the Fox Network, which has nearly four million visits each month (3,992,808).
2. WCWG-TV, in Greensboro, an affiliate of the CW network, with 1,770,363 visits per month and is co-owned by the Hearst Corporation.
3. WXII-TV in Winston-Salem, an affiliate of the NBC network, which lists its online visits as the same number as WCWG, 1,770,363 per month.
  - a. The two stations, WCWG and WXII, are co-owned by Hearst and share studios and transmitting facilities.
4. Spectrum News Triad, the local version of a cable outlet available across North Carolina. Spectrum News launched its Greensboro site in 2006<sup>9</sup> and claims 1,590,158 visits per month to its online site.

### Specific communities of need:

#### East Greensboro Community, Greater Greensboro, and the Piedmont Triad

According to recent demographic data, the East Greensboro Community, Greater Greensboro, and the Piedmont Triad represent a diverse population with varying informational needs. East Greensboro, in particular, is home to a predominantly African American community with limited access to reliable news sources tailored to their interests and concerns.

<sup>8</sup> The Nielsen Company, Radio Market Survey population, rankings & information, Fall 2022.

<https://www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/10/Radio-Market-Populations-Fall-2022.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Spectrum News Triad website, "About Us," accessed July 18, 2023.

<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nc/triad/about-us>

# Proposal for Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at North Carolina A&T State University



Greater Greensboro and the Piedmont Triad likewise comprise diverse populations with unique challenges that demand accurate and hyper-localized news coverage. We've learned through contact with community leaders for this proposal<sup>10</sup> that this region grapples with a significant lack of news coverage and residents are often left vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation. With the rise of social media and online platforms, the spread of misinformation has become a pressing concern, requiring a reliable and professional news outlet to counteract this trend.

## *Distribution Methods and Marketing Efforts:*

The Community News Center will deploy distribution methods and marketing efforts via traditional and online media, as well as with in-person events within Greensboro's underserved communities, to ensure its journalism reaches those most in need of news and information.

Distribution and marketing methods will include:

**Online Outreach:** As the home of downloads, FAQs, links to trustworthy resources, and information about the Center, its faculty and its work, a comprehensive website and mobile application will serve as the primary hub for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center and A&T.

That website will include direct links to the Center's **Social Media** accounts, which will focus on the more commonly-used platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. As of this writing, Twitter—which has long had an active Black audience—has been renamed X and its future viability as a source of credible information is in doubt. Our active presence on major social media platforms will facilitate the dissemination of news and engage a broader audience.

**Print Distribution:** Promotion of the Center's work—and projects A&T students participate in with local news outlets—will include press releases and downloadable copies of reports, studies, stories, and projects to print news outlets across North Carolina so as to increase the visibility of the Center beyond the Greensboro area as an example of an academic-media partnership aimed at increasing trust and debunking misinformation. This work will also help reach segments of the community that have limited internet access.

**Community Outreach:** As a Center focused on the community, "outreach" is key to our mission. In connecting with local organizations, community centers, and other area educational institutions like UNCG, Wake Forest University, Bennett College, and others (see "representation," page 12 of this document) the Center will regularly learn of community needs, train leaders to communicate with local media, and thereby help reach underserved populations and build trust within the Triad.

**Marketing Campaigns:** The Department's Public Relations majors will be tasked with creating promotional campaigns and materials that can be used within Greensboro and the Triad; those efforts may also be used, in coordination with a professional agency, to raise awareness about the Community News Center's launch and the work it will perform in the years to follow.

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix 3, summary of community leader interviews by Department senior Mercy Sackor.

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## Students Trained:

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication is home to one of the top 5 majors at the University, with 145 students graduating from one of the program's three concentrations in the 2021 – 2022 school year, 137 of whom were Black or African American.

The Journalism and Mass Communication Department at North Carolina A&T enrolls about 430 students in three media specializations: multimedia journalism, mass media production and public relations. A&T's student body is composed of approximately 92 percent African American students and 9 percent other, with 615 White students, 573 Hispanic students, 555 multiracial students, and 122 Asian students as of Fall 2022.

The Department also has a diverse faculty. About 50 percent of our 16 full-time faculty are African American. Whites account for 31 percent, while Asians represent 6 percent and non-Black internationals represent 12.5 percent. There are eight part-time faculty members, 62 percent of whom are Black. Whites account for nearly 38 percent of the part-time faculty.

The University's graduation rate is 52%<sup>11</sup>, comparable to nearby universities UNCG (University of North Carolina Greensboro) at 58.5% and Winston-Salem State University, also an HBCU, at 50.3%. Our students complete more than 150 professional internships annually; a growing number of them work for local or national media organizations while completing their studies. We frequently hear from potential employers who want to "hire an Aggie."

Events our journalism students cover include those hosted by the African Aggies Coalition, an active student organization of which many JOMC students are members. From its website, <https://1891connect.ncat.edu/organization/african-aggies-coalition>: "African Aggies Coalition is an organization for African students in the Greensboro Triad area. AAC Membership is also open to interested African Diaspora students. African Aggies of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University maintains collaboration with UNC-G, Bennett College, Greensboro College, and Guilford Technical College students."

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<sup>11</sup> University of North Carolina System, Interactive Data Dashboards. <https://www.northcarolina.edu/impact/stats-data-reports/interactive-data-dashboards/> Accessed July 30, 2023.

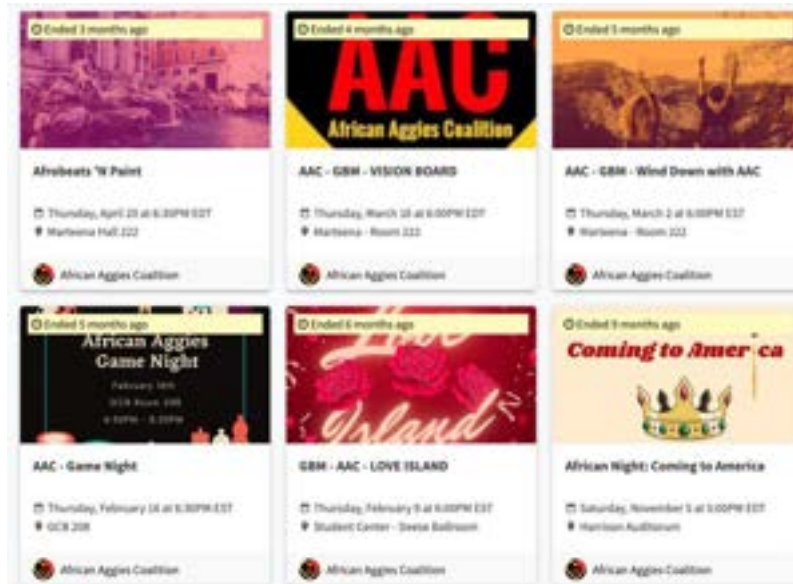


Figure 3 African Aggies Coalition Events 2023

Our students represent #AggiePride every day of the academic careers in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication. Current students and graduates of the Department are driven, determined, passionate and talented.

- ◆ Melvin Harris, former A&T Register reporter, sports editor, and editor in chief, interned at WBTV in Charlotte in his junior year; was an NBCU Academy fellow the same year, and followed that fellowship with an investigative internship at NBC News the summer of 2022. He's joined the NBCU family as a graduate, taking a full-time position with NBCUniversal as a News Associate in Charlotte.
- ◆ Lucy Pearsall-Finch graduated in 2023, after a college career prefaced by an internship in the office of the mayor of Pittsburgh, PA. Before she joined us and blazed a path through A&T's JOMC program, Ms. Pearsall-Finch worked on communication around proposed changes to Title IX, the city's first statue commemorating African American Women of Pittsburgh; and a history of women's suffrage for a Centennial Celebration. She wrote and produced collaboratively on the Justice Policy Institute in Maryland, interned with the Black Automotive Group, co-produced a short course for JOMC students with the National Association of Black Journalists, and followed all that with an internship in New York with Bloomberg News.

#### Tracking Student Career Progress:

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we will implement a robust plan to track student career progress for three years after graduation. Using an online database, we will systematically collect data on employment status, professional achievements, and contributions to journalism, we will gain insights into the long-term impact of our program. Tracking student career trajectories will enable us to adapt and enhance our training approach, ensuring that our graduates remain steadfast advocates of accuracy, fairness, and local news reporting.

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## Student recruitment

To recruit students to the Center, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication will work with the community to hold events for high school students in the Triad who are considering a career in communication. With luck, we can entice the Lucys and Melvins of A&T to join us at these events. Additionally, the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences to determine whether freshman within the College are interested in working in community journalism; with the local community to encourage application to the University and the Department in particular, so as to become involved with the Center's work; with recruiters at high schools throughout North Carolina to ensure the diversity of our HBCU's program and the Center. Recruitment events include on-campus fairs for local high school students, events in the community to help those students apply to the university with A&T alums and university employees walking high school juniors through the application process.

Mentorship and career development will involve A&T alumnae, who have lectured at Department events and who frequently express interest in having more active involvement with our events. Holding meet-and-greets with alumnae who come from diverse fields (including the expanse of Communication positions, i.e. in public relations, in conventional journalism, in social media, etc.) will bring professionals in touch with our students, and local business owners face to face with our majors, as a way of furthering our community-centered goals. Throughout their academic journey, they will be paired with experienced fellows from the program, who will serve as mentors, providing guidance, support, and valuable insights into the field.

Mentorship will extend beyond academic years, nurturing lasting professional relationships that will aid students in their journalistic pursuits. The mentorship component will instill strong values in accuracy, fairness, and the significance of local news, promoting a sense of responsibility towards the communities they will serve.

To bolster **representation**, we will prioritize recruiting at least some students from the very communities they will cover, creating a unique opportunity for students to engage with the stories and perspectives of their local neighborhoods. We will also collaborate with neighboring universities, including UNC Greensboro, Elon University, Wake Forest University, Guilford College, Greensboro College, Bennett College, and Winston-Salem State University, to reach a broader pool of aspiring journalists.

Furthermore, we will establish partnerships with other in-state colleges such as N.C. Central, UNC Chapel Hill, and Duke University, fostering a network that promotes diversity and excellence in journalism across North Carolina. Additionally, we will extend our training and support to smaller HBCUs, including Shaw University, St. Augustine's University, Fayetteville State University, Livingstone College, and Johnson C. Smith University, to provide resources and opportunities for students from these institutions.

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at North Carolina A&T is already in the process of setting up a tracking system for our students to determine their career progress after graduation. The grant will help facilitate to initiation of that system, from the software used to the first three years tracking students in the beginning of their careers.

The university as a whole, and the Department in particular, have developed a good reputation for producing quality graduates, as evidenced by the broad success our graduates have had: JOMC graduates are Hollywood filmmakers and network and local news reporters; they produce shows and create content; they are directors and vice presidents. Several graduates are general managers of professional sports franchises; others work for record companies and hold high-level positions in major

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public relations and advertising agencies. The university and the unit are fond of saying "Aggies are everywhere." We boast that our student interns and alumni can be found from Times Square to Hollywood and all points in between.

## Capacity:

The North Carolina A&T Department of Journalism and Mass Communication enjoys a healthy relationship with industry professionals, who regularly visit the unit as guest lecturers and to recruit students for internships and jobs.

We will leverage those relationships in recruiting for key personnel at the Center, as well as relationships with our colleagues, peers at other universities, alumnae and academic conferences to find the most highly-qualified Director and faculty for its founding and continued success. A check of the UNC System's database of similar positions and salaries shows a wide range of compensation awarded to faculty in Director's positions, from more than a quarter-million dollars annually to \$80,000. Average faculty pay at A&T is slightly more than \$78,000 per year; faculty pay decreased during the 2021-2022 school year. Those numbers were taken into consideration in estimating salaries for the Center's faculty positions (including Director) and are included in the budget attached to this proposal.

The Design Proposal team is currently in conversations with the University's Division of Research and Economic Development to ensure that budget figures, including potential salaries, are within state guidelines when grant monies contribute to an employee's earnings.

The Center will be based within the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at A&T, which is under the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, which is academically administered by the office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. The Provost reports to the Chancellor of the University. The University has a Board of Trustees, and the University of North Carolina system has a Board of Governors.

In talks with our own grant experts, extant Department faculty will be involved in establishing and staffing the Center on a cost-sharing basis, with a Center Director to be sought from within academia and/or the professional journalism field. Ideally a candidate would have years of experience in journalism as well as a graduate degree in order to earn the position.

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Journalism Center at North Carolina A&T  
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The Center’s Advisory Board will comprise:

Scripps Howard Foundation	3 positions
Dimon Kendrick-Holmes	Editor, Greensboro News & Record
Allen H. Johnson	Executive Editorial Page Editor for Greensboro News & Record and Winston-Salem Journal
Sayaka Matsuoka	Editor, Triad City Beat
Brian Clarey	Publisher, Triad City Beat
Kali-Ahset Amen	Executive Director, Howard University Center for Journalism & Democracy
Amos Quick	Pastor and North Carolina Representative
Queena Mackay	Owner and Operator of the Queen’s Royal Beauty Bar, Salon, and Boutique, Greensboro

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at North Carolina A&T is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). We are one of just two programs in North Carolina presently enjoying that status. Our most recent review occurred in February 2023. The site team recommended that we be fully reaccredited, finding us in compliance with all eight standards.

We are bold and dynamic and enjoy great support from both the dean of our college and the university's top administration (Provost and Chancellor). This has been emphasized as the university now strives to move from a high-research university to become a Carnegie Research 1 institution.

The university is the largest historically Black university in the nation with more than 13,000 students. It has experienced enrollment increases for the past eight years, drawing students from every state except Maine. The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the top producer of African American graduates of journalism and related programs. The unit has consistently been among the top five producers of such graduates.

### The Design Grant: deployment

Four full-time faculty members worked on the design grant. Each had a different, complementary role:

- Dr. Kimberly Smith contributed expertise in researching and summarizing the proposed curriculum and the literature<sup>12</sup> supporting particular models of experiential learning and how the media and public can and do successfully engage, even in an era of widespread mistrust in the press.

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<sup>12</sup> Appendix 1

- Dr. Xueying Zhang created and deployed a survey of Greensboro residents that will also serve as a baseline measure against which the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center can ascertain its progress as the work moves forward.<sup>13</sup>
- Mr. David Squires was co-PI on the development grant proposal, contributed his professional background in major market newspapers, and led his students in experiential learning, supervising a project that brought them in touch with community leaders, gathering information on them prior to interviewing and writing about them for some of our preliminary research on the community.
- Dr. Laura H. Marshall led the project after the original Principal Investigator, Dr. Robbie Morganfield, left A&T in mid-July to work with Morehouse College in Atlanta. Her work conferring with university grants officials, the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (within which the Department operates), and administrative staff, as well as compiling the various parts of this proposal into a unified whole.

One student in particular contributed a great deal of her time while interning at WEWS TV in Cleveland, Ohio for the summer. Mercy Sackor interviewed community leaders, transcribed their interviews, and crafted the narrative attached to this proposal (Appendix 4).

#### Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Center will focus on three main goals: trust building, experiential learning, and local reporting.

A Qualtrics survey to establish a baseline measure of the factors below will be deployed at the start of the project to get a baseline measure of the status of the community's trust in local news and the same questions will be used periodically through the first three years of the Center's work to ascertain progress in meeting our goals.

#### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan:**

The MEL plan will enable us to measure the effectiveness of the Center's activities and ensure progress toward our goals. It will incorporate a comprehensive set of measures aligned with each of the three stated goals. These measures will be incorporated into an initial survey distributed to leaders in the Greensboro community, as well as faculty and student at A&T, and used periodically at regular intervals to chart progress at meeting each goal.

#### **Goal 1: Trust Building:**

Goal 1 aims to test trust-building strategies, establishing best practices to be shared across educational institutions and media organizations. The following measures will be employed:

*Measure 1.1:* Initiatives undertaken with local communities to improve news literacy. At the beginning of the Center's work, those initiatives would include on-campus events offered for free with a schedule friendly to the average working day; as the Center becomes more established and earns a reputation, efforts go reach into the community—at public libraries or high-school campuses—to give residents lessons in spotting and debunking “fake news.”

*Measure 1.2:* Stakeholder surveys to assess public perception of media trust. This is where we would return to our Advisory Board and to the community leaders interviewed for the design grant proposal to determine whether they see improvement on particular issues.

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<sup>13</sup> Appendix 2



*Measure 1.3:* Collaborations with media organizations for joint credibility projects, i.e. students and local news teams working together on issues that affect the area audience.

**Goal 2: Experiential Learning:**

Goal 2 focuses on providing students with hands-on experience in fact-checking/debunking and local/community reporting. The following measures will be utilized:

*Measure 2.1:* Number of beats newly covered by student journalists (e.g., town halls, court houses, school boards/PTAs, etc.). Student journalists at A&T have in recent years focused primarily on covering campus news, such as events held for homecoming week or graduation. The teamwork mentioned above in 1.3 would be essential to activating this on-the-job experience.

*Measure 2.2:* Student feedback and evaluations on the practical learning opportunities. With at least one research faculty member involved in the work of the Center, students in research methods classes can learn better the importance of such work when their class reaches into the community and the student population to determine what's working.

*Measure 2.3:* Recognition and awards received by students for their journalistic work. The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication and NC A&T frequently recognizes successful students in Town Halls, awards events, and showings of student work and with the National Association of Black Journalists Funds from this grant could help extend those opportunities by encouraging student journalists to submit their projects to other groups including the Society of Professional Journalists and the National Association of Broadcasters.

**Goal 3: Local Reporting:**

Goal 3 aims to provide valuable journalism for an underserved community. The following measures will be implemented:

*Measure 3.1:* Number of in-depth investigative reports produced by the Center that focus on an issue faced by a Greensboro community. This is a straightforward measure, albeit one that could go into detail by tracking where and when a report appeared and how many people it reached (online, for instance, via clicks, site visits, etc.).

*Measure 3.2:* Impact of reporting on legal, policy, or regulatory changes at the local, state, and/or regional level. This would measure smaller changes (see Outcome 1, below) within given communities; stop signs installed, lighting improved in communities often left in the dark, roads repaired that had been pocked with potholes.

*Measure 3.3:* Increase in circulation/viewership of the Center's local news partners. This can be determined through extant ratings services, such as Nielsen and Arbitron, and through responses to news partners' stories via online comments and likes.

**Outputs and Outcomes:**

Writing many stories about an important issue does not necessarily guarantee change for the better. Output of news content, student experiential learning, and resources for the local community comprise essential measurements of the process of communicating and earning trust. That makes it imperative to capture and report on our Trust Center results. Some examples of potential outcomes:

*Outcome 1:* Legal, policy, or regulatory changes enacted at the local/regional level as a result of student reporting. For instance, one recent issue that affected underserved populations in North Carolina was a highly partisan-gerrymandered district map thrown out by the state's Supreme

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Court, then reinstated after midterm elections changed the court's majority. Student reporting in Greensboro—potentially in concert with other North Carolina universities—could encourage underrepresented groups to effect political change in the state's legislature.

*Outcome 2:* Actions undertaken by civic associations, non-profits, or other community groups in response to the Center's outreach and reporting. These might include community outreach programs intended to improve the health of Greensboro's lower-income residents, sparked by student investigations (one JOMC student created a powerful story about the state's Medicaid regulations)

*Outcome 3:* Increase in circulation/readership of one of the Center's local language news partners, i.e. the *News & Record* or the *Journal*, as well as *Triad City Beat* and local broadcast news outlets.

## **Progress Reports and Department Input:**

Regular meetings between the Trust Center and the Department Chair and other faculty will enhance the effectiveness and impact of student projects associated with the Center. Through the first year, presentations and discussion at faculty meetings will help A&T faculty aware of JTI projects and facilitate brainstorming new ideas.

The MEL plan will be periodically updated and presented through progress reports. These reports will include an Excel table quantitatively monitoring the outputs of the center's activities and showcasing the progress made toward the goals and outcomes outlined in this proposal.

## **Budget**

is appended to this document (Appendix 4).

## **We agree to these three requirements laid out in the Proposal Guidance:**

1. The Center at North Carolina A&T will be named the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.
2. The Advisory Board to the center will include three members designated by the Scripps Howard Fund, as well as local leaders of Greensboro's different communities, including local businesses, local news organizations, church leaders, health leaders and homeowners' groups. Our first invitations to join that Board will go to:
  - a. Pastor and Former North Carolina Representative Amos Quick
  - b. Ms. Queena Mackay, Owner and Operator of the Queen's Royal Beauty Bar, Salon, and Boutique in downtown Greensboro
  - c. Dimon Kendrick-Holmes, Editor of the Greensboro News & Record and Allen H. Johnson, Executive Editorial Page Editor for News & Record and Winston-Salem Journal
  - d. Sayaka Matsuoka, editor, and Brian Clarey, publisher of Triad City Beat
  - e. Kali-Ahset Amen, Executive Director of the Center for Journalism & Democracy at Howard University
3. We agree to submit quarterly status and financial reports during the startup, January to July 2024, as well as for year 1 of the Center's operation. In years 2 and 3, we will submit semi-annual status and financial reports.

## Appendix 1 Literature Review

### Public trust in and consumption of local news content

#### Trust and polarization

Trust in media outlets has declined with a general lack of trust in other people in recent years. The Edelman Trust Barometer [measures](#) trust in institutions, and its most recent edition also measured trust in other individuals to show that political partisanship, religious beliefs, and views of social policies tend to influence trust in others. According to the 2023 Trust Barometer, only 30% of respondents worldwide said they would help someone with differing beliefs if they were in need; 20% would be willing to be neighbors to an individual who believed differently from them; and 20% would be willing to work with them under the same employer (Peterson, Ries, & Bersoff, 2023).

That distrust mirrors attitudes toward the four institutions measured in the Barometer. Those are businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as non-profits, government, and the media. The lack of trust in the media, government, and NGOs is a worldwide phenomenon, with businesses being the most trusted of Edelman's four groups. Globally, the least-trusted of the four institutions is government, with media a close second and NGOs eliciting more trust than distrust, 51% to 29%. (page 8)

Journalists are distrusted by 47% of Edelman's survey respondents. Only government leaders elicit a lower level of trust, 41%. Individual income affects trust in institutions worldwide, and in the U.S. 63% of high-income earners trust institutions while only 40% of low-income individuals do. Local news, especially broadcast news, is used more frequently and seen as more trustworthy than national networks, no matter the political party or network choice (Fioroni, Local News Most Trusted in Keeping Americans Informed About Their Communities, 2022).

Despite a widening gap in media trust by political party, local news organizations are still seen as more trustworthy overall, and the gap between parties on the level of trust shrinks from 43 percentage points for national news organizations to 18 points for local news (Gottfried & Liedke, Jacob, 2021).

The Edelman surveys gets at distinct drivers of societal polarization, which may give us targets of opportunity in helping regain trust within our community. (Fig. 2). In addition to distrust in government, polarization within a community is exacerbated by a lack of shared identity, systemic unfairness, economic pessimism, societal fears, and distrust in media.

*“People see the difference between fake news and news as one of degree rather than a clear distinction. When asked to provide examples of fake news, people identify poor journalism, propaganda (including both lying politicians and hyperpartisan content), and some kinds of advertising more frequently than false information designed to masquerade as news reports. Fake news is experienced as a problem driven by a combination of some news media who publish it, some politicians who contribute to it, and some platforms that help distribute it. People are aware of the fake news discussion and see “fake news” in part as a politicized buzzword used by politicians and others to*

*criticize news media and platform companies. The fake news discussion plays out against a backdrop of low trust in news media, politicians, and platforms alike—a generalized scepticism toward most of the actors that dominate the contemporary information environment.” Nielsen, R. K., & Graves, L. (2017).*

### *The phenomenon and definition of “Fake News”*

Originally a term used by reporters at the website BuzzFeed to describe clearly false stories showing up on Facebook that seemed to come from a small country in Eastern Europe (Silverman & Alexander, 2016), “fake news” has since come to mean several things. One early example of the early definition of fake news appeared as a Facebook ad, titled “Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President,” (Fig.3) in July 2016. The website Snopes, created to rebut online information that could be proven inaccurate or misleading, used a simple formula of restating the falsehood as a question then describing it (Evon, 2016) in its own rebuttal to this fake news story from a non-existent “local news show.”

In July 2016, the web site *WTOE 5 News* reported that Pope Francis had broken with tradition and unequivocally endorsed Donald Trump for President of the United States. There was no truth to this story, however.

The structure of this kind of rebuttal has been termed “bottom heavy” (Kotz, Giese, & Konig, 2023) in that it front-loads the falsehood and follows it with the reality. Other authors have researched different message structures, in which the rebuttal to misinformation is placed differently, and rebuttal argument constructions have been researched for effectiveness. Those models are discussed later in this review.

Since the Pope’s non-endorsement of Trump, the phrase “fake news” has been reframed by politicians including the former President to challenge the accuracy of actual news stories published by legitimate outlets. Egelhofer and Lecheler call these the two dimensions of political communication: the *fake news genre*, i.e. the “deliberate creation of pseudojournalistic disinformation” as with the false Papal announcement, and the fake news label as the dimension Donald Trump expanded upon by calling any unfavorable media coverage “fake news.” National Public Radio pointed out when the term’s meaning evolved while covering the President’s first year in office (Kurtzleben, 2017).

The first term of the 45<sup>th</sup> President coincided with one of the greatest public health disasters in a century to create a combustible communication situation. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic altered society worldwide, many Americans saw “made-up news” as among the top five problems in the country, after drug addiction, the affordability of health care, the country’s political system, and income inequality (Mitchell, Gottfried, Stocking, Walker, & Fideli, 2019). Despite the seriousness survey participants gave to the problem of “made-up news,” they did not blame journalists, but did say news media are most responsible for fixing the problem. The public itself came second, which may support efforts to persuade news audiences to speak to their friends and family to help debunk conspiracy theories, disinformation, and misinformation shared by well-meaning acquaintances on social media.

It would seem any attempt to help American news audiences learn what news to trust, and how to spot and debunk wrong information when they see it, should happen close to home. A Pew Research Center survey examined trust in types of media sources among the American public in October, 2022. Those results showed that local news organizations top national news organizations and social media in gaining the trust of younger adults (Liedke & Gottfried, 2022). At the same time, Republicans and

Democrats persist in seeing journalists differently; 58% of Republicans and those who lean Republican say journalists “create a lot of made-up news” while just 20% of Democrats and leaning-Democratic voters say the same.

Researchers who study the phenomenon of “fake news” and its impact have begun using two definitions of the phrase to clarify what they are studying: “a two-dimensional phenomenon of public communication: there is the (1) fake news genre, describing the deliberate creation of pseudo-journalistic disinformation, and there is the (2) fake news label, describing the political instrumentalization of the term to delegitimize news media.” (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019) Studying and working to correct the first genre may help address the second genre by increasing public trust in the media. Knowing, also, which types of media are already more trusted—local news over national, for instance—can make these efforts even more effective.

### *Techniques of correcting misinformation*

Fighting misleading health information has been a priority of news media for generations. In the mid-1800s, as cholera, typhoid, and smallpox ravaged the populations of cities and densely settled areas, newspapers of the time published information about the importance of cleanliness, healthy behaviors, and other preventive measures including that century’s method of vaccination, “variolation” against smallpox via an injection under the skin of smallpox or cowpox virus from people who had the disease (Riedel, 2005).

That medical model gave 20<sup>th</sup> century health officials and communicators a construct for pre-empting or correcting misinformation about public health issues, a theory still called “inoculation.” Other models and techniques for correcting wrong information and convincing audiences of the accuracy of legitimate scientific findings have come from communication literature as much as health and medical studies, including the “truth sandwich,” use of identity in messages, and emphasizing empathy and source credibility to add power to rebuttals.

**Inoculation theory** is used in health communication to “pre-bunk” rather than debunk myths and misinformation. Its constructs posit that a specific argument structure can prepare audiences to spot and rebut wrong information when they encounter it (McGuire, 1961). That structure comprises a forewarning, i.e. “you’re going to hear people say...” and refutations to the wrong information. The Truth Campaign, at [thetruth.com](http://thetruth.com), has long used the technique to encourage youth and young adults to resist vaping or smoking by focusing on the “truth” about the risks of nicotine, thus “inoculating” their audience, with the end of the message challenging the myth/misinformation. The theory has been tested and updated ever since, including during the Covid-19 pandemic to fight misinformation about the disease and its treatment (Amazeen, Krishna, & Eschmann, 2022), to test nutrition messages (Konig, 2023)

Unfortunately, “pre-bunking,” or trying to prevent a bad message from circulating widely, is only available as a way to fight misinformation before it has reached and influenced its audience(s). More often, a rogue social media post or news story from a highly partisan outlet has been read, watched, or heard already by the time news organizations are aware of the problem. Debunking is needed once a wrong idea has become accepted as fact by large numbers of people, and “unless a debunk is done appropriately—or when people don’t read the explanation, just the poorly worded headline, tweets, or Facebook post—our brains are more likely to remember the falsehood.” (Wardle, 2020)

**The “truth sandwich.”** Berkley linguist George Lakoff is known for a model for refutation of mis- or disinformation he calls the “truth sandwich.” (Sullivan, 2018) Lakoff’s “sandwich” emphasizes that the nearly automatic response most of us would have to a lie—to deny the lie, inadvertently repeating its central constructs—is the least effective way to convince an audience of the untruth of a given statement. Instead, the “sandwich” rebuttal should be framed as truth, lie, truth: First a clear, concise statement of what the reality is; second, a brief reference to the lie; third, restatement of the truth, preferably using data. Researchers have tested this message structure against “bottom-heavy” and front-loaded message structures (Kotz, Giese, & Konig, 2023) and found the “sandwich” effective in changing audiences’ minds.

**Identity, empathy, credibility.** Recent research on partisanship and trust has shown identity to be a more important factor in political partisanship than specific policy attitudes (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012) —which could mean refuting wrong information with accuracy would have little effect on an audience predisposed to distrust those they see as “others,” i.e. mainstream media—but repeated surveys of media audiences have shown that local news still elicits high levels of trust (Fioroni, 2022).

It's important to note that the effectiveness of debunking techniques can vary depending on various factors, including individual cognitive biases, prior beliefs, and the specific context in which the misinformation is presented. In a study of messages used to inform audiences of the risks of Covid-19 in 2020, authors found that messages that focused on motivations to perform protective measures, for oneself and for others, were more likely to move audiences toward action than messages that used fear appeals or social norms (Bartels, et al., 2021).

Other research suggests that the effectiveness of debunking messages may also be influenced by factors such as the credibility of a message source, vividness of the misinformation, and emotional appeals used in the debunking process (Chen, Na, Tan, Chong, & Choy, 2022).

### **Proposed: a three-factor debunking model**

Combining the elements of debunking described above, we propose researching the effectiveness of a three-factor model for debunking, in which a front-loaded message (truth first) combines identity, empathy, and source credibility to help its audience see themselves in the effort to find truth, understands and cares about the harm that could result from disseminating or redistributing misinformation, and sees the speaker or featured message as coming from a trusted source.

### *Media and public engagement*

Media and public engagement refer in a broad sense to interactions between journalists and audiences that go beyond the consumption of news. Media and public engagement engage the audience through a variety of tools, including online quizzes, commenting spaces, and question and answer forums to interact with audiences (Belair-Gagnon, Nelson, & Lewis, 2019).

Another useful definition comes from the American Association for the Advancement of Science. “Public engagement with science refers to intentional, meaningful interactions that provide opportunities for mutual learning between scientists and members of the public,” (Theory of change, n.d., para. 1). Whether it is scientists or journalists, the purpose is to build public trust through community interaction, and to “shift the image of the scientist (or journalist) from being the “sage on a stage” one-way source of communication toward a more open two-way dialogue with the public that can be accomplished through seminars, workshops, fellowships and special events,” (Public engagement, n.d. para. 1).

### **From civic and public journalism to media and public engagement**

Media and public engagement originated in the 1990s through efforts by Rosen (1996) and Merritt (1998) to promote civic and public journalism that were popular at the time (Ferrucchi, 2017). Knight-Ridder-owned news outlets were at the forefront of civic and public journalism projects that solicited their readers, viewers and listeners to discuss issues and to hopefully, find solutions to issues their audiences felt were important. Civic and public journalism gave the community a seat at the table when it came to issues. But the effort fell into disfavor among some traditional news professionals, who viewed the efforts as “local boosterism,” an affront to investigative journalism, and a threat to journalism independence (The death and rebirth of civic and public journalism, 2021). But when news organizations began using social media tools like Facebook and Twitter in the early 21st century, there was a renewed interest in using social media as a means of building a dialogue with the public. Social media made interacting with the public easier and quicker. That new form of interaction, called media and public engagement (Ferrucchi, 2017), also had a downside. Those same tools gave rise to right-wing “alternative news” outlets. Some of those outlets sought to engage more conservative members of the public with disinformation and misinformation (The death and rebirth of civic and public journalism, 2021).

### **The public sphere philosophy**

Historically, philosophically, and in a theoretical sense, media and public engagement can be traced back to Habermas, a German philosopher who coined the phrase, “the public sphere,” (Jurgen Habermas and the public sphere, 2023). The public sphere is “made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state. Through acts of assembly and dialogue, the public sphere generates opinions and attitudes which serve to affirm or challenge—therefore, to guide—the affairs of state,” (Habermas, 1991, p. 176.). Ferrucchi (2017) provides an updated version of the theory of the public sphere, based on the writings of Christians, et. al. (1991). “The public sphere is a normative theory, one that argues that it is essential for the public to have a physical or conjectural space where it feels empowered to challenge or reinforce or communicate discourses concerning government or power or news,” (p. 7).

### **Why media and public engagement?**

Improving media and public engagement stems from concerns over the growing distrust that the public has in journalism and journalists and to the degree that disinformation and misinformation have helped to further erode this trust (Rosenberry, 2017). In an *Christian Science Monitor* essay, O’Carroll (2021) suggested that former president Donald Trump normalized misinformation and disinformation after his election in 2016. He argued that Trump’s constant attacks on the truth via social media created a climate that made it OK for a large segment of the American public, some politicians and media organizations to ignore facts. O’Carroll’s evidence included Trump’s inflation of inauguration attendance, the altering of a National Weather Service map with a Sharpie, claims that the coronavirus pandemic was “very much under control,” and (the biggest lie of all) claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen. On Jan. 6, 2021, those claims culminated in a mob of Trump supporters storming the U.S. Capitol, an attack that cost the lives of five people (O’Carroll, 2021). Trump had 88.7 million followers on his Twitter account before it was suspended after his supporters attacked the Capitol (Trump loses social media megaphone, 2021). His Twitter account spread lots of misinformation and disinformation, which continues today on other social media platforms.

In the same essay, O’Carroll (2021) noted the lesson and warning from George Orwell’s acclaimed book “1984:” Creating public distrust in the media and its watchdog function--the

constitutional right provided to the media by the First Amendment to make government accountable to the people--undermines democracy and plants seeds for totalitarianism.

Stone, O'Donnell, & Banning (1997) argued 26 years ago that the level of public distrust in the news media, documented by Swift (2016) and Fallows (1996), was so high that they question whether the watchdog function still exists. That erosion today is demonstrated in the closings of more than 1,400 local newspapers in the past 15 years, whose reporters and editors once kept local governments in check by making them accountable for the tax money citizens provided for them to spend (Loss of local news hinders ability to watchdog government, n.d.). The closings leave news deserts in towns and counties. How local governments spend federal, state and local monies go unreported. On a more broader scale, Hackett, et al. (2017) lamented the lack of journalism resources to cover climate change and its impact on rural and marginalized communities worldwide. Such news deserts lead to disinformation and lack of government accountability that could have worldwide, health, social, political and economic implications.

The Kettering Foundation, a democratic think tank, cited additional factors it determined are helping to further erode the public's trust in news. It warned that there is too much media partisanship in news programs, too many media pundits, too much focus on reporting controversy and scandal, and an overabundance of horse race reporting of electoral politics, (Rosenberry, 2019). "These trends have accelerated to the point that, as press critic James Fallows argued a couple of decades ago, the news media no longer contribute to a functional democratic system but undermine it," (p. 7).

Despite the pending threats to a free press, and by default, democracy, some media organizations are undertaking steps to create stronger ties with their publics to help rebuild trust. Here are some examples of news media participating in public engagement.

#### **Examples of news media practicing media and public engagement**

Atlanta Civic Circle, founded around 2011, is a non-profit news portal that focuses on critical issues facing residents of metro Atlanta. It provides in depth reporting and seeks solutions to these issues by engaging with its audience using social media (Atlanta Civic Circle, n.d.). One of its media and public engagement project is working on working with the community on housing issues. Taking its watchdog function seriously, Atlanta Civic Circle has a strong commitment to coverage of city and county government.

The Hidden Common Ground Initiative (HCG), located in New York City, is a part of Public Agenda, a non-profit founded in 1975 that is dedicated to closing the gap between government and the public. HCG provided push back to the notion that the nation was hopelessly divided over politics and race. Its mission is explained on its website. "Through research, journalism, and public engagement, Hidden Common Ground (HCG) helps Americans identify and strengthen their common ground, productively navigate their differences, and create fair and effective solutions to the challenges of our time," (The Hidden Common Ground Initiative, n.d.). In a series called "Strange Bedfellows," stories featured moments where people from across the country worked across racial, political and religious lines to solve community problems. One included a story about Democrats and Republicans in Iowa addressing police violence (Strange bedfellows, 2020).

WBEZ-FM in Chicago launched "Curious City" in 2012. Reporters answered questions posed by its audience. Some of the topics included questions about the city's architecture and what is at the bottom of the Chicago River. In an effort to add more diversity to the questions, editors and producers



fanned out to gather questions from underrepresented neighborhoods in Chicago. “Curious City” became one of WBEZ’s most popular programs (Wenzel, 2017).

WFDD-FM at Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, N.C., has a similar program called “Carolina Curious.” Topics, generated from questions sent in by listeners, include local trivia like, “What is the meaning beyond those letters on older brick chimneys,” to more important topics like, “What are the mental health resources for Spanish-speaking communities in North Carolina” (Carolina Curious, n.d.).

“We the Commuters,” launched by WNYC-FM in New York in 2019, helps commuters trying to navigate the New York City public transportation system. The major topics they investigated, based on interviews with commuters, were biking, homelessness and accessibility. The station discussed these issues on its social media accounts and hosted live events to help address problems commuters were having trying to get in and out of the city. The “We the Commuters” weekly online newsletter has 95,000 subscribers and tips about transportation issues have turned into news stories (How WNYC and Gothamist engaged audiences around transit woes, needs, 2020). Hearken, a media company specializing in community engagement, assisted the station with the project,

The University of Rhode Island, in 2015, acquired a National Science Foundation grant to fund a program that teaches STEM graduate students who want to become science writers how to improve their writing skills to better engage with scientific and non-scientific public stakeholders. SciWrite@URI “has the opportunity to foster greater public trust in the sciences, leading to more compelling and accessible scientific information being conveyed to a broader spectrum of society, and more effective incorporation of science into social and environmental policy making,” (Druschke, et. al, 2018, p. 1). A formal assessment of the project is forthcoming. But the authors reported good initial results from graduate students who saw improvement in their writing skills and their ability to interact and present their research before people in the science and non-science communities.

In 2017, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication published a special edition of the *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* to highlight examples of student and professional journalists engaged in media and public engagement as a means of rebuilding public trust. The Kettering Foundation and AEJMC advocated journalism education focus on media and public engagement as a means of improving journalists’ relationships with their audiences, (Rosenberry, 2017). Out of 50 abstracts submitted, 20 were selected for this special edition. There are lessons to be learned in those “best practices,” however, that can serve as a guide for future media and public engagement efforts.

### **Lessons from media and public engagement**

One of the news organizations featured in this special edition was a digital news non-profit that catered to Native Americans. The study by Ferrucchi (2017) revealed that social media played a crucial role as the conduit between the online news portal and its readers. The study also suggested that public news media outlets stand a better chance of succeeding in media and public engagement projects than commercial news media outlets because serving the community, not making a profit, was the agenda. Another study has shown that commercial news organizations, prioritizing profit, produce news that readers and viewers may not be interested in because journalists have not taken the time to ask them what they need (Beam, 2003). In what can be described as a “hit and miss” approach, another study suggested that commercial news stations relied on the concept of “an imagined audience” (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Journalists who have little or no interaction with their communities make erroneous

assumptions about them and the stories they want to hear, view or read, and rely on expert sources that rarely reflect the people who live in those communities.

One common thread among all of these examples is the crucial role that social media played in helping journalists form bonds with their publics. A study by Diehl, Ardèvol-Abreu, & Zúñiga (2019) revealed that journalists interacting with audiences on Twitter reduced the public's perception of media bias. They argued that journalists' interactions with audiences is a good thing and should continue.

The efforts at building trust between journalists and citizens (media and public engagement) are guided by a theory (a concept?) called *reciprocal journalism*. It proposes that journalists develop mutually beneficial relationships with their audiences (Coddington, Lewis, & Holton, 2018), and that the public will reciprocate more positively toward them. (Borger, van Hoof, & Sanders, 2016). Additionally, a related study showed that high school students exposed to journalism classes have an increased interest in the communities around them, believe they know more about current affairs, and believe that civil engagement helps them improve their journalism skills (Graybeal & Sindik, 2012).

[Best teaching practices in journalism education amid an ever-changing landscape—challenges, opportunities, achievements](#)

**Challenge #1: Reaching and Teaching Gen. Z.** One of the challenges facing journalism education, or education in general, is how to teach a generation of students who lack the skills to process massive amounts of information coming from a host of different media, particularly social media, that they consume every day, mostly from their electronic screens. In 2001, educational game designer and consultant Marc Prensky wrote, "Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach," (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). He wrote that today's students think and act differently than previous generations as a result of the access and use of new technologies that created an information overload. The term describes the social, economic, health and political upheavals caused by the plethora of information that is available to them (Shenk, 2003).

A Forbes study in 2018 put information overload into context. There are 2.5 quintillion bytes of data 2.5+ 18 zeros (000,000,000,000,000,000) created each day (Marr, 2018). Chat GPT translated that number. "Assuming an average text document with a page size of 4 kilobytes (4,096 bytes) and no additional formatting (such as images, graphs, or tables), 2.5 quintillion bytes of information translates into more than 6.5 + 12 zeros (trillion) pages of information created every 24 hours," (Personal communication with Chat GPT, July 4, 2023). Some of this information comes from social media content.

As of December 2022, there were an estimated 4.7 billion active social media users worldwide, and the largest social media market was China. People spend 147 minutes per day on social media, up from 135 minutes per day in 2018. TikTok is the world's most downloaded App (Dixon, 2022). Social media's impact cannot be underestimated. It is the most dominant means of communication in the 21st century (Hamouda, 2018). Case (2002) noted that the information overload is likely to increase stress and anxiety when one is faced with too many sources of information and uncertainty over the quality of that information. Information overload can also lead to bad decision making. It becomes frustrating having to decide from the many sources of information that are out there. Many do not have the skills to select what is credible and what is not. Shenk (2003) concluded that, "Our fast-paced, high-stimulation society leaves many people complaining about being overwhelmed, while many others are becoming unhealthily addicted to the mania," (p. 397).

Generation Z, age 11-26, is the first generation that has spent their entire lives in front of an electronic screen. They spend 4 hours and 15 minutes per day on their mobile phones, the longest time among all generations; 95% of them own a smartphone; 64% say they are constantly connected to their phones; and 57% say they feel insecure without them (Freer, 2019). Information overload has changed the learning styles of Generation Z. Trying to make sense of and cope with such massive amounts of information 24/7 is also having a negative impact on them socially, mentally and physically. Health problems include depression, anxiety, OCD, ADHD and alcohol use disorder, addiction to social networking, shyness and low self-esteem, increased rates of suicides, and obesity--which is the gateway to other health issues later in life, like heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure (Wacks & Weinstein, 2021; Complications, n.d; Pantic, 2014). They bring many of these ailments, signs of mental health problems, the inability to focus, under the influence of drugs, to the classroom that further complicate the mission of teaching. Additionally, some of the health problems associated with social media increased dramatically during the pandemic (Fernandes, et al., 2020). The pandemic also created an infodemic, the term used to describe what happened when “too much information, including false or misleading information in digital and physical environments during a disease outbreak, causes confusion and risk-taking behaviours that can harm health,” (Infodemic, n.d.,para. 1). Infodemics create mistrust in health authorities and undermine the public health response.

Journalism educators face a huge challenge trying to teach this generation that consumes social media at an alarming rate. How do you teach a generation that advertisers say has an 8-second attention span, juggles five screens at time, and is easily distracted (Marcus, 2022)? It is clear that the one-dimensional-teacher-knows-everything approach that included lectures, memorizing and regurgitating information back to the professor in the form of tests or essays (Vavrus, et. al, 2011) no longer works. “As a result of ‘information overload’ and the sheer volume of their interaction with it, today’s students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors” (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). Educators have to learn new teaching skills.

### **Meeting Challenge #1**

The answer, according to education researchers, is a “learner-centered” approach to teaching. Learner-centered methods focus on students and their ability to create their own knowledge through real world experiences (Freire, 2008). Current research and best practices show that digital natives learn best, whether remotely or face-to-face, from hands-on activities that are relevant to their lives, foster a sense of community, and promote student engagement (Aligning learning experiences with course outcomes, n.d.; Conrad & Donaldson, 2011). Prensky (2001) describes digital natives as “native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet,” (p. 1). Digital immigrants are people who use computers, video games and the Internet as a second language. Most of the professors who teach Generation Z are digital immigrants. Teaching digital natives skills they can apply to a subject of interest leads to a higher level of learning and improved retention. The studies are consistent with Bloom’s (revised) Taxonomy, where higher levels of learning and retention come, not from rote memory, but from actual, hands-on experiences or projects that require them to use all of their learned skills to figure out a solution to a problem (Anderson, Krathwohl, & Bloom, 2001).

Here is a chance to improve their teaching skills toward better student outcomes. North Carolina A&T is fortunate to have a Center for Teaching Excellence that trains faculty in research and evidence-based best teaching practices. It has partnered with the Association for College and University Educators to train 120 faculty members in new teaching strategies. The faculty members are versed in “learner-centered” approaches that promote student engagement, community, and hands-on learning that lead

to increased student graduation and retention (Torok, 2023). Through the ACUE faculty development program, A&T faculty were introduced to 95 new teaching strategies and 70 of them were implemented. Self-confidence in faculty members' ability to teach rose from 50% to 100%. Half of the faculty members who won university teaching awards in 2023 were ACUE certified. One of the ACUE-certified professors won the coveted UNC-Board of Governors Teaching award. Two members of the journalism faculty have taken the required faculty development courses to become nationally certified in online and F2F teaching. They are prepared to teach other faculty members what they have learned (Personal interview with Dr. Audrey Dentith, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at North Carolina A&T State University, May, 2023).

Where remote learning has become more common, UNESCO has published an online guide on how journalism educators can teach journalism courses remotely using a learner-centered approach. The guide came out of experiences during the pandemic and the growth of disinformation on social media (Keith & Cozma, 2023).

### **Challenge #2: Keeping faculty updated and trained on new communications technology**

Preparing to teach Gen. Z assumes faculty have the new technical skills to do the job in a multimedia environment. Lack of trained journalism faculty, particularly senior faculty with tenure who are reluctant to learn new skills, is a problem many journalism programs encounter (Sheerin, n.d. as cited in Smith, 2012). More than half of the journalism administrators at ACEJMC-accredited journalism programs cited the lack of trained faculty and finding the money to hire faculty with those skills among several obstacles they faced adding multimedia to their curricula (Tanner & Duhe', 2005 as cited in Smith, 2012).

Today, retraining faculty to teach emerging media has become more complicated as new technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) emerge. Pavlik (2023) wrote an essay after he experimented with Chat GPT and how it can be used in a journalism classroom. He prompted it with journalism history, financial and ethical questions. He found the responses well written and accurate in most cases. But the responses were limited by depth of knowledge and creativity. Similarly, Kothari & Hickerson (2020) explored how journalism professors who teach skills courses and those teaching conceptual courses viewed automated journalism (content produced by algorithms). They concluded that curriculum changes are being driven by professors who teach skills courses "who are more likely to view automated journalism favorably compared to those teaching conceptual courses," (p. 212). The professors also felt the need for media literacy training to help teach students about the pros and cons of automated journalism in the era of "fake news." How to use AI in the classroom, with difficult ethical considerations, is an ongoing debate with no clear answers.

The studies clearly show the challenges facing journalism faculty today are more challenging. In addition to trying to teach basic journalism skills to a group of students, who in some cases, lack basic writing skills, faculty members also struggle to learn new communication tools. They also have to learn new teaching skills to reach Gen. Z., serve as first responders for students suffering from stressors. They are also academic and career advisors, conduct research, perform community service, write grants, and try to find time for themselves, family members and friends. Overburdened is an understatement.

### **Meeting Challenge #2**

Here is an opportunity to provide resources to keep faculty updated on new teaching strategies and emerging communication technologies that journalism students will use to produce content.

### **Challenge # 3: Combatting disinformation.**

Disinformation is “false information which is deliberately intended to mislead” (Misinformation and disinformation, n.d., para. 1). Disinformation “includes malicious content such as hoaxes, spear phishing, and propaganda. It spreads fear and suspicion among the population” (Factsheet 4: Types of misinformation and disinformation, 2022, p. 231). Social media remained the prime conduit for disinformation during COVID-19, conditions that led to an infodemic (Infodemic, n.d.). Members of the public who gravitated to conspiracy theories and fake cures, fueled by partisan politics, frustrated public health officials trying to get them to wear masks and get their COVID vaccines so that more people would not lose their lives (Hsu, 2023). As of March 28, 2023, there have been 761,402,282 confirmed cases and more than 6,887,000 deaths from COVID-19 worldwide (WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard, n.d.). Experts wonder how many lives could have been saved had people been persuaded by the advice of public health experts and not by the disinformation campaigns that urged them not to wear masks, get vaccinated, or social distance. Disinformation over the effort to overturn the 2020 presidential election also fed the insurrection that led to the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capital (Select Committee to investigate the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capital, 2022).

### **Meeting Challenge #3**

One of the ways to combat disinformation is through social media literacy education, which will empower and uplift members of society. Social media literacy skills courses are needed to help people think critically about the media they consume. As they become empowered, they may make wiser choices about media and learn to critically analyze sources of information. Creating an empowering and uplifting social media culture results in a group of people less likely to be influenced by disinformation (Smith, Wade & Jowers, 2023). Higdon (2022) demonstrated that a social media college course could provide students with skills to critically analyze and make informed decisions about how they use social media. Interestingly, disinformation and trust in media (journalism) were among the top concerns cited in a survey taken of more than 2,000 journalists throughout the world, (The state of journalism, 2023).

Combatting disinformation, however, will not be an easy task. A study by Reiner, Harris, Rathje and Van Bevel (2023) concluded media efforts to fact-check disinformation may not be working. Partisan bias trumps fact-checking. Fact-checking by people outside a political group is 5 times more likely to backfire compared to fact-checking from inside the group. It is unlikely the disseminators of disinformation would fact-check. That would defeat the purpose of the propaganda campaign. Note that these researchers and others use misinformation (unintentional mistake of fact) and disinformation (propaganda) interchangeably. Researchers who study what leads people to believe disinformation found that news headlines that fit with the readers’ view of the world stand a greater chance of being believed regardless of the facts. People who believed disinformation also tend to go with their “gut” rather than deliberate their positions (Ecker, et al., 2023). Confirmation bias--the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting information that is consistent with a person’s existing beliefs--also helps explain why disinformation is so powerful and difficult to combat (Casad & Luebering, 2023).

### ***Achievement #1 Best Practices in journalism education***

Journalism education might take cues from “best practices” and research in education that seek ways to engage Generation Z in the classroom. Here are some noteworthy “learner--centered” approaches to teaching journalism and communication research.

Proposal for Roy Howard Community  
Journalism Center at North Carolina A&T  
State University



A broadcast journalism class at Howard University, for example, won a National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Student Production award in 2021 for producing online stories about the pandemic from their hometowns after the university closed because of the disease. Unable to have access to a TV studio, and with students living in their hometowns from across the country, the class improvised its way through the production using video editing tools and social media (Butler, 2021)

In the fall of 2022, students in a mass communication research class at North Carolina A&T State University learned to conduct a content analysis of 50 of their latest social media posts so that they could learn about the role of social media in their lives. The content analysis revealed that 68% of their posts were associated with entertainment, 17% uplift and 14% empowerment (Smith, Wade, & Jowers, 2023). Their research was the basis for a peer-reviewed study that will be published in an upcoming issue of AEJMC's "Journalism and Mass Communication Educator"

Both projects were consistent with strategies advocated by educators seeking ways to engage Generation Z in the classroom. The pandemic and social media were relevant to their lives, and they were topics that interested them. The assignments were interactive and required them to develop a sense of community. The projects put them on a path of self-discovery and gave them "ownership." Teaching students the skills that they can apply to a subject of interest leads to a higher level of learning and improved retention.

From 2000-2010, the Community College Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication published a 10-anniversary edition of its "Greatest Ideas for Teachers" winners. During the decade, journalism faculty submitted examples of innovative teaching strategies (best practices) that were judged and compiled for this special edition. The GIFTS serves as a rich repository for others searching for innovative ways to engage journalism and communication students (The Community College Journalist, 2009). Many of the practices in the special edition employed some if not all of the tips that education researchers recommend in order to engage digital natives. Among the examples were these.

In "How to use a court TV show to help students cover two sides of a story," for example, journalism professors used episodes of the "Judge Judy" court TV shows from YouTube to teach students how to cover both sides of a story. The teaching tip was a unique way to teach news writing. "Students view the "Judge Judy" exercise as a welcome break from more traditional news writing exercises, which tend to focus on death and destruction," (Boyle & Zuegner, 2009, p. 8). The exercise seems appropriate for the first journalism writing course.

On the first day of class, students in mass communications research introduced themselves from their Facebook profiles. Employing a uses and gratifications approach, students were asked why they used Facebook. Those comments were used to determine what emotional needs were being met.

"Although media research methods may seem dry to students, I do know that consuming and using media and, in particular social networking sites like Facebook, is all the rage among students. This assignment prompts students to think about studying the media in an entertaining, disarming and yet academically provocative way from day one through Facebook class introductions," (Gavrilos, 2009, p. 23).

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## Appendix 2: Survey of Community Leaders

### Local news, “fake news,” and trust

To understand audience’ news media use and trust in the Triad area, design proposal faculty conducted an online survey via Qualtrics. The survey measured (1) media and information consumption, (2) social media consumption, (3) opinions toward misinformation and fake news, (4) news literacy and new media literacy, and (5) trust in news media.

The survey link was shared via personal invitation to community leaders and on social media sites. 19 participants completed the survey, the average age of whom fit the Census demographic for Greensboro residents: between 36 and 45 years old. 74% of participants gave their gender as female; 21% reported being male, and one chose “Binary”. 74% of the survey’s participants reported their race as Black and 21% reported being White. When reporting their political affiliation, 11 chose “Democrat,” 7 “Independent,” and 1 Republican.

#### *(1) Audience’s media and information consumption*

First, we asked participants what kind of media they usually use. We listed eight media platforms and asked participants how frequently they get informed by the media platform (1 = Never, 5 = Always). Participants reported using social media most ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ), followed by a news organization’s website ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ) and broadcast TV ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 1.70$ ). Print media/newspaper received the lowest ratings ( $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ). On average, they reported using print media between “a little” and “occasionally”.

We asked another question specifically about cable news. Among the three biggest news networks, CNN, FOX, MSNBC, 8 participants reporting watching CNN most (42.1%), 8 participants reporting watching FOX (42.1%) and 3 selected MSNBC (15.8%). For the follow-up question, we asked which other cable news they trust and one entered “Black Start Network -Roland Martin Unfiltered”, one listed “NBC” and another participant said “Spectrum”.

We also asked participants how often they receive local news alerts on their phone. On average, participants reported receiving news alerts between “Occasionally” and “Frequently” ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ). Five participants reported never receiving news alerts on their phone and their intention to receive it in the future is low, between “A little” and “Occasionally” ( $M = 2.42$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ).

Regarding the content of news consumption, participants reported having “read, watched, or listened” to “politics” most often ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ) followed by “humor” ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ). “Alternative medicine and self-help” received the lowest rating ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ).

#### *(2) Social media consumption*

On average, participants reported spending 4.16 hours on social media per day ( $SD = 1.30$ ). Among the 8 most popular social media listed, they reported spending the most time on Facebook (between 2-4 hours) ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ), followed by YouTube ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ). When asked how they consume news on social media, 5 participants reported “I like to watch or read a story without sharing it or commenting on it”, five reported they like to read, watch and share or comment, five reported they like to share, comment and create their own content. Three reported they like share stories, comment, and

link to friends in a post. Only one reported liking to create her own content and tries to stoke controversy when she posted.

Regarding the news content that participants read or watch on social media, information and current issues received the highest frequency between “occasionally” and “frequently” ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). Video games and gamers received the lowest rating of “a little” ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ).

### *(3) Misinformation and Fake News*

We asked participants what kinds of stories they believe are more likely to include fake news. Among the 8 categories (“Science”, “Politics”, “Humor and gossip”, “Health and diet”, “Fashion”, “Sports” “Entertainment” “Videogames and technology”), they perceived “Politics” most likely to include fake news and the likelihood is “frequently” ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = .65$ ). “Sports” received the lowest rating ( $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ).

The strongest feelings that participants associated with “fake news” are distrust ( $M = 85.63$ ,  $SD = 23.56$ ) and danger ( $M = 85.53$ ,  $SD = 19.25$ ). They did not find it entertaining ( $M = 29.32$ ,  $SD = 31.26$ ).

On average, participants reported having has a friend or family member occasionally share a news story the survey respondent believed to be untrue. When that happened, eight participants said they chose to “listen, then later shared a text message or email with them that pointed out what was untrue”, four participants “tried to correct their understanding verbally in the moment” and two “asked about the source of the story”. Participants believe they themselves “Never” or “very seldom” share fake news with friends intentionally.

Seven participants specified how they recognize fake news. Three checked the media outlet, two looked at the way it makes them feel and another two examined the experts the news story quotes.






### *(4) Trust in media*

We measured trust in media with a 7-point Likert scale with 8 statements regarding how trustworthy the respondent believed news media are. One example of the item is “Today’s news media reports focus on important facts”.

On average, participants reported their level of trust in the media at 5.33 out of 7 ( $SD = 1.39$ ).

### **Text responses to “what do you think about your local news media?”**

Finally, we asked an open question regarding participants’ thoughts about local news media. Below are some quotes:

-  More "good" stories. I'm tired of drama, crime and politics”
-  “they are trying but are underfunded. And by the way, i would be answering these questions differently if we were comparing Fox News to NPR (one is reliable the other not)”
-  “I believe Greensboro is lacking in local news media coverage. It needs more people and resources to encourage others to engage with and share the ongoings of the community.”
-  “Lacks coverage of local subjects. The Rhino is the only news outlet that covers local politics and it's extremely biased.”
-  “My local news media is fairly unbiased and delivers the news as is.”

Proposal for Roy Howard Community  
Journalism Center at North Carolina A&T  
State University



- ✎ "I subscribe to our local newspaper so I think local journalism is important."
- ✎ "I no longer watch my local news"
- ✎ "Needs Improvement"
- ✎ "I think my local news media is good for the community in addressing problems of the community and keeping us up-to-date on happening"
- ✎ "It's the most important out of all news sources because it's about everything in the community."
- ✎ "I think they make good attempts, but I would like to see more local coverage on Black issues, discussions, and problems. I know news stations don't have the man power or maybe the interest to do that — so I am sure it won't happen."
- ✎ "Don't Watch It"



## Appendix 3: Community Leaders speak to A&T

North Carolina A&T would not be what it is today without community. Specifically, the Greensboro community.

Building a relationship with the community you are in is very important. Covering stories within them, and covering them correctly, is just as important. Allen Johnson, Queena Mackey, and Amos Quick III are all leaders in the Greensboro community in some way.

These three local leaders spoke about media and the community and there was a common theme in their responses: depth. There is a lack of depth when it comes to stories being told in local communities.

**Amos Quick III** is a Greensboro native, House Representative and Pastor. He represents the 58<sup>th</sup> district which is very close to N.C. A&T. Although the school is no longer in his district, the people that live around there are. So according to him,

“I’ll always be an Aggie at heart.”

When asked what the community needs from the news, Quick’s response was that it needed accuracy and in-depth information. He gave an example of how if a young African-American male is murdered there is no depth to the story, which furthermore dehumanizes the victim. Instead, the coverage should be about who the victim was, if the victim was married or had kids, and what the family is feeling.

**Queenia Mackey**, owner and operator of the Queen's Royal Beauty Bar, serves the Greensboro community by doing its hair. Her salon and boutique is a place where people in the community can come to look and feel good. The motto at her shop involves uplifting her clients and making sure they look good despite what they may feel.

"I don't want you to look like what you're going through, I want you to look like where you're going to," she explained.

Mackey expressed how generalized local news can be when telling stories. She noted that adding more information and even including point of contact would help with "personability" when it comes to storytelling.

**Allen Johnson III**, the executive editorial page editor at Greensboro News & Record, was born and raised in Greensboro, NC. He believes there is a critical need for not just local news, but in-depth local news.

"That's something that we struggle with in our industry now because we don't have the resources that we once had," he explained, "we have to make harder choices as to what we will do more of and what we will do less of. "

He also emphasized holding people in higher positions accountable when they give information or simply may not be doing their jobs to the best of their ability.

*Author info: Mercy Sackor is rising senior in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, North Carolina.*

Proposal for Roy Howard Community  
Journalism Center at North Carolina A&T  
State University



Appendix 4: Budget

[PDF attached separately via upload site]



July 31, 2023

Mike Canan  
Director of Journalism Strategies  
Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation  
312 Walnut Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mr. Canan:

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the proposal for a Roy Howard Community Journalism Center in our Department of Journalism and Mass Communication here at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. N.C. A&T State University has long seen our connections with the leaders and citizens of the Greensboro and Triad communities as essential to our service to the city we have called home since March 1891. N.C. A&T State University considers itself a community partner, neighbor and active citizen of East Greensboro and the surrounding Piedmont Area.

We have a commitment to making positive change in North Carolina—as we say, “Aggies DO.”

As a Historically Black College and University, and America’s largest HBCU, our mission has always been to improve the lives of diverse and often underserved Americans. We provide a place and an opportunity to gain knowledge and learn important skills at a doctoral university with high research activity. The mission of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center to fund high-quality local journalism and attract students of diverse backgrounds fits perfectly with our ambitious new strategic plan, “Preeminence 2030: North Carolina A&T Blueprint” to serve historically underserved communities with the information we all need to function in society—accurate, thorough, well-researched stories that change lives.

We acknowledge the specific roles and responsibilities our highly accredited Department of Journalism and Mass Communication will play, and that the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and, ultimately, the University will play in working with the Scripps Howard Fund on this important endeavor. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information at 336-334-7806.

Sincerely,

*Frances Ward-Johnson*  
Frances Ward-Johnson, Ph.D., APR  
Dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
General Classroom Building, Room A411  
1601 East Market Street  
Greensboro, NC 27411

Proposal Budget  
Budget Summary

Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_  
Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_

		From: 07/01/24			From: 07/01/25			From: 07/01/26			Grand Total
		To: 06/30/25	Amount	Effort Yr1	To: 06/30/26	Amount	Effort Yr2	To: 06/30/27	Amount	Effort Yr3	
<b>DIRECT COSTS</b>											
<b>Salaries</b>											
PI (acad) Marshall	1.08 per mon	\$78,000	13%	\$10,140	\$80,340	13%	\$10,444	\$82,750	13%	\$10,758	\$31,342
PI (summ)		\$26,000	75%	\$19,500	\$26,780	75%	\$20,085	\$27,583	75%	\$20,688	\$60,273
Co-PI (acad) Squires		\$56,226	13%	\$7,309	\$57,913	13%	\$7,529	\$59,650	13%	\$7,755	\$22,593
Co-PI (summ)	2.25 Per mon	\$18,742	75%	\$14,057	\$19,304	75%	\$14,478	\$19,883	75%	\$14,913	\$43,448
Project Director	65k x3 people	\$195,000	100%	\$195,000	\$200,850	100%	\$200,850	\$206,876	100%	\$206,876	\$602,726
Undergraduate Student (acad)	\$20/hr x 4 stud	\$115,200	100%	\$115,200	\$115,200	100%	\$115,200	\$115,200	100%	\$115,200	\$345,600
Undergraduate Student (summ)		\$38,400	100%	\$38,400	\$38,400	100%	\$38,400	\$38,400	100%	\$38,400	\$115,200
Graduate Student (acad)		\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Undergraduate Student (summ)	\$15/hr x4stud	\$28,800	100%	\$28,800	\$28,800	100%	\$28,800	\$28,800	100%	\$28,800	\$86,400
Graduate Student (acad)		\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Graduate Student (summ)		\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
		\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
		\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
		\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
		\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				\$428,406			\$435,786			\$443,390	\$1,307,582

153,600 acad +summ  
hire 4 extra stud in the summer only

	Rates	Per Mo	Amount		Per Mo	Amount		Per Mo	Amount	
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>										
PI (acad)	36%	1.17	\$3,650		1.17	\$3,760		1.17	\$3,873	\$11,283
PI (summ)	36%	2.25	\$7,020		2.25	\$7,231		2.25	\$7,448	\$21,699
EHRA staff	36%	1.66	\$2,631		1.66	\$2,710		1.66	\$2,792	\$8,133
SHRA staff	36%	0.00	\$5,061		9.00	\$5,212		9.00	\$5,369	\$15,642
Postdoc	36%	12.00	\$70,200		12.00	\$72,306		12.00	\$74,475	\$216,981
Graduate Student (acad)	0.00%	4.50	\$0		4.50	\$0		4.50	\$0	\$0
Graduate Student (summ)	7.65%	3.00	\$2,938		3.00	\$2,938		3.00	\$2,938	\$8,814
Graduate Student (acad)	0.00%	4.50	\$0		4.50	\$0		4.50	\$0	\$0
Graduate Student (summ)	7.65%	3.00	\$2,203		3.00	\$2,203		3.00	\$2,203	\$6,609
Graduate Student (acad)	0.00%	2.25	\$0		4.50	\$0		4.50	\$0	\$0
Graduate Student (summ)	7.65%	0.00	\$0		0.00	\$0		0.00	\$0	\$0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			\$93,703			\$96,360			\$99,098	\$289,161

<b>Tuition (Graduate TBA)</b>									
Out of State									\$0
In state	\$20k x4 stud		\$96,000		\$96,000		\$96,000		\$288,000
Health Fee									\$0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			\$96,000		\$96,000		\$96,000		\$288,000

80k for full time 4stud. And 16k for 3 summ stud

<b>Equipment</b>									
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0

<b>Travel</b>									
Domestic	9		\$5,000		\$5,000		\$5,000		\$15,000
Foreign									\$0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			\$5,000		\$5,000		\$5,000		\$15,000

\$50 a day meals/transportation

<b>Other Direct Costs</b>									
Materials and Supplies			\$30,000		\$30,000		\$30,000		\$90,000
Publication Costs			\$10,000		\$10,000		\$10,000		\$30,000
Consultant Services			\$10,000		\$10,000		\$10,000		\$30,000
ADP/Computer Services			\$5,000		\$5,000		\$5,000		\$15,000
Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees									\$0
Scholarships			\$35,500		\$35,545		\$35,545		\$106,590
Other									\$0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			\$90,500		\$90,545		\$90,545		\$271,590

<b>Subcontractors (DC+IDC)</b>									
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0

<b>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS</b>			\$713,609		\$723,691		\$734,033		\$2,171,333
<b>Modified Total Direct Cost (Less &gt;25K Sub. tuition. Equipment.</b>			\$617,609		\$627,691		\$638,033		\$1,883,333

<b>Indirect Cost (MTDC)</b>		F&A				
		44.0%	\$271,748		\$276,184	\$280,735
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			\$985,357		\$999,875	\$1,014,768

\$828,667  
\$3,000,000

## ROY HOWARD COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER GRANT

### **Texas Tech University**

#### Dean/Director

Robert Peaslee

Tel: (806) 834-2562

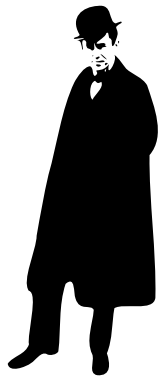
robert.peaslee@ttu.edu

#### Person submitting this request

Tyler Myatt

Tel: (806) 834-7589

tyler.myatt@ttu.edu



ROY HOWARD  
CENTER

FOR COMMUNITY JOURNALISM

SCRIPPS HOWARD FUND

# GRANT PROPOSAL



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Media & Communication



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University will leverage The Scripps Howard Fund's generous gift to establish the nation's preeminent generator and repository of community journalism content and knowledge.

Texas Tech's College of Media & Communication has a century of journalism education excellence. It houses the Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries and a robust infrastructure, making it an ideal home for the proposed center. Located in Lubbock, known as "Hub City" among residents of surrounding communities across hundreds of square miles, Texas Tech University has connections to diverse populations in towns and villages with minimal or no access to reliable information. Moreover, the issues salient to these communities – natural resources, climate, economic struggle, environmental justice and immigration policy – are microcosmic relative to the entire nation.

### Mission and Goals

The mission of the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism will be to empower communities in the High Plains region of Texas (aka the Texas Panhandle) with reliable information pertinent to their daily lives. Such information, which is crucial to communities' ability to thrive, should be representative of the full experience of residents' daily lives and civic engagement. To pursue this mission and become the premiere resource for community journalism education and professional development in the nation, the Roy Howard Center at Texas Tech University will have three primary goals:

1. Enrich and improve the lives of people in communities across the High Plains region by providing local publishers with greater capacity to cover news, build trust and hold power to account at the local level;
2. Provide post-secondary training in community journalism through hands-on experience and meaningful mentorship;
3. Enhance community journalism nationwide by (a) sharing lessons and successes with other journalism programs; (b) creating a robust population of graduates prepared to apply what they have learned in precarious and information-poor contexts around the nation and the world; and (c) building a network of community journalists with graduate degrees who can carry on



teaching community journalism lessons learned at the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism to colleges and high schools across the country.

### Strategies for Success

Our plan for meeting these goals contains the following elements:

- Creation of the West Texas News Hub, a regional news wire and website that will provide (and facilitate the exchange of) timely content to news leaders and audiences across the region. The regional news wire will also give students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in community journalism and build a robust portfolio of local news stories across beats and platforms.
- Founding of a master's program in community journalism in conjunction with the Roy Howard Community Journalism Scholarship fund, a focused effort to prepare a new generation of community journalism teachers and practitioners (including among professionals seeking new and more meaningful careers). The program's emphasis will be on empowering graduate students whose backgrounds have been shaped by the advantages and limitations of rural communities like the ones in the High Plains.
- Creation of two educational initiatives aimed at local communities: (a) a summer institute serving local news editors and potentially high school students interested in community journalism; and (b) remote or face-to-face media literacy and public information workshops. The result of these initiatives will be a demolition of the walls separating the academy, industry and audiences. The center's work will be disseminated to and discussed among each of these broad constituencies. The summer institute and the workshops, however, will meet an especially critical need by empowering local news consumers.

# LEVERAGING TWO LEGACIES TO ENACT A SHARED VISION

## Scripps Howard

A dynamic change agent, the Scripps Howard Fund has been making vitally important, positive interventions in the lives of Americans for decades. By focusing on journalism, literacy and related issues, the Scripps Howard Fund has recognized that democracy depends upon a knowledgeable citizenry empowered to make informed decisions. Scripps Howard's previous investments in investigative journalism centers at Arizona State University and the University of Maryland are already paying indispensable dividends. The Howard family's current focus on community journalism illustrates an awareness of the contemporary news desert crisis. It also aligns with ongoing efforts in journalism training at Texas Tech University.

## Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries

The department emphasizes experiential education opportunities that provide immersive learning, leading its nearly 600 students to produce robust content portfolios with support from peers, faculty, alumni and industry mentors. From their first day in our degree programs, students are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to write and produce content. The faculty serve as advisors to several student organizations and content production groups, including the Society for Professional Journalists, the National Association of Black Journalists, *The Daily Treador*, The Hub@TTU, Tech Creative Media Association, KTXT-FM 88.1, Women Make Movies and Tech Esports, among others. The department fosters close relationships with on-campus public media: KTTZ-TV Channel 5 (PBS) and KTTZ-FM 89.1 (NPR). The department also keeps open channels of communication with Tech Athletics, four local broadcast news outlets and the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*.

## The Hub@TTU

Since its inception in 2012, [The Hub@TTU](#) has served as a laboratory for in-depth and longform journalism. It has been regularly recognized as a leader in collegiate student journalism, as illustrated by the following awards:

- Twenty-one-time winner (individual and staff) of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Mark of Excellence;
- Seven-time First Place Certificate winner (individual and staff), Columbia Scholastic Collegiate Press Association (CSCPA)
- Six-time Certificate of Merit winner, CSCPA
- Two-time Silver Crown Award winner (staff), CSCPA
- One-time Multimedia Story of the Year award winner, Associated College Press
- Two-time Best Student Media Website winner, College Broadcasters, Inc.
- Two-time First Place Online Division 1 winner (individual and staff), Texas Intercollegiate Press Association
- One-time First Place winner, Barbara Jordan Media Awards
- One-time First Place winner, College Media Association David L. Adams Apple Award

The Hub@TTU is led by an editor-in-chief who is a graduate student, with support from a graduate assistant for visibility and promotions and a full-time undergraduate student reporter. Stories written in journalism classes are regularly submitted for editorial review and often published on The Hub@TTU.

### **The Daily Toreador**

Founded in 1925 as *The Toreador*, [The Daily Toreador](#) has served as Texas Tech's student newspaper throughout the university's existence. Accustomed to its own [recognitions for content and staff](#), *The Daily Toreador* provides daily, student-led coverage to the Texas Tech campus and its immediate surroundings. Advised by Sheri Lewis, director of student media, and overseen by a committee of faculty, staff and students, the *Daily Toreador* benefits from a long tradition of institutional support and editorial independence.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant team spent more than two months learning about the needs of news consumers and producers in our surrounding communities. Our findings confirm that the priorities outlined in the Scripps Howard Fund call for proposals are deeply relevant to the Texas High Plains region, and the following project description enacts those priorities.

### Priority 1: Trust Building

To build trust between the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center and the communities it will serve, our proposal emphasizes human resources over the construction or purchase of new infrastructure. Trust comes from mutually advantageous, consistent and empathy-based relationships.

We feel that the surest path toward achieving trust-building conditions is by investing in a team of dedicated professionals who view community journalism as their central priority. Accordingly, we propose the following staff structure:

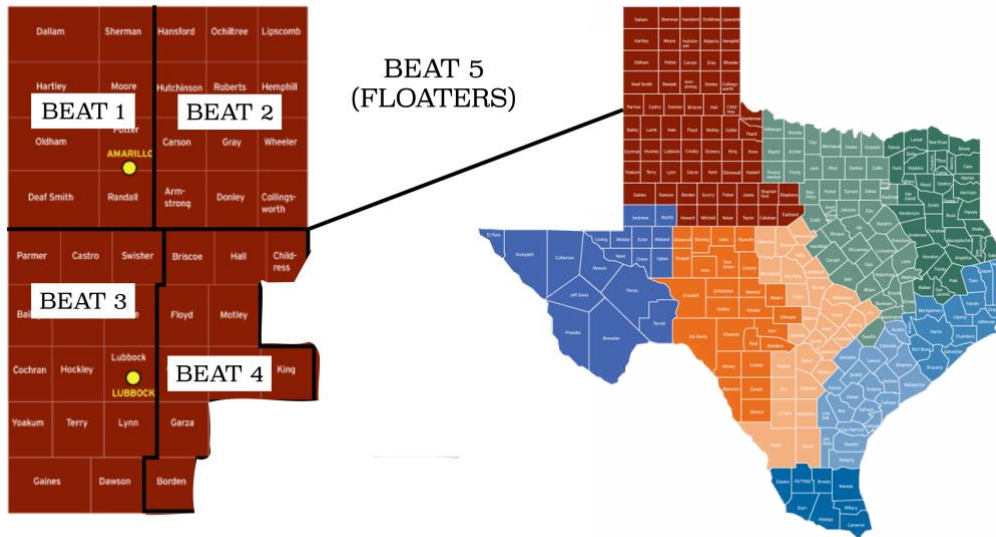
- Director of the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism: a seasoned journalist and editor with extensive experience reporting on communities like those we intend to serve;
- Community journalist-in-residence: an experienced practitioner with a mentor's heart;
- Postdoctoral fellow in community journalism: a dynamic scholar with journalism background serving as a program evaluator, organizer and knowledge disseminator;
- Digital operations manager: a web master and tech-savvy lieutenant who keeps the trains running on time.
- Master's program director and professor of practice: a dedicated journalism educator with newsroom experience and the desire to grow new curricular initiatives.
- Community journalism lecturer: master teacher with the experience necessary to develop capable community journalists through hands-on work.

## **Priority 2: Experiential Learning**

The Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech will reinforce the Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries' longstanding emphasis on experiential learning as a cornerstone of journalism pedagogy. We propose to expand The Hub@TTU, our award-winning, student-driven online news publication, into the West Texas News Hub (WTNH) at the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism. This reimagined platform will leverage The Hub's recognition and resources, expanding its mission toward serving the rural communities in the High Plains region. As a working newsroom serving the diverse communities of the Texas High Plains, the center will be a dynamic laboratory for mentorship and learning by doing. The center will create regular and sustained interactions among students, faculty and practitioners, maximizing the benefits of apprenticeship for budding journalists.

## **Priority 3: Local Reporting**

The local coverage produced by student journalists will be housed primarily on the WTNH's website and promoted via the WTNH social media accounts. However, we will also consult with regional/community news editors to devise a mechanism whereby our written, audiovisual and photographic content will help meet their needs and can be easily available and free of charge. The regional news wire service will provide a welcome service to news publishers and editors without competing for market share with already struggling outlets, ten of whom have included letters of explicit support for our proposal (available as addenda). Moreover, the student-staffed news wire's content will be available for use to state, national or international news outlets for a fee, providing a revenue stream that will aid in the WTNH's overall sustainability and/or could be used for scholarships. In addition, the center will provide printing and distribution assistance to local editors and publishers whose audiences seek out their content in a variety of ways.



**Beyond the WTNH: Maximizing Impact**

In addition to addressing local journalism needs through the WTNH, the Roy Howard Center at Texas Tech will seek to share news and knowledge on a national and international scale and foster partnership among community journalism practitioners and educators. Alongside the WTNH, therefore, we propose two further pillars in support of the center’s mission: (a) an annual summer institute; (b) graduate and undergraduate curricular investments.

**The Roy Howard Summer Institute for Community Journalism**

Technology and contexts for journalism practice and education are evolving, and so must our approach. The Roy Howard Summer Institute for Community Journalism will become a nationally recognized annual gathering of journalists, students, educators and scholars to collaborate and share cutting-edge community journalism research, tools and best practices in consultation with WTNH partners in the region and other community journalism centers state- and nation-wide (such as the Texas Center for Community Journalism at Tarleton State University, which primarily serves Central Texas).

Organized by the center’s postdoctoral fellow, the summer institute will have support from the department, the college, and the Thomas Jay Harris Institute for

Hispanic and International Communication. The event will include teaching best-practices workshops, practical tutorials from industry professionals, and annual awards for the best high school and college/university student community journalism work and research presentations. We will also invite alumni to return to campus for the summer institute and provide additional networking opportunities, mentorship and career development to current students.

**Master’s Program in Community Journalism**

The educational centerpiece of the Roy Howard Center at Texas Tech will be the master’s in community journalism, a 36-hour practical program aimed at (a) early- to mid-career journalists seeking to refocus or rejuvenate their professional practice and (b) career switchers looking to apply a diverse range of skills in service of strong, well-informed communities.

Required Coursework		
Six hours of JOUR 5XXX: Community Journalism Newsroom #	Noncredit one-week lab (before the first semester for career switchers): Community Journalism Bootcamp #	Three hours of JOUR 5XXX: Media Law and Ethics
Three hours of JOUR 5XXX: Records and Data Journalism #	Three hours of sociology graduate coursework related to social inequality; class, racial and aging disparities; gender and violence.	12 hours of JOUR or COMC elective courses*
Three hours of MCOM 5322: Multimedia Storytelling		Six hours of JOUR 6350: Editorial Capstone** #

# Denotes a proposed new course

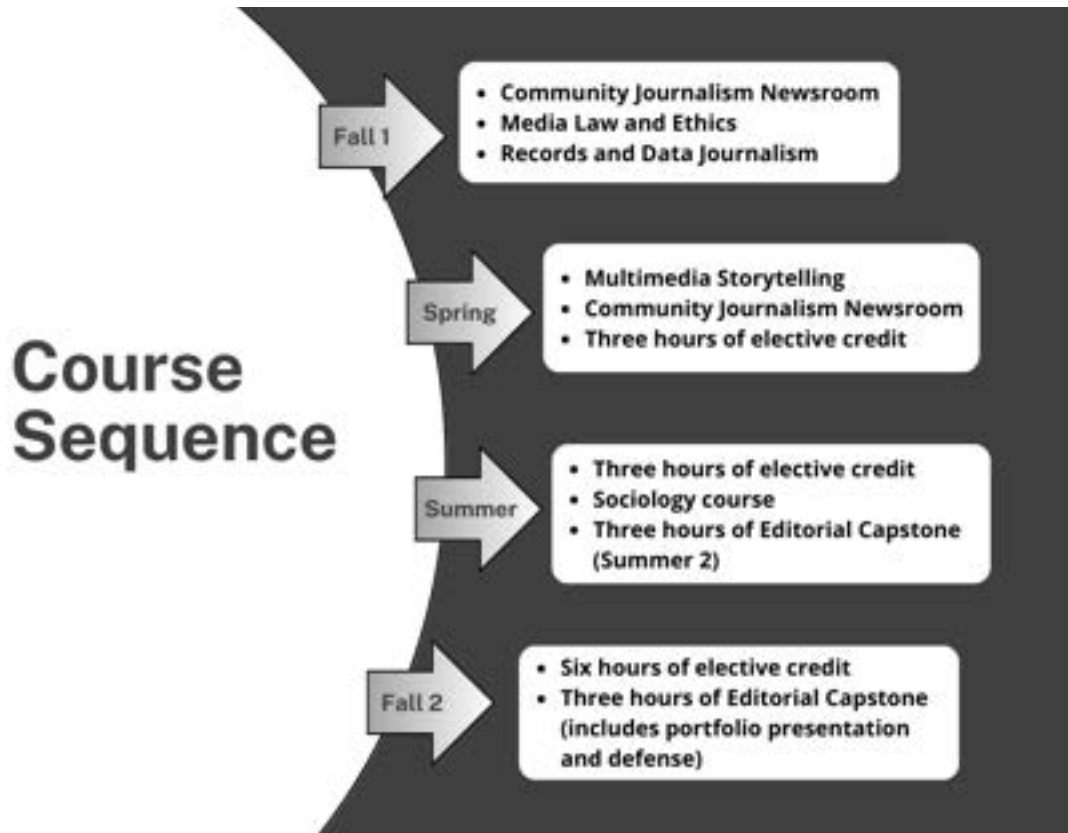
\* Students will have the option to take up to six hours of graduate coursework outside the college in lieu of the same number of hours of college elective courses, depending on M.A. director approval. Three hours of MCOM 5370 Internship credit will be available under the college “elective course” category, contingent on approval from the M.A.

director. This credit requires at least 160 internship hours, weekly reports and a formal final evaluation paper.

\*\* Students will complete two consecutive terms as regional editors, developing a portfolio of work relevant to readers in their assigned region. At the conclusion of their time as regional editors in their final semester, students will present their portfolios as the core of their final projects. The final projects will be supervised by a graduate faculty member and will require students to verbally communicate their conclusions to the graduate faculty.

### Course Sequence

The M.A. program will enroll new students each fall semester. Each cohort will complete the following course sequence, resulting in 36 total graduate hours:





## **Community Journalism in the Undergraduate Curriculum**

We will revise the B.A. program in journalism to include a clear commitment to community journalism in the following ways:

- The addition of a course titled “Reporting in Rural Communities,” a junior-level seminar in which students will be introduced to the specific challenges of local journalism, the tenets of solutions journalism and the skills necessary to be an effective reporter and editor in community contexts. This course will be taught by faculty affiliated with the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism and supported by the community journalist-in-residence.
- The development and implementation of community journalism modules throughout the B.A. program’s required courses, from the introductory JOUR 2300: Principles of Journalism through the degree’s intermediate and advanced courses. The community journalist-in-residence will be an essential partner in developing these modules with the journalism degree program coordinator and the department chair.
- The creation of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Scholars program, which will provide scholarships to a minimum of five students who are first-generation, bilingual, Black, indigenous, or people of color. Texas Tech University is federally recognized as a Hispanic-serving institution with a diverse population of students uniquely situated to pursue careers in community and impact journalism. With the scholarship program, The Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries will provide a new generation of community journalism students with meaningful financial support and a clear commitment to the wellbeing of underserved communities. Over time, we expect that a robust community of alumni of the Roy Howard Center at Texas Tech will provide professional opportunities and mentorship to incoming and current students.

## **Sharing the Message and Enhancing the Profession**

A primary goal of the Roy Howard Center at Texas Tech will be to use the work of its educators and practitioners to promote and perfect the practice of community journalism at the national level. The center’s postdoctoral fellow will generate industry-driven reports and research manuscripts, with an emphasis on best practices and

emerging issues in community journalism. These reports will be produced in three primary formats, each including attribution to the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism and acknowledging the support of the Scripps Howard Fund:

### ***Roy Howard Center White Papers***

Utilizing the postdoctoral fellow’s research skills and expanding upon internal program evaluations, the Roy Howard Center white papers will be released at least annually and made available via the center’s website for download and dissemination. Each white paper’s topic will be determined by the center director and staff in consultation with the advisory board. White papers may include annual “state of the discipline” statements, summer institute proceedings, examinations of news consumer and/or producer dynamics, or other data-driven topics of interest.

### ***Trade Publication Articles***

The center will prepare regular articles, reports, and Op-Eds for publication with trade platforms such as *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Editor & Publisher*, *SPJ News* and others. The goal of this output is to put the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at the forefront of nationwide industry discussions on community journalism and related issues, while also providing professional development resources to those working in the field.

### ***Scholarly Journal Articles***

The postdoctoral fellow will be engaged in academic scholarship during their tenure with the goal of publishing in highly reputable scholarly journals such as *Journalism Studies*, *Journalism Practice*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, and *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, among others. Such scholarship is intended to enrich future generations of journalism practitioners as part of their conceptual, technical, and ethical training.

### ***Collaboration and Partners***

The Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech already has received explicit commitments from multiple partners on campus and in the community. These include:

- **Texas Tech Public Media.** The College of Media & Communication has longstanding partnerships with KTTZ-TV Channel 5 (Lubbock’s PBS affiliate)

and KTTZ 89.1 FM (Lubbock's NPR affiliate). Both provide students in the Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries with access to studio facilities, internships, job shadowing and professional networking. Texas Tech Public Media is highly interested in potential national distribution of the center's content through PBS and NPR channels.

- **The Thomas Jay Harris Institute for Hispanic and International Communication (HIHIC).** The Harris Institute, for which our project co-leader Lucinda Holt serves as assistant director, pledges to provide material support and assistance to the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism through co-programming and co-publishing opportunities (particularly where bilingual journalism issues are relevant).
- **Department of Public Relations and Strategic Communication.** Department Chair Eric Rasmussen and Debbie Davis, interim associate dean for undergraduate affairs, have indicated support for collaborations between the center and RaiderComm, our student-staffed public relations agency. Such collaborations will provide the Roy Howard Center and our regional news wire, WTNH, with free marketing, while also giving public-relations students meaningful experience with a real-world client.
- **Lubbock Avalanche-Journal.** A key partner, the local daily newspaper consistently provides internships to students in the Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries and co-publishes student work with The Hub@TTU. The *Avalanche-Journal* has pledged access to newsroom resources, mentorship and workspace as needed for students working with the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism. A letter of support from Adam Young, the newspaper's editor, is available in the addenda.
- **Estacado Early College High School.** A majority-Hispanic magnet school in northeast Lubbock, a low-socioeconomic-status area, Estacado has pledged to collaborate by connecting Texas Tech community journalism students and high school students through events, workshops and peer mentoring. Estacado's journalism teacher Savannah Terry's letter of support is available in our addenda.
- **The University Interscholastic League (UIL).** This program, created by the University of Texas, offers athletic, academic and music competitions, including a robust series of journalism contests. The Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries has provided scholarships for UIL journalism

winners. The Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism will expand this partnership by hosting regional journalism contests and developing contest prompts related to reporting on underserved communities. Barb Amrhein, a retired journalism teacher and UIL journalism contest judge, has agreed to serve as an advisory board member.

## **Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism Launch Timeline**

### ***October 2023***

- The Scripps Howard Fund team and grant project leaders will meet; the project is announced according to the funder's preferences.
- The chair of the Department of Journalism & Creative Media and the college's associate dean for graduate studies will begin the approval process for the master's program in community journalism.
- The Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism advisory board will hold its first meeting;
- A committee of three faculty members with community journalism experience (Miglena Sternadori, Lucinda Holt and Sarah Self-Walbrick), student media director Sheri Lewis, two advisory board members, and two current journalism students will launch a national search for director of the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism.
- The associate dean of administration and finance will initiate the renovation and rebranding of student media space in the "rotunda" space of the College of Media & Communication.
- The graduate editor of The Hub@TTU will recruit and onboard at least three paid undergraduate community journalists (who may or may not be journalism students) to report "evergreen" regional stories in preparation for the launch of the regional news wire, the West Texas News Hub, in early 2024.

### ***November-December 2023***

- The director's search committee will review applications and invite finalists to on-campus visits.
- The College of Media & Communication will begin promotion of new academic offerings and new initiatives in community outreach and

engagement offered through the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism.

- The academic programs committee of the college will approve the master's in community journalism.

### ***January-March 2024***

- The Hub@TTU will begin creating pilot content aimed to supplement the content produced by community journalism newspapers in the region.
- JOUR 4370: Advanced Reporting will be modified to require students during the spring 2024 semester to produce at least two news stories relevant to the residents of nearby counties, in collaboration with community editors and publishers.
- The search committee and the college administration will complete the hiring and onboarding of the center's director.
- Under the oversight of the center director, the advisory board and the chair of the Department of Journalism & Creative Media, committees will launch national searches for a digital operations manager, community journalist-in-residence, postdoctoral fellow, M.A. program director and lecturer in community journalism.
- The university's academic council will approve the master's program and refer it for approval to the upper administration and the Board of Regents.
- The center director will develop pilot programming for a soft launch of the first summer institute in the summer of 2024.

### ***March-April 2024***

- The searches for digital operations manager, community journalist-in-residence, postdoctoral fellow, M.A. director and lecturer will be completed.
- With the master's program approval process ongoing, "soft" recruitment for the first class of master's students in community journalism will begin (with enrollment contingent on the program's final approval).
- Modifications of the space that will house the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism will be complete.
- Journalism faculty will join the planning of the inaugural Roy Howard Summer Institute in Community Journalism.

### ***May 2024***

- Board of Regents will approve the M.A. program in community journalism.

### ***June-July 2024***

- The Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism will open its doors, housing the regional news wire and workspace for affiliated faculty.
- The regional news wire West Texas News Hub will be officially launched.
- The inaugural Roy Howard Summer Institute in Community Journalism will be held on the Texas Tech campus over a three-day period.
- The hiring and onboarding of the digital operations manager, community journalist-in-residence, postdoctoral fellow, master's program director and lecturer will be completed.
- Design and preparation for new community journalism courses to be piloted in fall semester will commence.

### ***August 2024***

- Community journalism classes will be piloted as part of existing degree programs.
- Planning for two inaugural community media literacy/public information workshops will commence.

### ***September 2024***

- Two inaugural community media literacy/public information workshops will be held on weeknights in Lubbock and Plainview.

### ***October 2024***

- The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will approve the master's program in community journalism.

### ***January 2025***

- Recruitment of the first cohort of Howard Center M.A. Fellows in Community Journalism will begin.

### ***August 2025***

- The inaugural cohort of the Howard Center M.A. Fellows in Community Journalism will enter the first semester of the master's program.

# SERVING TEXAS HIGH PLAINS COMMUNITIES

## Target Audience and Consumer Research

### ***Local Editors and Publishers***

The most immediate target audience of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will consist of local news editors and publishers, who will (a) publish the content produced by students working under the supervision of professional editors at the center; and (b) benefit from the availability of interns and graduates with local community experience. Much of the content coverage by students will be guided by information exchanged in weekly videoconference meetings with editors of participating community newspapers.

To identify the needs of this most immediate “audience,” we spoke with the editors or publishers of 12 community newspapers in the High Plains area. The results of these in-depth interviews were summarized in the preceding section. All 12 interviewees expressed strong interest and enthusiasm about the possibility of establishing a community journalism center at Texas Tech University.

“I cannot state this strongly enough -- the impact of this journalism center could be incredible,” one publisher/editor said. Another added: “I love your project [because] we are the final cog in the wheel of democracy.”

A newspaper owner described community journalism as glue: “(O)nce you lose that glue, that center glue, even if you hate that glue...it is how a community – a small community stays together.”

The editor of a newspaper that recently ceased publication described our proposal as “necessary and long overdue.”

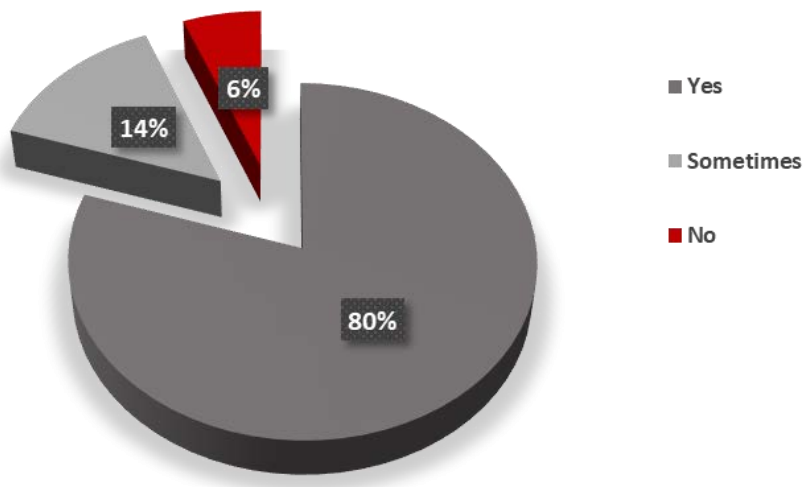
“Community newspapers are in critical need,” she said. “It seems like the most obvious thing to be done, especially in areas where newspaper owners are aging and needing someone to take over.”

### ***Residents of the High Plains Region***

Another target audience of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will consist of the residents of the 41 counties in the High Plains region. To identify their needs, we conducted pen-and-paper surveys (and, in some cases, verbal interviews) with 142 residents of 10 communities in the High Plains (65% women, 35% men).

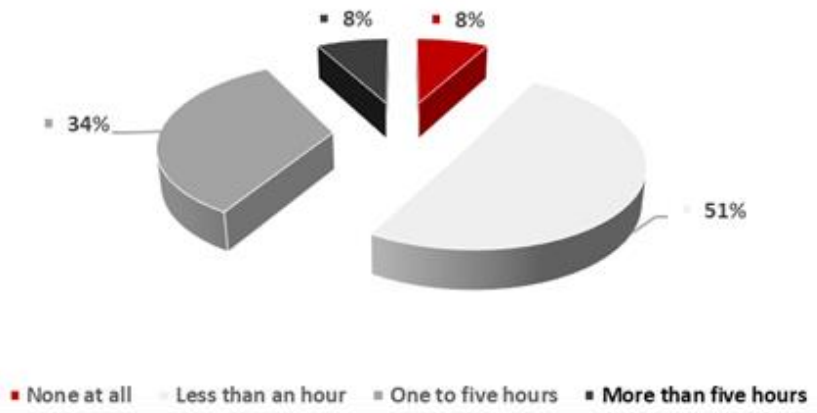
On the surface, our findings were not particularly alarming. More than 80% of the community members indicated that they have access to local news.

### Do you have access to local news?



Furthermore, most participants in the community surveys (92%) said they spend some time each day, even if it is less than an hour (the most common response) consuming local news.

### How much time do you spend each day reading, watching or listening to local news?

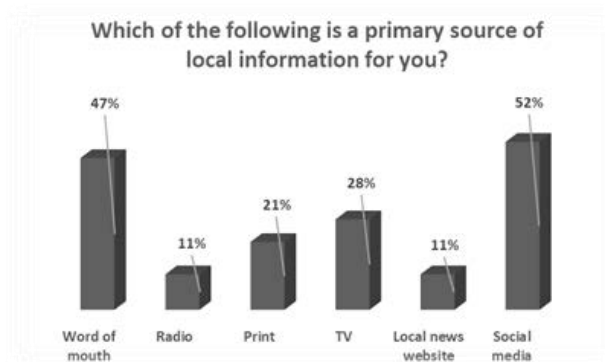




What was alarming, however, was that about half of the community members pointed to word of mouth (47%) and social media (52%) as major sources of local information for them. (Survey participants could choose multiple options). Both word of mouth and social media were reported by a percentage of participants that was higher at a statistically significant level than the percentage of participants who selected any of the “mass communication” options—such as print, TV, radio and news sites—that in most cases strive to publish verified information. Only one significant gender difference emerged: men were more likely than women to rely on radio as a primary source of information.

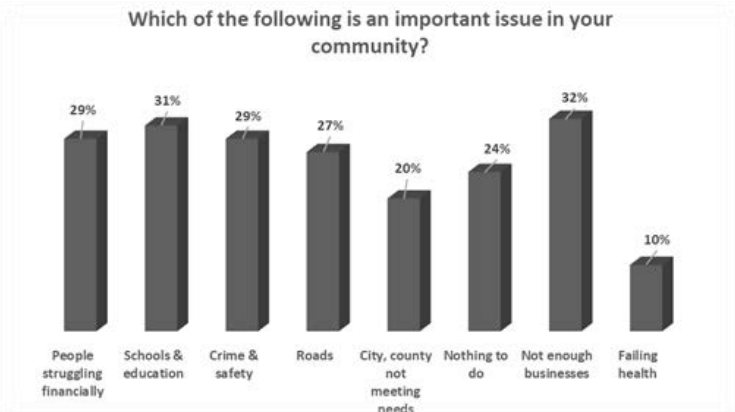
As we expected, based on our interviews with editors and audience members, the percentage of participants who pointed to print as a source of local information (21%) was higher than the percentage of those who mentioned local news websites (11%). However, the difference was not large enough to be statistically significant.

TV, a local information source for 28% of respondents, was the most frequently used “mass” media form. The difference between TV and print (21%) usage was not statistically significant, but TV was identified as a local information source at a significantly higher rate than radio (11%) and local news sites (11%).



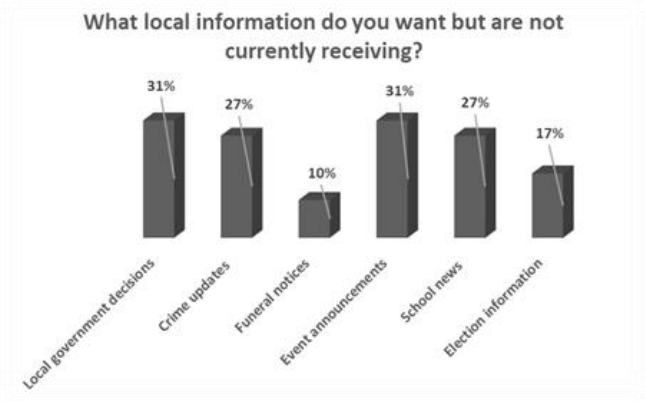
We also asked survey participants what the most critical issues were in their communities. No one issue emerged as more prominent, at a statistically significant level, than all others. The four mentioned most frequently were shortage of businesses (32% of participants), schools and education (31%), crime and safety (29%), and financial struggles (29%). Despite the region’s aging population, failing health was mentioned significantly less frequently (by 10% of respondents) than almost any other issue.

Only two statistically significant gender differences emerged in the responses to this question. Women were more likely than men to point to (a) schools and education and (b) “nothing to do” as major issues in their communities.



Finally, we asked community members what information they were lacking. Once again, no one category emerged as more frequently mentioned (at a statistically significant level) than all the other categories. The four most frequently mentioned included local government decisions and event announcements (by 31% of respondents) and school news and crime updates (by 27% of respondents). Funeral notices (10%) were mentioned significantly less frequently than all other categories. Only one statistically significant gender differences emerged: men were more likely than women to want information about local government decisions.

We were surprised by the relatively low rate at which election information was mentioned (by 17% of participants). These responses may be more frequent near the time of major local or national elections.



## Community Needs and Threats from Dis/Misinformation

### ***Need for Local and Accurate Information***

About 40 community newspapers still serve the Texas High Plains region, but their survival is threatened by decreasing advertising revenues and increasing production costs.

“I make less than my dad did 20 years ago,” said one publisher, who bought his town’s newspaper from his father in the early 2000s. “As of right now, I cannot afford to send my kids to college.”

Several community newspapers in the High Plains region have shut down in the last two years or are up for sale, leaving residents in such communities without an immediate source of day-to-day local information. *The Lynn County News* went up for sale in June. *The Canadian Record* stopped publishing earlier this year and is currently looking for a buyer. In 2022, *The Pulse* in Castro County, an online-only weekly, and the Southwest Digest, Lubbock’s only Black newspaper, ceased publication, following the closure of the *Oldham Enterprise* in 2021.

A substantial number of residents, even if they live in counties with a newspaper, do not have local news coverage that pertains to them. This complaint was mentioned often by Black residents and those who live in unincorporated communities.

“Everything is Facebook or word of mouth,” said one resident of a township in Dickens County, adding that people in that community get news primarily from social media posts by the county, the fire department, local volunteer groups, and independent community pages.

Another community member said the local newspaper does not feel relevant to her: “I just felt like nobody was really touching on things that are important to me [as] a woman.”

In communities with a non-daily newspaper, residents complained that the news was not sufficiently timely because the newspaper’s social media or website (if there was one) would not get updated. They said they had to rely on social media and word of mouth to learn about school announcements and crimes in the community, such as the discovery of human remains or an inmate’s escape from a local prison.

Editors and publishers pointed to several reasons for the dwindling financial stability and shrinking news coverage in community journalism:

- The pandemic: In-person events were canceled or postponed, and many businesses closed (temporarily or permanently), leading to loss of advertising revenue. Many regular events, such as local festivals, were never resurrected, making the loss of advertising revenue permanent;
- Turnover: Growing numbers of business managers are not from the community and are unwilling to support the newspaper through print ads because they do not see them as effective or say the community is already familiar with the business. It is only over time that they realize supporting the newspaper with ads is good for the entire community and has a trickle-down positive effect on their business. “The community is bigger than their one little business, but it usually takes them about 10 years to get it,” one publisher said.
- Production costs have gone up: the dwindling of community newspapers has made printing presses scarce, leading to higher prices for printing and transportation. “If some of the smaller papers go down, the ones that aren’t owned by corporations, that’s going to drive up my cost,” one publisher said.

As the number of locally owned Texas Panhandle newspapers has dwindled over the last five years, many have been acquired by corporations and investors. Our interviews with community members suggested that many residents no longer buy or subscribe to such publications because the amount of local content has diminished or because they distrust the new owners and have seen decreased “boots-on-the-ground” content.

Additionally, residents said they do not see any coverage of trends or issues that require long-term reporting, such as closeted drinking among the elderly and bullying of Hispanic children (both in and outside of school).

“I’ve seen a lot of YouTube videos of just your everyday ordinary people that see a problem, such as that houseless population, or kids in poverty or whatnot, and they go out, like yourselves, and they are ... reporting actual real-life things,” one community member said. “They just care. They want to bring awareness to it. That matters to me. I trust that 1,000 times over even than I do my own local news stations.”

Local newspapers owned by corporations or investors include the following:

- The two largest newspapers in the region, the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* and the *Amarillo Globe News*, are owned by Gannett.
- The *Plainview Herald*, *The Muleshoe Journal*, and *The Canyon News* are owned by Hearst.
- A string of smaller publications, including the *State and Hockley County News-Press*, *Castro County News*, *The Lamb County News Leader*, *The Brownfield News*, *The Slatonite*, and *The Dalhart Texan*, are owned by one of the Wesner brothers, Brett and Scott (they own at least 15 newspapers in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Kansas).
- An investor company, the Paragraph Ranch, owned by Kay Ellington and Barbara Brennan, recently acquired *The Texas Spur*, *the Floyd County Hesperian-Beacon*, *The Post Dispatch*, and *The Knox County News*.
- Jeff and Angela Blackmon, originally from the Waco area, own the *Swisher County News*, *the Hereford Brand*, and *the County Star News*.

Residents of some communities have noticed minimal or no content changes following the sale of their local newspapers. However, outside ownership has upset residents in other communities, especially when they noticed a substantial recent decrease in local coverage (even in cases when a newspaper has had a non-local owner for decades). In one such community, an elderly woman attending a Juneteenth event said she no longer subscribes to the newspaper because “it got too hot” (a likely reference to the newspaper’s superficial coverage of a sexual “incident” at a local elementary school).

“There used to be a guy who came to every event,” she said, referencing the newspaper’s previous news coverage. “Now nobody comes to anything.”

### ***Need for Debunking False Information***

“Pink-slime” outlets (a metaphor based on a meat byproduct), which are partisan websites that use commentary and filler stories to pose as local news outlets, do not appear to currently be the primary sources of mis/disinformation in the region. The residents and editors we interviewed said the spread of inaccurate or outright false information is a problem but pointed to social media and word-of-mouth as the primary sources of mis/disinformation.

Still, “pink slime” remains present. The now-defunct *Caprock Patriot* (which also had a print edition), still retains presence on YouTube and the rightwing platform Gab. Other area “pink-slime” websites, all owned by Metric Media, continue to maintain a web presence, including *Panhandle Times* (<https://panhandletimes.com>), *West Texas News* (<https://westtxnews.com>), *Amarillo Gazette* (<https://amarilogazette.com>) and *Lubbock Times* (<https://lubbocktimes.com>). These outlets’ local government sections conspicuously lack city/county reporting and are filled with press releases from Republican Congressmen serving local districts (e.g., Nathaniel Moran, Ronny Jackson, Jodey Arrington). *Lubbock Times* also republishes city of Lubbock press releases, accompanied by the same photo of the Republican mayor. Some sections of local “pink-slime” websites, such as sports, have not been updated since 2022.

Editors say most discourses that contain mis/disinformation are tied to current local government actions and reflect a lack of understanding of local government processes or lack of direct access to government officials. The most common subject of dis/misinformation are contentious spending decisions by local governments. One editor/publisher of a small community newspaper said it is clear to him that residents who spread false rumors do not read his content.

“I can tell you that almost everyone who shows up at city council to complain is not a subscriber,” he said. “The rumors would run rampant if the newspaper wasn’t here.”

Because community newspapers typically have only one or two reporters, sometimes correcting inaccurate information — for example, conspiracy theories about local murder cases, especially unresolved ones — takes more time than it should, news leaders said.

“We frequently have times, I feel like, in this newsroom where we have conversations about, ‘Well, if there was just one more ..., maybe we could have handled this a little bit better, or maybe we could have gotten out there a little bit sooner. Maybe we would have heard this and gotten it straightened out by this specific deadline,” one editor said.

Another editor said he has frequently had to explain to residents how government budgets work and recently wrote a column encouraging the community to attend local government meetings to get a first-hand look at how money is allocated.

Most news leaders said they deal with mis/disinformation head on, addressing it directly, unless it is likely to upset many readers (see examples in the “Need for independence and accountability” section.)

“When I am reporting on a city council meeting, even if they say the Nazis caused 9/11, I’m not going to dismiss that because there is a good chance that a whole group believes that,” one editor said. “I take it for what it is. If there is a direct question, direct answer, I put that in the paper. The more rumor or misinformation you allow to burn, the worse it gets.”

### ***Need for Independence and Watchdog Journalism***

Local news leaders have limited independence due to financial, political, and labor constraints. Nearly all local news leaders we interviewed emphasized that they “stay away from controversy” in their editorial columns and choices of topics to cover.

“A lot of this type of work is trying to people-please to keep relationships alive,” one community news editor said. Another emphasized that he prefers to channel “positive energy” in his content and not criticize local officials, even though his town is about to enter budget season without a city manager, a finance department head or a human resources department head.

Many interviewees volunteered examples of self-censorship without even being asked. One editor mentioned that if the mayor or another local power broker is found to be doing something illegal (for example, is charged with a DUI), the newspaper will not report on that for fear of losing access to the local government and/or losing advertising dollars.

“Say, there was a criminal report, and it involves one of your advertisers,” one community news editor said. “And you depend heavily on a few advertisers, and so it’s very difficult to present that.”

In another example of self-censorship, a community editor and publisher said he could not report or run local stories about the potential dangers of ivermectin, an anti-parasitic veterinary drug and an alleged COVID-19 cure, even though he knew many members of the community were taking it, because he feared upsetting the audience; instead, he decided that what was already on the national news had to be sufficient information for his readers.

Lack of political diversity in some areas has frustrated some editors who feel that their audiences expect to see only content that does not contradict their views. One editor, who described herself as an “independent conservative,” said the local Republican committee chairperson once called her and scolded her after the newspaper ran an ad paid for by the local Democrats.

Another obstacle to watchdog journalism is that newspapers with minimal staff cannot assign another reporter to a beat where relationships with sources have suffered. A former editor explained the predicament this way: “If you piss off the Chamber of Commerce, that’s it, there is nobody else to take over that beat.”

The trickle-down effect of such limited resources is a sense of impunity among some local government officials, editors said. Many have become accustomed to seeing no reporters at public meetings and feeling above the law. Lack of local government coverage, in turn, dampens the community’s expectations of accountability.

“There is a mistaken idea that local government is closed to the public,” one former editor said. “A lot of people don’t know that they have the right to go to a meeting.”

Residents of one town with a newspaper said they have not found it helpful in ensuring local government transparency. One said it is difficult to know what to do or reach county commissioners when roads become impassable after rain; another complained the only way to obtain information not included in the city’s newsletter is to file a public records request.

We realize that the creation of the West Texas News Hub regional wire will not be an immediate magic-bullet solution to the self-censorship tendency of some newspaper editors and publishers. We expect that many will still prioritize the need to maintain relationships with sources representing local power elites.

Nonetheless, the free online publication of stories and the presence of (somewhat transient) student reporters will encourage transparency and accountability in two ways. First, we expect that some news outlets will run wire stories about uncomfortable developments in nearby towns and counties, thereby exposing wrongdoing without necessarily jeopardizing their own relationships with sources. Such spread of information would place pressure on other editors and publishers to eventually run stories concerning power brokers in their own coverage areas. Second, the potential to lose a relationship with a specific source would be less damaging to a student reporter’s ability to report stories, due to the option to switch beats and/or regions as needed.



### ***Need for Journalists***

Almost all interviewed editors/publishers (many of whom were the sole reporters for their publications) said they were in desperate need of another writer. The reason was twofold. First, some publications had difficulty “filling the news hole,” especially if their owners required them to publish a certain number of pages in each issue, regardless of whether it is a “slow” time, such as the summer.

Second, some publications—especially those covering multiple entities, such as towns and school districts—lack the number of reporters needed to attend all relevant local government meetings. Even an editor who worked with another reporter (in addition to herself) said it is impossible to cover time-consuming events, such as court proceedings. The newspaper, which is owned by a corporation, has recently abandoned much of the coverage it provided when it had multiple reporters under previous ownership.

“The greatest disadvantage is some of the decisions that are made from higher up are made from people who probably haven't been to this part of Texas,” this editor said. “Or they don't know our audience; they don't know the people that we answer to.”

The shortage of reporters willing to work for small community newspapers has made it difficult to maintain true community coverage, especially for newspapers that cover more than one town or county, several editors said. Many wished they could expand their coverage but see no way of accomplishing this goal.

“I would love to see us be able to reach out to some of the surrounding communities that have traditionally looked to this paper for their news and to highlight their kids,” one editor said. “I would do more happy news, more positive news, if we had the resources to be able to be out there and be more present in some of those communities.”

Several newspaper editors indicated that one of the ways they deal with the shortage of content is by swapping stories with other local newspapers, especially (but not exclusively) if they have the same owner. Having a regional news wire, such as the one proposed in this grant application, was an exciting prospect for them.

Our interviewees also indicated that the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center would make it easier for them to identify and hire capable reporters.

“I think this is very important and beneficial to this area, the idea of having people specifically trained to be in rural journalism,” one editor said. “I don't know quite what it is that makes people not want to do that and prefer to take their

talents to a different publication. But it has been a huge barrier for us and definitely a huge stressor.”

Community members we interviewed understood that their local newspapers were doing their best with limited resources. Nonetheless, many wished for more content based on factual reporting of events and public meetings. One community member with school-aged children said her community newspaper’s coverage of local government and schools falls short.

“Because it’s a small local paper, I feel like it has more opinion than actual news,” the interviewee said.

Speaking about the same publication, a former reporter at a newspaper in a neighboring area described it as a “conservative rag,” whose editor is bent on criticizing President Biden: “Goes off and you know, these people around here, they read that as gospel. And he's full of shit.”

In another community, residents said the local newspaper is full of sports coverage, but not much else.

“We don't have human interest stories, really, unless you specifically call and say, 'My daughter's going to Harvard,'” one resident said.

The owner of several other newspapers in the region said most struggle at times with a shortage of local content because of how exceedingly difficult it has become to hire reporters since the start of the pandemic. In his experience, journalism graduates no longer seem interested in working in rural areas.

“It would be great to pay folks twice as much as we pay them right now, but the money is just not there,” the owner said, adding that a community journalism center at Texas Tech would be a game changer by taking on stories local publications cannot cover.

A reader in Garza County echoed the need for more news staff: “I would like to see two or three young, emphasize on young, community reporters.”

Several editors and publishers also expressed concern that the lack of resources and the shortage of potential reporters has left the region without any watchdog journalism for a long time. A resident of a town that has both a local newspaper and a local news radio station said someone needs to report on the “city corruption,” but declined to elaborate.

“Smaller papers just can’t take on a six-month investigative project,” one publisher said. “That is something that would be wonderful for the Panhandle area.”

### ***Need for Print***

All existing community newspapers in the High Plains region rely on print to reach their audience. Although more than 80% have websites, in many cases the digital content is non-existent or posted behind a paywall. Publishers say the relative shortage of digital advertising means they have no choice but to charge for online content.

Some residents, however, view digital paywalls as proof that community newspapers are about money making instead of public service.

“I think they should put out more content, and I think it should be free,” one community member said. “Now that they charge, I think a lot of people don't subscribe.”

Print is likely to remain an essential channel of content distribution in rural areas, where residents are older or live in areas with lacking or inconsistent cellular coverage. For instance, one man visiting his parents' home in a location without cell phone coverage said that when a tornado struck a nearby town, he and his father did not receive a tornado warning or a news notification. They learned about what had happened only when they received a landline phone call from his mother, who was in her office. This example is one of several that demonstrate the need for alternative, non-digital channels for distribution of content.

The owner of several publications in the High Plains area said at least 90% of their circulation is still print, with digital subscriptions being purchased mostly by people who have moved away. He added that he has seen a print revival of sorts, as businesses who may rarely or never place newspaper ads are more willing to advertise on the full-color pages of magazines occasionally produced by local newspapers. Furthermore, he added, people in their 20s seem to be purchasing print subscriptions more often than people in their 30s do.

“People want to have a cup of coffee with their newspaper,” the local publisher said. “I think [going completely digital] will happen someday, but I think it will be a while.”

In addition, at least two community newspapers in the region participate in the Newspaper in Education (NIE) program and deliver print copies to local schools, which leads to some increases in circulation and readership. The NIE guide for weekly and community newspapers points out that when school children take leftover newspapers home, their parents are more likely to subscribe. Therefore, despite the increasing use of digital editions in the NIE program, especially in larger metro school districts, in rural

areas print editions remain an aspect of material culture that is crucial to attracting new readers.

For these reasons, our proposal emphasizes print and distribution support for community newspapers in the region. Additionally, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will encourage local newspapers to work with the center's Digital Operations Manager to build an online and social media presence and modernize their existing websites.

### ***Need for Multiplatform Content***

While the news leaders we have reached out to are print-focused, many understand there is room for improvement in their current distribution model.

"I do not have a web site; I do not have a digital version of the newspaper, because that is beyond my capabilities," one editor said. "If that is something that your journalism students could provide for community newspapers, that might be a really good resource for us."

This sentiment was also shared by some of the community journalists we interviewed.

"I would love to see a newspaper run by journalists," one interviewee said. "But I'd also love to maybe (have) a radio station, a website, something, something that is a little bit more current that people could look at for free, but actually had investigative journalism."

Many community newspapers have a website and presence on Facebook (the preferred social media platform in most rural communities), but they struggle with finding the time to post updates and maintain their online content. This predicament is not unique to newspapers. For example, in Hereford, about 100 miles northwest of Lubbock, most community members listen to the radio for local news but would embrace anytime access.

"I will tell you this--I wish you could listen to them live on the internet because you cannot," one Hereford resident said. "So, that is one thing only because I was interviewed [for a radio story], and my people at my store wanted to listen, and we couldn't listen."

## **Distribution of Content**

### ***Regional News Wire***

Within the first two months of the grant's life, The Hub@TTU will begin its gradual transformation into a regional news wire (the West Texas News Hub). As indicated in the timeline section, at least three undergraduate reporters will be hired in late 2023. They will begin building relationships with sources in surrounding counties and working on regional stories that are not linked to a specific event. Examples of such stories may include trends in farming and ranching, homelessness, domestic violence and stray animal overpopulation.

This content will be posted on The Hub@TTU's existing website as soon as the stories are determined to be thorough and verified. In addition, the stories will be distributed to an email list of community news editors and publishers.

An existing course, JOUR 4370: Advanced Reporting, which is typically taught in the spring semester, will be revised to replace some existing assignments with at least two news stories based on reporting in nearby counties. Community news editors and publishers will serve as guest speakers in the class and work with students to guide them in their reporting of relevant local stories. These stories will also be posted on The Hub@TTU's website as soon as they are determined to be thorough and verified.

As early as November 2023, the staff at The Hub@TTU will make initial modifications to the website to (a) acknowledge the support of the Scripps Howard Fund and (b) indicate the change in news coverage to focus on community journalism in surrounding news deserts and semi-deserts. Starting in late spring 2024, a digital operations manager hired by the center will work to create a new website for the regional news wire, along with a portal for community journalism editors, through which they can (a) submit their local stories to the news wire's content, so they can be shared with others in the region; and (b) download content (including multimedia content) about their regions created by student journalists.

### ***Printing and Distribution Vouchers***

Our goal is not only to create and distribute new content but also to enhance editors and publishers' existing distribution networks for their current content. Such an approach will ensure that the content produced by students can reliably reach the ultimate audience—the residents of underserved communities. Accordingly, as described in the budget narrative, we will create a voucher system to underwrite a portion of local

publishers' print costs and ensure that local school districts and community colleges in the area have print copies, thus providing tangible sources of locally relevant news. To avoid undermining potential revenue streams for local publications that are already in dire financial straits, we will have an extensive discussion with each recipient of a printing voucher to determine an approach that fits their business model while also serving the public. Vouchers could also be used to offset costs associated with digital distribution and streaming, as in the case of local radio news/talk stations.

### ***Collaboration with Local Broadcast Stations***

The proposed project will rely on every media platform to reach diverse audiences. In the first year of the grant's life, our immediate focus will be on producing content that will be of use to community newspapers in the area.

Once the regional news wire has been established as a provider of content—including content community news editors and publishers are willing to share with each other—the center will turn its sights to the potential to distribute content in collaboration with local radio and TV news stations. The first step will be to produce regional news stories for KTTZ 89.1 FM (NPR) and Media & Communication TV (MCTV), our student-staffed news station, which has a YouTube channel and currently distributes its contents through the website of The Hub@TTU. Once we have had success with reporting community news stories for broadcast audiences, we will use these stories as a steppingstone to content-sharing agreement with at least two local TV news stations.

Our undergraduate journalism students are already involved as interns and part-time reporters at the radio and TV stations in Lubbock, which are watched by many residents in surrounding communities, as indicated by the results of our surveys and interviews. Furthermore, senior staff members at these stations serve or have served as adjunct instructors for journalism courses at Texas Tech University. We anticipate that any professionally reported and edited audiovisual content will be welcomed by these stations, which have a vested interest in serving all audiences within their reach.

## STUDENT TEAMS: TRAINING & DEMOGRAPHICS

A student team reflective of and receptive to the area’s demographic makeup will be critical to fostering the sense of community that underlies local journalism. The High Plains of Texas is a region with an estimated [population of 872,000](#) as of 2019 and encompasses 39,500 square miles (about the area of Ohio), according to the Texas Comptroller’s website. State comptroller data indicate the region’s population was more than 36% Hispanic, 5% Black non-Hispanic and 4% “other” as of 2018.

Students in our college reflect the High Plains’ demographics. As of [spring 2023](#), 25% of our students identified as Hispanic, 6% as Black and 5% as being of two or more races. About a quarter identify as first-generation [students](#). As a Hispanic-serving institution, Texas Tech has demonstrated a commitment to elevating and inspiring students from diverse backgrounds, which is reflected in our work and identities. This mission is not only something we teach but one that we live. Two grant team members, including the project lead, were the first in their families to earn a college degree.

As outlined below, we used the Scripps Howard News Fund design grant to employ seven students (five graduate and two undergraduate) who were representative of the region’s demographics and the overall student body: 29% Hispanic, 57% women and one nontraditional undergraduate student. The funding allowed us not only to gather relevant data but also to provide a hands-on opportunity for our student team to connect with people in the region — a pedagogical experience that exceeds what occurs in a traditional classroom.

Our community visits were informative not only because of the data we collected but also because of the student-training possibilities we encountered. School-aged students, families and educators were excited about our college’s presence at local events, allowing for unexpected recruitment opportunities. In Spur, about 69 miles east of Lubbock, where our team attended a community barbecue and farmers’ market, a young woman approached the table. A camera around her neck, pen and paper in her hand, she enthusiastically introduced herself as an incoming student in our college. Fresh out of high school, she said she helps at the local newspaper as needed.

In the proposed model, students like her will continue their vital work in local newsrooms and return to their communities with the experience and knowledge needed to give back to and support their hometown paper. To amplify the effects of the grant and foster community through academic and practical experiences, the center will,

therefore, seek collaborations with rural schools. Often located in unincorporated areas, such schools often serve as the only (or one of few) sources of community news. Relying on available resources, the center will seek to directly engage the community’s talent, both inside and outside of schools.

### **Education and Academic Success in Rural Areas**

As many rural schools lack college or career counselors, the presence of the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism will likely be central to our ability to recruit local talent. The benefits are twofold. First, diverse voices from the region will make the content produced by our regional news wire as relevant and timely as possible. Undergraduate and graduate students from these rural communities will enroll in our program with an understanding of the region’s geographical and demographic landscape and a desire to report on what is happening in their own backyards.

Second, such exposure will reinforce higher education’s importance in the minds of rural students or possibly even adults who have not considered college career. As scholars have consistently found that newspaper consumption is strongly linked with education levels, [U.S. Census data](#) for the High Plains area paints a far-from-encouraging picture. While 31.5% of adults over 25 in Lubbock County hold at least a bachelor’s, in nearby news deserts or semi-deserts, that proportion is up to three times lower. For example, in Lynn County, only 23.1% have at least a bachelor’s, in Hale County — 16.7%, in Crosby County — 14.5% and in Garza County — 11.6%.

Lack of education-related news has not been conducive to raising education levels. In Southland—an unincorporated area so small it is not measured by the U.S. Census Bureau—participants said more school news coverage could encourage area students to consider college. During a Spanish-language interview, a participant said the lack of news coverage negatively affected students' morale and self-worth:

“No hay nomás una escuela aquí, hay muchas escuelas, no importa que sean chiquitas o grandes, las escuelas son escuelas y eso también es motivación para los niños, para que se animen a seguir estudiando.”

In translation, she said there is not just one school – there are many – and it doesn’t matter how big or small they are, they still need to be featured in the news. The significance of this sentiment is highlighted by the fact that school news is the only news for many who live deep in the news desert, regardless of whether they have school-aged children.



Many of our students already hail from these communities. However, recruitment and hands-on assessments of the relevance of what they learn to their local communities have been limited. The presence of the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism will allow us to reach talented students that may not otherwise consider college and to produce knowledge of importance to journalism educators across the country.

### **Impact in Texas and Beyond**

Our university’s motto, “From here, it’s possible,” reflects the pedagogical philosophy underlying this proposal. Many of our graduates began their journalism careers as students and have since become well-known and respected. Brandon Formby, a 2002 graduate, leads the news desk at *The Texas Tribune*, Sarah Self-Walbrick, a 2016 graduate, is now the news director of the local NPR station. Kaitlin Bain, another 2016 graduate, is the editor of *The Beaumont Enterprise*, a community newspaper in east Texas. Elyssa Harris, from the same cohort of journalism students, is the editor of the *Plainview Herald* and the *Muleshoe Journal*. Dom Puente, who graduated in 2022, is now the editor of *Levelland & Hockley County News Press*.

The average four-year graduation rate of the Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries for the last three cohorts for which data exist is 55%. Our analysis of placement data indicates that about a third of journalism graduates who completed their degrees between 2018 and 2022 currently work for Texas news outlets. Many are reporters in rural communities. Watch a High Plains channel, pick up a community newspaper or listen to a regional radio station—chances are the news reporter on the other end is one of our graduates or current students.

In our skills courses, students are immediately introduced to community members and leaders through class activities. For example, students in our reporting course attend mock press conferences at the Lubbock Police Department, an activity that also satisfies a mandatory training requirement for law enforcement public information officers. The students report on local trials and city council and school board meetings and learn to establish rapport with the types of sources they are sure to encounter in the future. As a result, many graduate with a portfolio of news clips *and* an established community presence. The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will allow us to expand our students’ horizons by reporting on underserved communities whose needs greatly exceed those of Lubbock audiences.

# CENTER CAPACITY

## Space and Infrastructure

The College of Media & Communication proposes to renovate approximately 2,000 square feet of space in our Student Media suite as a home for the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism. This high-visibility, first-floor space, known as “the rotunda” and placed alongside one of our building’s main entrances, currently houses *The Daily Toreador*, Texas Tech’s student newspaper. The rotunda’s other tenant, the Texas Tech yearbook known as *La Ventana*, was recently discontinued, freeing up significant office and production space for repurposing.

The Howard Center will have its own branded entrance to this area, with a reception desk, offices for each of the administrative staff, and dedicated workspaces for student reporters and editors to work collaboratively with their peers, teachers, and mentors. Proximity to *The Daily Toreador*’s current facilities and staff will allow the Howard Center to collaborate effectively with *Daily Toreador* reporters and editors, while also taking advantage of existing infrastructure, including a multimedia studio, a conference room, and a collaborative, bullpen-style newsroom area.

Students and staff affiliated with the center will have priority access to existing infrastructure in the College, including a fully updated production equipment inventory and expansive audiovisual production and post-production facilities. The latter include the college’s Media & Communication Television (MCTV) news studio, the studios of KTXT-FM 88.1 The Raider, and the Esports Competition and Streaming Lab, with new podcasting, digital editing, and virtual production facilities coming online in 2024-25.

## Proposed Staff Qualifications and Recruitment

### **Center Director**

- ***Qualifications:*** The center director will be a seasoned journalist and editor with extensive experience in rural and/or underserved communities, ideally in the U.S. Southwest or areas with comparable issues of importance (e.g., water scarcity and other agricultural issues, environmental justice, immigration, etc.). The ideal candidate will also have deep organizational management experience, including budgeting, staff evaluation and oversight, and external and stakeholder-facing communication strategy. While a graduate degree is desirable, the center director

will not be expected to teach; therefore, a bachelor's degree coupled with a substantial and decorated newsroom background will be viewed as an excellent candidate profile.

- Proposed compensation: \$90,000 annual salary with a 3% salary escalation each year.

### **Postdoctoral Fellow**

- Qualifications: The postdoctoral fellow will have a professional journalism background and will have completed a Ph.D. in journalism, media studies or another related discipline at the time of appointment. The ideal candidate will also be able to teach courses in the master's program, show potential for the publication of research in reputable academic and trade journals, and demonstrate community engagement and event management skills.
- Proposed Compensation: NIH-approved postdoctoral compensation rate of \$56,484 annual salary with 3% escalation per year.

### **Community Journalist in Residence**

- Qualifications: The journalist-in-residence will be a mid-career journalist with substantial newsroom experience and demonstrated expertise in community journalism. This appointment will allow for deep engagement with the types of stories and communities with which the chosen journalist will already be familiar. The ability to write and report for Spanish-speaking audiences will be highly valued. While the journalist-in-residence will regularly mentor students and visit classes, they will not be expected to teach as instructor of record. Accordingly, the ideal candidate will hold a bachelor's degree in journalism, have substantial newsroom experience, and submit a portfolio of high-quality journalism content that demonstrates their ability to inspire and develop student journalists through their professional practice.
- Proposed Compensation: \$62,000 annual starting salary with 3% escalation per year.

### **Digital Operations Manager**

- Qualifications: The digital operations manager will be an effective interpersonal communicator with a bachelor's degree in information systems, user experience, interactive design, strategic communication or a related field. With substantial

professional experience overseeing digital operations for business, educational or nonprofit stakeholders, the digital operations manager will have the skills to (a) develop and maintain digital communication systems and (b) train others in their use. Experience overseeing social media and managing interns is ideal.

- Proposed Compensation: \$65,000 annual starting salary with 3% escalation per year.

### **Director of M.A. Program in Community Journalism**

- Qualifications: The master's program director will be a full-time faculty member hired at the rank of assistant professor of practice and will need to be credentialed as a graduate faculty member. As a result, a graduate degree in Journalism or a closely related field will be required. Extensive journalism industry experience and a strong background in journalism teaching/mentorship, as well as administrative experience, are also required elements of a successful application.
- Proposed compensation: \$75,000 annual salary with 3% escalation per year.

### **Lecturer in Community Journalism**

- Qualifications: The lecturer will either (a) hold a graduate degree in journalism or a closely related field, paired with moderate levels of newsroom experience in community journalism contexts; or (b) hold a bachelor's degree in journalism and demonstrate an extensive professional background in community newsroom environments. In either case, demonstrated classroom effectiveness at the secondary or post-secondary level will be essential.
- Proposed compensation: \$59,000 annual salary with 3% escalation per year.

### **Recruitment**

- The position announcements for the center director and journalist in residence will be placed on the job boards of major professional associations such as the Society of Professional Journalists, the National Newspaper Association, Investigative Reporters and Editors, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the National Association of Black Journalists, the Native American Journalists Association, the Association of LGBTQ Journalists, the Asian American Journalists Association and the Society of Environmental Journalists. We will also place an advertisement via JournalismJobs.com and the job board of the

Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, along with traditional networking sites such as LinkedIn and Indeed.

- All academic appointments will be recruited through the job boards of journalism scholars' professional organizations, such as the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, the International Communication Association and the Broadcast Education Association, along with advertising in academic publications such as The Chronicle of Higher Education.
- The digital operations manager will be recruited through the Texas Tech careers website, a primary job source in Lubbock.

### Advisory Board

To aid in the pursuit of our goals for the Center, we propose that the following people, each of whom have confirmed their willingness to serve, provide collective oversight as inaugural advisory board members alongside those appointed by Scripps Howard:

**Penny Muse Abernathy\*** is a visiting professor of journalism at Northwestern University. A former executive with *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, Prof. Abernathy was the Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics at the University of North Carolina from 2008 to 2020. With more than 30 years of professional experience as a journalist and senior business executive, she specializes in preserving quality journalism by helping news organizations succeed economically in the digital environment. Her research focuses on the implications of the digital revolution for news organizations, the information needs of communities and the emergence of news deserts in the United States. Abernathy is author of “News Deserts and Ghost Newspapers: Will Local News Survive?” — a major 2020 report that documents the state of local journalism, what is at stake for our democracy and the possibility of reviving the local news landscape.

*\*Prof. Abernathy is glad to be listed as an advisor for the purposes of this proposal. If the grant comes through, she said some discussion may be needed whether she or someone else she recommends would provide the best insight.*

**Barb Amrhein** is a retired journalist with 37 years' experience as a freelance writer and stringer. In addition, Amrhein has 17 years' experience coaching competitive Texas

UIL journalism students and giving workshops at the secondary level, resulting in over 50 UIL State entries and 15 champions.

**Betsy Blaney** spent 29 years as a print and radio journalist, including tenures with newspapers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and 16 years working with the Associated Press. The overwhelming majority of her time with the AP was as a solo correspondent in West Texas, covering breaking news and sports for 65 counties in the region. Blaney also spent two and a half years as a radio producer for KTTZ 89.1 FM, Lubbock's NPR affiliate, and taught journalism classes at Texas Tech for two years upon her retirement from full-time reporting.

**Laurie Ezzell Brown** is the editor and publisher of *The Canadian Record*, a respected independent community weekly covering Hemphill County in the northeastern Texas Panhandle since 1893, and a legacy business owned and published by the Ezzell family since the late 1940s. *The Record* is an active member of the Panhandle and West Texas Press Associations, the Texas Press Association—which Brown served as President and Chairman of the Board—and the National Newspaper Association. In 2022, Brown was honored with TPA's Frank W. Mayborn Award for Community Leadership, presented annually to a publisher who contributed most significantly to society during the past year. In 2007, the Ezzell family won the Tom and Pat Gish Award for courage, integrity and tenacity in rural journalism, given by the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues. Brown often says that the greatest honor she has received is the trust and respect of her readers.

**Jayme Lozano Carver** is a member of the *Texas Tribune's* Regions Team, covering the South Plains and Panhandle through a partnership with Report for America. An area native, Carver has covered her home region throughout her career at the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, *Amarillo Globe-News* and Texas Tech Public Media, Lubbock's NPR station, where she spearheaded the award-winning series [Rural Healthcare: The Other Texas Drought](#). She covers a range of topics, including rural needs, [water availability](#), climate change, agriculture, mental health and health care.

**Nicole Casperson** is an accomplished journalist and founder of *Fintech Is Femme*, a leading voice in fostering inclusivity and diversity within the fintech industry through storytelling and community. With 50,000+ subscribers to her podcast and newsletter, she

offers reliable insights and analysis backed by her expertise as a former finance reporter specializing in B2B niches. Recognized as a Top Inspiring Female in Fintech and a DEI Trailblazer, Casperson is a sought-after speaker and contributor to *Forbes*, where she addresses gender equity, finance and technology intersections. She holds a master's in mass communication and a bachelor's in journalism from Texas Tech University.

**Abel Cruz** is contributing editor and writer for *El Editor* newspaper, a print publication in Lubbock, Texas, where he writes news stories with an emphasis on issues impacting the Hispanic and Black communities. Cruz has held a variety of management roles at newspapers throughout his career, including *The Washington Post*, the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, *The San Jose Mercury News* and *The Shreveport Times*. Among these, he oversaw Hispanic Readership Research and Hispanic Community Outreach through *TWP* Public Relations Department. He also managed and oversaw the first initial Newspaper in Education (NIE) College Readership Program at *TWP*. Cruz later managed the NIE Program for local secondary schools at the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*. He is a past recipient of three Jose Marti Writing Awards from the National Association of Hispanic Publications.

**Robin Lerner** is President and CEO of the Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC), overseeing a unique state-based consortium of public and private universities who, together, work toward increasing campus internationalization. She previously served as a deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Before joining the administration, Ms. Lerner served as a senior counselor on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where she led the Committee's policy and budget positions regarding gender equality, human rights, refugees, migration, trafficking in persons, international education, and public diplomacy. Lerner serves on the City of Austin's Ethics Review Commission, the Texas State Advisory Committee of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, the public affairs committee of the Ann Richards School Foundation, and serves on the board of directors for the non-profit organizations Too Young To Wed and Global Ties, U.S, where she is chair of the public affairs committee. Lerner also serves on the advisory board for the *Austin Monitor*, a non-profit news outlet for the City of Austin.

**Homer Marquez** is currently the director of business operations at Covenant Health Plainview. Before moving into the medical field, Marquez gained nearly 10 years of experience serving as the news and sports editor for two community newspapers. Born and raised in West Texas, he holds an associate degree in advertising from South Plains College and a bachelor's degree in digital marketing from Wayland Baptist University.

**Rob Pomper** owns the *State Line Tribune*, a weekly newspaper covering the Texas communities of Farwell, Bovina, Lazbuddie and Texico, N.M. He is the longest-serving president of the Farwell Chamber of Commerce and chair of the local festival Border Town Day. Since buying the Tribune in 2004, Pomper has covered more than 500 city council meetings in person. He holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from Texas A&M University.

## **Marketing and Promotion**

The center director will oversee marketing and promotion of the center's outreach and engagement activities, while the M.A. program director will guide recruitment, marketing and promotion of the master's program. Working closely together, the center director and the master's program director will be aided in these efforts by a dedicated digital operations manager, who will oversee the content and function of the center's primary web presence and the West Texas News Hub, along with substantial and consistent support from the College of Media & Communication's marketing team (comprised of four multimedia producers) and a team of external communication interns, paid at an hourly rate of \$15 through the university's college-to-career program.

In addition, Texas Tech's [award-winning](#) Office of Communications and Marketing, working under President Lawrence Schovanec, is positioned to promote the work of the center among its international alumni and partner networks, enhancing Scripps Howard's public engagement and philanthropy profile.

Finally, RaiderComm, Texas Tech's student-run public relations agency, will work regularly with the center to help grow its media presence and be a resource to the postdoctoral fellow in external marketing and communications for the summer institute.



## Organizational Structure

As a full-time staff member, the director will submit an annual report to the Department of Journalism and Creative Media Industries chair, who will conduct a yearly employee performance review (as required by the university's human resources policy) in consultation with the grant project leaders and center's advisory board.

In turn, the director will oversee and evaluate the performance of the postdoctoral fellow, the community journalist in residence, and the digital operations manager, making annual reports to the advisory board and the chair of the Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries.

Faculty affiliated with the Howard Center—including the master's program director (a professor of practice) and the lecturer—will submit annual reports on their teaching, scholarship, and service (as appropriate) to the chair. In consultation with the center director and the advisory board, the chair will provide annual evaluations leading up to a comprehensive third-year review. By virtue of their full-time appointments, these faculty will be voting members of the Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries.

## Editorial Authority and Workflow

To ensure the quality of reporting and writing, the director of the Howard Center will have editorial authority over stories produced for the West Texas News Hub and/or under the aegis of the center. They will manage the center's budget meetings and will be the final word regarding a story's readiness for publication.

Graduate students pursuing the master's degree in community journalism will be assigned by virtue of their degree requirements as Regional Editors and charged with developing relationships with stakeholders in their geographic area. In consultation with the Community Journalist in Residence, they will write and edit stories relevant to their region and, in their final semester, mentor first-semester M.A. and undergraduate reporters.

## THE DESIGN GRANT

We used the design grant for field research and data collections to better understand the needs of rural news consumers and editors/publishers.

As an initial step, a graduate student project manager, Lisa Thompson, was hired to assist the grant team by recruiting, hiring, and training a team of student researchers charged with data collection and data cleaning. Three such students—undergraduates Madison Vidales and Tanner Billings, and M.A. student Anna Soo Hoo—were hired for this purpose on an hourly basis. Madison and Tanner were both eligible for work study, so by Federal law their hours were not billed to the grant, while Anna’s were.

Following approval of our project by Texas Tech’s Human Research Protection Program, we then collected data in two phases. **First, the grant project leaders traveled approximately 822 total miles with undergraduate and graduate students to speak with news consumers in small communities situated in nine rural counties surrounding Texas Tech University.** The total number and geographical distribution of these interviews is as follows (note that population data is sourced from the [U.S. Census](#) and that city population is provided when available):

Location	Event	Date	Interviewees
Crosbyton, Crosby County 2020 pop. (county) 4,998 about 40 miles from Lubbock	July Fourth Celebration	July 4	15
Floydada, Floyd County 2020 pop. (county) 5,235 about 53 miles from Lubbock	St. Mary Magdalen Jamaica	June 24	19
Hereford, Deaf Smith County 2020 pop. (city) 14,765 about 100 miles from Lubbock	Carnitas cook-off; Tierra Blanca Classic Golf Tourney	June 24	12
Plainview, Hale County 2020 pop. (city) 19,599 about 47 miles from Lubbock	Juneteenth celebration	June 19	24
Post, Garza County 2020 pop. (city) 5,237 about 43 miles from Lubbock	July Fourth celebration	July 4	22

Ropesville, Hockley County 2020 pop. (county) 21,161 about 21 miles from Lubbock	July Fourth Color Run	July 4	9
Slaton, Lubbock County 2020 pop. (city) 5,746 about 19 miles from Lubbock	Community pool interviews	June 29	5
Southland, Garza County 2020 pop. (county) 6,232 about 27 miles from Lubbock	Door-knocking interviews	June 29	8
Spur, Dickens County 2020 pop. (county) 1,726 about 71 miles from Lubbock	Spur Trade Days; Big Dog Barbecue	June 17	23
Wilson, Lynn County 2020 pop. (county) 5,724 about 27 miles from Lubbock	Door-knocking interviews	June 29	7
<b>Total community interviewees:</b>			<b>144</b>

Student researchers completed questionnaires and short onsite interviews with community members during each of these data collection opportunities, with mentorship and oversight provided by the grant project leaders. Students later edited raw transcriptions of field interviews for accuracy once they were generated using Otter.ai transcription software.

Second, to better understand the needs of community news producers, grant project leaders interviewed 12 editors and/or publishers of local community newspapers. Student researchers sat in on interviews to take notes and then edited raw transcriptions of those interviews. To maintain the confidentiality of these editors and publishers, as required by the university’s human subject research policies, we have not included further description of the publications they lead, but each of the publications is in the Texas High Plains and serves one or more rural communities.

The grant team, including the project leaders and graduate students, collaboratively analyzed these edited transcriptions. The patterns and themes that emerged from this analysis inform this proposal and would not have been possible without paid student support and travel funded by the design grant.

Doctoral student Brittany Potter and master’s students Caden Coleman, Nii Armah and Arianna Flores also assisted in preparing the full proposal by mining alumni data and providing editorial and design support to the proposal’s final preparation.

<b>Design Grant Expenses</b>		
<b>Student Salaries</b>		
Name	Role	
Nii Armah	M.A. Research Assistant	\$2,521
Caden Coleman	M.A. Research Assistant	\$1,763
Brittany Porter	Ph.D. Research Assistant	\$2,281
Lisa Thompson	Project Manager	\$3,000
Anna Soo Hoo	M.A. Research Assistant	\$1,100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,665</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Travel and Supplies		\$460
<b>Cost Sharing</b>		
Arianna Flores	M.A. Research Assistant	\$1,763
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,888</b>

# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

## Monitoring and Management

While it is important to note these positions are discussed and expanded on further in this proposal, they are also highlighted in this section in order to show the monitoring process and team. The team includes the following:

### ***Center Director***

- The director will serve as the central point for ideas and communication flowing in and out of the center. Students will rely on them for guidance with beat coordination, enterprise and investigative story ideas and development, information gathering, and editing. Directors may lead mandatory news budget meetings with students in coordination with publications in designated coverage areas, and intervention meetings to discuss professionalism or legal and ethical issues as they arise.

### ***Postdoctoral Fellow***

- Serving as a bridge by assisting in academic roles, this person will use a variety of research methods to test the efficacy of the program and media messaging to provide updates on audience response, and program and student success. Since many of the community journalism issues faced on the High Plains are not unique to this area, this person's research findings can also serve in assisting other researchers and programs with similar goals and interests, as well as practitioners. Production output will consist of white papers and published findings in academic journals.

### ***Community Journalist-in-Residence***

- The person in this role has years of field experience and will serve as an editor and mediator should newsroom issues arise. They will mentor while guiding students in applying classroom knowledge to practice. This is especially important when looking at the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics and weighing in on ethical situations and conflict of interests in reporting.
  - If legal intervention or mediation is required, the center will rely on the guidance and expertise from the [Reporters Committee for Freedom](#)

[of the Press](#), which provides pro-bono legal services, including assistance with record attainment and publication review, to journalist.

### ***Digital Operations Manager***

- This person will strictly focus on production-based materials through website management and maintenance. In this role, they will assist serve as the community liaison through social media management and communications with local publishers and editors.

### ***Director of M.A. Program in Community Journalism***

- This person will manage the master's program. Overseeing the recruitment of new applicants, the director will work on bringing in master's students into the newsroom. These master's students will then lend their advanced reporting knowledge and skills to guide and assist undergraduates with enterprise ideas and evergreen stories.

Along with the staff and faculty in these roles, students will work closely with local publishers and editors, people within our advisory board, and the grant team to provide work observation, feedback and intervention if necessary. At the end of each semester, the center's director will conduct student evaluations to assess and gauge student success; evaluations will also include comments on student performance from community publishers or editors.

## **Program Outcomes**

### ***Trust Measures***

As previously mentioned, trust is at the core of journalism and is strongly displayed in community publications. Our proposed curriculum will place students directly in the communities they will serve, building rapport and trust among sources and audiences (in some cases, sources and audiences are one and the same).

Our ability to maintain relationships with community leaders while providing unbiased, in-depth information is a skill developed through transparent and well-sourced articles. Efficacy of the articles and trust will be measured through the work of our postdoctoral fellow. Again, results will be made available for institutions and organizations who share an interest in connecting with and engaging smaller audiences.

- Measure 1.1 – The director will assign beats to students based on regional coverage. Consistency and media partnerships within these regions will increase the visibility of our students and their work; therefore, establishing trust.
- Measure 1.2 – High school mentorship. Students and faculty will work in their respective regions to connect with and mentor high school students in order to train and possibly recruit into our program. Many of these publishers and editors have been in industry for decades, and they are ready to retire; however, they do not have anyone within the community ready to take over their publications. Recruiting and fostering an interest at this level can establish a new generation of community journalists.
- Measure 1.3 – Faculty and graduate students, with the assistance of the undergraduate team, will assist with community media literacy workshops. These workshops will cover topics such as public information, how to spot mis- and dis-information, social media use, civic engagement, and relying on trusted sources.
- Measure 1.4 – Scholarship designation for continued education. The program is designed to lead by example. Real journalists, recruiting and creating future media professionals. Outstanding students will receive scholarship funding to continue education through the center. Furthermore, students will also have the opportunity to receive potential funding through our unique master’s program—dedicated to special and investigative interests.

### ***Experiential Learning Measures***

The center will allow us to expand our current curriculum and put it into consistent practice. Depending on course selection and instructors, some of the skills learned in previous courses may get lost or buried if not put into regular use. Through the center, students will be more consistent in the use of these skills through frequent newsroom activity.

Our students have benefitted greatly through their community coverage in our Reporting course. Students have an opportunity to work with local experts, including city officials and industry leaders, and community members. In smaller communities, the opportunity to connect with audiences and experts is much greater. Just as exhibited

with the design grant, students will receive a fully immersive experience in an environment that encourages collaboration and personal and professional growth.

- Measure 2.1 – Community partnerships. Students will work with civic leaders to establish relationships and provide consistent coverage. Students will also experience a true newsroom environment as they will work closely with community publications to learn and meet their news demands, be it research, meeting coverage, historical writing, or archival work.
- Measure 2.2 – Media Law. Students will learn how to file Freedom of Information Act and Texas Public Information Act requests. They will learn how to protect themselves and sources, while developing a well-sourced story.
- Measure 2.3 – Ethics. As a journalist, coverage may involve sensitive material such as reporting on cases that are sexual in nature or those that involve children. Students will learn about public information, and criminal, court, and medical protocol and proceedings.
- Measure 2.4 – Research. The postdoctoral fellow is responsible for research. The findings should test and gauge target audiences' attitudes toward production materials through focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

### ***Local Reporting Measures***

Students will build rapport and trust in the community. Their presence will give news outlets the opportunity to cover stories that may otherwise be uncomfortable due to the fear of compromising relationships and advertising revenue.

To ensure students are obtaining the most out of their learning experience, newsroom activities will include fact-checking, interviewing, records searches, information requests, innovative and traditional forms of storytelling, and combatting mis- and dis-information. Students will leave the program fully equipped with the cerebral tools to cover a wide range of stories in a variety of platforms.

Students will take our hands-on approach to learning a step further by publishing quick timely pieces while also working on evergreen articles to help bolster the content of local newspapers.

- Measure 3.1 – Partnerships with local publications. We are proud of the fact that our letters of support come from the majority of publications throughout the High Plains, including Brett Wesner, former chair of the



National Newspaper Association. These partnerships will provide training for students that cannot be achieved in the classroom as they will mentor and guide students through their given tasks. Monitoring of student tasks will be conducted by the center's faculty, but students will work to their regional publications' needs. Students will use transportation from the university motor pool to carpool to regions for evergreen, civic, sports, and investigative coverage. They will also be equipped with the proper technology to produce content. Local publications will provide students with temporary or rotational office space.

- Measure 3.2 – Digitization of archives. Tangible morgues can be costly with binding and storage costs. Through the use of technology, students will assist with the scanning and digital archival storage of materials. Not only will this help with the preservation of history, but also the fast recall of previously written articles for future stories.
  - "The more technology you have, the faster your job goes, and I discovered that sometimes my iPhone is as good as a camera, as is my Canon—it depends on the situation. And, my phone is as good as a recorder, sometimes better than a recorder, and I use my phone for Facebook Live or I will use my iPad." - Local news editor
- Measure 3.3 – Social media management. While most publications have a website and a Facebook page, they may not have the time or the knowledge to maintain their presence. Students will be a great asset to these communities as our students already have access to courses on multiplatform media production and social media/web presence.
- Measure 3.4 – Beats will be assigned regionally and as needed. Student teams will be assigned a regional weekly travel day and use designated university transportation to commute to these areas to satisfy their area's needs. If breaking news should occur, students will travel to the area with an editor to provide coverage. During the design grant phase, student teams of two traveled to designated regions with grant investigators to interview community members, publishers and editors. This arrangement gave the grant investigators a sense of what regional travel would consist of.
- Measure 3.5 – Evaluations. Advisory board members will conduct an external investigation to determine the efficacy of the center to determine if we are meeting student and community demands.

# COST NARRATIVE

## Personnel

The **Center Director** will oversee staffing, assigning beats and investigative stories, editing, and helping student reporters find stories of interest. They will also coordinate financial reporting for the center and work with College and TTU external communications offices to promote the center's activities and impact.

The **Postdoctoral Fellow** will establish and grow the Howard Center's Summer Institute on Community Journalism, including event management, resource allocation, volunteer recruitment, panel/paper solicitation/review, and publication of proceedings. In addition, the fellow will be the director's primary aide in program evaluation, regularly conducting research on program effectiveness, emergent issues, and other topics of relevance to the center's leadership and stakeholder community. The fellow will teach one to two classes annually in the M.A. and/or B.A. programs, as needed. The fellow will also oversee the publication of most research results and assist the director in the completion of reports, white papers and other external communications.

The **Community Journalist in Residence** will be a regular contributor to the West Texas News Hub and provide editorial assistance to the center director. The journalist-in-residence will provide mentorship to student journalists working for the Howard Center and lead the development of regular media literacy workshops in communities that fall within the center's service area. Finally, the journalist-in-residence will be a regular visitor to undergraduate and graduate courses, contributing to curriculum development and experiential education opportunities for students.

The **Digital Operations Manager** will be responsible for creating and maintaining the center's website and ensuring the regular and reliable operation of the West Texas News Hub wire service. They will also consult with local editors and publishers and help to disseminate curated stories produced at the center to local media, and they will oversee external communication interns and aid the director in promoting the center's work through social media channels.

The **Director of the M.A. Program in Community Journalism** will be a full-time faculty member hired at the rank of assistant professor of practice. In partnership with the college's graduate studies office, the director will oversee the recruitment of new applicants, application review, and student onboarding, retention and advising. The

director will also teach courses in the program at a reduced load due to administrative duties.

The ***Lecturer in Community Journalism*** with expertise in community journalism will be recruited and hired to provide teaching support to the M.A. program in community journalism. The lecturer will teach between six and eight courses per academic year, providing considerable capacity to the master's program while also supplementing faculty support in the undergraduate journalism program and mentoring potential applicants for graduate study.

***Fringe Benefits:*** Employee benefits are directly charged as a percentage of salaries and wages. The rate used for summer salary for faculty is 18% plus health insurance. The rate used for graduate research assistants is 1% plus health insurance. The rate for undergraduate student assistants is 1%.

## **Student Support**

### ***Scholarships***

- Each year, five master's students will be chosen to work as Roy Howard Community Journalism Fellows, providing them with compensation and tuition waivers as they work as Regional Editors for the WTNH. In addition, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Scholarship Fund will allow us to recruit the most promising undergraduate journalists with interests in community journalism and ties to underrepresented communities in our region.

### ***Student travel for reporting***

- Funds will be used to cover travel costs from Lubbock to local communities to cover beats and investigative stories.

### ***Tuition and Fee Remission***

- Effective Sept. 1, 2000, compensation provided to teaching and research assistants will include remission of certain tuition and fees. These costs will be charged in accordance with [Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(\\$200.466\)](#) and are excluded from the facilities and administrative cost base. These costs are expected to increase at the rate of 5% per year.

## Operations

### **Summer Institute**

- Funds have been allocated to host a Summer Institute, where aspiring journalists from around the region will gather for collaborative think sessions, updates on the latest best practices, and networking events for job seekers. Funds will cover space rental, catering costs, accommodation for students, and a travel grants program that will be administered by the team and staff of the center.

### **Media literacy town halls and public information workshops**

- Working with local contacts and in collaboration with the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism, the journalist-in-residence will plan and conduct media literacy and public information workshops in communities throughout the center's coverage area. Funds will cover travel costs, event space rentals, printing of educational materials, refreshments and event staffing as needed.

### **Supplies**

- Funds are allocated for supplies for the center. Sheri Lewis, director of *The Daily Toreador*, will consult with the Howard Center's director and students on the most efficient use of these funds for student reporters.

### **Equipment**

- Funds are allocated for equipment purchases to keep the center up to date with equipment that will be used by professional journalists in the field. The center's director will make these purchase decisions in consultation with Sheri Lewis, the journalist-in-residence, the college's director of technology services, and the Department of Journalism & Creative Media Industries chair.

### **Printing and distribution vouchers**

- While the West Texas News Hub will exist primarily as a digital news source, our conversations with editors and publishers in the region have convinced us that providing opportunities for financial support for printing and distribution of local news outlets would be transformative. Accordingly, as described above, working with printers in the region, we will create a voucher system whereby center funding will be utilized to underwrite print costs and ensure that local school districts and community colleges are stocked with tangible sources of locally relevant news. To avoid undermining potential revenue streams for local publications that are already in dire financial straits, we will have an extensive discussion with each recipient of a printing voucher to determine an approach

that fits their business model while also serving the public. Vouchers could also be used to offset costs associated with digital distribution and streaming (e.g., for local radio stations). Voucher recipients, in turn, will commit to providing internship or other professional development opportunities to secondary and post-secondary journalism students affiliated with the center and its partners in the region.

### ***Marketing, promotion and recruitment***

- Funds will be used for marketing the center to communities throughout the region using methods that have proven effective in the past such as local clergy, popular radio DJs, social media, and legacy media advertisements. Additionally, promotion of both the center and the master's program will leverage the Scripps-Howard brand to attract the most talented aspiring journalists from both local communities and nationally to expose students to diverse cultural mindsets and pedagogical backgrounds.

### ***Renovation costs***

- In addition to the \$100,000 being committed by the college, funds will be used to update the center. Estimates were made using previous renovations in similar spaces and in consultation with the university's physical plant and construction experts.

### ***Facilities and Administrative Cost (F&A)***

- F&A is charged at the approved rate of 3% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). MTDC excludes equipment costs (items costing \$5,000 or more); graduate student tuition and fee remission; participant support costs, and the amount of each subaward over \$25,000.

## **Cost Sharing**

### ***Renovation costs:***

- The College of Media & Communication will commit \$100,000 to the renovation of the center. Costs will include new signage with the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism on the glass facing outward into the rotunda and modernizing the facilities.

### ***Allocation of effort:***

- ***Robert Peaslee, Ph.D.***, will commit 10% of his time to the center and master's program for the life of the project. His responsibilities will include hiring assistance, report development and other administrative tasks.
- ***Miglena Sternadori, Ph.D.***, will commit 10% of her time to the center and master's program for the life of the project. Her responsibilities will include teaching in the master's and undergraduate programs, mentoring the postdoctoral fellow, and assisting with master's students' recruitment and admissions.
- ***Lucinda Holt, M.A.***, will commit 10% of her time to the center and master's program for the life of the project. Her responsibilities will include assisting the journalist-in-residence with media literacy and public information workshops and acting as a conduit to area stakeholders.
- ***Sheri Lewis, director, Toreador Media***, will commit 5% of her time to the center and master's program. Her responsibilities include providing the director with editorial assistance and newsroom oversight.
- ***Mary Norman, assistant dean of graduate affairs***, will commit 5% of her time to the master's program by assisting the M.A. director with degree program evaluation and assessment, student recruitment, academic/career advising and application review.
- ***Brooke Galvan, college recruiter***, will commit 5% of her time by working with the leadership of the center to recruit high-achieving scholarship students into the undergraduate journalism program.
- ***Jose Andino, journalism academic advisor***, will commit 5% of his time to advising our most promising undergraduate journalism students toward admission onto the master's program.

### ***Undergraduate reporters and external communication interns:***

- Reporters and interns will be paid through the university's college-to-career program at an hourly rate of \$15.

# ADDENDA

July 25, 2023

The Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th Floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202



Re: Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Letter of Institutional Support

Texas Tech University is proud to support the application of Dr. Robert Peaslee, Dr. Miglena Sternadori, and Prof. Lucinda Holt for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center grant program. As part of Texas Tech's commitment to the local communities in the region, this center will serve as a sustainable force-multiplier for effective community journalism in the High Plains of West Texas and beyond.

Your investment will help the team create a first-of-its-kind Master's in Community Journalism program, leveraging the Scripps Howard brand to recruit aspiring local and national journalists to learn rural, community impact and solutions journalism from experts in a real-world newsroom environment. Students will build an extensive résumé and portfolio, entering the job market as savvy, experienced reporters. Recruiting first-in-college, underrepresented, and bilingual students will be prioritized, particularly those from the region who have a vested interest in their community. Texas Tech's established reputation as a Carnegie R1 institution, coupled with our extensive capacity for high quality research and dynamic outreach and engagement, make us an ideal partner in this enterprise.

Students will serve the region by working as community-centered beat reporters in news deserts, delivering vital news stories to underserved areas and contributing to a regional news wire service for community media outlets serving the High Plains. Based on previous research that members of this team completed for the Knight Foundation, a lack of these resources can be very harmful, and even fatal, when mis/disinformation is not countered by good, locally relevant journalism from trusted sources.

I recognize the essential importance of editorial independence to the success of any journalistic endeavor. Our office will work with the College of Media & Communication (CoMC) to establish a report structure whereby the Center's director, staff, and student reporters would be assured such independence while still benefiting from close coordination with the faculty and staff of the CoMC. The CoMC has made a commitment of \$100,000 and 2,000 square feet of space for the center if this award is conferred.

I highly recommend and support Dr. Peaslee, his team, and the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at Texas Tech University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lawrence Schoonover'.

Dr. Lawrence Schoonover  
President, Texas Tech University

Office of the President

Box 42005

Lubbock, Texas 79409-2005

806.742.2121 • 100.TTU.EDU



Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut St., Ste 2800  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

This letter is written in support of the Texas Tech University's College of Media and Communication (COMC) grant application.

Having long worked as a journalist in weekly or small daily Central or West Texas publications as well as serving the past 25 years as adviser to Tech's student-run *Daily Toreador* newspaper, I am familiar with much of the area's media landscape. Over the years, many COMC graduates have accepted jobs with broadcasters and publications in these smaller markets. These opportunities not only provide fantastic career experiences for young journalists/broadcasters but also infuse strength in newsrooms often led by waning, overworked staffers who may not have the knowledge or time to effectively grow their digital delivery platforms, audiences and advertising bases. To survive, it is imperative these businesses expand and evolve, and the key to that growth lies in education.

The college has made great strides in addressing this need. The COMC is highly supportive of *The Daily Toreador*, not only in providing technological and financial assistance and academic support, but also a high-profile space to accommodate our operations. I was afforded the opportunity to teach an undergraduate class on community journalism, and I know of numerous occasions when journalists from the area have been invited to speak to classes. Employment and internship opportunities from news outlets of all sizes are regularly shared. Additionally, the college has long encouraged its faculty and staff to identify opportunities and partnerships that might benefit Tech students. With that in mind, I currently am working alongside the Texas Center for Community Journalism to coordinate a Lubbock workshop later this month open not only to media representatives from throughout West Texas but student journalists as well.

I am intrigued by the COMC's plans involving community journalism and wholeheartedly support the effort. It not only would benefit COMC students and *The Daily Toreador*, but also the West Texas community and the survival of journalism in many areas on the verge of become news deserts. I look forward to collaborating in any way I can, both professionally and personally, to boost the role community journalism plays on the South Plains.

Sincerely,



Sheri Lewis

July 28, 2023

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from the Wesner Publications group (including the Lamb County Leader-News, the Castro County News, and the Levelland News-Press) as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. We, at Wesner Publications, have already experienced and benefitted from the talent coming out of the existing journalism program as current and past journalists are alumni. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Wesner', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

K. Brett Wesner, President

# THE TEXAS SPUR

SINCE 1909 ★ NEWS FOR DICKENS AND KENT COUNTIES

**KAY ELLINGTON** Publisher • **BARBARA BRANNON** Editor/Associate Publisher  
424 Burlington Ave., Spur TX 79370 USA • 806.271.3381  
spur@TheTexasSpur.com • www.TheTexasSpur.com

July 30, 2023

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation:

Please accept this letter from The Texas Spur and our sister weeklies The Caprock Courier, The Floyd County Hesperian-Beacon, The Knox County Courier-News and The Post Dispatch, as our strong endorsement of the proposed **Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University**. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. In our award-winning newspaper group we have already experienced and benefitted from the talent coming out of the existing journalism program—and are fortunate this year for one of our own interns, a local class salutatorian, to be entering Tech’s journalism program following her summer on our staff. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

We believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and are eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,



**Kay Ellington, Publisher**  
**Barbara Brannon, PhD, Editor**



**07-28-2023**

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from the **The Hereford BRAND** as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

*Jeff Blackmon, Publisher/Owner*

7-29-23

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal and Amarillo Globe-News as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. We, at the USA TODAY network papers in Lubbock and Amarillo, have already experienced and benefitted from the talent coming out of the existing journalism program as several of our journalists are alumni, myself included. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Adam Young

Editor

Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, Amarillo Globe-News

806-766-8717

[ayoung@lubbockonline.com](mailto:ayoung@lubbockonline.com)



Monday, July 31, 2023

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from *The Canadian Record* as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. We at *The Canadian Record* have already experienced and benefitted from the talent coming out of the existing journalism program as past interns are alumni and teachers in Canadian's public school system. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives. I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Laurie Ezzell Brown, Editor and Publisher

The Canadian Record

PO Box 898, Canadian, TX 79014

806.323.6461 | 806.570.3033



**July 29, 2023**

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from **El Editor Newspaper** as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. We, at **El Editor Newspaper**, have already experienced and benefitted from the talent coming out of the existing journalism program as **past journalists** are alumni. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Amalia Aguero

Publisher

El Editor Newspaper

806-763-3841

**July 31, 2023**

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from **The Lynn County News** as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. We, at **The Lynn County News** have already experienced and benefitted from the talent coming out of the existing journalism program as past interns are alumni. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Juanell Jones, Publisher

The Lynn County News

Tahoka, Texas

07/28/2023

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from the Booker News as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Loui Ypara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Owner/Publisher of The Booker News

# THE CLARENDON Enterprise

THE CLARENDON NEWS & THE DONLEY COUNTY LEADER

[www.ClarendonLive.com](http://www.ClarendonLive.com)  
Phone: 806.874.2259 • Fax: 806.874.2423  
105 S. Kearney St. • P.O. Box 1110 • Clarendon, TX 79226

July 28, 2023

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

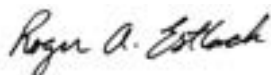
Please accept this letter from the The Clarendon Enterprise as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. We, at The Clarendon Enterprise, have already experienced and benefitted from the talent coming out of the existing journalism program as myself and our contributing editor are both Tech alumni. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,



Roger A. Estlack,  
Publisher

**July 31, 2023**

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from the **The Pampa News** as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. We, at **The Pampa News**, look forward to working with students from this program. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

ReDonn Woods

The Pampa News

ReDonn Woods  
The Pampa News  
PO Box 2198  
Pampa Tx 79065

**June 28, 2023**

To the staff at the Scripps Howard Foundation,

Please accept this letter from the State Line Tribune as our strong endorsement of the proposed Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. Your contribution, along with strong partnerships with journalists throughout the High Plains, will provide an invaluable service for audiences and students (current and prospective) across our diverse region.

We are excited to support and serve as a partner in this community endeavor to help foster relationships with rural areas and family-owned publications in the High Plains. We, at The State Line Tribune have already experienced and benefitted from the talent coming out of the existing journalism program as past intern Cole Rohrbach is an alumni. The College of Media & Communication has long-standing collaborative relationships with several community organizations as existing and incoming faculty practice a hands-on approach to learning.

Through this proposed center, students—many of whom are coming from rural areas—will be able to give back to their communities through learned experiences as the center will focus on developing a new generation of journalists fully-equipped to take on issues that have a direct impact on everyday lives.

I believe this team from Texas Tech is well positioned to make a positive impact on our region and am eager to see this proposal come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Rob Pomper

Publisher

State Line Tribune



To whom it may concern,

This letter is written in support of the Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism at Texas Tech University. I have worked as an English teacher at Estacado Early College High School in Lubbock, Texas for the past several years, and I have experienced first hand the positive and life changing impact that resources for writing instruction can have on students.

This center would not only provide support for my current journalism students' learning experience in my classroom, but it would continue to provide them with support for years to come. Since many of my students aspire to be first generation college graduates, this would be an opportunity for them to follow their dreams and pursue a career in journalism.

As a journalism educator at the secondary level, I am passionate about this project as well as providing students with outlets for their voices to be heard. I believe that student participation will be a beneficial experience unlike any they have had before. I am happy to work as a partner in programming that will build valuable bridges between my students, Texas Tech students, and the profession.

Best Regards,

Savannah Terry  
English III Dual Credit Teacher  
English II Pre-AP Teacher  
Journalism & Yearbook Teacher  
Student Council Sponsor  
Instructional Teacher Leader



Roy Howard Community Journalism Center  
 TTU College of Media and Communication  
 Three-Year Budget

Expenditures	Start-Up January–June 2024			Year 1 July 2024–June 2025			Year 2 July 2025–June 2026			Year 3 July 2026–June 2027			Total January 2024–June 2027		
	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing TTU College of Media and	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing TTU College of Media and	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing TTU College of Media and	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing TTU College of Media and	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing TTU College of Media and	Total
	<b>Personnel*</b>														
Howard Center Director			0	90,000		90,000	92,700		92,700	95,481		95,481	278,181	0	278,181
Professor of Practice director of community journalism master's program			0	75,000		75,000	77,250		77,250	79,568		79,568	231,818	0	231,818
Digital Operations Manager			0	65,000		65,000	66,950		66,950	68,958		68,958	200,908	0	200,908
Community Journalism lecturer, 3-year contract			0	59,000		59,000	60,770		60,770	62,593		62,593	182,363	0	182,363
Roy Howard Community Journalism Postdoctoral Fellow			0	56,484		56,484	58,179		58,179	59,924		59,924	174,586	0	174,586
Journalist-in-Residence			0	62,000		62,000	63,860		63,860	65,776		65,776	191,636	0	191,636
Robert Peaslee salary, 10% effort			0		14,488	14,488		14,488		14,488		14,488	0	43,464	43,464
Miglena Sternadori salary, 10% effort			0		14,082	14,082		14,082		14,082		14,082	0	42,246	42,246
Lucinda Holt salary, 10% effort			0		10,045	10,045		10,045		10,045		10,045	0	30,135	30,135
Sheri Lewis salary, 5% effort					3,898	3,898		3,898		3,898		3,898	0	11,694	11,694
Mary Norman, 5% effort					5,406	5,406		5,406		5,406		5,406	0	16,218	16,218
Brooke Galvan, 5% effort					2,546	2,546		2,546		2,546		2,546	0	7,638	7,638
Jose Andino, 5% effort			0		2,100	2,100		2,100		2,100		2,100	0	6,300	6,300
Student Interns paid through college-to-career program					22,500	22,500		22,500		22,500		22,500	0	67,500	67,500
Employee Related Expenses (Benefits)			0	143,438	15,514	158,952	152,647	15,516	168,163	162,623	15,516	178,139	458,708	46,546	505,254
<b>Student Support</b>															
Scholarships for five master's student editors for community news wire			0	75,000		75,000	75,000		75,000	75,000		75,000	225,000	0	225,000
Scholarships for Community Journalism Scholars program				30,000		30,000	60,000		60,000	90,000		90,000	180,000	0	180,000
Student travel and other reporting costs			0	6,550		6,550	6,550		6,550	6,550		6,550	19,650	0	19,650
Other (be specific)			0			0			0			0	0	0	0
<b>Operations**</b>															
Supplies			0	5,000		5,000	5,000		5,000	5,000		5,000	15,000	0	15,000
Equipment purchases, replacements and repairs (cameras, etc.)			0	20,000		20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000		20,000	60,000	0	60,000
Marketing, promotion and recruitment			0	25,000		25,000	25,000		25,000	25,000		25,000	75,000	0	75,000
Summer Institute Space rental, catering, travel grants			0	22,500		22,500	22,500		22,500	22,500		22,500	67,500	0	67,500
Non-student travel			0			0			0			0	0	0	0
Media literacy townhalls/public information workshops			0	10,000		10,000	10,000		10,000	10,000		10,000	30,000	0	30,000
Repurposing Daily Toreador offices for new center			0	200,000	100,000	300,000			0			0	200,000	100,000	300,000
Printing costs for local newspapers			0	100,000		100,000	100,000		100,000	100,000		100,000	300,000	0	300,000
			0			0			0			0	0	0	0
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,044,972</b>	<b>190,579</b>	<b>1,235,551</b>	<b>896,406</b>	<b>90,581</b>	<b>986,987</b>	<b>948,973</b>	<b>90,581</b>	<b>1,039,554</b>	<b>2,890,350</b>	<b>371,741</b>	<b>3,262,091</b>
<b>Indirect Costs (capped at 3% of Direct Costs)</b>			0	31,349	5,717	37,067	26,892	2,717	29,610	28,469	2,717	31,187	86,711	11,152	97,863
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,076,321</b>	<b>196,296</b>	<b>1,272,618</b>	<b>923,298</b>	<b>93,298</b>	<b>1,016,596</b>	<b>977,442</b>	<b>93,298</b>	<b>1,070,740</b>	<b>2,977,061</b>	<b>382,893</b>	<b>3,359,954</b>
<b>Revenue Sources</b>															
Scripps Howard Foundation			0	1,076,321		1,076,321	923,298		923,298	977,442		977,442	2,977,061		2,977,061
TTU College of Media and Communication		0	0		196,296	196,296		93,298	93,298		93,298	93,298		382,893	382,893
<b>Total Revenue Sources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,076,321</b>	<b>196,296</b>	<b>1,272,617</b>	<b>923,298</b>	<b>93,298</b>	<b>1,016,596</b>	<b>977,442</b>	<b>93,298</b>	<b>1,070,740</b>	<b>2,977,061</b>	<b>382,893</b>	<b>3,359,954</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## ROY HOWARD COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER GRANT

### **University of New Mexico Foundation**

#### Dean/Director

Henry Nemcik

Tel: (505) 313-7668

#### Person submitting this request

Ilia Rodriguez Nazario

Tel: (505) 277-5305

ilia@unm.edu

**The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center  
at the University of New Mexico**

**Proposal submitted to the Scripps-Howard Foundation by**

**Dr. Ilia Rodríguez Nazario  
Michael Marcotte  
Gwyneth Doland**

**July 2023**

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### Included Attachments:

1. UNM President Letter of Support
2. 7 Partner Letters of Support
3. List of Project Collaborators & Advisors
4. Diagram of Center Staffing
5. Model Ethics Code
6. 3 Local News Research Reports

### Separate Attachments:

1. Excel Sheet: Monitoring/Evaluation Grid (Separate Upload)
2. Excel Sheet: Three-Year Spending Plan (Separate Upload)

## The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at the University of New Mexico

### I. Our Project Description

A momentous grant of \$3 million from the Scripps Howard Foundation would allow the flagship journalism program at the University of New Mexico to launch a dynamic community newsroom serving the unmet information needs in the state's diverse populations, while achieving state-of-the-art training for the next generation of community-focused journalism professionals.

The exciting new "Roy Howard Community Journalism Center," made possible by the generosity and enduring commitment of the Scripps-Howard Foundation, would become the centerpiece of a reimagined undergraduate curriculum in the UNM Communication and Journalism Department, where our mission is to "communicate for a better world."

The Center will attack disinformation and media distrust, replacing it with verified information and earned trust in journalism and journalists – especially in our troubled news deserts. We will harness the power of our unusually collaborative statewide media ecosystem to extend our reach and deepen our shared impact. We will build on our highly successful fellowship program which has received national acclaim for vaulting diverse graduates into local news careers. And we will catalyze the significant interdisciplinary resources of UNM, our talented faculty, and an expert advisory board, with the leading theories and practices of our colleagues from industry and education.

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will be strategically structured and staffed to prioritize, engage, and serve the information needs of New Mexico, with priority focus on Native American and Hispanic/Latinx communities.

(A word about terminology: We are mindful of different community perspectives on the uses of the terms "Native American," "indigenous," or "American Indians," and "Hispanic," "Latino," "Latina," or the gender neutral "Latinx." The designations used in this document are preliminary and, in some instances, for the sake of congruency with institutional categorization. Once the Center's leadership team and students are involved in refining our plans, they will lead our editorial policies on this.)

Our approach will reflect local cultures, while inviting users — and learners — to lead the way in setting our editorial direction in service of local communities.

We are well positioned to execute this program because:

- Our award-winning teaching model already incorporates an editorially independent working news laboratory.
- Our experiential pathways for interns and fellows are a phenomenal success.
- Our local news service projects have already attracted public and private financial support.
- Our department has built a web of close connections with local media.
- Our commitment to community engagement and cultural diversity runs deep.
- We have faculty expertise in disinformation and a required course in data tools.
- We have, or will attract, the leadership, talent and expertise needed to succeed.

And New Mexico is the best place to receive this program because

- It is a majority-minority state, where half of the residents identify as Hispanic/Latinx --the highest percentage of any state in the country. Our 13% Native American population is third highest of any state.
- Despite these large subpopulations, very few Spanish-language news outlets exist, and few outlets focus on Indigenous affairs.
- Our need is great. New Mexico has the highest poverty rate in the nation and ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation for child wellbeing. Residents struggle with access to healthcare, food insecurity, violence, lack of well-paying jobs and other inequities.
- Meanwhile, our media ecosystem is under severe duress, with legacy news outlets shrinking, start-ups in short supply, and many communities living in news deserts.

Despite limited resources, our program's determined efforts are having a meaningful impact on local newsrooms. Earlier this year, [our profile](#) was added to the Center for Community News site cataloguing university-based local news services. This July, we were featured prominently in a [Nieman Lab piece](#) on state funding for news fellowships, and the positive impact of our training program was acknowledged by local news leaders [on KNME-TV](#).

Our mission to enhance and sustain community journalism in New Mexico would be a tribute to the legacy of Roy Howard, honoring his historic stature.

a) **Our Center's Structure: A News Hub with Twin Verticals for Indigenous and Hispanic/Latinx News**

Research shows the greatest news needs in New Mexico are concentrated among two underserved populations: Native American and Hispanic/Latinx residents.

We propose to transform our existing student-driven news site, New Mexico News Port, rebuilding it around two content verticals that address the biggest gaps in local coverage, reporting of Indigenous and Hispanic issues.

Our state's needs are both severe and geographically widespread; our news deserts are much larger than our news oases. As such, we are planning to roll out, gradually, incrementally, targeted localities to be served by our project, and retaining long-term commitments to those communities with which we build connections.

Structurally, the project will assemble a central editorial team, basing its operations in underutilized facilities in the Communication and Journalism building on the campus of UNM in Albuquerque. Here the Center can readily involve the students, faculty, and staff of the C&J program, recruit students from other departments and engage with other partners.

We will aim to reach a statewide audience but will focus on the communities in Central New Mexico from which UNM draws many of our students. At first, our students will report spotlight Albuquerque's **South Valley**, an underserved, semi-rural area with a high concentration of Hispanic residents, and **Albuquerque's Urban Indigenous** community, the largest geographical concentration of Native Americans in the state.

A robust community engagement strategy will ensure that our coverage priorities are developed in partnership with our audiences and not dictated to them.

The keys to this "high trust" form of engagement journalism are the active efforts of our two expertly staffed, people-oriented service desks.

**The Hispanic/Latinx Affairs Desk** (working title) will shape bilingual (Spanish/English) content to better serve individuals in New Mexico's largest ethnic group.

**The Indigenous News Desk** (working title) will customize news for our significant-yet-underserved Native American populations.

Each desk will feature the following components, providing for twin operations:

**Original Reporting** – a vital role of each desk is to produce essential stories to serve the target community. To accomplish this, each desk will have an assigned team:

- An **Associate Editor for Hispanic/Latinx Affairs** and an **Associate Editor for Indigenous News**; both experienced professionals selected for their advanced abilities to engage their target communities and mentor emerging journalists;
- A **Bilingual Reporting Fellow** and an **Indigenous Affairs Reporting Fellow**, recent graduates to be employed full-time for one-year;
- **Three Hispanic/Latinx Desk interns** and **three Indigenous Desk interns**; motivated undergraduates selected for their paid roles in writing/editing, data journalism, engagement journalism, multimedia production, and other areas assigned by their desks;
- and, through our classroom connections, a deep pool of **15-35 student journalists**, depending on semesters and courses involved.

**Acquired Content** – an additional aspect of each desk is its ability to acquire curated content via **partner newsrooms**, **freelance contributors**, paid **news services**, or other **community-based sources**, including citizen contributors. All content, be it news, commentary, or general civic information, will be vetted for accuracy and ethical standards. An acquisition budget will allow the desk to commission original work from diverse reporters and pay contributors a competitive fee.

**Website** – at first, these desks will take advantage of our existing website, which will be modernized and rebranded: **New Mexico News Port, a service of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center**. The strategy is for the site to publish and archive all content of the Center, providing a central clearinghouse for content sharing, and a singular source for contact and information about the Center. Later, we will discuss if each desk warrants more public-facing autonomy.

**Newsletter** – each desk will propagate a recurring newsletter written and curated for its target audience. The newsletter, to be uniquely titled and branded as a service of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center, will



highlight original journalism from the Center, aggregate selected reports from our network of partners, and provide for other messaging and interactivity that supports ongoing community trust.

**Podcast** – each desk will strive for at least one podcast series per year, taking its journalism into the audio realm for added reach and impact. We hope to see new and creative products arise from this effort – including those in Spanish, or Diné (Navajo) -- with significant support from our audio storytelling course.

**Community Engagement** – each desk will manage outreach activities to better know and serve its users. These include

- **social media** engagement and distribution (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Threads, Tik-Tok, and perhaps others);
- **audience feedback** forms (leading to more structured editorial input such as the Harken model, or other engagement tools)
- **SMS messaging** (including Whats App, Messenger, others) -- especially important where we are engaging in low-bandwidth areas.
- timely **surveys** (or other research efforts TBD)
- and, importantly, targeted, and timely **in-person trust-building events** (such as town hall meetings, lectures or panel discussions, social meetups, etc.), which we will establish in targeted locales, beginning with our “South Valley Voices” and our “Urban Indigenous” initiatives.

In addition, there will be positions to lead the Center and positions to add greater support for the Center. Here is a snapshot of these positions:

**Shared Leadership and Resources** – while our content desks will develop distinct audiences, they will share tremendously in back-end support. The following resources aid the twin desk model:

- a **Professor of Practice in Community Journalism**, an existing faculty member who will become Director of the Roy Howard Center, and lead the overall effort;
- a **Professor of Practice in Community Engagement**, a new faculty position, who leads the Center’s trust-building strategy while teaching related courses;
- a **Visiting Journalist in Residence**, a new rotating faculty slot, who will lead a capstone course in advanced community journalism coverage;

- the **Managing Editor**, a new full-time staff leader who runs the Center day-to-day and directs the daily work of all desks;
- a **Multimedia Producer**, who, under the direction of the Managing Editor, supports all forms of multimedia storytelling;
- an **Innovation Fellow**, who we expect to recruit from our graduate ranks and who will conduct research and advise us on generative AI, and other fast-arriving technological advancements;
- a **Tech Fellow**, who, like the reporting fellows is a recent graduate hired full-time for 12-months, devoted to advancing our digital and interactive user experiences and tracking digital metrics;
- a **Program Administrator**, who, under the direction of the Center Director and in collaboration with the managing editor, will assist with financial, personnel, and operational matters; and who will be assigned a **Student Assistant**;
- and, other short-term, contracted **consultants** who will assist with specific matters such as website design/support, assessment reports, development campaigns, special training, and other support work.

b) **Our Audience Service Strategy: Reach Young Users with the Greatest Stakes in Local Schools, Local Business, Local Government, and Local Culture**

To tighten our focus on who we aim to serve, we begin with our target age range:

- New Mexicans roughly in the 18-35 age bracket are most awash in new media, thus least likely to be acquainted with traditional news services and news values, but most likely to be reachable via social media and online platforms;
- These young New Mexicans are most likely to be entering careers, starting families, enrolling children in schools, settling into communities, and starting to care for aging parents;
- This is the age group with whom our student journalists may best relate, thus allowing their experiences to better inform their connections and their coverage.

### c) Our Approach to Localism: Select Specific Communities We Can Serve Well

While our macro-approach is to think statewide (and share significant statewide content through our website and network of partners), our central, tactical approach will concentrate on trust building and information gathering in targeted locales that we can access through proximity, partnerships, or key connections. Over time, we will grow the number of these locales and employ more ways to support their continuing coverage.

We have a plan for year one coverage. Years two and three are left open until our team is formed and can advance further plans.

#### YEAR ONE: FEATURED LOCALITIES

##### HISPANIC/LATINX AFFAIRS DESK: **South Valley Voices**

Our plan for this desk is to concentrate on Albuquerque's South Valley, a vibrant community of some 40,000 residents, 80% Hispanic, with per capita income of \$23,000 and where the poverty rate exceeds 20%.

The area has no dedicated newspaper and is generally overlooked by mainstream media.

Coverage in South Valley would be especially timely in 2024, as statewide redistricting changed the political dynamics here. Moreover, 2024 may bring further efforts to disinform voters of color, as was documented in 2020.

One of the first activities of the Roy Howard Center would be to conduct community engagement events with our South Valley partners.

By making the most of geographical proximity for access and outreach, and by providing timely and culturally relevant coverage, our engagement-journalism project can address the information gap in the South Valley.

*See the full details about our South Valley strategy in the Community Service section.*

##### INDIGENOUS NEWS DESK: **Our Urban Indigenous**

Our plan for this desk is to concentrate coverage on Albuquerque's Urban Indigenous population. This population is defined as American Indians who may have direct ties with a particular tribe, but who live in urban areas.

Some 70% of Native Americans live in cities. Our advisors call coverage of this population a “huge need.”

Data show many health, education and economic inequities facing this population. A major issue involves the lack of a coordinated public safety effort to solve cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

One of our first engagement activities under the Roy Howard Center would be to conduct listening sessions in partnership with Native American community organizations.

Again, by utilizing the Center’s immediate proximity to individuals and organizations in this community, our coverage can combat misrepresentations and foster pride in Native American heritage, encouraging positive community engagement.

*See the full details about our Urban Indigenous strategy in the Community Service section.*

By building a strong foundation in these localities in Year One, and establishing an ongoing commitment there, the Roy Howard Center can create a blueprint for expansion to other underserved communities in New Mexico.

d) **Our Summer Experience Program: Create Community-Based Reporting Opportunities for High School Students, College Pre-majors, and Others**

In addition to our academic year program, which relies heavily on the undergraduate course work of UNM journalism students, we plan to create a Summer Experience Program that is open to UNM students as well as high school students interested in exploring community journalism. Summer is an underused semester at UNM, and we’ve had great success embedding student interns and fellows in cities and towns across the state. Expanding opportunities for younger journalists will help us further develop their skills and create meaningful connections with our audiences.

Place-based immersion in a New Mexico community will be an essential aspect of these experiences. These experiences allow us to expand our partnership base even further. Working with the NM Scholastic Press Association, Generation Justice, 4-H, or other youth leadership or youth media partners who have extensive roots in rural New Mexico communities, we can reach and inspire a new cohort of community storytellers.

Summer experiences will be led by Communication and Journalism faculty or Center staff and may collaborate with other departments, news organizations or community organizations to leverage ongoing connections and add journalism elements to existing research projects as we build our own. For example:

- Collaborating with KUNM-FM, KNME-TV, and news partners on multimedia coverage of primary election issues facing voters in Sandoval County, which is home to the large suburb of Rio Rancho as well as lands of 11 Tribes and Pueblos. Expanding existing strengths, including what we've done in the past with our [People, Power and Democracy](#) project.
- Informing immigration issues in New Mexico with international reporting trips similar to those led by UNM faculty to Mexico, Cuba and Central America.
- Partnering with UNM Spanish Professor Damian Wilson and graduate students researching New Mexico's endangered form of Spanish to tell the stories of historic communities (explained in the *New York Times*: "[New Mexico is Losing a Form of Spanish Spoken Nowhere Else on Earth](#)").
- Producing series of multimedia features focusing on the impact of climate change on the South Valley. (See this example from UNM cartography students: [Voices of the South Valley Acequia Community](#))
- Partnering with [UNM's Indigenous Design and Planning Institute](#) to report stories around innovative community projects initiated by Indigenous Communities.

e) **Our TOP GOALS: Build Journalistic Trust, Train the Next Generation of Public Service Journalists, and Deliver Valued News**

The three main planks of our proposal are based on trust building, experiential learning, and local reporting—an interdependent set of practices that blend the diverse lived experiences of our student body with our demonstrated professional mentorship and training.

These goals' expected outcomes drive our theory of change. In other words, our Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is prepared to convert a generous \$3 million philanthropic grant into

- thousands of trusting users of news,
- powerful learning for a generation of new journalists,
- and valued journalism that feeds community-level hunger for truth, knowledge, and empowerment.

Below are the ways we can actualize these goals. (Our metrics for measuring these goals are detailed in the monitoring section.)

**Trust Building** – Establishing trust and building on it is the challenge at the center of our mission. This is especially true when it aims to covering sensitive topics related to Hispanic / Latinx and Indigenous news.

Here are our strategies for fostering trust:

- a. Representation: We will ensure our center is staffed with diverse faculty, staff and students who understand the cultural nuances, history, and challenges faced by the Hispanic and Indigenous communities. Teams that include reporters who share similar backgrounds can help establish trust with the people they are covering.
- b. Inclusivity: We will strive to actively involve community members in the journalism process. Our town hall meetings, community forums, and recurring feedback, will help the center understand community concerns, needs, and priorities. We will invite community members to contribute their stories, perspectives, and experiences to be covered.
- c. Accuracy and Transparency: We do this with solid journalism – upholding high journalistic and ethical standards, fact-checking, information verification, and providing transparency in the reporting process. We correct mistakes promptly and remain open to feedback from the community.
- d. Engagement and Collaboration: We seek to partner with local organizations, leaders, and grassroots initiatives within the Hispanic and Indigenous communities. Collaborative efforts can help demonstrate the center's commitment to serving the community's interests rather than just reporting from an outsider's perspective. Inviting grass-roots involvement and valuing that involvement is a radical change in newsroom culture – but it is what we will role-model.
- e. Long-term Commitment: Building trust takes time, consistency, and commitment. The Center will be dedicated to covering our Hispanic and Indigenous audiences beyond short-term goals, activating sincere interest in the community's well-being. We hope to pioneer a community-based “continued commitment” theory that helps a locality develop and support its own community news sources to improve upon what our center can deliver.

**Experiential Learning** – “Learning by doing” is an essential aspect of community journalism, as it empowers individuals to actively participate in the reporting process and understand the complexities of storytelling.

These are some of the ways we will achieve experiential learning:

- a. **Classroom Involvement:** Our Center will have a broad, durable foundation based in the classrooms of University of New Mexico, where service-learning is in high demand and high respect. Our existing writing and reporting courses will readily adapt to the Center's needs, as we have already developed this model with our New Mexico News Port publishing lab. But we will grow the model with additional curriculum involvement and experiment with our flexible "topics" courses.
- b. **Fellowships and Internships:** We are excited to build upon our highly successful statewide local news internship and fellowship program, which has attracted considerable outside funding and has garnered national recognition. This program involves all state schools in their recruitment of students and is open to all local newsrooms for their placement and training. The Center will align nicely with this program – training students to excel in the program, while also becoming a newsroom employer of fellows and interns.
- c. **Immersive Reporting:** We will encourage reporters to spend time within the communities they cover, fostering high-engagement reporting. This approach allows journalists to gain a deeper understanding of the issues faced by the community and builds more authentic connections with the people they interview.
- d. **Summer Experience Program:** Allows us to do much wider outreach to high school students and pre-major college students, while connecting majors and the Center to various communities of interest for special coverage. This involvement grows our ranks of students and deepens our connections to community.
- e. **Professional Mentorship:** Our student journalists will be guided by a cadre of professional editors, instructors, and content specialists. The mentoring is baked into the production model providing stages of experience from basic, to intermediate, to advanced. The most motivated students have opportunities to be hired by the Center, and, of course, the best of our graduates could be rewarded with one-year paid fellowships, as referenced above.

**Local Reporting** – An essential goal of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is to provide high-quality, valuable journalism that explores issues and stories in our Hispanic and Indigenous communities.

Here are some of our strategies for achieving this:

- a. **Depth Reporting:** We go beyond superficial reporting and delve into the complexities and nuances of the issues that affect the communities. We aspire to

deliver accountability coverage, in-depth investigations, and context-rich reporting.

b. Solutions Journalism: While it is essential to shed light on problems, stakeholders told us they're exhausted by news that only focuses on negative stories about their communities. We will also explore potential solutions and positive initiatives within the communities. Solutions journalism can empower the community by highlighting successful strategies and inspiring positive change.

c. Data Journalism: Using quantifiable dimensions of an issue to better show trends, contrasts, or proportions, which can lead to deeper understanding of an issue.

d. Language Accessibility: As mentioned, our Hispanic Affairs Desk will provide content in both English and Spanish, in considering the linguistic diversity within the Hispanic community. We will also look for opportune ways to feature Native languages, through collaboration with our colleagues at UNM who are leading important research and preservation efforts. This accessibility will ensure a broader reach and inclusivity.

e. Amplifying Voices: We elevate the voices and perspectives of the Hispanic and Indigenous community members themselves. This may involve featuring opinion pieces, guest columns, and community-contributed content.

f. Collaborative Reporting: The Center is a hub from which to partner with other local news outlets or organizations to expand the Center's reach and resources – and to help expand our partner's reach and resources. Collaborative reporting can lead to more comprehensive coverage and greater community engagement.

By diligently focusing on these three main goals and measuring their objectives over time, the community journalism center can establish itself as a reliable, impactful, and community-driven source of information for our communities.

**f) Our Curriculum: Adapting and Growing the C&J Multimedia Journalism Degree Program to Integrate with the Roy Howard Center**

The Communication and Journalism Department has continually evolved and innovated to keep current with best practices in journalism education and in sync with the needs of society. We were ahead of the curve when we moved to a converged media model (away from siloed approaches to print, broadcast, magazines, etc.), while our most recent curriculum adjustments in 2018 and 2020 added a media literacy gateway course, introduced a data tools course, and added social media classes. Amid these adaptations, we adopted a “teaching-hospital-model,” with the introduction of our



publishing lab, New Mexico News Port, allowing various reporting classes a real-world outlet for their work.

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will vault our program to the next level, effectively giving the entire multimedia journalism sequence a sharper focus – that of committing to helping New Mexico’s underserved communities right here, right now.

We have the institutional support to revise courses immediately upon acceptance of this proposal, and to create some new courses specifically to help drive the Center’s mission.

The following courses will prove instrumental in supporting the Roy Howard Community News Center:

**CJ-475 Advanced Multimedia Reporting** – our required capstone course, to be realigned with the Center’s goals, and taught by a Visiting Journalist-in-Residence. This is for seniors and can be set up for team coverage of major issues. Builds on the basics learned in 200 and 300 level writing and reporting courses. All stories are published to NM News Port (or other publications). Course design already incorporates fact-checking and focuses on community issues. More will be done to develop a community-trust-building component.

**CJ-464 Advanced Visual Storytelling** – an elective allowing the instructor to delve into long-form documentary production, or other more advanced storytelling. When this is next offered, we will plan for coverage in line with the Center’s mission.

**CJ-393 Topics Classes** – an elective that explores any journalism topic in greater depth. Recent examples include Covering Criminal Justice, Media Entrepreneurship, and Cannabis Communication. One suggested topics class is Using AI for Good, Not Evil. We will look to our Professors of Practice to innovate course offerings in this space immediately upon approval of our proposal. Engagement Journalism would be one such topic; Combatting Misinformation would be another.

**CJ-375 Intermediate Reporting** – a required staple of the curriculum, where all students work on both short form and long form stories for web publication. Assignments typically hew toward community issues, accountability stories, beat specialties, and data journalism. This course will be devoted to the Center’s news agenda.

**CJ-370 Audio Storytelling** – a popular elective in which students learn fundamentals of audio news, field recording, interviewing, writing, announcing, editing, etc. The Center will be involved with this course to champion a podcast series in line with Center goals.

**CJ-367 Social Media for Journalists** – a growing staple of the program teaching students ethically sound methods of using social media in reporting, branding, community-building, and information debunking. Students explore apps, tools and gear for effective messaging and audience engagement. We will align this course with the Center’s needs.

**CJ-361 Photo Journalism** – an elective focused on all aspects of effective news photography. This course creates obvious opportunities for students to serve the local news mission of the Center.

**CJ-360 Visual Storytelling** – a required course in which students learn the basics of video news, field recording, interviewing, writing, on-camera presentation, editing, etc. Video packages would be published under the auspices of the Center.

**CJ-350 Data Tools for Media Professionals** – a required course that covers statistical methodologies, data analysis, data visualization, spreadsheets and databases. Project work could be harnessed for use by the Center. Our instructor is an expert in machine-learning and using tools to discover disinformation campaigns.

**200 level courses** are numerous and many could be closely involved in the Roy Howard Center. There is a news writing course, a multimedia visual communication course, a web design course, and our required media ethics and law course.

Similarly, some **100 level courses** would enjoy ties with the Center, including our media literacy course (Sex, Lies & Fake News) and introduction to media writing.

**CJ-492 Internships** – C&J does not require internships but highly encourages them, allowing up to 6 credit hours (two semesters). Moreover, we have endeavored to create paid internships via funding we’ve raised (i.e., our NM News Port editor, and some summer internships at nearby partner newsrooms). As referenced earlier, we plan to create six paid internships each semester to directly support the work of the center. There will be high motivation for students to gain this experience, earn these credits, while being paid at a rate better than most part-time jobs.

Lastly, the dual structure of UNM’s Department of Communication and Journalism offers journalism majors access to courses in communication that enrich their knowledge in preparation for careers in journalism. The Department offers two bachelor’s degrees, one in Journalism and Mass Communication (JRMC) and one in Communication Studies. The JRMC degree has two concentrations: multimedia

journalism and strategic communication. In addition, our undergraduate program is partnered with the Interdisciplinary Film and Digital Media program in the College of Fine Arts to offer a concentration in Digital Field Multimedia. The degree in Communication Studies has concentrations in intercultural, health, environmental, organizational, interpersonal, public communication, and media studies. The department also offers two graduate degrees (MA and PhD) in communication studies.

Journalism majors benefit from elective courses in intercultural, environmental and health communication, or multiculturalism, gender and media. Furthermore, our students also benefit from the national reputation of the department as one of the top graduate programs in intercultural communication. This standing affords our majors access to faculty researchers with expertise in local, regional and global cultures; a diverse pool of U.S. and international graduate teaching assistants; and events, speakers and workshops that expand their cultural competencies and awareness. Overall, these communication offerings are a great complement to the multimedia journalism curriculum outlined above and would provide resources to enrich the projects led by the RHCJC.

g) **Sharing our Findings: Multiple Strategies for Helping Others Learn From our Experience**

Sharing will take many forms, and generally will split between sharing with **educators**, sharing with the **journalism industry**, and sharing with **communities**.

We are uniquely poised to share our findings in all these realms, locally and nationally. We anticipate proactive and reactive opportunities of these kinds:

- formal reports – rigorous findings to be published for the benefit advancing scholarly or industry knowledge;
- topical articles – shorter works written under less rigorous conditions for timely sharing in communities of interest;
- talks or lectures – as could happen on campus, at conferences, in community settings or the like;
- panel participation – at meetings or conferences where our experts are part of a milieu of experts;
- media appearances – when our work garners notice and is the subject of coverage, we will seek to promote and accommodate such exposure;
- contextual information that comes with our journalism – meaning that every newsletter and every story provides an opportunity for anyone to link to our site and learn more about who we are, what we do, how we do it, and why.

Primary responsibility for communicating our experience in these ways will fall to our two Professors of Practice. Each has a research requirement within their contract,

whereas productivity, in part, will be evidenced by research publications and other notable writings or appearances, all of which shall be based on the learnings of the Roy Howard Center. (Note: publications do not need to be in peer-reviewed, scholarly journals; they may be designed for consumption by practitioners, community leaders, fellow educators, etc.)

Our team is already active in journalism organizations, making for a natural extension of their current roles to present at national and regional conferences and related venues.

Professors Ilia Rodriguez, Gwyneth Doland, Michael Marcotte, Mohammed Yousuf, and Jaelyn de Maria are respected members and officers of organizations including

- Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ),
- National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ),
- Native American Journalists Association (NAJA),
- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) and relevant divisions (Minorities and Communication and Community Journalism)
- National Communication Association (NCA)
- Southwest Education Council for Journalism and Mass Communication (SWECJMC)
- Online News Association (ONA)
- Journalism and Women Symposium (JAWS)
- Public Media Journalists Association (PMJA)
- Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE)
- New Mexico Press Association (NMPA)

When the Roy Howard Center is established, we will apply to join INN, the Institute for Nonprofit News, so as to share with and learn from INN members. (This would also make us eligible for News Match fundraising campaigns.) Similarly, we'll be prepared to join and engage with other organizations and venues so that we may advance the role-modeling and iterative innovation of the Center.

Relatedly, our News Port lab and our Local News Fellowships are programs of national interest, receiving notable coverage. We expect our Roy Howard Center for Community Journalism to draw further attention in the same circles.

At the national Center for Community News based at the University of Vermont, we are profiled in detail. We have hosted CCN training events, and we are active members of the CCN Slack user group, where we engage in real-time with other educators striving to deliver community news.

Similarly, we have attracted national attention of Nieman Lab at Harvard University. This and other watchers of local news developments will be made aware of our project, and we will invite them to explore or profile what we have to share.

Also, in New Mexico, we're actively connected to stakeholders in local news via The New Mexico Local News Fund, which helps fund our internship/fellowship program and sponsors other projects to serve the local news ecosystem. We share avidly in LNF publications, meetings, a real-time Slack channel, and we will be a notable presence when LNF convenes a Local News Summit in Albuquerque in September.

Of course, new members of the Roy Howard team will serve as evangelists for the project and be encouraged to publish and speak about their experiences. As will our expert advisory board.

Moreover, we are planning to create an annual awards program to celebrate student achievements at the end of each year that the Roy Howard Center is in operation. This awards program will include a public event in which we can tout our learnings with a wide assortment of invited stakeholders.

Finally, one can argue that because UNM's C&J department brings a unique eye, indeed a critical eye, to the ways in which marginalized populations have been used in the furtherance of research, historically, we'll want to mind our approach to this question of what learning is achieved. That is, to the extent that journalism has historically been a very white and westernized discipline, and in our concern to remain ethical and relevant to our target communities, we will encourage these communities to learn and share in their own ways.

#### h) Collaboration: Working Well with Others to Accomplish our Goals

Every step of our planning process has involved gathering valuable perspectives from people we need to help us succeed – in the academy, in the industry, in our community. This approach will continue to be imbued in all aspects of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at UNM.

As our attached letters of support reflect, we are carrying the hopes of many who have devoted themselves to the betterment of New Mexico.

The following individuals and groups are central to our efforts. Additional advisors and potential partners are included in the addenda. Our approach to partnering is strategic. We are in conversation with educators and scholars from the University of New Mexico with interests in journalism, student success, intercultural communication, Chicano

studies, Native American studies (including language preservation), engineering, political science, community design, and public health. They also include journalists committed to media sustainability, entrepreneurship, accuracy, access, accountability, human rights and social justice. And they include community organizers and local leaders with collective expertise in community development, public policy, data analytics, and ways to foster community trust.

#### UNIVERSITY COLLABORATORS

##### **Agoyo, Pam (Cochiti, Kewa, Ohkay Owingeh)**

##### ***UNM, American Indian Student Services***

Agoyo plays an essential role in the American Indian Student Services (AISS) at the University of New Mexico. Established to support Native students, AISS provides various programs to ensure academic achievement and personal growth. Pam and AISS honor the history and contributions of Indigenous peoples while advocating for education and support for Native students attending UNM.

##### **Chee, Melvatha R.**

##### ***University of New Mexico, Linguistics***

Chee is Tsé Nahabitnii, Kin Łichii'nii, Hooghan Łání and Áshjhhí, a Diné woman from Lake Valley, New Mexico. Chee is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics at the University of New Mexico, with extensive experience in her heritage language, Navajo. She serves as an official interpreter for the U.S. Department of Justice, teaches Diné language at the University of New Mexico, and engages in research on Navajo language acquisition. Her work focuses on the morphologically complex Navajo verb and aims to build a Navajo language corpus. As a linguistically trained individual and a fluent speaker of Navajo, she brings a unique perspective to her research and actively works to preserve and enrich her culture's language.

##### **de María, Jaelyn**

##### ***University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

de María, a multimedia storyteller with expertise in intercultural communication, justice studies, and Xican@ studies, exemplifies journalism's potential to bring about social change. As an independent photographer and lecturer in the Communication and Journalism Department, she employs visual communication to highlight issues of globalization, free trade, and cultural sustainability. Her work as a staff photographer for the Albuquerque Journal and her engagement with teaching through service-learning underscore journalism's role in capturing diverse narratives and promoting community engagement.

**Doland, Gwyneth*****University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

Doland is an accomplished reporter and editor, known for her work across various media platforms. From newspapers to radio and television, she has covered government accountability and state government matters. Her achievements have earned her recognition and awards from reputable institutions, such as the First Amendment Award from the ACLU of New Mexico.

**Marcotte, Michael V.*****University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

Marcotte is a Professor of Practice in Journalism in the C&J Department since 2013. He teaches journalism skills courses, media entrepreneurship, and other topics. He formed the New Mexico News Port collaboration/publication lab and is the Principal Investigator in charge of the NM Local News Fellowships and Internships program. Marcotte had a career leading public media newsrooms in California and Washington. He continues to consult on local news strategy and would continue in an advisory role with the RHCJC.

**Pride, Michaele*****University of New Mexico, Design and Planning Assistance Center***

Pride, AIA, NOMA, is a distinguished Professor of Architecture at the University of New Mexico, specializing in urban design and public health. Her work focuses on creating healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities. Leading several projects for NM Mainstreet communities and The Stories of Route 66, she actively addresses adverse determinants of health through cross-campus community initiatives.

**Rodríguez Nazario, Ilia*****University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

Rodríguez is a distinguished educator and researcher in the field of Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico. Her expertise lies in journalism history, ethnic minorities and media, and international communication. With a professional background in print journalism, she has worked for newspapers and Latino publications in Puerto Rico, California, Louisiana and Minnesota. Her commitment to incorporating data, programming, and computation into mass communication and journalism curricula continues to empower future generations of journalists. Rodriguez chairs the C&J Dept.

**Yousuf, Mohammed*****University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

Yousuf is a recipient of multiple teaching and research awards and is a distinguished scholar in Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico. He

exemplifies innovation and dedication by utilizing datafication and big data analytics in journalism and communication research. Through his work, he encourages collaboration across disciplines, making significant strides in media scholarship in and beyond academia.

### **UNM Daily Lobo**

<https://www.dailylobo.com/>

The New Mexico Daily Lobo is an award-winning publication which has served as the independent newspaper at the University of New Mexico since 1895. The student staff works in news, production, design, classifieds, advertising and accounting. Students produce a print newspaper weekly during the fall, spring and summer semesters and publish an e-newsletter four times a week.

### **UNM, Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies**

<https://chicanos.unm.edu/>

The goal of the Department of Chicano/Chicana studies is to promote a critical understanding of Chicano, Mexicano, Hispano, and Indigenous communities to the University and bridge the gaps between all ethnic studies groups on campus.

### **UNM, Department of Native American Studies**

<https://nas.unm.edu/>

The Department of Native American Studies (NAS) at the University of New Mexico is an interdisciplinary academic department dedicated to Indigenous academic scholarship and research excellence. Offering various degree programs and a minor, NAS aims to educate students and the public about the Native experience, emphasizing the complex history and intercultural heritage of New Mexico and the United States. Additionally, NAS seeks to foster collaboration with Native communities and engage students in Nation building efforts.

### **UNM, Department of Political Science**

<https://polisci.unm.edu/>

In the UNM Department of Political Science, we engage with and respond to issues facing our communities on local, national, and global scales.

Our faculty and students investigate critical issues such as inequality, civil conflict, transitional justice, elections, and international politics, among other pressing topics. We are proud to be the only Hispanic-Serving Institution in the U.S. that is also classified as a Carnegie Research University with Very High Activity. As such, we are uniquely situated to study the politics of underrepresented and under-served groups.



**UNM, Department of Spanish and Portuguese**

<https://spanport.unm.edu/>

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UNM plays a crucial role in teaching the languages, cultures, and literatures of the Hispanic and Portuguese worlds. With various distinguished programs, including internationally ranked Hispanic Linguistics and Southwest Studies, students have the opportunity to engage in research, fieldwork, and travel to professionalize their language skills and connect with a broader community.

**UNM, El Centro de la Raza**

<https://elcentro.unm.edu/>

El Centro de la Raza upholds the legacy of the Chicano movement of the 1960's. El Centro is committed not only to support the academic journey of our students, but also to serve as place to nurture cultura. Cultura represents an effort to reclaim and create social and economic justice for our students and communities by being a conduit for self-affirmation through poetry, danza, ceremonies, and other cultural expressions that define who we are. Our intent is not only to help our students navigate the intricate ways of the university and to serve as a support system, but to also create a beautiful space in which our students can explore and experience their own culture, their sense of being, and their belonging to the larger world.

**INDUSTRY COLLABORATORS****Griswold, Shaun*****Source New Mexico***

Griswold is a journalist in Albuquerque with a unique background as a citizen of the Pueblo of Laguna, as well as having Jemez and Zuni ancestry. His extensive experience in print and broadcast news allows him to cover critical issues impacting Native Americans in both urban and tribal communities throughout New Mexico, particularly focusing on education and child welfare.

**Hughs, Art*****Koahnic Broadcast Corporation***

Hughs is a seasoned radio and multimedia journalist who possesses an extensive background in public and community-based media. Having worked for various organizations and publications, he brings a wealth of experience in covering diverse topics from city meetings to natural disasters. His expertise has contributed to the expansion of news organizations and has showcased the stories of various communities.

**Kamerick, Megan*****KUNM***

Kamerick is a passionate journalist with over 25 years of experience in business weeklies, print, and online journalism. Currently holding the position of News Director at KUNM, she advocates for women's voices in media and has produced stories for various reputable organizations like National Public Radio. Megan's TED talk on women and media has garnered significant attention, demonstrating her commitment to amplifying underrepresented voices.

**New Mexico In Depth**

<https://nmindepth.com/about-nmid/>

New Mexico In Depth aims to invigorate New Mexico journalism through our reporting, through working with other journalists as collaborators or mentors, and through media partnerships that leverage collective resources, with the goal of telling in-depth stories of people who represent our diversity and challenging power in a way that informs and empowers people and communities.

**NM Searchlight**

<https://Searchlightnm.org>

Searchlight New Mexico is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization dedicated to investigative reporting. In a landscape of shrinking media resources, our mission is to focus high-impact journalism on topics of local, regional and national interest in order to allow the public to see into the remote recesses of government and to expose abuses of power. We believe great reporting empowers people to demand honest, effective public policy and to seek appropriate remedies.

**New Mexico Press Association (NMPA)**

<https://nmpress.org>

The New Mexico Press Association exists to improve the quality of member newspapers, encourage high journalistic standards, promote journalism education and will seek to protect the rights of free speech for its members as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America.

**New Mexico Broadcast Association (NMBA)**

<http://www.nmba.org>

New Mexico Broadcasters Association serves to promote cooperation and understanding among broadcasters, both radio and television, as well as enhance and promote relationships with businesses and other organizations in the service of communities throughout the state.

**New Mexico Local News Fund**

<https://www.nmlocalnews.org/>

The New Mexico Local News Fund aims to grow the ecosystem of local news across our state to better serve the information needs of all New Mexicans. To accomplish that ambitious goal, we work with both existing newsrooms and trusted community organizations. Our goal is ultimately for everyone to have access to the local news and information they need to thrive. The New Mexico Local News Fund is a fiscally sponsored project of the Santa Fe Community Foundation.

### **NM Scholastic Press Association**

<http://jea.org/>

The Association supports free and responsible scholastic journalism by providing resources and educational opportunities, by promoting professionalism, by encouraging and rewarding student excellence and teacher achievement, and by fostering an atmosphere which encompasses diversity yet builds unity.

### **Proctor, Jeff**

#### ***New Mexico PBS***

Proctor is an accomplished journalist who has been making significant contributions to media in New Mexico since 2002. His expertise lies in covering criminal justice issues, transparency, and more. His dedication to journalism and commitment to serving the community have earned him recognition and respect in the field.

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

### **Generation Justice (GJ)**

<https://generationjustice.org/>

GJ is a multiracial, multicultural project that trains youth to harness the power of community and raise critical consciousness through leadership development, civic engagement, media production and narrative shift in the areas that most impact New Mexicans- racial justice, health, education, early childhood development, and economic security. GJ's mission is to inspire youth to become multidimensional leaders who are committed to social transformation. In New Mexico, Generation Justice has been recognized as the premier youth media and leadership group, and locally and nationally, has been the recipient of numerous awards.

### **Luján, George**

#### ***Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)***

Luján is a dedicated member of the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) with a rich history in community work and art. His involvement in SWOP spans over a decade, where he has learned and grown in various roles, including being the primary grant

writer. His dedication to justice and community engagement has kept SWOP at the forefront of the movement for justice in New Mexico.

### **Pecos, Regis**

#### ***Santa Fe Indian School Leadership Institute***

Pecos is a former governor of Cochiti Pueblo and co-founder of the Santa Fe Indian School Leadership Institute, with an impressive background in public service and academia. His contributions to building state/government relations and his dedication to Indigenous education have made him an influential figure in New Mexico. Pecos was the first Indigenous person ever to become a trustee of an Ivy League institution, when he joined the board at his alma mater, Princeton University.

### **Native American Voters Alliance**

<https://www.groundworksnm.org/>

Groundworks New Mexico was founded on the idea that by working together, rather than apart, we will have a greater impact in our beloved state. Today NAVA serves as a single, neutral entity that serves to connect, strengthen, and advocate for New Mexico's social impact organizations while unleashing the full potential of working together.

### **National Hispanic Cultural Center**

<https://www.nhccnm.org/>

The National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) is a dedicated advocate for the preservation, promotion, and advancement of Hispanic culture, arts, and humanities. Through exhibitions, performances, educational programs, and support for Hispanic, Chicano, and Latinx artists, the NHCC creates a cultural home that celebrates the diverse identities shaping the community. Located in the historic neighborhood of Barelmas, the NHCC's extensive campus features theaters, museums, educational facilities, and resources that enrich and engage both the local and national audience.

### **Pueblo Action Alliance**

<https://www.puebloactionalliance.org/>

"Pueblo Action Alliance is a community driven grassroots organization that protects Pueblo cultural sustainability and community defense by addressing environmental and social impacts in Indigenous communities."

### **Somos un Pueblo Unido**

<https://www.somosunpueblounido.org/>

Somos, founded in 1995, is a statewide community-based and immigrant-led organization that promotes worker and racial justice. With an active membership of 2,500 people in eight counties, Somos offers community education about rights and remedies, forges leadership opportunities for immigrants and low-wage workers,

provides legal services to wage theft victims and initiates impact litigation to defend worker's rights, engages Latinos in the political and electoral process, and leads and supports grassroots campaigns for local and national policies that strengthen our communities.

### **Tewa Women United**

<https://tewawomenunited.org/>

Located in the ancestral Tewa homelands of Northern New Mexico, Tewa Women United is a multicultural and multiracial organization founded and led by Native women. Tewa Women United was incorporated for educational, social and benevolent purposes, specifically for the ending of all forms of violence against Native Women and girls, and Mother Earth, and to promote peace in New Mexico.

### **South Valley Mainstreet**

<https://www.facebook.com/SVMainstreet/>

South Valley MainStreet is a grassroots community-based economic and community development organization.

### **RFK Charter School**

<https://www.rfkcharter.com/>

Mission: RFK prepares, motivates, and supports students to achieve their college and career goals in partnership with their families and the community. RFK Charter School offers a unique high school experience for students seeking alternatives to traditional secondary schools. One of the founding principles of RFK is its belief in the strength of relationships among all the participants. Classes are small, and students receive lots of individual attention. All teachers are certified by the State of New Mexico.

### **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center**

<https://indianpueblo.org/>

The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) Campus serves as a gathering place where Pueblo Culture is celebrated through creative and cultural experiences, while providing economic opportunities to Pueblo and local communities. It is located at the heart of nearly 80 acres of land owned by the 19 Pueblos and governed by the 19 Pueblos District (a sovereign government formed by the Tribal Councils of the 19 New Mexico Pueblo Communities) at the former location of the Albuquerque Indian School (1881-1982).

## **i) Our Timeline: A Deployment Plan with Strategic Phases**

With determined effort, we will have The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center staffed and operational by fall of 2024. Each semester thereafter will be an exciting opportunity to involve more students and more community members in its mission.

Here is our working timeline of activities from the time this proposal is submitted and presuming we are selected for funding.

## **PRE-GRANT**

### **FALL 2023**

- Continue outreach and engagement with potential partners
- Begin prototyping changes to NM News Port
- Begin shift in coursework aligned with community journalism objectives
- Attend NM Local News Summit to document emerging needs and opportunities
- Host SHF site visit: tour campus and workspaces, meet key faculty and community participants, present design plans, observe reporting classes, possible field trip to target localities
- Upon grant notification, expedite SHF-UNM contract, coordinate public announcements
- Submit job postings
- Local News Fellowships and Internships begin recruiting for 2024/2025 Cycle

### **SPRING 2024**

- Install Center Director and provide an Interim Project Assistant
- Form Advisory Board, convene initial meetings monthly
- Establish Hiring Committee / Recruit / Review / Select Center Staff
- Arrange Facility Buildout
- Establish Web Contracts / Redesign Plan
- Prototype Local Reporting Project (Community stakes in 2024 legislative session and 2024 New Mexico primaries)
- Set Fall course curriculum (align key courses: CJ393, CJ375, CJ367, CJ360, CJ35)
- Recruit /Select Fall RHCJC Internships
- Plan and execute first community engagement events
- Local News Fellows and Interns announced three Fellows detailed to the RHCJC
- Quarterly Report Due

## **YEAR ONE (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)**

### **SUMMER 2024**

- Convene Advisory Board, move to quarterly meetings
- Start dates for Center staff (target: July 1)
  - Team retreat, orientation, introductions
  - Trainings: Center systems, policies, procedures
  - Design/Prototyping: newsletters, assignments, classroom instruction
  - Trust/Engagement: strategy sessions, community meetings
  - Innovation/Tech: strategy sessions, systems integration

- Monitoring/Evaluation: establish rubric, issue RFP for consultant
- Local News Fellows and Interns – bootcamp, deployments begin
- Fall course planning, teaching assignments finalized
- Quarterly Report Due

#### FALL 2024

- RHCJC Launches!
  - Open house
  - Public campaign
  - Newsletters Debut
- Hold Fall Engagement Events
- Convene Advisory Board
- Engage key courses: CJ393 (TBD), CJ375, CJ367, CJ360, CJ350
- Local News Fellowships and Internships begin recruiting for 2025/2026 Cycle
- Recruit /Select Spring RHCJC Internships
- Quarterly Report Due

#### SPRING 2025

- Engage Key courses: CJ475, CJ393 (TBD), CJ370, CJ367, CJ350
- Convene In-Person Advisory Board Meeting, Open House and Luncheon
- Hold Spring Engagement Events
- Hold first annual awards event (May)
- Plan / Recruit for Summer Experience 2025
- Recruit / Select Visiting Journalist for AY26
- Recruit /Select Fall RHCJC Internships
- Local News Fellows and Interns announced; three Fellows detailed to the RHCJC
- Compile first year assessment; Conduct graduate exit surveys for tracking.
- Semi-Annual Report Due

#### **YEAR TWO (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026)**

##### SUMMER 2025

- Hold Summer Experiences
- RHCJC Staff Retreat (Planning for Year Two)
- Convene Advisory Board
- Quarterly Report Due

##### FALL 2025

- Key courses: CJ393 (TBD), CJ375, CJ367, CJ360, CJ350
- Hold Fall Engagement Events
- Convene Advisory Board
- Local News Fellowships and Internships begin recruiting for 2026/2027 Cycle

- Recruit /Select Spring RHCJC Internships
- Semi-Annual Report Due

#### SPRING 2026

- Engage Key courses: CJ475, CJ393, CJ370, CJ367, CJ350
- Convene In-Person Advisory Board Meeting and Luncheon
- Hold Spring Engagement Events
- Hold second annual awards event (May)
- Plan / Recruit for Summer Experience 2026
- Recruit / Select Visiting Journalist for AY27
- Recruit /Select Fall RHCJC Internships
- Local News Fellows and Interns announced; three Fellows detailed to the RHCJC
- Compile second year assessment
- Semi-Annual Report Due

#### **YEAR THREE (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027)**

#### SUMMER 2026

- Hold Summer Experience
- RHCJC Staff Retreat (Planning for Year Three Communities of Focus)
- Convene Advisory Board
- Quarterly Report Due

#### FALL 2026

- Key courses: CJ393, CJ375, CJ367, CJ360, CJ350
- Hold Fall Engagement Events
- Convene Advisory Board
- Local News Fellowships and Internships begin recruiting for 2027/2028 Cycle
- Recruit /Select Spring RHCJC Internships
- Semi-Annual Report Due

#### SPRING 2027

- Key courses: CJ475, CJ393, CJ370, CJ367, CJ350
- Convene In-Person Advisory Board Meeting and Luncheon
- Hold Spring Engagement Events
- Hold third annual awards event (May)
- Compile 3-year alumni tracking report
- (TENTATIVE) Plan / Recruit for Summer Experience 2027
- (TENTATIVE) Recruit / Select Visiting Journalist for AY28
- (TENTATIVE) Recruit /Select Fall RHCJC Internships
- Local News Fellows and Interns announced; (TENTATIVE) Three Fellows detailed to the RHCJC



- Semi-Annual Report Due

This completes the overall project description. We are excited to respond to this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity made possible by the Scripps-Howard Foundation. The Howard and Scripps families will understand that what made journalism a central organizing principle in society over a century ago is still a primary principle today – especially crucial in underserved areas – providing people important facts in context, exposing problems and solutions, helping connect and empower communities for their own self-improvement. We believe we’ve made the case for New Mexico as a well-deserving target of opportunity, and for our program as the best grant recipient to take on this ambitious – but manageable – project.

In the sections below, we provide further depth on our preparedness and our vision.

## II. Our Community Service

This proposal builds on a body of research – local and national – ours and that of others – pointing us to the community service plan we now wish to deploy.

Our school's investment in the New Mexico local news ecosystem took on urgency after our faculty produced the 2017 report for Democracy Fund (unpublished) that found growing news deserts in parts of the state, weakening legacy news organizations, and rising concern about both veteran and new talent leaving for other areas.

These findings were explored further in 2019 by focus groups of journalism leaders and community leaders, convened by NM First in partnership with the Local News Fund. (Reports are attached.) As these studies show, a growing chorus of concern decried the loss of community coverage and the resulting lack of accountability. These findings documented the loss of Spanish-language coverage, distressed rural communities, and fear that young people were overly reliant on untrustworthy social media sources. Community leaders readily linked loss of media coverage with loss of civic identity and weakening systems of governance.

Proposed solutions included greater collaboration among journalism organizations, more philanthropic funding for nonprofit news, and stronger support from university programs. The discussants also wanted to see more attention given to diverse communities, and a more accurate reflection of that diversity.

Adding to this picture, a 2021 survey of New Mexico news users conducted by Impact Architects (see study attached), confirmed these trends. Some 42% of respondents were getting news daily via social networks, while 63% said social media was their primary source of local news.

A third said they would consume local news in Spanish IF it were available.

This study also found a strong appetite for solutions-based news (61%). And a majority said more community engagement would improve coverage.

With this background knowledge, this summer we engaged various community partners and advisors on ways a community news center at UNM might counter some of these trends.

### a) What Informs Our Community Service Plan

The following is a selection of points of discussion offered by participants doing community-focused work and interviewed in summer 2023 for the development of this proposal.

They point to the need to orient news coverage toward local neighborhoods, employing insiders' perspectives, to hire and retain Native American reporters, and to involve community.

We were advised that news in Spanish could be valuable. A few commercial television stations produce Spanish-language newscasts, but no major print or online outlets publish bilingual or Spanish-language content.

Shaun Griswold, the editor for Source New Mexico, offered these perspectives on improving news coverage of the South Valley:

- Understand the South Valley and recognize that most of the stories are told from the perspective of outsiders
- Produce news content in Spanish, either by bilingual reporters or through translations of stories
- Cover stories on agriculture, water usage, climate change that are written for the community to understand how it will impact them
- Address the harmful stigmatizations related to crime and uplift the character and reputation of the people who live here
- Recognize that this is a historically "othered" group which has long been outcast in a "sophisticated genocide" where needs are not met

Adding to this case, Damian Vergara Wilson, UNM Professor of Linguistics and Southwest Studies, encouraged reporters to:

- Consider that, "People are feeling marginalized and not seen"
- Include content related to language history when producing portrayals of New Mexican cultures
- Write on culture from an insider perspective. Instead of asking "why are you guys so weird?" ask "Why is your Spanish so weird?"
- Report on "silly, youth-oriented things, like TikTok" and reassure the elders the younger generation isn't just lost

We were advised that news for Native Americans residents would be a public service. Currently two newspapers and three radio stations focus on the Diné community, which is only one of over 20 Native American groups in the state.

Marjorie Childress, journalist at NM In Depth, a nonprofit news site with one of the state's very few Indigenous affairs reporters, advised:

- New Mexico has a very large Indigenous population that's entirely underserved
- It's a problem of supply and demand in mainstream media. The indigenous journalists get scooped up and move away.
- this is in part because there are no legacy news organizations covering the beat

Art Hughes, Executive Director of Native America Calling, a national broadcast based in Albuquerque, says coverage of the Urban Indigenous population is "a huge need."

- Organizations like Navajo Times and Indian Country today focus on reservation land rather than the urban population, which taken as a whole, is much larger.

Adding to this, Regis Pecos, co-founder of the Leadership Institute at Santa Fe Indian School, urged better coverage of Native Americans:

- We need to grow opportunities for Indigenous storytellers to create a common agenda as we work through the challenges we face.

Regarding increased community engagement and letting communities drive coverage, Michaele Pride, UNM Distinguished Professor of Architecture, offered:

- Prioritize community involvement
- Pay community organizers to help with engagement
- Focus on what the community asks for

Melvatha Chee, UNM Professor of Linguistics, added:

- Tell the good stories, especially about children

These local perspectives resonate with the perspectives of people across the country, as documented in recent studies on the value of local news. A 2023 national study by the American Journalism Project to find out what people need from local news outlets identified nine common themes across the eight markets surveyed. Six of these nine are represented in the local perspectives outlined above. People want:

- 1) more micro-local news from neighborhoods,
- 2) news that tell the full story of their community,
- 3) to see themselves in the news and in the newsrooms,
- 4) journalists who can ask “their” questions;
- 5) newsrooms that connect and involve communities, and
- 6) news that reach them where they are—even in TikTok

<https://www.theajp.org/news-insights/insights/we-asked-5000-people-across-the-country-what-they-want-from-local-news-heres-what-we-learned/#>

Other research studies have empirically demonstrated the difference that local news can make in a democracy. A meta-analysis of research on media and democracy by Josh Stearns and Christine Schmidt (2018) offers insights that are particularly relevant to the work of the RHCJC in our target communities. Four of these findings speak to the needs and goals of the Center:

- media representation of place-based identities facilitates trust in journalism;
- local media build a community’s sense of shared connection;
- they establish a trusted, shared understanding to counteract distrust; and
- communication “within place is critical to producing community”

<https://medium.com/office-of-citizen/how-we-know-journalism-is-good-for-democracy-9125e5c995fb>).

The availability and sustainability of local media sources is made even more important by recent reports of community organizers who are expecting more complex disinformation campaigns that target immigrants and communities of color as the 2024 election approaches.

According to sources cited by AP, these campaigns focus on topics that touch upon the vulnerabilities of each group based on historical experiences (whether immigration laws, fear of socialism, distrust in the electoral system, etc.). These campaigns also exploit the “information vacuums” and scarcity of news outlets in local communities. According to Clara Jiménez Cruz, co-founder of a Spanish-language fact-checking group (Factchequeado): “These tactics exploit information vacuums when there’s a lot of uncertainty around how these processes work, especially because a lot of election materials may not be translated in the languages our communities speak.” Sources cited also stress that disinformation, whether in English, Spanish, or Mandarin, is distributed primarily thorough social media. “As a result, messages on apps like WhatsApp often fly under the radar and are allowed to spread and spread, largely unchecked,” said Randy Abreu, a policy counsel for the National Hispanic Media Coalition who leads the Spanish Language Disinformation Coalition and is cited in the story. (<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/07/29/election-disinformation-campaigns-targeted-voters-of-color-in-2020-experts-expect-2024-to-be-worse-00108866>).

These local, state and national studies on the needs of local communities and the impact of community journalism drive our motivation and agenda for the RHCJC at UNM.

## b) Our Target Communities in Detail

As mentioned in the project description, our first year will concentrate on coverage of two target communities, our featured localities. Here is a more expanded explanation of our thinking and the research behind it.

### HISPANIC/LATINX AFFAIRS DESK: **South Valley Voices**

South Valley is recognized as a Census Designated Place (a geographic location representing closely settled, unincorporated communities that are locally recognized and identified by name), of some 40,000 residents, rich in cultural heritage, that faces a wide assortment of unmet needs. Census data show the Hispanic population in South Valley comprises over 80% of the community, with a per capita income of \$23,000. The poverty rate exceeds 20%.

The South Valley is primarily unincorporated land in Bernalillo County, surrounded by Albuquerque on three sides, but has no dedicated newspaper.

Mainstream media often overlooks the needs and concerns of South Valley's residents, especially the younger cohort. While there is a low power FM station based at a charter school, it has limited reach. Albuquerque's two Spanish language commercial TV stations provide regional coverage, but their local staff is small, and their management is out of state. As reported above, local survey data show a large share of residents, 40%, rely on social media for local news and information. Some 30% say they would consume more Spanish language news if they could get it.

Coverage in South Valley would be especially timely in 2024, as statewide redistricting carved the largely Democratic area out of the First Congressional District and moved it into the Second District. Over the past two decades, CD1 has become a Democrat stronghold, while CD2 has long been represented by Republicans. The new political lines will make the South Valley an area of contention between the parties. This comes as [experts warn](#) 2024 may bring further efforts to disinform voters of color, as was well documented in 2020.

One of the first activities of the Roy Howard Center would be to conduct community engagement events with our South Valley partners (these may include South Valley Mainstreet, Southwest Organizing Project and RFK Charter School) to give greater depth to our assessment of needs and provide a baseline for our editorial planning. These events will also help us recruit students and audience members.

By making the most of geographical proximity for access and outreach, and by providing timely and culturally relevant coverage, our engagement-journalism project can address the information gap in the South Valley. We would foster a sense of belonging among Hispanic youth, inspiring them to be active participants in community affairs. We will develop innovative storytelling methods, amplify youth or other relevant media, and strengthen connections with the Hispanic youth, thereby promoting civic engagement and empowering them with information.

#### INDIGENOUS NEWS DESK: **Our Urban Indigenous**

The Urban Indigenous are defined as American Indians who may have direct ties with a particular tribe, but who live in urban areas. The U.S. Census shows some 7 in 10 American Indians and Alaska Natives live in U.S. cities. They may be permanent, long term or short-term residents, but they may still identify with their tribal community.

Within Albuquerque's urban Native American community, there exists a rich tapestry of historical and cultural experiences. Data show many health, education and economic inequities facing this population. A major issue involves the lack of a coordinated public safety effort to solve cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

One of our first engagement activities under the Roy Howard Center would be to conduct listening sessions led by partnering community organizations (American Indian Student Services, Tewa Women United, Native American Voters Alliance) to give greater depth to our assessment of needs and provide a baseline for our editorial planning.

We are preparing a code of ethics statement that will guide our approach in this community. (See draft template attached.)

Again, by utilizing the Center's immediate proximity to individuals and organizations in this community, our coverage will empower young Native Americans to share their perspectives on historical, cultural, and social issues. And by elevating indigenous narratives, amplifying youth or other community media, we aim to combat misrepresentations and foster pride in Native American heritage, encouraging positive community engagement.

#### c) Summarizing Our Approach: A Localized Focus & Reliance on Community Guidance

We are proposing to transform our existing student news site, the New Mexico News Port, with two primary verticals addressing the biggest gaps in coverage: Indigenous news and Bilingual news.

In our conversations with community members and leaders, news industry representatives, university colleagues and others, these were the content areas that kept coming up as glaring holes in New Mexico's news ecosystem.

Continuing community engagement will serve as the backbone of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center, ensuring that our coverage addresses the most pressing issues faced by our audiences. By actively involving the community, we will create a news service that is truly representative of the people it serves and fosters a deeper understanding of local challenges, achievements, and aspirations.

**Community Engagement Strategies.** We recognize the importance of community groups in identifying issues that deserve news coverage, as they possess valuable insights and firsthand experiences.

To achieve our community engagement objectives, we will implement the following strategies:

**Partnership development:** Identify and establish partnerships with community organizations, local leaders, non-profits, educational institutions, and other relevant stakeholders. These partnerships will enable us to tap into existing networks, access hard-to-reach communities, and garner support for our news initiatives. Many of these conversations are already underway.

**Community forums and listening sessions:** Organize community forums and listening sessions to actively engage with residents and understand their concerns. These gatherings will provide a platform for open dialogue, allowing community members to express their viewpoints, share experiences, and suggest news topics that deserve attention. At present, we believe we can conduct at least four sizeable events a year. These would be in addition to other feedback methods for community input.

**Collaborative news initiatives:** Work collaboratively with community partners to develop projects that address specific issues or events identified through community engagement. By pooling our resources and expertise, we can amplify the impact of our journalism, create meaningful change, and generate greater public awareness. This is at the heart of engagement journalism which we plan to role model.

**Training and capacity-building:** Conduct workshops, training sessions, and mentorship programs to equip community members with essential journalism skills. These initiatives will empower individuals to contribute to the news coverage process, ensuring diverse perspectives and voices are represented accurately in the reporting. This is part of our “continuing community commitment” strategy, where we help create local coverage BY the community.

We will continuously assess the effectiveness of our community engagement efforts to measure progress and make necessary improvements. See our section on monitoring and evaluation. By incorporating community feedback into our decision-making processes, we will enhance the relevance and impact of our news coverage.

#### d) Our Distribution Methods and Marketing Efforts to Drive Usage

With time and effort, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will grow audiences for its services. This will require a multi-faceted strategy. Here are some of the key planks:

**Engagement via Mobile, Social Platforms** – in the digital ecology, news finds users via their personal devices using algorithm-driven apps and feeds. Our strategy will require a



sophisticated engagement of those platforms preferred by our target users. We know these to include:

- YouTube
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Tik Tok
- Snapchat
- Threads

Using branded accounts, tagging, linking, liking, and sharing we increase the likelihood of our content being discovered, consumed and shared with others. Each desk and all reporters will share stories this way. Our journalists will also engage before, during and after working on stories – to further inform their journalism and their audiences. Thus, each story and each post has the potential to create a new user, a new follower, and a new subscriber.

**CJ Student Opportunity:** We will explore ways to use our class “Social Media for Journalists” to help drive this approach.

**Podcasts, Live Feeds, Other Platforms** – similarly, there are platforms adapted for podcast consumption or for engaging in live events. We will want to use the best platform for the kind of engagement we are creating.

**Online Search, Web Presence** – we will optimize the ability of people searching for content to find what we have produced at our central website or via our social media pages. Our technology team will guide best-practices for search engine optimization.

**Content Shared via Media Partners** – another way to maximize our reach and discover new audiences is to offer our journalism to statewide media partners who see it as a valuable addition to their content. We plan to share freely with media partners content we create, branded as a service of the RHCJC, requiring a link back to our home site.

**Newsletter Distribution and Propagation** – a staple of our service will be inbox newsletters that are readily shareable and easy to subscribe to. These convey our journalism, amplify the work of our partners, induce subscriptions, and invite engagement and feedback.

**SMS Messaging** – we know the mobile phone is the key to information access for many, and texting is a well-adopted technology. Our goal is to gain subscribers via SMS so that we may a) alert them to breaking news, b) link them to RHCJC reports, and c) ask short poll questions of them to inform us on important issues.

**Advertising** – to generate broad awareness, especially in our targeted communities, we will promote and advertise our presence. A campaign will need to be designed to match the most effective means with our budget limitations.

**CJ Student Opportunity:** We will approach our Spring Strategic Marketing Campaigns class about building out a marketing campaign for the RHCJC.

**Earned Media Attention:** See our plans, above, to share learning from the Center and, below, to promote and recruit for the center. While not entirely user focused, those activities will also yield users, followers and subscribers of our service.

**Community-Based Presence** – By “showing up” in one-on-one situations, we will attract users to our service and stimulate word-of-mouth awareness. We will also share promotional materials at events and in community hubs within our target communities. These include marketplaces, libraries, coffee shops, community centers, schools, barber shops, performance venues, etc.

### III. Students Trained

At UNM, we have a student body that reflects the unique, historic diversity of our state. Our majors have deep personal and social connections with the land and the peoples in the communities covered. And our department has a record of success in training students from New Mexico to succeed in reporting on their own communities.

#### a) Demographics:

The demographic profile of our journalism students mirrors the state's ethnic and socioeconomic profile. In 2023, 61% of Communication and Journalism majors, a slightly higher percentage than the University as a whole, identified as members of minoritized groups. Thirty-four percent of New Mexicans speak a language other than English at home, mostly Spanish and Diné (Navajo). This year, 13% of our fellows and interns said their language skills were strong enough to write and report in Spanish and English.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>UNM Journalism Students 2023</b>	<b>NM Population 2022</b>
Hispanic	50%	50%
White	30%	36%
American Indian	4% (down from 15% in 2019 before Covid-19)	11%
Black or African American	6%	3%
Asian	1%	2%
Two or more	1%	3%
<b>Gender</b>	<b>UNM Journalism Students 2023</b>	<b>NM Population 2022</b>
Female	60%	52%
Male	39%	48%

Sources: UNM, Office of Institutional Analytics, <http://oia.unm.edu/facts-and-figures/official-enrollment-reports.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, "U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts," <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NM/PST045221>

The student body is also representative of the economic profile of the state. New Mexico is among the 10 states with the lowest per-capita income and highest poverty rates (19.6%) in the U.S. (<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/per-capita-income-by-state>).

The percentage of UNM students receiving financial aid in 2021-2022 was 81% in (<https://define.unm.edu/affordable/>). In 2021, the UNM's Basic Needs Survey of 833 students

found that 26% of respondents experienced food insecurity and 43.5% housing insecurity. African American, Native American, Hispanic, International and LGBTQ+ student respondents experience higher percentages than the UNM student average (<https://basicneeds.unm.edu/basic-needs-2021-report.pdf>).

Nearly half of the student body at The University of New Mexico is a "first-generation" college student—i.e., a student with neither parent having any education beyond high school or a student with neither parent having received a four-year degree (<https://firstgen.unm.edu/>).

Our students' demographic profile, as shown above, placed young people and their families among the most vulnerable to the short- and long-term dislocating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic ([https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2021/21\\_0084.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2021/21_0084.htm); <https://hub.jhu.edu/2021/10/11/map-covid-19-impact-american-indian-population/>). In the past two years, such effects have been evident in UNM's overall enrollment and graduation rates, with a positive trend to pre-pandemic numbers since Fall 2022.

But the census-driven narratives that frame New Mexico narrowly as a "poor state," often cloud the excellence, richness, creativity, and success of our communities. Even amidst socioeconomic challenges or a lethal public health crisis, we see our students' intelligence, talent and love of their community shining bright.

To cite a case, among many others: Sharon Chischilly, a Diné reporter and photojournalist at UNM's student-run newspaper. In 2020, as Covid-19 was devastating the Navajo Nation, Chischilly began to cover the pandemic on her own. The quality of her work earned her the chance to shoot photos for the *Washington Post* and report to the world how the pandemic was affecting her community. Her photos have now been featured on Getty Images, on [Instagram](#), High Country News, New York Times, and Wall Street Journal. (<http://news.unm.edu/news/student-photographer-chronicles-pandemic-in-navajo-nation>).

#### b) Graduation rates:

For the year 2018-2019, right before Covid-19, the UNM Office of Institutional Analytics reports that the average time to degree for JRMC majors was 4.15 years. For the year 2021-2022 (the most recent data reported) the average was 5.20 years (<https://oia.unm.edu/facts-and-figures/time-to-degree-.htm>).

In Spring 2023, the number of majors and pre-majors in the multimedia journalism concentration 72, of which 32 were declared majors and 40 were pre-majors (i.e. students completing required general education courses before transition to major status but allowed to take lower-level courses in journalism). A comparison of pre-majors in Spring 2023 and Spring 2021 indicates a very positive trend toward growth (51% increase) after a significant drop in enrollment in 2020-2021 due to Covid-19. Similar enrollment drops and recent increases are documented across campus units (<http://oia.unm.edu/facts-and-figures/official-enrollment-reports.html>).

The University of New Mexico maintains institutional initiatives to support its student population and promote retention and graduation. It has federal designations as a Hispanic Serving Institution, Minority Serving Institution (UNM is one of only three universities in the nation that are Research 1 universities and Minority Institutions) and a Native American-Serving Campus ([https://frdo.unm.edu/sites/default/files/UNM as an HSI%2CMI and MSI 2021-2022.pdf](https://frdo.unm.edu/sites/default/files/UNM_as_an_HSI%2CMI_and_MSI_2021-2022.pdf)).

UNM also promotes the campus as an LGBTQIA and Military Associated-Student friendly university (<https://diverse.unm.edu/about-dei-at-unm/message-from-the-vice-president.html>).

It is also recognized as a First-Gen Forward Institution by the Center for First-Generation Student Success (<https://news.unm.edu/news/unm-declared-first-generation-forward-institution>) and as a Community Engaged Institution (Carnegie Classification).

These designations recognize institutions that demonstrate commitment to improving student experiences and investing resources.

Lastly, UNM strives to maintain accessibility through affordability. The average 4-year savings for non-resident students compared to peer universities is \$15,000 (<https://define.unm.edu/affordable/>).

#### c) Serving groups underserved in journalism:

The demographic profile of our journalism students enables a close relation between student journalists and the underserved communities targeted by this project. With personal and social networks in communities of color and urban and rural towns, student reporters and their instructors and mentors will have an easier time building trust and earning credibility for the RHCJC as a relevant news source. Through existing departmental initiatives (NM News Port, the NM Local News Interns and Fellows, and the regular internship program) and partnerships, journalism students and instructors have been cultivating such sources and networks. The establishment of the RHCJC would provide funding and training to enable faculty and students to expand coverage in ways that are more systematic and culturally grounded in the communities served, and sustained year after year.

#### d) Recruitment:

For the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center, we plan to recruit from our own majors as well as other programs in the University to reduce unnecessary barriers to participation. We know there are many students who could bring important experiences, perspectives and skills to this effort but are not journalism majors, so we plan to recruit from related fields such as Chicana and Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, Political Science, Geography, Navajo Linguistics, Spanish and Portuguese, Geography, Film and Digital Arts, and others.

In our brainstorming meetings with faculty and leaders from these departments we have had a warm reception to collaborative reporting projects, cross-listed courses, credit for intern

reporters and other initiatives. We also plan to work closely with UNM's American Indian Student Services and El Centro de La Raza, two extremely successful support centers that many of our students already engage with.

We are also working to make the program as equitable as possible. Since most of our students work at least part-time during their studies, our plan to pay student interns, student editors and other staff is designed to address barriers that could prevent some students from participating. We have been working for a long time to address a central problem in our media ecosystem: Many local news organizations tell us they do not have the money to offer paid opportunities to students and their financial situations are so precarious they are often afraid to gamble on a recent graduate. We designed our paid Fellowship and Internship program to eliminate financial risk factors for newsrooms while giving students and graduates access to newsroom experience. Competitive, paid positions in the Community Journalism Center will help support our existing student-training framework and contribute significantly to paving the school-to-career pathway.

Recruitment for the RHCJC would also draw on the department's active recruitment efforts throughout the year. These are coordinated by the College of Arts and Sciences' Office of Advisement and led by the C&J academic adviser and faculty and graduate student volunteers. The regular recruitment efforts are: first-year student orientations in summer—where they are encouraged to consider our majors—pre-major orientations in Fall and Spring semesters for those who have expressed interest in journalism and are already taking our courses, and open-house recruitment fairs for high school students and parents from all over the state in Fall semester.

In addition to these, C&J takes the opportunity to promote recruitment among high school students. For instance, in 2022-23, we received two cohorts of 4-H Club members from around the state, met with the Journalism teacher from a local high school and Board Member of the New Mexico Scholastic Press Association to plan recruitment events, met with two Project Managers to promote the New York Times Corps — a new multi-year commitment to mentoring undergrads—and co-sponsored with the non-profit organization Generation Justice Youth Media Project a leadership conference on campus for high school students.

Lastly, among UNM students, recruitment efforts have been shared with student organizations and clubs on campus, faculty participation in programs like the Ronald E. MacNair Scholars Program and the new Research Opportunity Program or the new Arts and Sciences Support for Undergraduate Research Experience (ASSURE). These efforts combined ensure that journalism majors and participants in the RHCJC are from diverse backgrounds and have roots in the communities being covered.

e) Graduates in the past two years working in local news roles:

Although our department, due to limited staffing, has not recently collected career placement data on alumni, we have excellent data on the Local News Fellowship and Internship Program.

This five-year-old project demonstrates our ability to recruit, select, train and mentor students from historically underrepresented populations. Our fellowship and internship participants are more diverse than majors in our department, the University's student body or the state. That is partly because our pool of applicants is diverse, but it is also because of a sustained commitment to increasing representation of diverse voices in journalism and creating a more inclusive media landscape.

The impact of the program was recognized in a recent two-part series on the state of local journalism in the public affairs television program *NM in Focus* on KNME. The show featured news leaders who mentioned the impact of C&J's Fellows in the diversification of newsrooms and recruitment of local journalists. See <https://www.pbs.org/video/analyzing-new-mexicos-journalism-ecosystem-nxfvus/> (min 54:45).

Note that the fellowship program is not a tiny segment of our students: this year's cohort made up 17% of the 2023 graduating class. Since 2019, 74% of our fellows and interns have been people of color and 67% women. And they succeed. At the end of their nine-month terms, 90% of our fellows have been offered jobs at their news organizations or by other newsrooms in the state. Nearly 70% of fellows who have completed the program are still working in journalism in New Mexico news markets (including two in El Paso, TX, which also serves Las Cruces, NM).

f) Plan to track student career progress for three years after graduation:

Instituting a process to track the progress of alumni is instrumental to the operations of the Center for three main reasons: it is a measure (quantitative and qualitative) of the effectiveness of the program in meeting some of its main goals; it facilitates program evaluation for improvement of curriculum and mentorship in support of our journalists; and it allows for the cultivation of alumni relations for collaboration and mentorship of younger students. The plan proposed has four main components.

- 1) Administration of an online Exit Survey among graduating students every year to assess their perceived learning and preparation for career; it also captures their future contact information.
- 2) Annual follow up surveys of alumni to measure professional development.
- 3) A focus group session with alumni at the end of their third year to evaluate program impact and needs.
- 4) Compile a three-year report with evaluation and recommendations based on analysis of survey and focus group data.

The Center's director will lead the process. The administrative staff will administer the surveys and collect data with the help of the student assistant. Consultants will assist in survey design, focus groups administration, and overall data analysis and evaluation report.



## IV. Our Program Capacity

Through a research, planning, and consultative process that began in 2014, our department and our collaborators have been documenting the needs of New Mexico communities and incrementally creating journalism solutions to address those needs. These deliberate actions lead us to the transformative opportunity we face today:

2013 – C&J receives blue ribbon report urging more up-to-date skills training, more student publishing opportunities, and the creation of a new faculty rank: Professor of Practice. Veteran journalist Michael Marcotte is hired to pursue these goals.

2014 – Marcotte and team win an Online News Association curriculum-innovation grant to launch New Mexico News Port – a training lab for student publishing, digital innovation, and statewide collaboration. News Port attracts financial support from ONA funders and EEJF Foundation.

2015 – C&J intermediate and advanced reporting courses are rebuilt around the NM News Port publishing model. The site expands its content verticals and introduces the “Curious New Mexico” concept. AAJA and C&J collaborate on a criminal justice reporting initiative.

2016-2017 – A UNM team led by Marcotte conducts a study into New Mexico’s “precarious” local news ecosystem, funded by the Democracy Fund. Findings show growing news deserts in the state and the need to stem a brain drain of talent.

NM News Port partners with KUNM, NMPBS, and NM in Depth for a two-year [“People, Power and Democracy”](#) state government reporting project demonstrating a collaborative reporting model new to the state. More collaborative projects follow, including those by Solutions Journalism, NM Searchlight, Source NM, and others.

2018-2019 – Democracy Fund and Santa Fe Community Foundation establish the NM Local News Fund. Focus groups are held around the state. Input from civic participants reflects the desire for consistent, accurate local news at the community level. Input from journalists reflects severe economic disruptions and a need to bring new talent into the ranks of professional newsrooms.

NM News Port is named the best independent student news website by SPJ.

2019-Today – To meet both industry and student needs, C&J partners with NM Local News Fund to establish the NM Local News Fellowship and Internship Program, open to all students in the state; some 35 students have now participated; the majority remain

working in local news; NM state government now lends funding support. See Nieman Lab's coverage of this initiative at: <https://www.niemanlab.org/2023/07/government-funded-journalism-fellowships-are-taking-off-in-three-states-and-counting/>

Spring 2023 - Scripps-Howard Foundation invites C&J to apply to build the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at UNM.

Of course, our educational roots in New Mexico are much deeper than these recent events tell. Founded in 1942, the Department of Journalism was first led by Keen Rafferty, a former editor at the Baltimore Sun, who came to UNM to serve as the news service director and department's chair. Rafferty was one of the nation's foremost proponents of ethical journalism. Henry ("Hank") Truitt, who eventually went on to achieve recognition as one of the nation's leading journalists, was one of the first graduates of this program and eventually returned to New Mexico and joined the Journalism faculty. The Department of Journalism moved to its current location in 1949. Built in the neo-Pueblo style, this now-historic building remains a major University landmark on Route 66.

C&J has played a decades-long role in training many of the reporters, editors and publishers who built or work in news organizations here. Our campus houses long-standing public media outlets KUNM and NMPBS, with whom we work closely. Our internship program has produced countless professional pathways into the industry. Our faculty are respected leaders in journalism and other community circles.

Given this scaffolding, C&J is well-positioned to lead local news collaborations further in New Mexico.

#### a) Center Staffing

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is seated in the academic program of the Communication and Journalism Department, with top leadership provided by faculty. At the core of the center are professional journalists who have responsibility for carrying out its mission. The wide base of the Center depends on the active roles played by students, fellows and interns.

Here are the key positions organized by Faculty, Staff, and Students:

#### **FACULTY POSITIONS**

##### **Center Director (Professor of Practice in Community Journalism)**

- Faculty Contract: 9-month, Renewable, Nontenure track
- Reports to Dept Chair.
- Compensation: \$80,000/yr

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Director is a visionary leader responsible for overseeing the center's operations, fostering partnerships with journalistic professionals, campus and community organizations, and teaching related journalism courses each semester. This position is accountable to the C&J Department Chair, responsive to the Center's Advisory Board, and works collaboratively with the Center's Engagement Leader. The Director serves as the Principal Investigator for grants supporting the Center. The successful candidate will be passionate about community journalism, possess organizational leadership and management skills, bring strong teaching abilities, and demonstrate a commitment to mentorship, diversity and equity.

Responsibilities:

- Teaching and Course Development: Plan and deliver one journalism course each semester, covering topics aligned with the Center's objectives (building trust, experiential learning, local news delivery). Engage students with a mix of conceptual and skills-based instruction, fostering a hands-on and experiential learning environment.
- Supervision and Leadership: Provide direct supervision and leadership to the program administrator and the managing editor. Ensure smooth operations and effective collaboration among the team to support the center's mission.
- Service Duties: Fulfill various service duties, including academic and career advising for students, active participation in department committees, curriculum development, and outreach to the community and industry.
- Building Partnerships: Establish and nurture successful partnerships with journalistic professionals, campus and community organizations to advance the Center's programming and purpose.
- Research and Center Development: Produce studies that explore the Center's advancement in community trust, experiential learning and local news services. Collaborate with stakeholders to contribute to the strategic and fiscal development of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.
- Mentorship: Demonstrate a commitment to mentorship and the professional development of young journalists, offering guidance and support to students both in and outside the classroom.

Qualifications:

- Experience: Professors of Practice bring extensive experience and established recognition in their industry, having more than 10 years of successively increasing responsibilities in their field.
- Teaching Experience: Previous teaching experience is desirable, with a passion for engaging and inspiring students in the field of journalism.
- Mentorship Skills: Demonstrated ability to mentor and support the development of young journalists, fostering their growth and success.
- Educational Background: A Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Master of Arts (MA), or Master of Science (MS) in journalism or related field is required.
- Leadership and Supervisory Skills: Strong leadership abilities to effectively manage the program manager/administrative assistant and managing editor, promoting collaboration and efficiency.
- Community Engagement: An understanding of the importance of community engagement and the ability to build strong partnerships with journalistic professionals and organizations.

- Communication Skills: Excellent communication and interpersonal skills to foster positive relationships with students, colleagues, and external partners.

### **Professor of Practice in Community Engagement**

- Faculty Contract: 9-month, Renewable, Nontenure track
- Reports to Dept Chair.
- Compensation: \$80,000/yr

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is seeking an experienced and dedicated individual to join our team as a Professor of Practice in Community Engagement. The successful candidate will join the C&J faculty to teach courses focused on trust-building, engagement strategies, and community-oriented journalism. The faculty in this position is an integral member of the Center's leadership team, advising on community trust and engagement practices, and participating in those activities. The successful candidate will have a passion for community journalism and possess expertise in developing trust-based relationships within diverse communities.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Teaching: Plan and deliver two journalism courses per semester focused on trust-building, engagement, and community-oriented reporting. These courses may include trust and media ethics, community journalism practices, and strategies for developing and maintaining relationships with diverse communities.
- Experiential Learning Support: Play an active role in supporting and mentoring students in our experiential learning programs. These include our summer experience projects.
- Curriculum Development: Collaborate with the Center Director and other faculty members to develop and enhance curriculum related to trust-building, community engagement, and reporting on local issues.
- Student Mentorship: Provide academic and professional mentorship to students, guiding them in building strong connections and trust with the communities they serve.
- Partnership Building: Work closely with the Center Director to cultivate and strengthen partnerships with local media organizations, campus units, and community groups, fostering collaboration and opportunities for their engagement.
- Community Engagement Initiatives: Participate in community outreach and engagement efforts to understand the needs and perspectives of the local communities and incorporate them into the journalism curriculum.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Experience: Professors of Practice bring extensive experience and established recognition in their industry, having more than 10 years of successively increasing responsibilities in their field.
- Teaching Experience: Previous teaching experience is desirable, with a passion for engaging and inspiring students in the field of journalism.
- Educational Background: A Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Master of Arts (MA), or Master of Science (MS) in journalism or related field is required.
- relationships with students, colleagues, and external partners.
- Expertise in Trust and Engagement: Demonstrated expertise in building trust-based relationships within diverse communities, particularly in the context of journalism and media.

- Mentorship Skills: Ability to mentor and support students during experiential learning programs, helping them develop their skills and understanding of community journalism.
- Community Advocacy: A commitment to advocating for and representing the interests of underserved communities through journalism and community engagement.

### **Journalist in Residence**

- Reports to: Center Director
- Compensation: \$52,000

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is seeking a passionate and innovative Journalist-in-Residence to join our team on a 9-month contract basis. The journalist-in-Residence will play a vital role in mentoring student journalists, teaching our capstone course, and leading special project coverage targeting community issues. This project will be determined based on community needs, mission of the Center, and your expertise and interests. Reporting to the Center Director, and collaborating with the editorial leadership team, the successful candidate will be instrumental in fostering community relationships and delivering impactful journalism.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Special Project Leadership: Develop and lead a special reporting project that addresses relevant and timely issues in the community.
- Teaching and Mentoring: Teach the capstone class and oversee a group of student reporters, providing guidance, mentorship, and constructive feedback to enhance their reporting skills.
- Editing and Producing Engaging Content: Collaborate with student reporters to produce in-depth multimedia content to maximize news value and reader interest.
- Community Engagement: Foster and maintain strong relationships with local communities, engaging with diverse stakeholders to ensure comprehensive and inclusive coverage.
- Social, Ethical, and Legal Considerations: Address the social, ethical, legal, and policy implications of journalism in the context of emerging issues, guiding students in responsible and ethical reporting practices.
- Adaptability: Demonstrate flexibility and agility in pivoting quickly as project mandates shift, ensuring the project remains relevant and impactful.
- Research and Analysis: Conduct in-depth research and analysis to provide factual, accurate, and well-researched content for the special project.
- Collaboration: Collaborate with other Center members and teams, sharing insights and expertise to enrich the overall journalism initiatives.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Educational Background: A minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent in law, humanities, social science, journalism, or other discipline.
- Professional Journalism Experience: Proven experience in journalism, with a focus on producing engaging and impactful articles.
- Teaching Skills: Ability to teach and mentor students, providing guidance in reporting, storytelling, and ethical journalistic practices.
- Community Engagement: Experience in building and maintaining relationships with diverse communities, ensuring comprehensive and inclusive coverage.

- Adaptability: Comfortable with taking initiative, managing time efficiently, and pivoting quickly as project mandates evolve.

#### Contract and Compensation:

The Journalist-in-Residence position is a 9-month contract with a competitive compensation package. It has the opportunity to extend to paid summer experiential programs, based on need. As part of the contract, the Journalist-in-Residence will have the opportunity to work on-site at the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center, enjoying the vibrant academic and journalistic environment.

### **STAFF POSITIONS**

#### **Program Administration Manager**

- Reports to: Center Director
- Term: Permanent Full Time (Staff) - Grant Dependent
- Compensation: \$64,000

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is seeking a highly organized and detail-oriented individual to join our team as a Program Manager. As the Program Manager, you will play a crucial role in providing administrative support to the Center Director, working in close collaboration with the Managing Editor, ensuring smooth operation of the Center's programs and initiatives. You will be responsible for managing contracts, tracking program graduates, coordinating communication with community partners, and handling various administrative tasks. This position offers an exciting opportunity to contribute to the success of the Center and support the growth of community journalism in New Mexico.

#### Responsibilities:

- Administrative Support: Provide comprehensive administrative support to the Center Director and the Managing Editor, including managing correspondence, organizing meetings, and assisting with other logistical needs.
- Contract Management: Oversee contracts for interns, fellows, and contractors involved in the Center's programs. Ensure all contracts are properly executed and track contract expiration dates.
- Graduate Tracking and Placement: Maintain a database of program graduates, track their progress, and assist in finding suitable placements or opportunities as needed.
- Community Partner Communication: Act as a liaison between the Center's leadership and community partners, maintaining strong lines of communication and fostering positive relationships.
- Scheduling and Coordination: Coordinate meetings, events, and workshops, ensuring all logistics are managed efficiently.
- Bookkeeping: Assist with financial tasks, including expense tracking, reimbursements, and budget coordination, working closely with the Center Director and the university's financial department.

- Program Reporting: Assist in the preparation of reports and presentations related to program outcomes and achievements, collaborating with the Center Director to ensure accurate and timely reporting.
- General Office Management: Maintain office supplies, manage equipment, and ensure a well-organized and functional office environment.

#### Qualifications:

- Administrative Experience: Previous experience as an administrative assistant or program manager, with a strong track record in providing efficient and effective support.
- Organizational Skills: Exceptional organizational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to manage multiple tasks and deadlines.
- Communication Skills: Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to interact professionally with diverse stakeholders.
- Contract Management: Experience in contract management and understanding of contract terms and conditions.
- Bookkeeping Knowledge: Familiarity with basic bookkeeping tasks and financial record-keeping.
- Database Management: Proficiency in using database software to track program graduates and other program-related data.
- Problem-Solving: Strong problem-solving skills and the ability to proactively address challenges.
- Team Player: A collaborative and adaptable approach to work, with the ability to work effectively in a team-oriented environment.

#### Contract and Compensation:

This is a full-time position, and the Program Manager will work under an annual contract. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

#### **Managing Editor**

- Reports to: Center Director
- Compensation: \$75,000
- Term: Permanent Full Time (Staff) - Grant Dependent

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is seeking an experienced and innovative Managing Editor to lead our Indigenous News Desk, Hispanic Affairs Desk, and Innovation Team. As the Managing Editor, you will play a key role in shaping content strategies, overseeing their implementation, and managing a team of editors, producers and technical specialists. Your expertise in content planning, team management, and understanding of different mediums will be essential to drive the success of our journalism initiatives. This is a permanent (grant-dependent) staff position, with a primary focus on managing the desks and the innovation team. Occasional teaching may be required, aligning with the candidate's expertise and availability.

#### Responsibilities:

- Content Strategy: Develop and execute content strategies for the Indigenous News Desk, Hispanic News Desk, and Innovation Team, aligning with the Center's mission and goals.
- Team Management: Lead and manage a creative team of journalists, providing guidance, feedback, and support to foster their professional growth.

- Campaign Monitoring: Track and analyze the results of various content campaigns, ensuring they meet set objectives and making data-driven decisions for improvement.
- Content Editing: Edit content pieces to maintain adherence to tone and style guides, ensuring high-quality, accurate, and engaging journalistic content.
- Editorial Expertise: Demonstrate a keen eye for good writing, accuracy, ethical standards -- offering insights and feedback to enhance the overall quality of content produced.
- Resource Management: Understand your team's capabilities, workload, and deadlines, ensuring realistic goals and efficient content production.
- Medium Expertise: Possess a comprehensive understanding of different journalistic mediums and their appropriate use to reach diverse audiences effectively.
- Progress Reporting: Prepare progress reports and present updates to the Center Director, showcasing accomplishments, challenges, and future plans.
- Teaching (Occasional): When needed and based on expertise, occasionally teach journalism courses, contributing to the academic mission of the Center.

#### Qualifications:

- Editorial Experience: Significant experience in content editing in journalism or media-related fields.
- Team Leadership: Proven track record in managing and mentoring editorial teams, fostering a collaborative and creative work environment.
- Strategic Thinking: Demonstrated ability to develop and implement effective content strategies aligned with organizational goals.
- Analytical Skills: Strong analytical skills to monitor content performance and leverage data for continuous improvement.
- Writing Expertise: A deep understanding of journalistic writing principles and style guides.
- Medium Proficiency: Familiarity with various journalistic mediums, including digital, print, audio, and video.
- Time Management: Excellent time management skills to meet deadlines and handle multiple projects simultaneously.
- Communication Skills: Effective communication skills to provide feedback, collaborate with team members, and present progress reports.

#### Contract and Compensation:

This is a full-time permanent (grant dependent) staff position, and compensation will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. Benefits include health insurance, retirement plans, and professional development opportunities.

#### **Associate Editor, Indigenous News**

- Reports to: Managing Editor
- Term: Permanent Full Time (Staff) - Grant Dependent
- Compensation: \$62,000

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is seeking an experienced and dedicated Associate Editor to lead our Indigenous News Desk. As the Associate Editor focusing on Indigenous news, you will play a pivotal role in overseeing the coverage of issues affecting Indigenous populations, particularly the



Navajo Nation, Pueblo communities, and Urban Indigenous peoples in New Mexico. Your passion for Indigenous issues, understanding of power dynamics in traditional media, and commitment to giving voice to marginalized communities will be essential in fostering meaningful relationships and driving impactful journalism. This position will involve supervising a graduate (Fellow) and collaborating with interns and classroom-based student journalists to ensure the Desk produces high-quality and culturally sensitive content.

**Responsibilities:**

- **Indigenous News Coverage:** Lead and oversee the Indigenous News Desk, focusing on issues affecting the Navajo Nation, Pueblo communities, and other Indigenous populations in New Mexico.
- **Community-Centered Journalism:** Recognize power imbalances in traditional media and strive to bring Indigenous issues to the forefront, producing stories overlooked by mainstream media.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster interactive, positive relationships and collaborations with existing Indigenous communities in the state, ensuring the Desk's coverage is culturally sensitive and respectful, and guided by community members themselves.
- **Story Selection:** Identify and prioritize stories that resonate with Indigenous populations, reflecting their perspectives and experiences accurately.
- **Team Supervision:** Oversee the work of a graduate (Fellow) and interns, providing guidance, feedback, and mentorship to nurture their growth as journalists.
- **Content Editing:** Review and edit content produced by the Desk, ensuring it aligns with the Center's journalistic standards and the cultural context of Indigenous communities.
- **Newsletter Editing:** Curating, assembling and publishing a recurring newsletter targeting Indigenous readers and using the newsletter to advance feedback and engagement.
- **Social Media Editing:** Guiding the social media messaging produced by the desk team assuring for effectiveness, style standards, frequency, and reach.
- **Collaboration:** Work closely with the Managing Editor and other team members to align the Indigenous News Desk's coverage with overall content strategies.
- **Storytelling Impact:** Drive impactful storytelling that sheds light on the diverse experiences and challenges faced by Indigenous communities.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Emphasize diversity and inclusion in storytelling, amplifying the voices of Indigenous individuals and communities.
- **Community Outreach:** Participate in community events and initiatives to strengthen ties with Indigenous groups and better understand their needs and concerns.

**Qualifications:**

- **Indigenous News Experience:** Extensive experience working with Indigenous populations in New Mexico, particularly the Navajo Nation and Pueblo communities.
- **Journalistic Expertise:** Strong background in journalism or related fields, with a passion for community-centered reporting and storytelling.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Demonstrated understanding of the cultural nuances and historical context of Indigenous communities, ensuring content is respectful and accurate.
- **Leadership Skills:** Proven ability to lead and mentor a team, fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment.

- **Storytelling Insight:** Keen eye for identifying impactful stories and issues relevant to Indigenous populations.
- **Collaborative Spirit:** Strong team player, able to work collaboratively with colleagues and community partners.
- **Communication Skills:** Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, to connect with diverse communities and advocate for Indigenous voices.

#### Contract and Compensation:

This is a full-time (grand dependent) staff position. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. Benefits include health insurance, retirement plans, and opportunities for professional development.

#### **Associate Editor, Hispanic/Latinx Affairs**

- Reports to: Managing Editor
- Term: Permanent Full Time (Staff) - Grant Dependent
- Compensation: \$62,000

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is seeking a dedicated and experienced Associate Editor to lead our Hispanic Affairs Desk, with a particular focus on reporting for the Latinx communities in New Mexico. As the Associate Editor for the Hispanic Affairs Desk, you will play a crucial role in providing a voice to underserved communities, particularly those with Spanish heritage and immigrant backgrounds. Your fluency in Spanish and understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by the communities will be vital in fostering meaningful connections and driving impactful journalism. This position will involve supervising a graduate (Fellow) and collaborating with interns and classroom-based student journalists to ensure the Desk produces high-quality and culturally sensitive content.

#### Responsibilities:

- **Bilingual Reporting:** Lead and oversee the Hispanic Affairs Desk, focusing on reporting for the Latinx communities in New Mexico, providing services accurately translated in both English and Spanish
- **Community-Centered Journalism:** Demonstrate deep understanding and cultural sensitivity in reporting on issues relevant to the Latinx communities, including first and second-generation immigrants.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster positive relationships and collaborations with Latinx communities, ensuring the Desk's coverage is inclusive, authentic, and respectful, and guided by community members themselves.
- **Story Selection:** Identify and prioritize stories that resonate with Latinx populations, reflecting their perspectives and experiences accurately.
- **Team Supervision:** Oversee the work of a graduate (Fellow) and interns, providing guidance, feedback, and mentorship to nurture their growth as journalists.
- **Content Editing:** Review and edit content produced by the Desk, ensuring it aligns with the Center's journalistic standards and the cultural context of Latinx communities.
- **Newsletter Editing:** Curating, assembling and publishing a recurring newsletter targeting Hispanic readers and using the newsletter to advance feedback and engagement.

- Social Media Editing: Guiding the social media messaging produced by the desk team assuring for effectiveness, style standards, frequency, and reach.
- Collaboration: Work closely with the Managing Editor and other team members to align the Hispanic Affairs Desk's coverage with overall content strategies.
- Storytelling Impact: Drive impactful storytelling that sheds light on the diverse experiences and challenges faced by Latinx communities.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Emphasize diversity and inclusion in storytelling, amplifying the voices of Latinx individuals and communities.
- Community Outreach: Participate in community events and initiatives to strengthen ties with Latinx groups and better understand their needs and concerns.

#### Qualifications:

- Bilingual Proficiency: Fluent in Spanish, preferably with Spanish as a heritage language
- Cultural Knowledge: In-depth understanding of Latinx cultures and familiarity with immigrant communities in New Mexico.
- Journalistic Expertise: Strong background in journalism or related fields, with a passion for community-centered reporting and storytelling.
- Leadership Skills: Proven ability to lead and mentor a team, fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment.
- Storytelling Insight: Keen eye for identifying impactful stories and issues relevant to the communities served.
- Collaborative Spirit: Strong team player, able to work collaboratively with colleagues and community partners.
- Communication Skills: Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, to connect with diverse communities served.

#### Contract and Compensation:

This is a full-time (grant dependent) staff position. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. Benefits include health insurance, retirement plans, and opportunities for professional development.

#### **Multimedia Producer**

- Reports to: Managing Editor
- Term: Permanent Full Time (Staff) - Grant Dependent
- Compensation: \$51,000

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is seeking a dedicated and experienced Multimedia Producer to work with our Hispanic/Latinx Affairs Desk, Indigenous Affairs Desk, Journalist-in-Residence and with our classroom journalists to help realize high quality, multimedia content produced by desk reporters and classroom reporters.

#### Responsibilities

- Plans and develops multimedia reports for the web, typically by assisting the work of others, but may include your own story origination; researches and develops ideas; writes scripts; schedules interviews and facilities.

- Produces multimedia stories; conducts interviews; may serve as editor, photographer, videographer, or audio specialist.
- Post-produces multimedia stories: using Adobe tools.
- Provides training and direction to the staff and students.
- Participates in the design of web graphics, music, and creative aspects of the website. Makes editorial decisions regarding assembly of information, illustrations, and content.
- May evaluate new audio/visual equipment and direct the installation and interfacing of new equipment in production facilities and classrooms.
- Performs miscellaneous job-related duties as assigned.

#### Qualifications

- Completed bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to work effectively with a wide range of constituencies in a diverse community.
- Ability to plan work schedules and assign duties; ability to provide or arrange for training.
- Creative decision-making skills.
- Skill in organizing resources and establishing priorities.
- Ability to make administrative and procedural decisions.
- Ability to create, compose, and edit written materials.
- Knowledge of professional audio/video tools, facilities, and equipment.
- Knowledge of professional audio and/or video tape editing and post-production procedures, techniques, and standards.
- Collaborative Spirit: Strong team player, able to work collaboratively with colleagues and community partners.
- Communication Skills: Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, to connect with diverse communities and advocate community voices.

#### Contract and Compensation:

This is a full-time (grant dependent) staff position. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. Benefits include health insurance, retirement plans, and opportunities for professional development.

### **STUDENT POSITIONS**

#### **Reporting Fellow 1 – Hispanic Affairs Desk**

- Reports to Associate Editor, Hispanic/Latinx Affairs
- Responsibilities:
  - o Lead reporter on Hispanic/Latinx Affairs Beat
  - o Bilingual
  - o Model engagement journalism skills
  - o Mentor undergraduate journalists
- Term: 12/months
- Selected via Local News Fellowship program
- Compensation: \$35,000/year (50% outside funding)

### **Reporting Fellow 2 – Indigenous News Desk**

- Reports to Associate Editor, Indigenous News
- Responsibilities:
  - o Lead reporter on Indigenous News Beat
  - o Model engagement journalism skills
  - o Mentor undergraduate journalists
- Term: 12/months
- Selected via Local News Fellowship program
- Compensation: \$35,000/year (50% outside funding)

### **RHCJC Tech Fellow**

- Reports to Managing Editor
- Responsibilities:
  - o Web, Newsletter, user experience lead
  - o Web, Newsletter, SMS user metrics
  - o Data visualization support
  - o Center reports/logistics
  - o Consult community news trainers
  - o Other management/desk support as assigned
- Term: 12/months
- Selected via Local News Fellowship program
- Compensation: \$35,000/year

### **Graduate Innovation Fellow**

- Reports to Managing Editor
- Responsibilities:
  - o Research and advisement on newsroom innovation strategies
  - o Design and monitor generative AI initiative
  - o Work with Tech Fellow on user experience, SMS and metric evaluation
  - o Work with Center leadership to facilitate UNM/C&J research studies
- Term: 12/months
- Selected via Graduate Program Processes
- Compensation: \$23,920/year

### **Student Intern Reporters/Editors**

- Six per semester
- Three report to Associate Editor, Hispanic/Latinx Desk
- Three report to Associate Editor, Indigenous News Desk
- Report to: Associate Editors
- Shared/Rotating Responsibilities:
  - o Beat Reporting
  - o Social media engagement, promotion
  - o Edit classroom submissions
  - o Multimedia graphics, audio, video as required
- Term: 16 weeks, 12 hrs/wk (Summer = 8 wks, 20 hrs/wk)
- Compensation: \$16/hr

**Student Admin Assistant**

- One per semester
- Reports to Program Administrator Manager
- Responsibilities: Assist manager in day-to-day admin support
- Term: 16 weeks, 20 hrs/wk
- Compensation: \$16/hr

**b) Center Advisory Board**

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will have an active board of 15 advisors, selected for their range of experience, to provide guidance, perspective and feedback to the project's leaders.

Board responsibilities include:

**Facilitate Robust Discussions:** Stimulate and actively engage in high-quality conversations during Advisory Board meetings by asking probing questions, sharing knowledge, exercising critical thinking, and offering professional expertise.

**Strategic Introductions and Advocacy:** Board members bring a vast network of connections who may, within guidelines, provide further information, resources and visibility.

**Champion Community Trust-Building:** Board members will be key in helping the Center enact its commitment to community listening and involvement. They may advocate for approaches and reporting that authentically represent the voices and needs of the communities the center aims to serve.

**Contribute Opinion Content:** Board members may offer perspectives and insights by contributing opinion pieces and content to further the center's mission.

**Advise the Center Director:** Collaborate closely with the Center Director, offering valuable guidance, feedback, and support on various aspects of the center's operations and initiatives.

Qualifications for board members include:

**Expertise in Journalism or Media:** Substantial experience in the field of journalism and media, with a strong understanding of best practices, industry trends, and challenges.

**Expertise in Community Engagement:** A demonstrated commitment to community engagement and understanding of the importance of equitable reporting.

Expertise in Hispanic or Indigenous News: Knowledge, experience and connections with the communities most directly served by the Center.

Business or Organizational Leadership Skills: Strong skills to help a newsroom within a college manage itself and its people effectively.

Advocacy and Networking: Proven ability to advocate for initiatives and build strategic partnerships within the media and journalism landscape.

### Advisory Board Seats

The following individuals have been invited to serve (or have agreed to serve) on our Advisory Board of Directors

1. Scripps-Howard (TBA)
2. Scripps-Howard (TBA)
3. Scripps-Howard (TBA)
4. Zita Arocha, Immigration Project Director at Poynter Institute and Professor Emeritus at University of Texas at El Paso
5. Angie Drobnic Holan, Director, International Fact-Checking Network
6. Regis Pecos (Cochiti), Trustee Emeritus of Princeton University, Co-Director of the Leadership Institute at Santa Fe Indian School.
7. Russell Contreras, Justice and Race Reporter at Axios; Past President, Unity: Journalists for Diversity
8. Simon Romero, National Correspondent, New York Times
9. Antonia Gonzales (Navajo), Editor/Anchor National Native News
10. Rhonda LeValdo (Acoma Pueblo), faculty at Haskell Indian Nations University, Producer and Host of "Native Spirit" on KKFJ 90.1 FM Kansas City and Past President, Native American Journalists Association
11. Pam Agoyo (Cochiti, Kewa, Ohkay Owingeh), UNM Executive Director for Student Support and Director of American Indian Student Services
12. Rashad Mahmood, Executive Director, New Mexico Local News Fund
13. Melanie Majors, Executive Director, New Mexico Foundation for Open Government
14. Ilia Rodríguez Nazario, Chair, UNM Dept of Communication and Journalism
15. Gwyneth Doland, Professor of Practice in Journalism

### c) Center Structure

Our proposed Roy Howard Community Journalism Center uses a dynamic organizational hierarchy designed to foster innovation, collaboration, and community impact. The structure seamlessly empowers each team member to contribute their unique expertise and passion towards the shared goal of advancing community journalism.

See the diagram below (or as provided in the attachment).

The Center Director serves as the overarching leader, with accountability to the Advisory Board, and (not shown) to the C&J Department Chair. The Director also serves as a professor of practice in community journalism, pioneering coursework in service of the Center.

Reporting to the Director are two instrumental professionals – the Program Administrative Manager and the Managing Editor. The editor is most focused on editorial side of the mission, while the administrator is most focused on the business side. Together they manage day-to-day activities.

The Program Administrative Manager manages contracts, scheduling, bookkeeping, and communications (especially as tied to university requirements). This position helps manage recruitment of interns, fellows, and contractors.

The Managing Editor, meanwhile, leads the editorial team consisting of the Indigenous News and Hispanic Affairs desk editors and the multimedia producer. This foursome will have many interactions with classroom instructors to align the experiential learning of the students with the editorial agenda of the Center. The editor is also working directly with the “innovation team” – an Innovation Fellow and a Tech Fellow – instrumental to providing for a sophisticated digital operation.

The two Associate Editors – for Indigenous News and Hispanic/Latinx Affairs – each bring sharp expertise to their beats. They may do some original reporting, but mostly they edit the work of their reporters, they acquire stories from outside sources, they compile and publish the curated newsletters, and they publish pieces to the Center’s website.

Each desk editor, in turn, mentors a reporting team. These teams are comprised of a Reporting Fellow, and three Student Interns. The reporting fellow works full-time producing original journalism as assigned by the desk editor. The three student interns (with a combined commitment of 36 hours per week) produce social media engagement, edit the work of fellow students, and conduct original reporting for the desk.

Supporting all reporters – whether on the core editorial team or in the classrooms – is a skilled multimedia producer who mentors others so as to render high quality multimedia elements for web, audio or video platforms. The producer may produce some original work but mostly works adjacent to the editors and producers to boost their knowledge, skills and content results.

Two other faculty members are integrally involved in the Center. A Professor of Practice in Community Engagement and a Journalist-in-Residence.

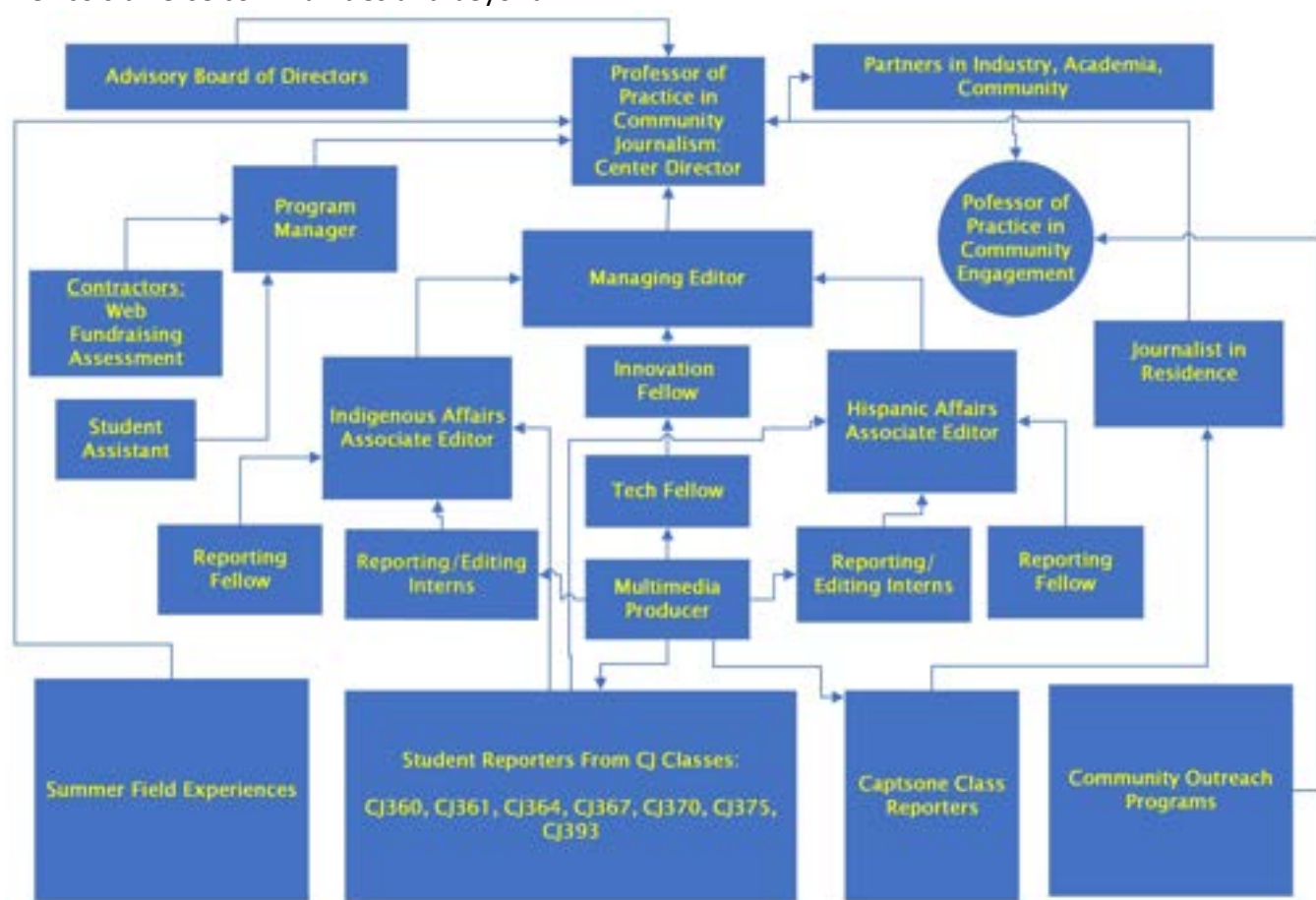
The Professor of Practice in Community Engagement is there to lead, teach and produce engagement journalism and engagement events. This position works collaboratively with the



Center director, the managing editor, and the desk editors to root all center activities in this engagement work.

The Journalist-in-Residence, a 9-month visiting instructor, leads our advanced reporting class in a high-impact reporting project sure to be showcased by the Center. The Journalist-in-Residence plays a central role in designing that project and leading the class through it, including managing much of the editing responsibilities.

In this cohesive organizational structure, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center leverages the strengths and diversity of its team members to achieve its overarching mission. Through innovation, community engagement, and responsible reporting, the Center strives to be a trailblazer in community journalism, serving as a trusted source of information for New Mexico's diverse communities and beyond.



ROY HOWARD COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER AT UNM  
STRUCTURAL MODEL

d) Center Support by UNM President

The proposed Center has the earnest support of UNM leadership. Attached to this proposal is a letter from UNM President Garnett Stokes, who, it might be noted, previously served as Chancellor of the University of Missouri, the school most noted for pioneering the “Teaching Hospital Model” in journalism education, where honoring campus journalism independence and integrity is a core value. An avid booster of community-engaged learning, President Stokes calls attention to the significant in-kind contributions UNM is prepared to offer to establish the Roy Howard CJC.

The Center would also be a proud achievement of our C&J Department Chair, Dr. Ilia Rodríguez Nazario, a noted communications scholar and former journalist, who has been instrumental in leading this grant proposal.

As evidenced in our letters of support, many more UNM colleagues and leaders are rooting for this program.

e) Center Promotion

While we expanded earlier on the many ways we will share the learning demonstrated by the center, and ways to attract users, we have also outlined a plan to promote the center and recruit its staff and participants.

**Here are the topline strategies for promotion:**

**Via C&J and Center Staff.** They will be announcing the establishment of the new Center and publicizing its activities through:

- the Alumni Association’s communication network
- communications with our networks of influencers, donors, advisory board members, alumni and emeriti faculty
- the use of departmental web site and social media for promotion
- requests to the Strategic Communication classes to create strategic campaigns for the Center as final projects in the capstone courses
- distribution of promotional materials at on-campus and off-campus conferences, recruitment fairs, professional meetings
- active participation in local, state, and national journalism professional associations
- sponsorship of campus lectures or workshops

**Via Community Partners.** Publicity and promotional messages will be generated by:

- sharing information through partners’ social media
- serving as expert sources for local media, and as guests in radio and television programs dedicated to public affairs
- serving as speakers in community panels and other events

- offering training and workshops relevant to the communities' needs
- disseminating information in community centers and events
- using digital platforms, posters, handouts, social media to reach different segments of the audience

**Via UNM's division of Communications and Marketing.** This division will provide coverage of the Center's activities and of individual accomplishments for distribution on campus and local media

- timed articles and video for public information

**Via National, Regional, State Organizations.** Promotion will take place through participation in:

- conferences and professional meetings
- research journals and trade publications
- sponsored events on campus and in the community
- other opportunities for media visibility

**Recruitment of Students and Staff.** A detailed description of recruitment strategies for students was provided in Section III, p.40. Recruitment of staff will follow the strategies recommended by UNM's Human Resources Department.

- job postings in the UNM Jobs website and in local employment sites (e.g., Workforce NM)
- job announcements on web pages and email lists of relevant professional, educational and community organizations
- direct email messages to colleagues and alumni whose expertise and background makes them good partners in identifying strong candidates
- direct messages to potential applicants with top qualifications to invite applications

## V. How We Designed Our Proposal

The design grant process involved meticulous planning, information gathering, community engagement, and collaboration among key stakeholders. We were fortunate that our team has extensive experience in researching the local media ecosystem—and much recent work in it—so we had a strong foundation to build on.

We first arranged meetings with colleagues in our own department, focusing on their specific areas of research and experience. We then expanded to key collaborators in other areas of the university, followed by the larger journalism community and then to community partners. We dug deeply into the specific strengths we could bring to this endeavor and learned a lot from efforts in other parts of the university — examining work that had students and faculty committing “inadvertent acts of journalism.” We thought long and hard about how we could leverage the advantages of our extremely diverse university community to support a project that engaged journalists and community members.

The design grant team consisted of Dr. Iliia Rodriguez, Professors Michael Marcotte and Gwyneth Doland, and PhD student Chelsea Roe. The team began convening in June. Early stages involved reviewing all research and engagement information gathered during work on the Letter of Intent and laying the groundwork for further research and brainstorming.

In mid-June we convened a series of intensive in-person brainstorming meetings, bringing together piles of research, ideas and contributions from colleagues and organizing ideas into a SWOT analysis, and assigning tasks for further exploration.

Late June team meetings continued while members organized individual research, interviews and meetings. The summer break made it too difficult to schedule focus groups so instead we chose to mostly conduct one-on-one interviews with stakeholders. Each interview lasted about an hour. We met frequently to debrief.

In early July we organized a series of group meetings with important stakeholders and got valuable feedback on our structure, organization, goals, focus, logistics and terminology. We learned so much about work that our colleagues are doing and how much they wanted to work with us.

Mid-July, in team meetings we reported findings from our individual interviews and reported back on research. We met on specific topics including environmental journalism, social welfare and health reporting, immigration and border reporting. The group emphasized the need for well-informed, nuanced reporting to counter stigmatization and one-sided stories.

We dedicated the final week to writing, organizing research, and crafting the grant budget – including a review by the Office of Sponsored Projects to adhere to UNM procedures. We

reviewed and refined the action plans, running all planning through our lens to factor in such concerns as New Mexico's unique rural landscape, limited access to broadband internet, and economically disadvantaged communities.

### Engaging Faculty, Students, News Stakeholders, and the Community

Throughout the design grant process, faculty and students played integral roles, working hand in hand with the team. The expertise of Professors Michael Marcotte and Gwyneth Doland, along with Dr. Iliia Rodriguez's guidance, laid the groundwork for a comprehensive and community-oriented proposal. Chelsea Roe, the dedicated graduate research assistant, actively contributed to data gathering and analysis, enriching the project with valuable insights.

To ensure a community-centric approach, the design grant team proactively engaged with local news stakeholders and diverse New Mexican communities. Collaborations with NM INSPIRES and organizations such as Street Smart and A.S.H.U.N.M. allowed the team to gather essential input and foster rapport with marginalized communities. The team actively considered the unique needs of populations with low literacy rates, limited access to resources, and diverse linguistic backgrounds, including Spanish and Indigenous languages.

### Allocation of Grant Funds

The design grant funds were thoughtfully allocated to support various aspects of the information-gathering process and community engagement. The timing of the award and the limited capacity of stakeholders during summer holidays limited our ability to host community-engagement events. Fortunately, our grant writing team had been deeply involved in these efforts over the past decade and were able to lean on previous work and the contacts we've made in the community to accomplish this quickly. We are closely acquainted with the individuals and organizations that represent our target audiences and were able to leverage established relationships.

The bulk of the grant budget compensated the 3-person faculty team for their time. Honorariums were provided to the 8 consultants who provided intensive time commitments, contributing their expertise to the proposal's development.

To facilitate productive brainstorming and data visualization, the grant also supported essential materials such as whiteboards, markers, maps, and relevant literature. Moreover, the funds facilitated transportation and communication expenses, ensuring effective collaboration among team members during in-person meetings and remote work sessions.

Overall, the design grant report highlights how the grant served as a catalyst for gathering crucial information, involving faculty and students, engaging local news stakeholders and the community, and laying the foundation for a comprehensive and community-centric full proposal for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center in New Mexico.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Compensation – Design Team Member	Michael Marcotte	<b>\$4287.83</b>
Compensation – Design Team Member	Gwyneth Doland Parker	<b>\$4287.83</b>
Compensation – Design Team Member	Ilia Rodriguez NazarioP	<b>\$4287.83</b>
Honorarium	Jaelyn de Maria	<b>\$250</b>
Honorarium	Megan Kamerick	<b>\$250</b>
Honorarium	Jerry Redfern	<b>\$250</b>
Honorarium	Karen Coates	<b>\$250</b>
Honorarium	Melvatha Chee	<b>\$250</b>
Honorarium	Evan Ashworth	<b>\$250</b>
Honorarium	Jeff Proctor	<b>\$250</b>
Honorarium	Mohammed Yousuf	<b>\$250</b>
Incidentals – maps, documents, site visits, parking passes, etc.		<b>\$136.51</b>
<b>Total Grant</b>		<b>\$15,000</b>
Below: Paid by UNM		
Graduate Research Assistant	Chelsea Roe	<b>\$3863.49</b>

## VI. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan presented below will measure the effectiveness of the Center's activities in meeting programmatic goals and producing outcomes. For this task, the Center's director will initially collaborate with assessment coordinators in C&J and the College of Arts and Sciences to refine the plan. C&J has a robust learning assessment plan that can provide a model (including sample surveys, rubrics and other documents) for the design of measurement tools for evaluation.

The table below (an Excel worksheet is included as an addendum to this document) outlines goals, objectives, measurements, sources of data, and methods to collect data. In this process, the Center's staff will play a key role in monitoring and documenting activities, and collecting data for reports. Such reports will provide data for a quantitative evaluation.

The Center's Director may also contract with consultants to collect and analyze survey data and other quantitative or qualitative data generated.

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	How Reported
<b>1. Build Journalistic Trust</b>	a. <i>Staff Representativeness:</i> The Center will be staffed with diverse journalists who understand the cultural nuances, history, etc.	staff demographics	report of staff demographics
	b. <i>Engagement and Inclusivity:</i> The Center will actively involve community members in the journalism process through engagement activities	number of events and types of initiatives	quarterly engagement summary
		community evaluations	evaluation of participant surveys at the end of events
	c. <i>Accuracy and Transparency:</i> The Center will establish editorial policies and standard procedures for (1) fact-checking and verification (debunking), (2) correction of mistakes and (3) receiving and responding to community feedback.	documented editorial policies	evaluation of editorial policy manual
		number of messages and types of	monthly engagement summary

		community feedback	
	d. Collaboration: The Center will maintain partnerships for collaboration with (1) local news organizations and professionals, (2) community organizations and their leadership, (3) grassroots initiatives.	number of partnerships and events	quarterly engagement summary

<b>2. Promote Experiential Learning</b>	a. The curriculum will offer courses with effective experiential learning components	course syllabi, student assessments	analysis of student course evaluations, student exit surveys, semester reports by instructors
	b. The students will participate in meaningful internship and fellowship programs in community journalism	percentage of participation, student assessment	semiannual report, student exit surveys
	c. The Center will host a successful Summer Experience Program each year for recruitment and outreach	student assessment via survey	analysis of the survey of student participants

<b>3. Provide Quality Local Reporting for Underserved Communities</b>	a. The Center will maintain collaborative reporting projects	number, types, and partners in collaborative projects	quarterly summaries by staff
	b. The Center will provide factual content that combats misinformation/ disinformation	number and types of stories that illustrate this effort	quarterly summaries by staff
	c. The content will provide language accessibility relevant to the audiences	number of stories in different languages covered	quarterly summaries by staff
	d. The coverage will amplify community voices	sourcing in reporters' stories	quarterly summaries by staff
		number of community generated news stories	quarterly summaries by staff



	e. The coverage will have demonstrable quality and impact	number of awards, fellowships, and other recognitions for students and staff	quarterly summaries by staff
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<b>4. Outcomes - Local Impact</b>	The Center expects to have an impact on civic action and community empowerment	monitor and document instances of impact of reporting	quarterly summaries by staff
	The Center will increase the numbers of viewers/readers/listeners	track record of audience usage/metrics	quarterly summaries by staff
	The Center will distribute original content to news outlets and relevant organizational sites relevant to communities served	number and type of outlets receiving original content	quarterly summaries by staff

## VII. About Our Budget

Please see the budget spreadsheet submitted with our proposal. This strictly accounts for what the grant provides. It totals \$2,999,499 as presently submitted.

Note: The attached spreadsheet conforms to our University of New Mexico Office of Sponsored Projects guidelines. We do not use the spreadsheet template offered by Scripps-Howard Foundation as it does not conform to our guidelines.

The grant budget is explained below. Also explained, but not included in the spreadsheet, are many in-kind contributions from UNM and our other sources.

### **Spending for Faculty: \$442,126**

The grant would allow C&J to hire a professor of practice, designated as our Professor of Practice in Community Engagement. This position helps teach the coursework related to the project and would be essential to its leadership and guidance. The annual starting salary is \$80,000.

The grant also allows C&J to hire a Journalist-in-Residence as a visiting/temporary faculty member each year for \$52,000. Each year, this selected journalist would be integral to the Center's content planning and would teach our capstone reporting class, whose published work would be featured by the Center.

Please note, UNM will contribute its only existing professor of practice to the Center, to serve as its director. This redubbed Professor of Practice in Community Journalism will have primary responsibility for the Center, will teach essential coursework related to the Center, and will serve as the grants' Principal Investigator.

While both professors of practice positions conform to our standard faculty 9-month appointments, the grant would provide summer research funding to allow both to work for some time during the summer. There is \$13,333 for this summer work in the first and second year, slightly less in the third year.

It should be noted that UNM will also be employing other faculty, not grant funded, who will be contributing teaching time to the project, as there are a range of courses that will be involved in the Center. We also anticipate existing faculty to contribute valuable research time and service time toward the center's activities.

### **Spending for Staff: \$1,131,088**

The largest share of the grant will allow us to create key staff positions to give the Center its necessary structure to carry out its mission.

The Managing Editor is the essential supervisor of the Center's team and content, overseeing day-to-day operations. This leader is budgeted at \$75,000 to start.

The two desk editors – for Indigenous News and for Hispanic Affairs – are budgeted at \$62,000 each.

The project needs administrative support which will come via a Program Administrator position, crucial to interfacing with university accounting, HR, C&J, and other stakeholders. The job is budgeted on the grant for 9 months at \$48,000. However, the remaining 3 months of the year will be covered by funding from other sources, so that we may apply the administrator's skills to helping with our fellowship program.

There is a professional specialist in multimedia production who will assist the team in all aspects of digital storytelling. This position is budgeted at \$51,000.

Finally, there are three fellowship slots devoted to the team. Two of these recent graduates will be detailed to the twin desks. The third will serve the entire team as a tech fellow, a new category of fellow, who is less about reporting per se, and more about helping advance the sophistication of our interactive, computerized services. The two reporting fellows will be half funded by the grant; the other half of their pay will come from outside funding we raise for our fellowship program. The tech fellow will be fully funded by the grant. These three fellows are in place for a full year, then new fellows will take their place.

Again, it should be noted, that other staff at C&J will be expected to contribute indirectly to the success of the Center. For example, we presume our front office staff will have some occasional roles to play. Our in-house engineer will be helpful over time as we deal with facilities, IT, computers, and the like. And we are expecting considerable involvement from our colleagues in other departments and units of UNM, such as marketing, Native American Studies, Chicano Studies, El Centro, Native Student Services, and many more.

### **Spending for Students: \$258,758**

A key part of our structure and our spending is the hiring of students. Each semester, we expect to hire six undergraduate students to assist with editorial production and one to help with administration. With summers included, this comes to 21 students employed per year (though some may return for more than one semester). We set a pay rate of \$16/hr. Hours per week may vary, but we expect to make these positions competitive with any outside work the students may otherwise be considering. Note that most of our students hold jobs during college; so, we are not only helping them learn but helping them live!

Additionally, we have budgeted for one graduate student, our “Innovation Fellow,” who we will pay via a GA system as they pursue their advanced degree under faculty guidance. The annual cost is around \$24,000, though we scale that back during the final year. Elsewhere we discuss how this position is essential to helping us advance our most sophisticated tech strategies, including how to use generative AI.

### **Spending for Fringe Benefits: \$709,712**

UNM has a generous fringe benefit package for employees, faculty, and students. For all the positions discussed above, there are varying rates of fringe costs, but the total for year one is \$228,406. By year three, this cost is \$243,602.

### **Spending for Travel: \$72,000**

New Mexico is a large state, and a good portion of our costs may come from driving to and from interviews, events, meetings, etc. We have budgeted \$2000 a month for this purpose. It may include per diem expenses for longer trips.

### **Spending for Operating Costs: \$298,450**

- Marketing / Recruitment – a budget line to set up an introductory campaign, all branding collateral, and to run an effective recruiting process for staffing and for student involvement. \$22,000 over three years.
- Start Up Pkg/Equipment -- top level hires will be offered some start-up funds to help cover equipment/office needs, memberships and other discretionary expenses. This fund will also provide for any physical build-out costs in modifying the facilities to house the center. This is front loaded with \$30,000 the first year, only \$2000 the third year. (Note: C&J will also be providing computers, desks, and other equipment or furniture as part of the in-kind support of the center.)
- Web Contracts (and related services) – we will outsource our web design, content management system, and site hosting to vendors to be named later. There will be software tools and other platform-specific needs included. We’re estimating annual costs around \$18,000.
- Subscriptions – for ongoing tools such as AP Stylebook for all desks, paywalls to newspapers, etc. \$2000 per year. (Note: One in-kind benefit of being at UNM will be use of such online tools as MS Office, Zoom, Adobe Suite, etc.)
- Supplies – expected costs for office operations. \$1500 per year.
- Board Mtg – to allow us to cover travel and meals for an annual meeting of the advisory board. \$6000 per year.
- Summer Experience – exact costs to be determined, but this involves housing students for a time during their in-depth community reporting project. Estimated at \$15,000 per summer.

- Consulting (Fundraising, Assessment) -- Funds for contract work to achieve certain objectives. These include providing an outside assessment of our project, and helping build out a development plan for long range funding. \$10,000 a year.
- Community Engagement Events – Money that would be spent on or with partners to conduct our community engagement activities. \$10,000 a year. (Note that our marketing budget also lends support to these engagement events.)
- Acquisitions – a budget for desk editors to order up work for hire from freelance contributors, or pay honoraria to community contributors, or offset expenses for other content. \$12,500 for first year.
- Awards – funds to offset the costs associated with a public event to celebrate the annual accomplishments of students and center staff. \$4000 per year.

**Spending for Indirect Costs (F&A): \$87,364**

Per grant guidelines, we have limited the indirect cost of the grant to 3%. This amounts to \$87,364 over the 3-year period of the grant.

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July 27, 2023

Scripps Howard Foundation

Dear Review Committee:

I am writing to provide enthusiastic and committed support for the grant application submitted by the Department of Communication & Journalism to the Scripps Howard Foundation for the creation of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at the University of New Mexico.

The proven commitment and success of current departmental initiatives to support journalism students and local newsrooms in underserved areas of New Mexico sets an excellent foundation for the creation of the Center. With the Foundation's support, I am confident that UNM will become a model of excellence and innovation in providing accurate and trusted news reporting for diverse communities, particularly at times when des/misinformation trends and the dwindling number of local news media outlets threaten the role of journalism in a democratic society.

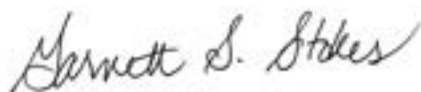
The center would solidify the Department and the University's longstanding commitment to prepare students to excel in their professions while serving New Mexican communities. As the flagship research university in New Mexico, the university's contribution to the well-being of New Mexicans is a commitment that lies at the center of our institutional identity.

In my leadership role as university president, I confirm that the university is committed to supporting the RHC with resources available for student and faculty success. More specifically, the Department of Communication & Journalism will make available resources and staff expertise to

- a. provide space for RHC's operations in the Communication & Journalism Building in areas already designated for multimedia journalism production and currently underutilized. Located at a major intersection on one of the main entrances to campus—Central Avenue and Yale Blvd.—the C&J Building is in a prime location for accessibility and to facilitate community engagement.
- b. enable continuing collaboration with University Communication and Marketing to promote the center's initiatives
- c. ensure access of student reporters who are UNM students to the department's audio visual equipment and relevant software in the labs
- d. allow for the scheduling of new topics courses that speak to the priorities of the center
- e. support the continuing collaboration of the department with Student Advisement for the recruitment of multimedia journalism and strategic communication majors
- f. maintain a collaborative relation with Information Technologies to assist in troubleshooting and other matters
- g. enable collaboration with the College of Arts & Sciences Development Office to get advice on fundraising initiatives led by RHC.

I look forward to a positive reception of C&J's grant proposal and reiterate my commitment to support our shared values in service of New Mexicans.

Sincerely,



Garnett S. Stokes  
President



**New Mexico  
Local News  
Fund**

July 27, 2023

Dear Members of the Scripps-Howard Foundation Review Committee,

I wholeheartedly endorse the grant application by the Department of Communication & Journalism (C&J) at the University of New Mexico for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

As Executive Director of the New Mexico Local News Fund, I firmly believe in the center's potential to drive positive change in journalism education, local news reporting, and community trust and engagement. They have been an amazing partner for our local news fellowship program and have demonstrated their ability to support early career journalists while working with and supporting local news organizations.

The proven commitment of C&J to empower journalism students and local newsrooms in underserved areas lays a strong foundation for the Center's success. With the Foundation's support, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will elevate UNM's position as a pioneer of excellence and innovation while addressing the critical need for accurate and inclusive news reporting.

Our organization is excited to offer support to the Center's initiatives, and I look forward to witnessing the transformative impact it will bring to New Mexico's journalism landscape.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rashad Mahmood".

Rashad Mahmood

Executive Director

New Mexico Local News Fund

[rashad@nmlocalnews.org](mailto:rashad@nmlocalnews.org)



7/27/2023

Dear Members of the Scripps-Howard Foundation Review Committee,

I wholeheartedly endorse the grant application by the Department of Communication & Journalism (C&J) at the University of New Mexico for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

As executive director of the New Mexico Press Association, I firmly believe in the center's potential to drive positive change in journalism education, local news reporting, and community trust and engagement.

The proven commitment of C&J to empower journalism students and local newsrooms in underserved areas lays a strong foundation for the Center's success. With the Foundation's support, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will elevate UNM's position as a pioneer of excellence and innovation while addressing the critical need for accurate and inclusive news reporting.

Our organization is excited to offer support to the Center's initiatives, and I look forward to witnessing the transformative impact it will bring to New Mexico's journalism landscape.

Sincerely,

Sammy M. Lopez

Executive Director

The New Mexico Press Association

Shaun Griswold, Editor  
Source New Mexico

[sgriswold@sourcenm.com](mailto:sgriswold@sourcenm.com)

7/27/2023

Dear Members of the Scripps-Howard Foundation Review Committee,

I endorse the grant application by the Department of Communication & Journalism (C&J) at the University of New Mexico for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

As Editor of *Source New Mexico*, I firmly believe in the center's potential to drive positive change in journalism education, local news reporting, community trust and engagement.

It's vital to empower journalism students and local newsrooms in underserved areas. The ability for UNM to meet its commitment to that mission will elevate with the Foundation's support.

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center can prove to be a symbol for excellence and innovation, while addressing the critical need for accurate and inclusive news reporting. This I firmly believe.

*Source New Mexico* is excited to offer support to the Center's initiatives, and I look forward to witnessing the transformative impact it will bring to journalism in New Mexico.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Griswold', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shaun Griswold

Editor

Source New Mexico



26 July 2023

Review Committee  
The Scripps Howard Fund  
312 Walnut Street, 28th floor  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Members of the Scripps-Howard Foundation Review Committee,

I gladly support the grant application by the Department of Communication & Journalism (C&J) for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

As a Professor of Architecture and co-director of the school's Design and Planning Assistance Center (DPAC), I see this initiative as a perfect match for the University of New Mexico's student-centered learning approach and dedication to fostering career outcomes.

At the School of Architecture + Planning, we prioritize experiential learning to empower our students to thrive professionally while making a positive impact on the community. The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center's focus on hands-on experiences and partnerships aligns with our mission to provide our students with opportunities for growth.

I am eager to support the Center in ways to be explored, such as curriculum, mentorship, or internships. This alignment will strengthen our students' skillsets, enhance their career prospects, and create meaningful impacts in journalism and the communities they serve.

I endorse C&J's grant proposal and eagerly await the positive transformation this initiative will bring to our students and the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'mpride'. The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Michaela Pride  
Professor & Associate Dean  
School of Architecture + Planning



Letter of Support from Atomic Reporters

Sent by Email

**From:** Peter Rickwood <[peter.rickwood@atomicreporters.org](mailto:peter.rickwood@atomicreporters.org)>

**Sent:** Friday, July 28, 2023 5:01 AM

**To:** Ilia Rodriguez Nazario <[ilia@unm.edu](mailto:ilia@unm.edu)>

**Subject:** Re: Request for your support 🌻

[EXTERNAL]

Atomic Reporters works extensively with journalists and young people in order to promote understanding and knowledge about nuclear science and technology in order to raise awareness about a neglected subject. Fostering reliable communication is a means to better inform policy in the public interest.

**We strongly support the initiative of the University of New Mexico's Department of Communication & Journalism to provide a community news service that better serves the people of New Mexico.**

The state is a nexus of nuclear activities in the USA having a variety of impacts on its communities. Atomic Reporters, based on its experience and active engagement with an extensive network of specialists, is well positioned to complement the initiative.

The University of New Mexico's Department of Communication & Journalism hosted a successful Atomic Reporters workshop for US based journalists in June 2023 and we look forward to the possibility of further collaboration.

Atomic Reporters is a Canadian incorporated non partisan not for profit organization operating from Vienna Austria.

July 2023

July 26, 2023

Dear Members of the Scripps-Howard Foundation Review Committee,

I gladly support the grant application by the Department of Communication & Journalism (C&J) for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

As Director of El Centro de la Raza & Special Advisor to the UNM President on Latina/o Affairs, I see this initiative as a perfect match for the University of New Mexico's student-centered learning approach and dedication to fostering career outcomes.

At El Centro de la Raza, we prioritize experiential learning to empower our students to thrive professionally while making a positive impact on the community. The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center's focus on hands-on experiences and partnerships aligns with our mission to provide our students opportunities for growth.

I am eager to support the Center in ways to be explored, such as curriculum, mentorship, or internships. This alignment will strengthen our students' skillsets, enhance their career prospects, and create meaningful impacts in journalism and the communities they serve.

I endorse C&J's grant proposal and eagerly await the positive transformation this initiative will bring to our students and the community.

Sincerely,



Rosa Isela Cervantes  
Director & Special Advisor to the President on Latina/o Affairs

July 27, 2023

Scripps-Howard Foundation

Dear Members of the Scripps-Howard Foundation Review Committee,

I gladly support the grant application by the Department of Communication & Journalism (C&J) at the University of New Mexico for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

As Chair of the Native American Studies Department, I see this initiative as a perfect match for the University of New Mexico's student-centered learning approach and dedication to fostering career outcomes.

At the Department of Native American Studies, we prioritize experiential learning to empower our students to thrive professionally while making a positive impact on the community. The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center's focus on hands-on experiences and partnerships aligns with our mission to provide our students opportunities for growth.

I am eager to support the Center in ways to be explored, such as curriculum, mentorship, or internships. This alignment will strengthen our students' skillsets, enhance their career prospects, and create meaningful impacts in journalism and the communities they serve.

I endorse C&J's grant proposal and eagerly await the positive transformation this initiative will bring to our students and the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tiffany S. Lee'.

Tiffany S. Lee, Ph.D. (Diné/Lakota)  
Chair and Professor  
Native American Studies  
University of New Mexico

## PROJECT COLLABORATORS AND ADVISORS

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will benefit from the experience and perspectives of our colleagues in academia, industry and our community.

Below is a more complete list of those who have advised us in the preparation of this report and/or who we seek to engage further as we build the Center.

### UNIVERSITY COLLABORATORS

**Agoyo, Pam (Cochiti, Kewa, Ohkay)**

*UNM, American Indian Student Services*

Agoyo plays an essential role in the American Indian Student Services (AISS) at the University of New Mexico. Established to support Native students, AISS provides various programs to ensure academic achievement and personal growth. Pam and AISS honor the history and contributions of Indigenous peoples while advocating for education and support for Native students attending UNM

**Ashworth, Evan**

*University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism*

Ashworth is a researcher and educator in the Department of Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico. His areas of expertise include language ideologies, language preservation, service learning, and flipped-classroom pedagogy. With a background in Linguistics, he earned his PhD from UNM and has focused on the factors that influence the acceptance or resistance to using writing for endangered indigenous languages, particularly the Tewa language in northern New Mexico. He has taught and served as a director of the writing and language tutoring program, contributing to the preservation of indigenous languages.

**Bowannie, Mary K.**

*University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism*

Bowannie is a dedicated educator and researcher at the University of New Mexico's Communication and Journalism departments. With an MA in Journalism from CU Boulder, her focus during her studies involved education and internet access for Native American communities. Currently serving as an adjunct faculty member at UNM, she also works as a research associate for the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and support for Indigenous communities.

**Chee, Melvatha R.**

***University of New Mexico, Linguistics***

Chee is Tsé Nahabitnii, Kin Łichíí'nii, Hooghan Łání and Áshjǫ́hí, a Diné woman from Lake Valley, New Mexico. Chee is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics at the University of New Mexico, with extensive experience in her heritage language, Navajo. She serves as an official interpreter for the U.S. Department of Justice, teaches Diné language at the University of New Mexico, and engages in research on Navajo language acquisition. Her work focuses on the morphologically complex Navajo verb and aims to build a Navajo language corpus. As a linguistically trained individual and a fluent speaker of Navajo, she brings a unique perspective to her research and actively works to preserve and enrich her culture's language.

**DeDios, Jeanette**

***University of New Mexico, KUNM***

DeDios is a recent graduate of the University of New Mexico who excels in multimedia journalism, film, and English. Proudly from the Jicarilla Apache and Diné Nations, she is determined to make an impact in the media world. As part of the Local News Fund Fellowship, she gains valuable experience working with KUNM-FM and NMPBS, where she is eager to share her skills and unique perspective.

**de María, Jaelyn**

***University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

de María, a multimedia storyteller with expertise in intercultural communication, justice studies, and Xican@ studies, exemplifies journalism's potential to bring about social change. As an independent photographer and lecturer in the Communication & Journalism Department, she employs visual communication to highlight issues of globalization, free trade, and cultural sustainability. Her work as a staff photographer for the Albuquerque Journal and her engagement with teaching through service-learning underscore journalism's role in capturing diverse narratives and promoting community engagement.

**Doland, Gwyneth**

***University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

Doland is an accomplished reporter and editor, known for her work across various media platforms. From newspapers to radio and television, she has covered government accountability and state government matters. Her achievements have earned her recognition and awards from reputable institutions, such as the First Amendment Award from the ACLU of New Mexico.

**Kamerick, Megan*****University of New Mexico, KUNM***

Kamerick is a passionate journalist with over 25 years of experience in business weeklies, print, and online journalism. Currently holding the position of News Director at KUNM, she advocates for women's voices in media and has produced stories for various reputable organizations like National Public Radio. Megan's TED talk on women and media has garnered significant attention, demonstrating her commitment to amplifying underrepresented voices.

**Michael V. Marcotte*****University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

Marcotte is a Professor of Practice in Journalism in the C&J Department since 2013. He teaches journalism skills courses, media entrepreneurship, and other topics. He formed the New Mexico News Port collaboration/publication lab and is the Principal Investigator in charge of the NM Local News Fellowships and Internships program. Marcotte had a career leading public media newsrooms in California and Washington. He continues to consult on local news strategy and would continue in an advisory role with the RHC.

**Pride, Michaele*****University of New Mexico, Design and Planning Assistance Center***

Pride, AIA, NOMA, is a distinguished Professor of Architecture at the University of New Mexico, specializing in urban design and public health. Her work focuses on creating healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities. Leading several projects for NM Mainstreet communities and The Stories of Route 66, she actively addresses adverse determinants of health through cross-campus community initiatives.

**Rodríguez, Ilia*****University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

Rodríguez is a distinguished educator and researcher in the field of Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico. Her expertise lies in journalism history, ethnic minorities and media, and international communication. With a professional background in print journalism, she has worked for newspapers and Latino publications in Puerto Rico, California, Louisiana and Minnesota. Her commitment to incorporating data, programming, and computation into mass communication and journalism curricula continues to empower future generations of journalists. Rodriguez chairs the C&J Dept.

**Vergara Wilson, Damián**

***University of New Mexico, Department of Spanish and Portuguese***

Damián Vergara Wilson (Ph.D. University of New Mexico) is the coordinator of the Sabine Ulibarrí Spanish as a Heritage Language Program. His main areas of research and teaching are historical linguistics, sociolinguistics and sociology of language. One of his chief goals is to use these areas of study to support and inform the field of teaching of Spanish as a heritage language in the Southwest

**Yousuf, Mohammed**

***University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism***

Yousuf is a recipient of multiple teaching and research awards and is a distinguished scholar in Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico. He exemplifies innovation and dedication by utilizing datafication and big data analytics in journalism and communication research. Through his work, he encourages collaboration across disciplines, making significant strides in media scholarship in and beyond academia.

**UNM, American Indian Student Services (AISS)**

<https://aiss.unm.edu/>

American Indian Student Services (AISS) was founded during the 1980-1981 academic year to enhance the recruitment and retention of Native students. It currently offers various student support programs at The University of New Mexico-Main Campus, aiming to ensure academic achievement and foster personal, cultural, and social success for American Indian students. AISS also serves as a bridge for Native students from local high schools, tribal colleges, governments, and organizations, facilitating their enrollment and retention at the university. All students are welcome, and encouraged, to participate in AISS programs.

**UNM, Department of Chicano / Chicana Studies**

<https://chicanos.unm.edu/>

The goal of the Department of Chicano/Chicana studies is to promote a critical understanding of Chicano, Mexicano, Hispano, and Indigenous communities to the University and bridge the gaps between all ethnic studies groups on campus.

**UNM, Daily Lobo**

<https://www.dailylobo.com/>

The award-winning New Mexico Daily Lobo has served as the independent newspaper at the University of New Mexico since 1895. The student staff works in news, production,

design, classifieds, advertising and accounting. Students produce a print newspaper weekly during the fall, spring and summer semesters and publish an e-newsletter four times a week.

### **UNM, Department of Linguistics**

<https://ling.unm.edu/>

The UNM Department of Linguistics is the sole linguistics program in a multilingual and multicultural state, taking on a dual role of teaching and researching language structure and use while serving society on language-related issues. With a cognitive-functional perspective, the department focuses on language interaction and usage through data-driven and fieldwork methods. It emphasizes studying regional languages, indigenous languages, and signed languages, and commits to applying linguistics to address social concerns and empower minority communities.

### **UNM, Department of Native American Studies**

<https://nas.unm.edu/>

The Department of Native American Studies (NAS) at the University of New Mexico is an interdisciplinary academic department dedicated to Indigenous academic scholarship and research excellence. Offering various degree programs and a minor, NAS aims to educate students and the public about the Native experience, emphasizing the complex history and intercultural heritage of New Mexico and the United States. Additionally, NAS seeks to foster collaboration with Native communities and engage students in Nation building efforts.

### **UNM, Department of Political Science**

<https://polisci.unm.edu/>

In the UNM Department of Political Science, we engage with and respond to issues facing our communities on local, national, and global scales.

Our faculty and students investigate critical issues such as inequality, civil conflict, transitional justice, elections, and international politics, among other pressing topics.

We are proud to be the only Hispanic-Serving Institution in the U.S. that is also classified as a Carnegie Research University with Very High Activity. As such, we are uniquely situated to study the politics of underrepresented and under-served groups.

### **UNM, Department of Spanish and Portuguese**

<https://spanport.unm.edu/>

The Department of Spanish & Portuguese at UNM plays a crucial role in teaching the languages, cultures, and literatures of the Hispanic and Portuguese worlds. With various



distinguished programs, including internationally ranked Hispanic Linguistics and Southwest Studies, students have the opportunity to engage in research, fieldwork, and travel to professionalize their language skills and connect with a broader community.

### **UNM, El Centro de la Raza**

<https://elcentro.unm.edu/>

El Centro de la Raza upholds the legacy of the Chicano movement of the 1960's. El Centro is committed not only to support the academic journey of our students, but also to serve as place to nurture cultura. Cultura represents an effort to reclaim and create social and economic justice for our students and communities by being a conduit for self-affirmation through poetry, danza, ceremonies, and other cultural expressions that define who we are. Our intent is not only to help our students navigate the intricate ways of the university and to serve as a support system, but to also create a beautiful space in which our students can explore and experience their own culture, their sense of being, and their belonging to the larger world.

## **INDUSTRY COLLABORATORS**

### **Coates, Karen**

#### ***Mongabay***

Coates is an esteemed journalist and the Fellowship Editor for Mongabay, a global environmental news service. She has a passion for reporting on pressing issues like food, environment, health, and human rights, particularly in tropical regions. With an extensive background in journalism and media training, she brings forth stories that shed light on diverse communities and cultures around the world.

### **Griswold, Shaun**

#### ***Source New Mexico***

Griswold is a journalist in Albuquerque with a unique background as a citizen of the Pueblo of Laguna, as well as having Jemez and Zuni ancestry. His extensive experience in print and broadcast news allows him to cover critical issues impacting Native Americans in both urban and tribal communities throughout New Mexico, particularly focusing on education and child welfare.

### **Hughs, Art**

#### ***Koahnic Broadcast Corporation***

Hughs is a seasoned radio and multimedia journalist who possesses an extensive background in public and community-based media. Having worked for various

organizations and publications, he brings a wealth of experience in covering diverse topics from city meetings to natural disasters. His expertise has contributed to the expansion of news organizations and has showcased the stories of various communities.

**Luján, George**

***Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)***

Luján is a dedicated member of the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) with a rich history in community work and art. His involvement in SWOP spans over a decade, where he has learned and grown in various roles, including being the primary grant writer. His dedication to justice and community engagement has kept SWOP at the forefront of the movement for justice in New Mexico.

**Pecos, Regis**

***Santa Fe Indian School Leadership Institute***

Pecos is a Professor of Architecture at the University of New Mexico and a respected leader and educator at the Santa Fe Indian School Leadership Institute, with an impressive background in public service and academia. His contributions to building State/Government relations and his dedication to Indigenous education have made him an influential figure in New Mexico. Regis continues to teach and co-direct the Leadership Institute, leaving a lasting impact on the community.

**Proctor, Jeff**

***New Mexico PBS***

Proctor is an accomplished journalist who has been making significant contributions to media in New Mexico since 2002. His expertise lies in covering criminal justice issues, transparency, and more. His dedication to journalism and commitment to serving the community have earned him recognition and respect in the field.

**Redfern, Jerry**

***Capital & Main***

Redfern is an impactful visual journalist, capturing environmental and humanitarian issues across Southeast Asia and other developing regions. His work has appeared in renowned publications, showcasing the aftermath of American bombs in Laos, agroforestry in Belize, and life amid logging in Borneo. Jerry's photography has brought attention to critical global issues and has been featured in influential media outlets.

**Rosenblum, Gail**

***C&J Alumna, Editor at the Minneapolis Star Tribune.***

Minneapolis-based journalist, essayist, public speaker, and teacher. Her work has appeared in dozens of newspapers and national magazines for over 40 years. Recognized, most recently, with the Pollen Midwest's "50 Over 50" award for her career-long work in solutions journalism. She is the founder of MPGL Entertainment, a nonprofit entertainment company producing animated films and teaching lessons to nurture a generation of informed, empathetic and engaged young adults

### **New Mexico In Depth (NMID)**

<https://nmindepth.com/about-nmid/>

New Mexico In Depth strives to revitalize New Mexico journalism by engaging in comprehensive reporting, collaborating with fellow journalists as mentors or partners, and forging media alliances that pool resources. Their primary objective is to narrate in-depth stories about the diverse people of New Mexico, while questioning authority in a manner that enlightens and empowers both individuals and communities.

### **NM Searchlight**

<https://Searchlightnm.org>

Searchlight New Mexico is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization dedicated to investigative reporting. In a landscape of shrinking media resources, our mission is to focus high-impact journalism on topics of local, regional and national interest in order to allow the public to see into the remote recesses of government and to expose abuses of power. We believe great reporting empowers people to demand honest, effective public policy and to seek appropriate remedies.

### **New Mexico Press Association (NMPA)**

<https://nmpress.org>

The New Mexico Press Association (NMPA) serves as the representative for member newspapers, promoting high journalistic standards, journalism education, and protecting the freedom of speech. It encompasses three branches: the NMPA, which advocates for transparency in government and hosts an annual convention; the New Mexico Press Service, facilitating newspaper advertising; and the NMPA Foundation, dedicated to journalism education through workshops for high school students.

### **New Mexico Broadcast Association (NMBA)**

<http://www.nmba.org>

The New Mexico Broadcasters Association serves as a unifying force among radio and television broadcasters, fostering partnerships with businesses and organizations to benefit communities throughout the state. Recognizing their role as community

stewards, broadcasters actively engage in local issues, offer free airtime, and support community programs and initiatives. Moreover, they contribute significantly to the economy by providing essential free entertainment, news, and local programming, fostering economic growth, productivity, and efficiency.

### **New Mexico Local News Fund (LNF)**

<https://www.nmlocalnews.org/>

The New Mexico Local News Fund, a fiscally sponsored project of the Santa Fe Community Foundation, strives to expand the local news ecosystem throughout the state, catering to the information needs of all New Mexicans. By collaborating with established newsrooms and trusted community organizations, their ambitious aim is to ensure equitable access to essential local news and information, promoting the well-being of communities statewide.

### **Atomic Reporters**

<https://www.atomicreporters.com/>

Atomic Reporters is an independent, non-profit, incorporated in Canada at the end of 2012, operating as an officially recognized international NGO from Austria, providing substantive and non-partisan information to journalists about nuclear science and technology.

### **NM Scholastic Press Assn**

<http://jea.org/>

The Journalism Education Association supports free and responsible scholastic journalism by providing resources and educational opportunities, by promoting professionalism, by encouraging and rewarding student excellence and teacher achievement, and by fostering an atmosphere which encompasses diversity yet builds unity.

## **COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS**

### **Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)**

<https://www.enmu.edu/>

ENMU, with close to 90 years of experience, prepares students for careers and advanced study. The institution believes in the potential of every individual and strives to offer an engaging learning environment with modern technology, ensuring a rich educational experience. ENMU serves students of traditional age, adult learners, and organizations through diverse undergraduate and graduate programs, making education accessible and fulfilling for all.

### **Generation Justice**

<https://generationjustice.org/>

GJ is a multiracial, multicultural project that trains youth to harness the power of community and raise critical consciousness through leadership development, civic engagement, media production and narrative shift in the areas that most impact New Mexicans- racial justice, health, education, early childhood development, and economic security. GJ's mission is to inspire youth to become multidimensional leaders who are committed to social transformation. In New Mexico, Generation Justice has been recognized as the premier youth media and leadership group, and locally and nationally, has been the recipient of numerous awards.

### **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center**

<https://indianpueblo.org/>

The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) Campus is a vibrant gathering place that celebrates Pueblo Culture through various creative and cultural experiences while offering economic opportunities to Pueblo and local communities. Situated at the heart of approximately 80 acres of land owned and governed by the 19 Pueblos District, the Center features a museum, gallery space, Native arts and artifacts, a library, archives, education department, teaching kitchen/restaurant, and cultural programming, all dedicated to honoring the rich Pueblo culture of New Mexico.

### **Native American Voters Alliance**

<https://www.groundworksnm.org/>

Groundworks New Mexico was established to address a specific need in the state's social sector and to maximize impact through collaboration. Formed by three programs with over 40 years of combined experience, the organization serves as a neutral entity, connecting, strengthening, and advocating for social impact organizations in New Mexico to create a better living, working, and investing environment.

### **National Hispanic Cultural Center**

<https://www.nhccnm.org/>

The National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) is a dedicated advocate for the preservation, promotion, and advancement of Hispanic culture, arts, and humanities. Through exhibitions, performances, educational programs, and support for Hispanic, Chicano, and Latinx artists, the NHCC creates a cultural home that celebrates the diverse identities shaping the community. Located in the historic neighborhood of Baretas, the

NHCC's extensive campus features theaters, museums, educational facilities, and resources that enrich and engage both the local and national audience.

#### **New Mexico Dream Team**

<https://www.nmdreamteam.org/>

The New Mexico Dream Team empowers multigenerational, undocumented, LGBTQ+, and mixed status families for liberation through advocacy and leadership development, fostering a strong community for social justice.

#### **New Mexico State University (NMSU)**

<https://nmsu.edu/>

New Mexico State University (NMSU) is a comprehensive research, land-grant university that excels in teaching, research, and public service. It proudly reflects the vibrancy of the region's communities, providing an exciting environment to address challenges, seek solutions to critical issues, and prepare for the future.

#### **Pueblo Action Alliance**

<https://www.puebloactionalliance.org/>

Pueblo Action Alliance is a grassroots organization focused on protecting Pueblo cultural sustainability and community defense, drawing from the revolutionary spirit of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. They advocate for Indigenous self-determination, ancestral wisdom, and rematriation to dismantle oppressive systems and promote liberation for all Indigenous peoples.

#### **RFK Charter School**

<https://www.rfkcharter.com/>

RFK Charter School is dedicated to empowering students to achieve their college and career goals by providing a nurturing environment and strong family and community partnerships. Offering an alternative to traditional secondary schools, RFK fosters strong relationships, with small class sizes and certified teachers, ensuring personalized attention and high-quality education.

#### **Somos un Pueblo Unido**

<https://www.somosunpueblounido.org/>

Somos, founded in 1995, is a community-based and immigrant-led organization promoting worker and racial justice in New Mexico. With 2,500 active members across eight counties, Somos offers education, leadership opportunities, legal services, political

engagement, and grassroots campaigns to strengthen communities and defend workers' rights.

### **South Valley Mainstreet**

<https://www.facebook.com/SVMainstreet/>

South Valley MainStreet is a grassroots community-based economic and community development organization based in the unincorporated community of South Valley, NM.

### **Tewa Women United**

<https://tewawomenunited.org/>

Tewa Women United, a multicultural organization led by Native women in Northern New Mexico, envisions movements rooted in unity and love for all. They center Indigenous women and girls, embracing ancestral wisdom and healing to address the effects of colonization and violence, promoting peace and well-being for everyone. Established in 1989, TWU began as a support group, and in 2001, it became a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a focus on ending violence against Native women and girls and advocating for Mother Earth.





## ***University & Native American Community Collaborations Code of Ethics & Integrity***

### **Acknowledgments**

The original document Code of Ethics and Integrity Guidelines was obtained from the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and was created in partnership with Indigenous Wellness Research Institute –University of Washington (IWRI-UW).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Code of Ethics and Integrity is to establish a set of principles, obligations, and responsibilities that will guide our partners to achieve the goals and objectives of the partnership throughout all phases of the research process.

This Code of Ethics and Integrity recognizes that the *tribe* have the right of self-determination and, in exercising that right, must be recognized as the exclusive owner of Indigenous traditional and cultural knowledge.

This Code of Ethics and Integrity recognizes the rights of the *tribe* community that face health disparities to engagement, decision-making, and ownership of our indigenous knowledge and culture as well as the knowledge that emerges from our work. Our partnership acknowledges that Indigenous knowledge, cultural and biogenetic resources, and intellectual property rights have been, and continue to be, damaged, destroyed, stolen, and misappropriated, both on and off our tribal lands; the *tribe* tribal members have been the subjects of research for decades, with little benefit returning back to the community from the research. Our partnership strives to prevent continued abuses, protect individual and community traditional knowledge and properties, and ensure our rights to continue to practice traditional lifeways and long-term survival.

### **Respective Responsibilities**

#### **Lead Investigators**

The Lead Investigators will meet as needed and will have the following duties:

- Establish publications guidelines, data sharing agreements, conference presentation request guidelines, and other related policies to coordinate and ensure that all partner and community interests are protected and represented;
- Examine and comment on all proposals for research including theses, dissertation projects, secondary data analyses, and grant supplements;
- Review and finalize data sharing agreements; and
- Negotiate the terms and conditions for new research projects (e.g., secondary data analyses), IRB materials and protocols, new data sharing agreements, and dissemination venues and products.

### **Policy Statement**

Research should support the empowerment of our community and community-academic partnerships as well as promote improved health and reduced health disparities in the *tribe* and other Native communities that face health disparities. Our partnership strives to conduct research free from harmful, intrusive, ill-conceived, or otherwise offensive research, investigative procedures, or misuse or misappropriation of research findings and biological and genetic materials.

Research should be beneficial, community-based, culturally relevant, and consistent with *tribe* health priorities and concerns, and the risks associated with the research should be less significant than the benefits to be gained.

### **Mission and Vision**

*<state mission and vision of partners>*

### **Project Values/Principles**

Our overall project values are to promote collaboration among and within our institutions, to produce sound and rigorous science, to be accountable and transparent, to strive toward equalizing power within our collaboration, to ensure the research if of use and value to the tribal communities, and to support our partnership.

#### **Promote Collaboration**

- Our voices will influence work to promote our continued collaboration
- Increasing capacity of our partnership within and outside our tribal community
- Research analyses, interpretations, and results must be presented to and discussed by all partners to ensure accuracy and avoid misunderstanding

#### **Good Science**

- Mutual commitment to excellence and rigorous science
- Recognize it is not incompatible to do CBPR and to strive for excellence/rigor in science
- Research enterprise will recognize “truth” comes from many places
- Integrity of indigenous knowledge and wisdom in all communities
- Research must ensure confidentiality and anonymity of individuals, organizations, and communities unless these parties choose to be named when the results are reported

#### **Accountability and Transparency**

- Honor agreements from past/present/future
- Honor tribal community codes of conduct
- Value transparency in all thoughts and actions
- Share at all stages of project through monthly updates
- Dissemination in multiple ways and through the use of the project website
- Importance of translation of research for community understanding of research
- Simple yet focused

#### **Equalizing Power**

- Value broad/multiple definitions of research

- Recognize importance of dialogue on research (What is good science, all perspectives included)
- Honor what others bring to the table
- Recognize the limitations that others face, including time, financial resources, infrastructure, and politics
- Reciprocity: honor what we are given and make sure we give back
- Recognize privilege in all forms: economic/ethnicity/education/etc.
- Have collective and cultural humility
- Counter the corporate model (university)
- Help develop new language-innovative, equitable, transdisciplinary science
- Honor autonomy, self-determination, social justice
- Recognize that all research is culturally bound
- Listen to understand, not just to react
- Speak in ways people understand and ask for clarification if needed
- Acknowledge history and culture of self and others
- Share with outsiders the history and culture of the Yakama people
- Ensure community participation at each step of the research process such as frequent community presentation
- Active, free, and informed consent must be obtained from all participants

#### Ensure Utility of Research for our Community

- Ensure meaningful impact: relevant benefit to our community
- Build capacity through the recruitment, training, and inclusion of our community members in all phases of the research process
- Continuously reflect back on what we are doing: does it add value/protect culture?
- Recognize centrality of reflection and learning
- Be good stewards of information
- Reports and summaries must be returned in a language and format that is comprehensible to our community
- Research results must be presented to the participating partnerships before being disseminated in the public domain
- Focus group, Survey respondents and intervention participants from community-academic partnerships constitute individual respondents, not research partners. While research results will be shared with them, the aggregate survey results do not represent and are not the property of any specific participant. The *Study Name* research team will consult with the Tribal Nation, The YRWC coalition and participating respondents about the analyses and research products that would be most useful.
- Research must respect the rights and dignity of our community and the people involved in the research

#### Support Research Partners

- Build capacity at research institutions also: promote promising/best practices
- Respect constraints that universities put on researchers: create mutual support through open discussion on the requirements the university has on the academic partners and incorporate the support into the partnership process

- Respect the constraints of the grantors: timelines, progress reports, expectations of publication and dissemination for findings, expectation of access to de-identifiable data
- Equal partnership in all aspects of the research. Continuous consultation and collaboration must characterize the partnership
- Ensure that our community has opportunities to participate in all aspects of the research
- Collaborate with community members in the research design, implementation, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and the dissemination of results
- Ensure that the research is relevant and beneficial to our community and in agreement with the standards of competent research
- Ensure that the research undergoes the appropriate review and approval processes as determined by university IRBs as well as policies and practices of our community-academic partnerships
- Develop cultural awareness about our community
- Do no harm to our community
- Promote creation and dissemination of knowledge through written publications and oral presentations. This includes the documentation of the undertaking of the project and of the results
- Enhance community capacity by providing community members ongoing opportunities for active participation in the research
- Train and mentor students and junior colleagues, with preference to American Indian/Alaska Native students
- Respond to community requests for information after the research project ends

# FOCUS GROUP BACKGROUND BRIEF – DISCUSSION DRAFT



## RESEARCH PROJECT

# Advancing Sustainable, Reliable Journalism in New Mexico

## CONVENER

Society of Professional Journalists, Rio Grande Chapter

## RESEARCHER

New Mexico First

## FUNDERS

Thornburg Foundation and Democracy Fund

- Focus group participants are urged to review this report before their discussion.
- Join us at one of these locations:
  - **Portales:** March 19, KENW-TV 52 Broadcast Center, Eastern New Mexico University, 1500 S. Avenue K
  - **Las Cruces:** March 20, NM Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum-Oregon View Room, 4100 Dripping Springs Road
  - **Santa Fe:** March 22, KSFR 101.1 FM, Santa Fe Community College-Room 570, 6401 South Richards Avenue
  - **Albuquerque:** March 23, KNME-TV, 1130 University Blvd NE



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**New Mexico First**

P. O. Box 56549

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87187

Phone: 505-225-2140

Website: [www.nmfirst.org](http://www.nmfirst.org)

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# Executive Summary

New Mexicans rely on accurate, reliable news coverage to inform their personal, economic and voting decisions. However, there are fewer journalists producing high-quality work, particularly in rural areas. This document provides background information on the condition of journalism in New Mexico and creates a foundation for focus group discussions across the state.

Across the country, most Americans worry about news bias or media inaccuracies. They lack faith in the press and are concerned about sensational coverage, an expansion of news sources promoting certain ideologies, a lack of investigative journalism, and inaccurate reporting. New Mexico residents share those concerns. Mainstream journalism here and nationwide is defined by newsrooms increasingly tasked to do more with less. This includes smaller staffs, less time and fewer resources.

In New Mexico, nearly every established media company is entering a second decade of shrinking staff sizes and diminished coverage. The state is home to 359 media outlets, the majority being radio and newspapers. Public and private television, online publications and a handful of magazines comprise the rest. Together, these media sources provide critical services, including investigative journalism. In the last decade, New Mexicans have witnessed unethical, or in some cases, criminal behavior in multiple levels of New Mexico government that investigative journalism helped to uncover. The need to support journalism's capacity to hold government and elected officials accountable as the "Fourth Estate" cannot be overstated.

This report provides a closer look at New Mexico's local news media platforms: print newspapers, online news outlets, radio, television, public journalism, and alternative or advocacy journalism. Regardless of the news medium, some challenges cut across all types of outlets, such as a shortage of qualified media professionals to do the work. In addition, some sources indicate that New Mexico has a shortage of Spanish-speaking or Native American media considering the diversity of our population. Addressing these and other challenges will include supporting the next generation of reporters as well as professional development for current journalists.

These current and future reporters will face a world that demands "fast news." This pressure on mainstream media to report information immediately often comes from news breaking on the Internet and on social channels like Facebook and Twitter, whether or not the source is valid. As a result, public trust can erode.

Rural communities have unique media access challenges. Research shows that people in rural areas tend to turn to newspapers over other traditional media. While this local trust is heartening, it may complicate the problem of getting reliable news to rural communities since their shrinking staffing levels make in-depth coverage on important topics highly difficult.

The issue of "orphan counties" affects some rural New Mexicans' ability to receive in-state programming. Instead, they receive programming from neighboring Texas communities. For example, Las Cruces residents receive El Paso television news and Clovis receives much of its programming from Amarillo rather than Albuquerque or Santa Fe. The programming communities receive is largely determined by Nielsen, which focuses on people's consumer markets rather than their news needs. Nielsen has concluded that eastern New Mexico and southern New Mexico are more closely allied with the Amarillo and El Paso media markets. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as well as the cable and satellite television industries for the most part, honor Nielsen's market definitions.

In an effort to meet demand for fast-paced, accurate news and to do so amid the new realities facing media professionals, three progressive models may provide some answers: collaborative journalism, bringing together multiple reporters and editors to cover an issue; aggregate journalism, which curates existing news stories from multiple sources; and public-private partnerships, through which media outlets can partner with state universities, think tanks or nonprofits focused on policy to improve coverage or citizen engagement.

All these issues warrant further attention and potential local or statewide efforts. The following report offers details to inform such considerations.



# Foreword

## Purpose of this Report

New Mexicans need accurate sources of information they can rely on to make decisions for their families and businesses, engage in work to improve their communities, and take part in the democratic process. Although the need for accurate, trustworthy news is greater than ever, there are now fewer journalists producing high-quality work, particularly in rural areas outside of Albuquerque and Santa Fe. This document is intended to get people thinking and talking about fundable projects that could strengthen journalism throughout the state, as well as concrete ways to advance journalism locally. Specifically, it is designed to support a series of focus groups to explore ways to ensure that all New Mexicans have access to a variety of media sources offering varied perspectives, and that those sources are deemed trustworthy and relevant by residents.

**Note:** There are few right or wrong answers to any public question, and the problems and opportunities around our state's journalism and media capacity are complex. As a result, no brief explanation of the situation – including this report – can cover all available information and opinions. The working professionals and future journalists of New Mexico will lend their expertise to the question of how to strengthen journalism in New Mexico.

## About New Mexico First

A statewide public policy organization, **New Mexico First** engages people in critical issues facing their state and communities. The nonpartisan, nonprofit group produces comprehensive policy reports – primarily on natural resources, education, health, good government and the economy. These analyses inform policy discussions, legislative options and often student learning as well. These documents also provide the foundation for New Mexico First's unique town halls and forums that convene citizens to develop proposals to improve the state. The reports are available at [nmfirst.org](http://nmfirst.org). Our state's two U.S. Senators – Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich – serve as New Mexico First's honorary co-chairs. The organization was co-founded in 1986 by then U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici.

## About Society for Professional Journalists

The nation's most broad-based journalism organization, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) is dedicated to encouraging the free practice of journalism and stimulating high standards of ethical behavior. Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry. It also works to inspire and educate current and future journalists through professional development, and it protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press through its advocacy efforts. The research project for which this report was commissioned was spearheaded by the Rio Grande Chapter of SPJ, which serves all of New Mexico and El Paso.

## Authors and Reviewers

This New Mexico First report was prepared by Heather W. Balas and Autumn Gray; the section on Federal Communication Commission regulations was prepared by Ernie Sanchez, an attorney with extensive expertise on FCC matters. The writing team was advised by the following committee members: Sarah Gustavus, New Mexico PBS; Carmen Lopez-Wilson, Thornburg Foundation; and Grant Taylor, New Mexico First.

## WHERE DO WE GET OUR INFORMATION?

Throughout this document, we provide as many data sources as possible. We draw from published reports, newspaper and journal articles, first-hand interviews and online resources. All direct quotes are from interviews conducted for this report unless otherwise noted. We know that policymakers, researchers and students use our reports, so we provide the details you need to learn more – and answer your questions. Footnotes provide short references to the complete citations in the detailed bibliography.

## Section 1

# The Condition of Journalism in New Mexico

## A Landscape Overview

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Across the country, most Americans believe news bias or inaccuracies are major problems today. National survey data reveal that people's top concerns about news media include the spread of inaccurate information on the internet and owners of news outlets attempting to influence the way stories are reported. Americans also worry about sensational coverage, bias in reporting and selection of stories, an expansion of news sources promoting certain ideologies, a lack of investigative journalism, and inaccurate reporting.<sup>1</sup>

New Mexico residents share those concerns. Mainstream journalism here and nationwide is defined by newsrooms increasingly tasked to do more, with less:

- Reporters wrestle with writing more stories per day because fewer bodies exist to handle the news load and because social media and the internet drive instant demand for the latest information.
- There are fewer reporters, photographers and videographers, in part because pay is low, hours are long and odd, and the increasing workload leads to burnout.
- Reporters' attention is fractured among multiple jobs within the newsroom due to staff cuts.

Whereas at one time a reporter's job involved gathering information from multiple sources, double- and triple-checking facts, and producing a fair and accurate story on a deadline, that same reporter today handles myriad simultaneous responsibilities. He or she may need to be a photographer or videographer while conducting an interview, be responsible for crafting a daily blog, and maintain regular social media and website postings that align with the day's stories.

The results of that work environment are almost inevitable: an increase in shallow reporting, unverified information, undertrained and overworked staff, turnover, staff shrinkage, and loss of institutional knowledge.

In fact, most of New Mexico's established media companies are entering a second decade of shrinking staff sizes and diminished coverage. A statewide evaluation of New Mexico's news industry, led by Michael Marcotte at the University of New Mexico, counted the recent loss of some 30 news services due to closures, consolidations and start-up failures, the most impactful being the shuttering of the Scripps-owned Albuquerque Tribune in 2009. The problems are worse in the state's rural areas, where community news is dominated by the Albuquerque-Santa Fe metropolitan area, "leaving people from Farmington to Hobbs wondering why they should waste time with stories of urban crime or other reports irrelevant to their local lives."<sup>2</sup>

The *Albuquerque Journal*, which has sustained a few rounds of layoffs in the last decade, continues to be the state's "paper of record," with a Sunday circulation of about 98,000 statewide. It also has a northern New Mexico edition that competes with the capital city's paper, the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Both are local-family-owned, a rarity amid the country's media conglomerates, and both show commitment to local enterprise coverage and complex, investigative pieces.

The *Journal* and *New Mexican* stand in contrast to the state's biggest newspaper chain, Gannett, with seven properties, including the *Las Cruces Sun-News* and the *Farmington Daily Times*.<sup>3</sup> As with any concentration of ownership or power, such publications are at increased risk for less diverse coverage, fewer representations of differing viewpoints, and increased influence from politicians and advertisers. At the same time, concentration of ownership can also reduce costs and increase production efficiencies.

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<sup>1</sup> (Gallup/Knight Foundation, 2018)

<sup>2</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>3</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

Despite significant media outlet losses, readership/viewership remains fairly healthy among those that remain. New Mexico is home to 359 media outlets, the majority of which are radio and newspapers (202 and 74 respectively). Public and private television, online publications and a handful of magazines comprise the rest. More than 700,000 of the state's two million people read a newspaper.<sup>4</sup>

## Types of News Media

Depending upon whom you ask, this mix of media outlets represents either unlimited opportunity or precipitous decline. The following is a closer look at our local news media platforms.

### PRINT NEWSPAPERS

New Mexico is home to 69 print newspapers (40 daily and 29 non-daily), including three major urban papers as well as multiple weekly or semi-weekly rural publications. Most publish both print and online editions. Though they have a digital presence, it is not strong in many communities. Most charge a subscription fee. Some are locally owned; others are part of large chains. For example, where there were once three competing newspapers in Quay, Curry and Roosevelt counties, there is now one company – Clovis Media Inc. – owned by the Stevenson newspaper company in Wyoming. The result is that they publish less frequently and may have difficulty hiring.<sup>5</sup> In addition, rural residents may be deprived of receiving local information when they most need it.

Across the state, both urban and rural newspapers operate today with far smaller news desks than in years past. This cutback not only diminishes the potential for investigative pieces but also limits growth and innovation in coverage or dissemination. Instead, many papers find themselves “just treading water.”<sup>6</sup> This challenge is especially true of rural papers, where time and money are scarce, but nevertheless they operate in places with significant political and socio-economic issues that cry out for coverage.

On the flip side, the larger urban dailies are finding some capacity for innovation. The *Santa Fe New Mexican* is developing news partnerships with online news startups. The paper took this approach to achieve broader distribution of stories and to elevate reporting through joint investigation. The *Albuquerque Journal*, meanwhile, has focused on amplifying its digital news platform and fostering more team coverage internally.

### ONLINE NEWS OUTLETS

New Mexico's email and web-based media sources reach a growing audience. We are home to at least three exclusively online news outlets - *New Mexico In Depth*, *NMPolitics.net* and *New Mexico Political Report*. They do not charge for a subscription. Their focus is primarily government, policy and politics, publishing a mix of original content, submitted editorials and occasionally republished information from other sources. One is for-profit and two are nonprofit in structure, two receiving foundation funding. These types of outlets usually also receive advertising money. All rely on partnerships and collaboration with established media.

The growing influence of online outlets – as well as the digital versions of traditional print publications – points to the need for reliable high-speed broadband throughout the state. Rural and tribal areas are particularly likely to experience gaps in internet coverage, limits to the amount of streaming media subscribers can download, or higher access costs.

### RADIO

Radio comprises more than half of the state's media outlets, which should create a highly favorable environment for quality reporting as well as effective consumer reach by radio broadcasters. Other factors to consider in our state include lack of ability for our residents to access information, for a variety of reasons: “[i]n a state that has a high rate of illiteracy and poor broadband access, radio can be a significant provider of news and community connections.”<sup>7</sup>

In reality, only a handful of New Mexico radio stations produce notable, localized product on a regular basis. Like rural newspapers, they do so with staffs typically no more than three or four people deep. Sometimes they make use of volunteers, like Santa Fe's community radio station KSFR. Because of its larger team that includes both paid staff and volunteers, KSFR produces some of radio's stronger daily content. The station is also highly collaborative and played an

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<sup>4</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>5</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>6</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>7</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

active role in the Solutions Journalism Network project. (See below.) Some community stations like KSFR tend to have a weak signal but reach a populated area. Others such as KENW-FM cover more miles but in sparsely populated territory. At least three stations – KANW, KENW and KUNM – carry National Public Radio (NPR) programming in addition to local content. Some stations also provide additional content digitally, often distinctly different from what is released on the regular airwaves.

There is little doubt radio remains a relevant source of news, especially in a state like New Mexico. But in an increasingly digital age, does it make sense for radio stations to be so abundant in the number of stations? To what degree might consolidation eliminate duplication of efforts or strengthen news coverage? Or might some existing stations adjust their focus to address unmet needs? Could an increased use of podcasts help local radio extend its reach to digital news consumers? (See “cross-cutting issues” below.)

### TELEVISION

Three major commercial Albuquerque-based network television affiliates – KOAT, KOB and KRQE – dominate local TV news throughout New Mexico. Large national companies own each of them. Annual in-state research published by the Garrity Group indicates that most New Mexicans (over 70 percent) say they get at least some of their news from television. However, this behavior does not hold true for younger viewers. Millennials decreased their access of TV as a news source by 21 percent between 2011 to 2017. Age aside, the number of New Mexicans who use television as a source declined eight percentage points since 2011 and, in eastern New Mexico, declined by 27 percent over the same period.<sup>8</sup>

Efforts to elevate coverage exist. According to Marcotte’s analysis, KOAT has a limited collaborative relationship with the *Albuquerque Journal*; the two outlets share polling information, for example. KOB partners similarly with the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. KRQE, with no partnership, offers more news hours and perhaps because of that, seems to devote more time to more complex coverage.

### PUBLIC JOURNALISM

New Mexico’s three public television stations offer reporting on issues of significant social concern to New Mexicans: health, crime, politics and education. Each station is affiliated with a state university. Public media – both TV and radio – is the longstanding example of nonprofit journalism. It depends on private donations and grants for survival. Though local public television stations often do not have a nightly news, the coverage offered garners some of the most respect among TV news viewers.<sup>9</sup> For example, New Mexico PBS (i.e., KNME) has engaged in several notable collaborations with organizations like the Solutions Journalism Network’s “Small Towns, Big Change” and “State of Change” reporting projects and with the People, Power and Democracy Project (PPD) with *New Mexico In Depth*, KUNM radio and the *New Mexico News Port*.<sup>10</sup>

### ALTERNATIVE JOURNALISM

In each of the categories above, some publications approach the news with a style that diverges from traditional media. Examples include the Albuquerque *Weekly Alibi* and the *Santa Fe Reporter*. Publications like these often print in a tabloid format or online on a weekly basis. Rules governing traditional media coverage do not restrict them, so some stories may read as opinionated. They do not feel obliged to report on general news, rather picking themes, trends and topics the community may find interesting. Some, like SFR, have active digital platforms and leverage analytics to track engagement and social media to connect with the community.<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, local consumers tend to view these as watchdog publications, containing aggressively reported stories of importance to them.

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<sup>8</sup> (Garrity Group, 2017)

<sup>9</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>10</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>11</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

## CROSCUTTING CHALLENGES

Regardless of the news medium, some challenges cut across the landscape:

- There appears to be a shortage of **Spanish-speaking and Native American media**, considering the diversity of New Mexico's population. There are opportunities to do more within existing media outlets, as well as by establishing new ones. This is an area where New Mexico could establish itself as a national leader, with Spanish media growing across the country. Spanish-language television networks Univision, Telemundo and Azteca America operate affiliates in New Mexico and thrive in our markets. But they do not provide much local news. A plethora of Spanish language radio stations also exist in New Mexico but provide little news.<sup>12</sup> Koahnic Broadcast Corporation produces two national news programs, *Native America Calling* and *National Native News*, from Albuquerque but those programs do not focus exclusively on local news.
- New Mexico **lacks enough qualified professionals** to do the work; well-trained journalists can earn more elsewhere, so many of the most capable people leave the state. Alternatively, many who want news jobs cannot get them due to shrinking newsrooms and fewer media outlets. Many would-be journalists are now contributing to the growing public relations/marketing industry instead.
- A troubling trend exists among marketers who create content – especially digital – that **looks like news but is advertising**. This type of information contributes to the public notion that “news” is one-sided and biased, when in reality, consumers are reading well-disguised paid ads.

These types of concerns informed a project that the Solutions Journalism Network and LOR Foundation launched in 2016: a network of newsrooms across New Mexico and Colorado collaborating to produce solutions-oriented reporting on issues facing rural towns in the Intermountain West.<sup>13</sup>

## Education and Training

Whether educating the next generation of reporters who are currently in college or investing in professional development for working journalists, supporting those who choose news media as a career is a sound investment in a healthy democracy. There is even a role for media literacy among the general public who consume news media.

### ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

Three universities dominate the role of preparing the next generation of New Mexico journalists: Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico State University and the University of New Mexico. Each school offers hands-on training and coursework in print and broadcast media, and the program at UNM is nationally accredited. Opportunities exist to increase internships and formal learning opportunities with media outlets.

Some people believe the schools are doing good work preparing the next generation of working journalists in New Mexico. Others are concerned that there are not enough well-trained students completing these programs. Still others point to a lack of academic preparation in high school, citing interviews indicating that some students arrive at college unprepared for the rigors of journalism training, including print, online and broadcast news.<sup>14</sup> When looking for ways to strengthen these learning opportunities, one might consider additional industry collaborations and improved coordination between the three universities, area high schools and their public broadcasting stations.

### FELLOWSHIPS FOR WORKING JOURNALISTS

In other parts of the country, internships and fellowships exist to help prepare members of the media more effectively cover *policy* rather than just the daily horserace of *politics*. For example, the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation (a health policy organization) runs a nationwide fellowship program to help reporters gain an in-depth grasp of U.S. health issues through site visits, briefings and discussions with policy experts as well as other journalists. The fellowships are paid, and they cover participants' travel. The project aims to encourage and inform coverage of the complex economic, political and medical issues for a broad range of audiences.”<sup>15</sup> The foundation also offers a series of webinars for journalists on healthcare reform. What might such internships and fellowships look like in New Mexico, perhaps covering our most critical issues such as water, education, economics and public health?

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<sup>12</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>13</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>14</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>15</sup> (Kaiser Family Foundation, n.d.)

### **MEDIA LITERACY FOR THE PUBLIC**

Beyond improvements to university level education in journalism, it might also be worthwhile to consider teaching media literacy at the middle and high school levels. While it is clear that significant improvement can be made in the way media delivers the news, there also must be some responsibility on the part of the consumer to understand differences among products being delivered. When is an article really an ad versus a true news piece, and how does one know the difference? It is important for people to know what qualifies as opinion, or what is a reputable news source. How can New Mexico do a better job of educating all its residents?

### **“Orphan” Counties in Rural Areas**

Most people would agree that New Mexicans should be able to receive television programming that features local and New Mexico news, politics, sports and emergency information. Surprisingly, residents of five New Mexico counties (Doña Ana, Curry, Roosevelt, Quay and Union) are virtually cut off from such local and state programming. Instead they receive programming from neighboring Texas communities. For example, Las Cruces residents receive El Paso news and Clovis receives programming from Amarillo rather than news from Albuquerque or Santa Fe. The satellite television industry refers to these counties located on edges of a state as “orphan counties.” These New Mexico counties are not alone. There are over 80 orphan counties throughout the country.

The programming communities receive is largely determined by Nielsen, which is a global measurement and data company that provides clients with information about what consumers watch and what they buy. Nielsen uses an algorithm to divide the country into 210 markets. From a marketing standpoint, Nielsen has concluded that eastern and southern New Mexico are, respectively, more closely allied with the Amarillo and El Paso media markets than the Albuquerque-Santa Fe market. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as well as the cable and satellite television industries for the most part, honor Nielsen’s market definitions.

In recent years, Congress asked the FCC to study the issue and develop proactive ways to help orphan counties secure television programming from within their own states. Congress has since authorized individual county governments to petition the FCC to have their county assigned to an in-state media market. This is the primary vehicle which may potentially reunite New Mexico orphan counties with the Albuquerque-Santa Fe media market. Through this process, Durango, Colo., was recently granted permission to be included in the Denver market rather than the Albuquerque-Santa Fe market. So far, an extensive grassroots and legal effort has enabled PBS KENW-TV in Portales to continue to serve New Mexico as it had for decades. Substantial concerns remain, however, that Nielsen, which has broad discretion, could change its market definition, causing New Mexico residents to lose KENW local and state coverage in exchange for Amarillo programming.

Unfortunately, most counties are not familiar with the FCC reassignment option, and virtually none has the knowledge or funds to pursue such a reassignment request. In addition, Texas television stations are likely to fight to keep New Mexico counties in their viewership. One way to assist orphan counties is to establish a “Local Journalism Defense Fund” that would fund and help successfully guide counties through the rigorous, complex and costly regulatory and legal process.

## Section 2

# The Changing Way People Receive News

## Differences by Ages, Rural or Urban, and Interests

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Technological advances have made it easier than ever for people to access information. Despite that, “most Americans believe it is now more difficult to be well-informed and to determine which news is accurate.” They also increasingly perceive the media as biased.<sup>16</sup> With misinformation prevalent, many consumers also have difficulty determining real news from “fake.” Moreover, the definition of fake news depends upon whom you ask. Amid the changing informational landscape, Gallup polling shows that media trust in the U.S. is eroding, making it harder for the news media to fulfill their democratic responsibilities of informing the public and holding government leaders accountable, even though most Americans believe the media play a critical role in our democracy.

According to the Knight/Gallup survey, most Americans fall into one of two categories:

- “Knowledgeable Optimists,” who are informed and believe it is possible to find the truth
- “Inattentive Skeptics,” who are less informed and pessimistic that the truth can be identified

Partisanship and education influence these beliefs. In fact, the differences in how people consume news, where they get it and what they make of it depends largely on demographics – age, political leanings, geographic location, race, gender and education. These distinctions are important when studying media in a state like New Mexico.

We are largely rural and Hispanic. The rural areas tend to run Republican, while urban areas like Santa Fe and Albuquerque skew Democrat. That combination tends to make us a “purple” state. More young people reside in the cities, as do people with college and post-college degrees. The characteristics of media consumers heavily impacts their perception of what they read and view:<sup>17</sup>

- Democrats largely trust the media, and Republicans do not. In a state that runs purple, how can the media increase Republican trust?
- The number of people who believe there are enough news sources for them to sort out the facts is declining.
- Younger adults (aged under 50) are more likely to consume news online, including on social media, while older adults are much more likely to watch or listen to news.
- Most Americans believe the media does not do a good job of separating fact from opinion.
- Most Americans claim to rely on a mix of liberal and conservative news sources, but one in four admit to getting news from only one perspective. What changes can be made to the New Mexico media landscape that would broaden consumers’ interests?

In 1989, 25 percent of U.S. adults said there was a great deal of political bias in news coverage. Today, that number is 45 percent. Yet, regardless of demographic, those polled had far greater faith in the objectivity of cable and national news – FOX, CNN, NPR – than they did in local news. What could local media do to increase the perception of neutrality and, therefore, engender trust?

Across the demographics, those polled replied it was very important for the news media to help them feel connected to their community. In fact, some rural New Mexico newspapers appear to be addressing that concern by concentrating on “hyper-local news – weddings, obituaries and children’s activities – that capitalize on the family-oriented nature of their communities.”<sup>18</sup>

Research also shows that people in rural areas tend to turn to newspapers over other traditional media.<sup>19</sup> While this local trust is heartening, it may complicate the problem of getting reliable news to rural communities since their sparse staffing levels make in-depth and timely coverage on important topics highly difficult. Additionally, as increasing

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<sup>16</sup> (Gallup/Knight Foundation, 2018)

<sup>17</sup> (Gallup/Knight Foundation, 2018)

<sup>18</sup> (Marcotte, 2017)

<sup>19</sup> (Todd, 2015)

numbers of people get timely news online, small newspapers face increased pressure to keep up with changing technology.

That means that more complex issues requiring more time and manpower often go uncovered in rural areas. In fact, a Solutions Journalism Network study found there to be a significant gap between what readers were interested in and the news that is available to them. Among SJN focus group participants, economic vitality and diversification ranked as the number one issue of concern, followed by health and infrastructure.

The same study, which focused on a handful of small towns including Taos and Española, found relevance to be especially problematic in rural news coverage. Only one in five people surveyed thought their local news to be consistently relevant and valuable. Most complained about negativity in the news and too much attention given to high school sports and petty crime. One Española resident was quoted as saying, “This newspaper just contributes to the ongoing destructiveness of people. It doesn’t represent my family, my culture, my heritage, my children.”<sup>20</sup>

### **FAST NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Across the board, from rural and urban New Mexico and nationwide, there has never been greater demand than now for fast news. Simultaneously, the public expects fair, quality reporting. This pressure on mainstream media to report information immediately often comes from news “breaking” on the internet and on social channels like Facebook and Twitter, whether or not the source is valid. Public expectations and competition often force media to release information without time to verify facts and/or track the most credible sources, much less obtain information reflecting all sides of an issue.<sup>21</sup>

As a result, public trust can erode. Interestingly, distrust is not limited to the Fourth Estate; the public is skeptical about virtually everything, according to a recent public media poll. “Trust in the institutions that have been the pillars of U.S. politics and capitalism is crumbling. Americans have limited confidence in its public schools, courts, organized labor and banks — and even less confidence in big business, the presidency, the political parties and the media.”<sup>22</sup>

Even though the public expectation for “news, now” is near insatiable and social media influences that craving, the majority of Americans believe social media has had a negative impact on the news.<sup>23</sup> By contrast, they believe the internet, news aggregators, citizen videos and cable news have brought a positive effect on U.S. news in the last decade.

### **New or Growing Journalism Models**

In an effort to meet demand for fast-paced, accurate news and to do so amid the realities facing media, three progressive models may provide some answers: collaborative journalism, aggregate coverage and private-public media partnerships.

**Collaborative journalism** brings together multiple reporters and editors to cover an issue. They research and write stories collaboratively. The idea is that more people have the capacity to reach out to more sources, therefore crafting a broader, fairer, more accurate story. Collaborative journalism presents its own sets of challenges: If the reporters represent different news organizations, would those traditional news outlets be willing to play in the same sandbox with one another? Does such a model diminish one of the main drivers for media – getting the scoop before the other guy? If the collaborative reporters do not hail from established media, who pays them, and what authority guides coverage or issues professional standards?

**Aggregate journalism:** Alternatively, aggregate journalism curates existing news stories from multiple sources – such as broadcasts, publications, blogs – and puts them all in one place. The Drudge Report is an example of an aggregated site on national issues. In our state, some media organizations, including *Searchlight New Mexico* and *New Mexico in Depth*, produce content that is intended to be distributed through media partners, like newspapers across the state. These entities are providing a valuable service across the state.

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<sup>20</sup> (Todd, 2015)

<sup>21</sup> (Washington Post, 2018)

<sup>22</sup> (NPR, PBS News Hour, Marist Poll, 2017)

<sup>23</sup> (Gallup/Knight Foundation, 2018)



Problems can exist with this type of content, however. What or who ensures the news is substantive? Would the public trust the aggregator? What type of oversight might ensure the news aggregated is culled from disparate outlets, offering a variety of perspectives?

**Private-Public Partnerships (P3s):** We have already noted small trends toward media collaborating with one another. But instances also exist of media partnering with state universities, think tanks or nonprofits focused on policy. An example of this occurred last year when KOB and New Mexico First came together to cover Albuquerque's mayoral debates.<sup>24</sup>

During the 2017 Albuquerque mayoral debates, candidates answered questions during a live evening broadcast that had been formulated by public consensus earlier in the day at four community centers throughout the city. Participants had been asked to read background information on public safety to help develop thoughtful, issue-based questions as a means for yielding an informative and fair mayoral candidate debate. Together, they agreed on the public safety questions that they wanted the mayoral candidates to address.

Might forums such as this be an alternative way of informing the community about issues people care about on a routine basis? Would it work in a digital age?

## Conclusion

Our state and nation rely on a free press, as well as a highly qualified and rigorous press. The increasing marginalization and diminished capacity of local and state journalism – coupled with the growing need to prepare the next generation of ethical, intellectually curious reporters – is critical to a healthy democracy. In New Mexico, it is essential to recognize that good work is underway among many media outlets. It is equally important to acknowledge our shortcomings and seek constructive solutions. This report, and the focus groups to follow, will hopefully move forward constructive discussions about sustainable, reliable journalism in the Land of Enchantment.

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<sup>24</sup> (New Mexico First, 2017)

**i**MPACT ARCHITECTS

# New Mexico News & Information

Community Survey - November 2020

# Top Line Findings

- Daily, 42% of respondents get news and information from social networks, and 41% use an online or digital news source.
- Weekly, 38% get news and information from online neighborhood groups, and 33% from broadcast radio.
- 32.4% would consume local news in Spanish were it available. 54% would not consume local news in a language other than English.
- 59% of respondents report paying for local news. This dramatically higher than the 14% nationally who report paying for a news source.
- Respondents of the survey are frequent consumers of local news, with 44% reporting consuming news frequently or everyday.
- 63% of respondents consider social networks to be one of their primary sources of local news, followed by online news, 52% and radio, 49%.
- On average, around 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with positive statements on their local news.

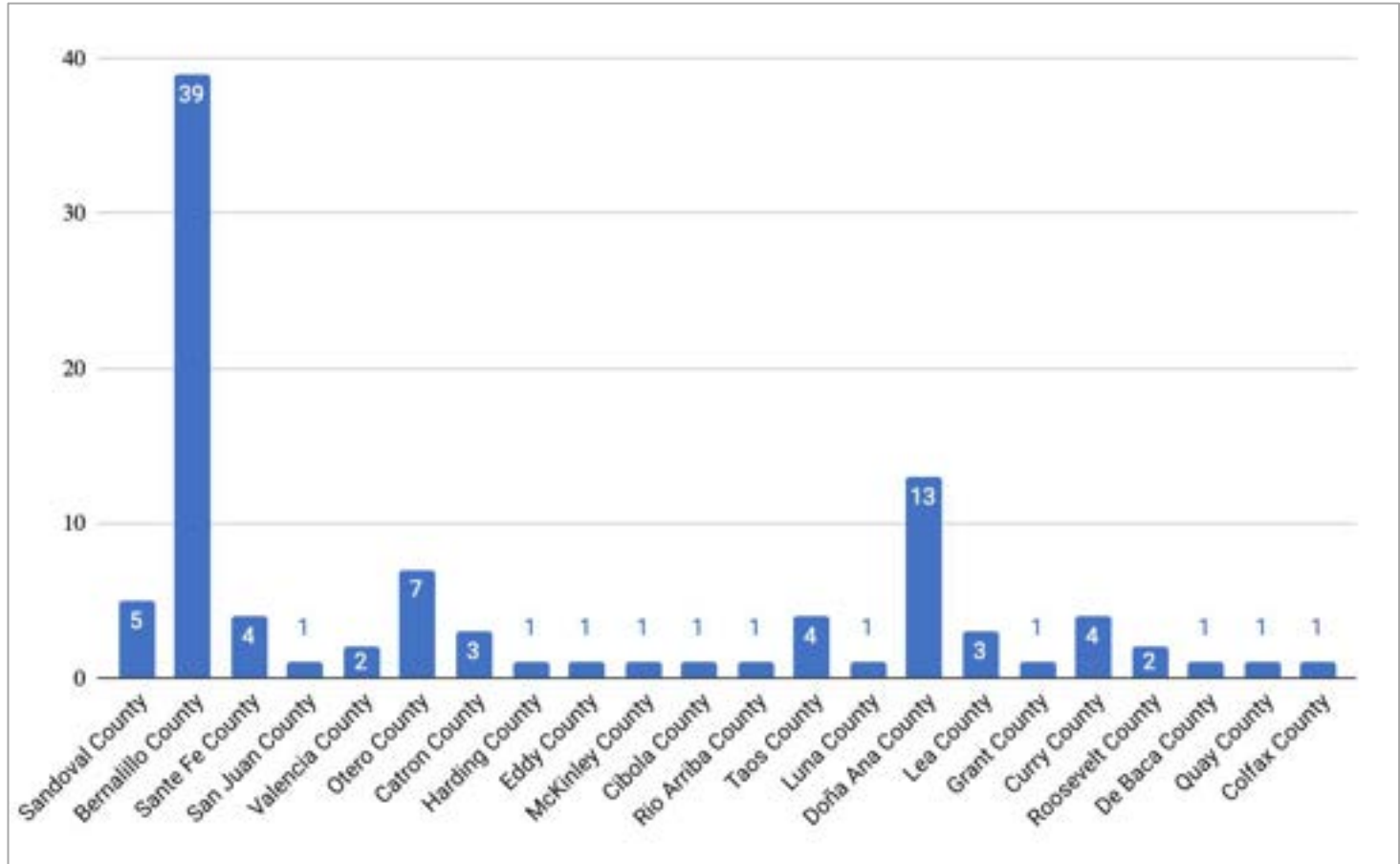
# Top Line Findings

- 61% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the local news is more focused on problems than solutions.
- Respondents expressed a desire for more health news as well as deeper community engagement.
- 67% of respondents feel that their community does have a trustworthy and accessible source for local news and information. Nearly 20% do not. 13% are unsure.
- 14% report radio and 14% TV each as their most trusted source. The most common outlets named as most trusted news sources were KUNM, the Sante Fe New Mexican, and the Albuquerque Journal.
- 42% of respondents report there are not enough local news sources in their area.
- 21% report that subscription cost is too high.
- 15% do not have enough news sources in their preferred language.

## 1. Where do you live?

A plurality of respondents, 39 or 40%, live in Bernalillo County.

13 respondents, 13%, live in Doña Ana County, while 7 respondents, 7% live in Otero County.



3. How would you define your local community?

Respondents defined their local community in a myriad of ways including:

- geographic boundaries, (their city, state, or county)
- density (rural, urban, suburban)

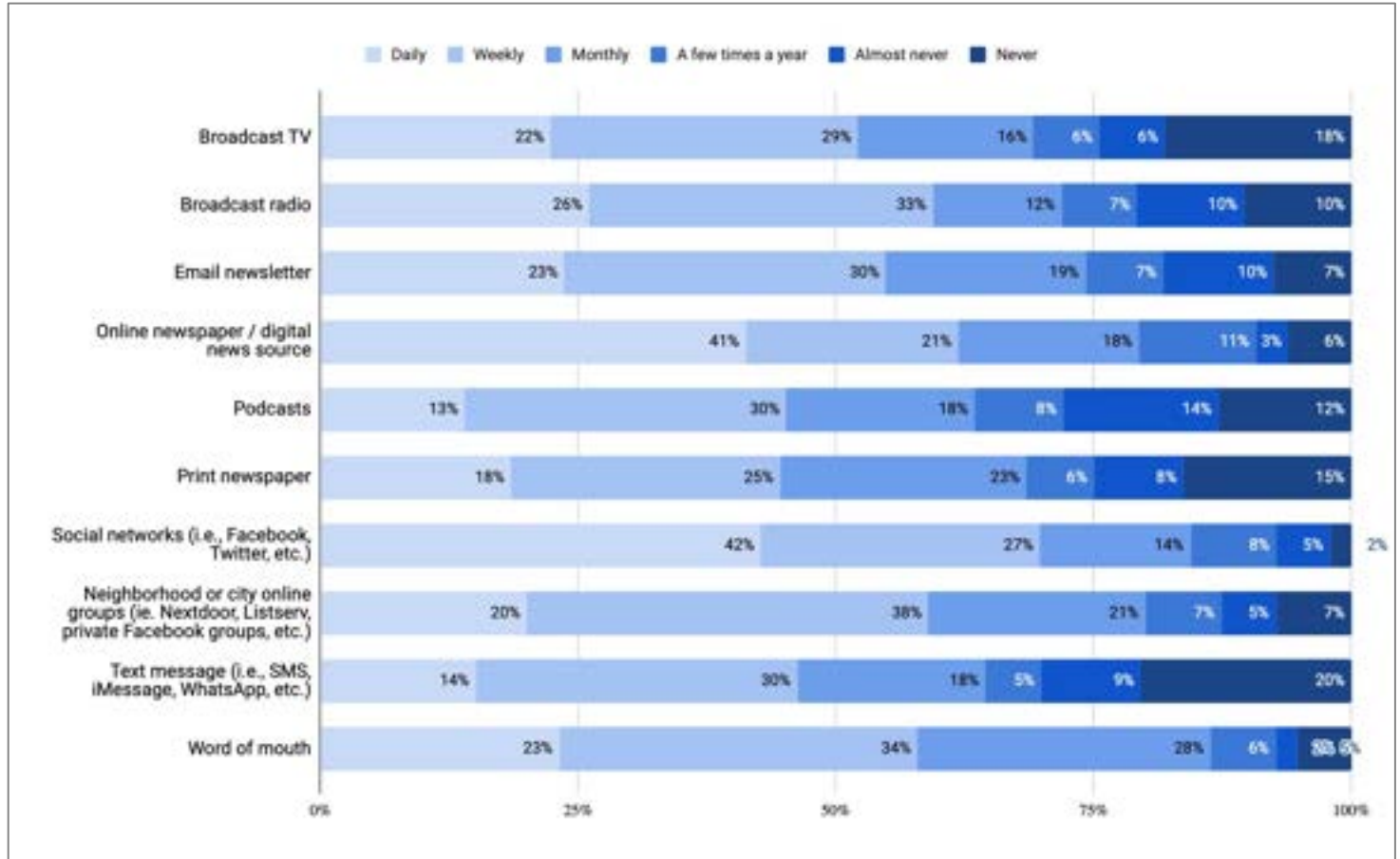
as well as descriptors of their community such as:

- highly educated;
- vibrant;
- warm;
- energetic;
- comfortable;
- friendly;
- clean; and
- peaceful.

3. How often do you get news and information about your local community on the following platforms?

Daily, 42% of respondents get news and information from social networks, and 41% use an online source.

Weekly, 38% get news and information from online neighborhood groups, and 33% from broadcast radio.



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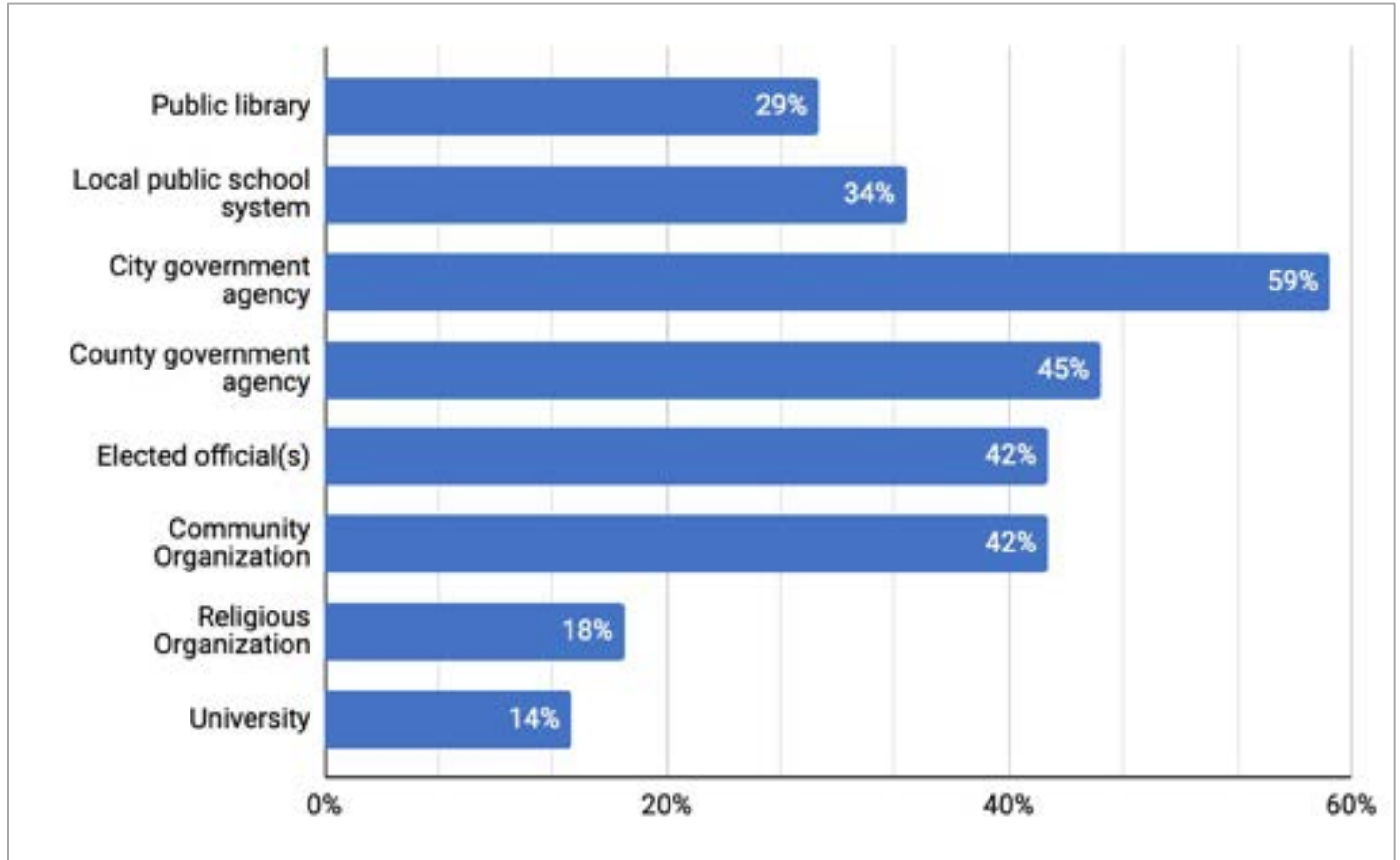
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Few times / Year	Almost Never	Never
<b>Broadcast TV</b>	22%	29%	16%	6%	6%	18%
<b>Broadcast radio</b>	26%	33%	12%	7%	10%	10%
<b>Email Newsletter</b>	23%	30%	19%	7%	10%	7%
<b>Online newspaper / Digital news source</b>	41%	21%	18%	11%	3%	6%
<b>Podcasts</b>	13%	30%	18%	8%	14%	12%
<b>Print newspaper</b>	18%	25%	23%	6%	8%	15%
<b>Social networks</b>	42%	27%	14%	8%	5%	2%
<b>Neighborhood online groups</b> (i.e., Nextdoor, Private Facebook Groups, etc.)	20%	38%	21%	7%	5%	7%
<b>Text message</b> (i.e., SMS, iMessage, WhatsApp, etc.)	14%	30%	18%	5%	9%	20%
<b>Word of mouth</b>	23%	34%	28%	6%	2%	5%



4. Where else do you get news of information about your local community?

*Select all that apply*

59% of respondents report getting local information from their city government agency while 45% get information from a county government agency. 42% get information from elected officials and community organizations.

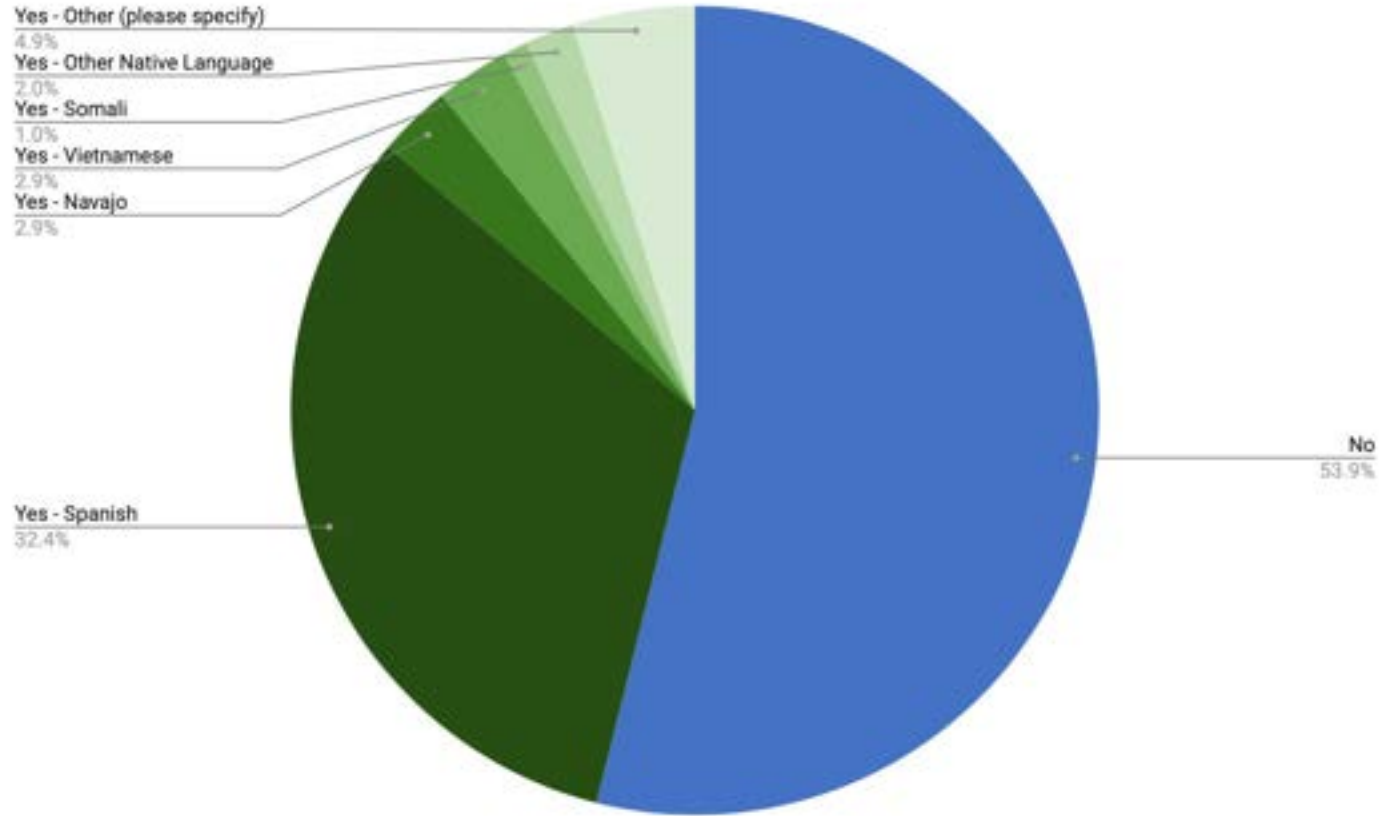


\*Other: Neighbors, Arts organizations

5. If it were available, would you regularly consume local news in a language other than English?

54% would not consume local news in a language other than English.

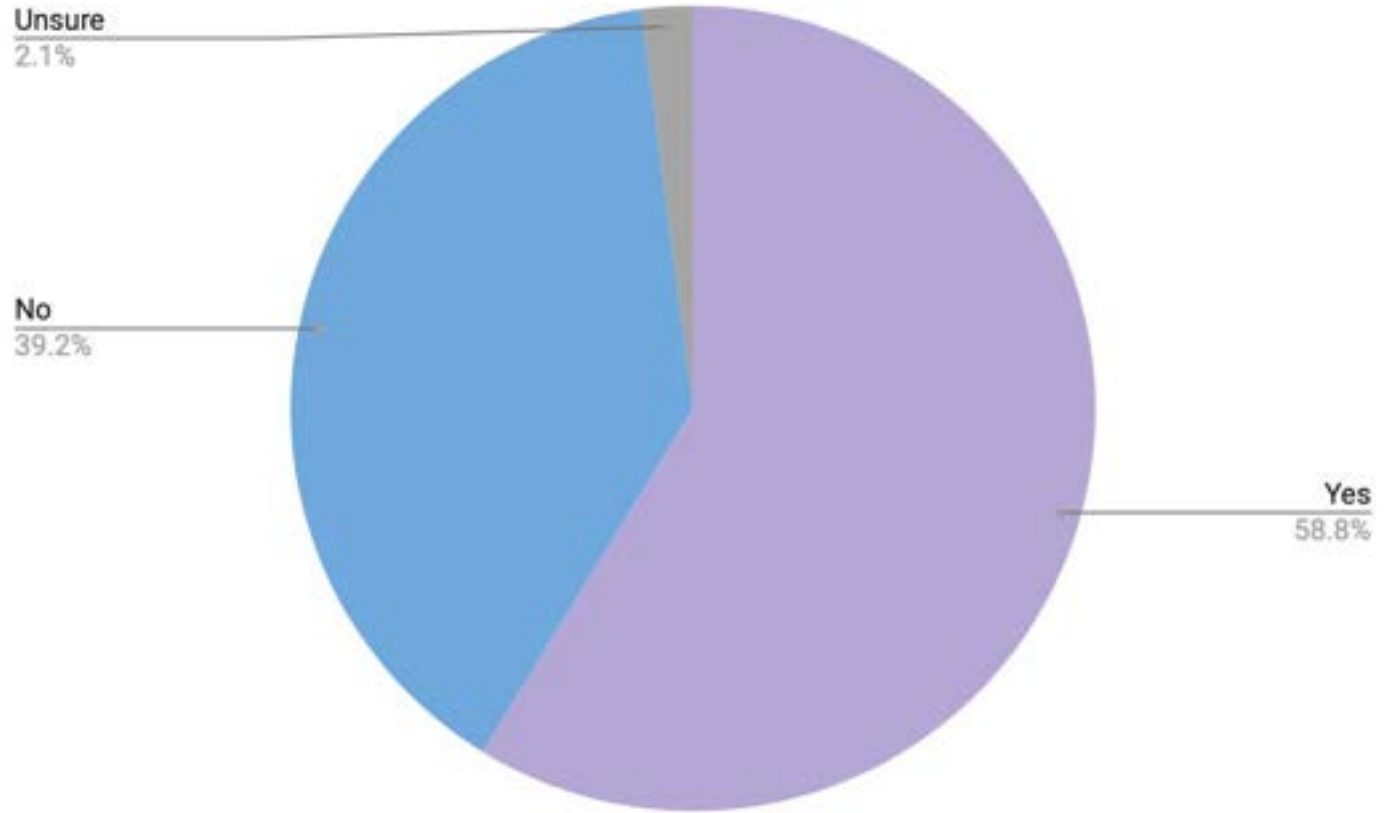
32.4% would consume local news in Spanish were it available.



6. Do you pay for access to local news through a print or digital newspaper subscription?

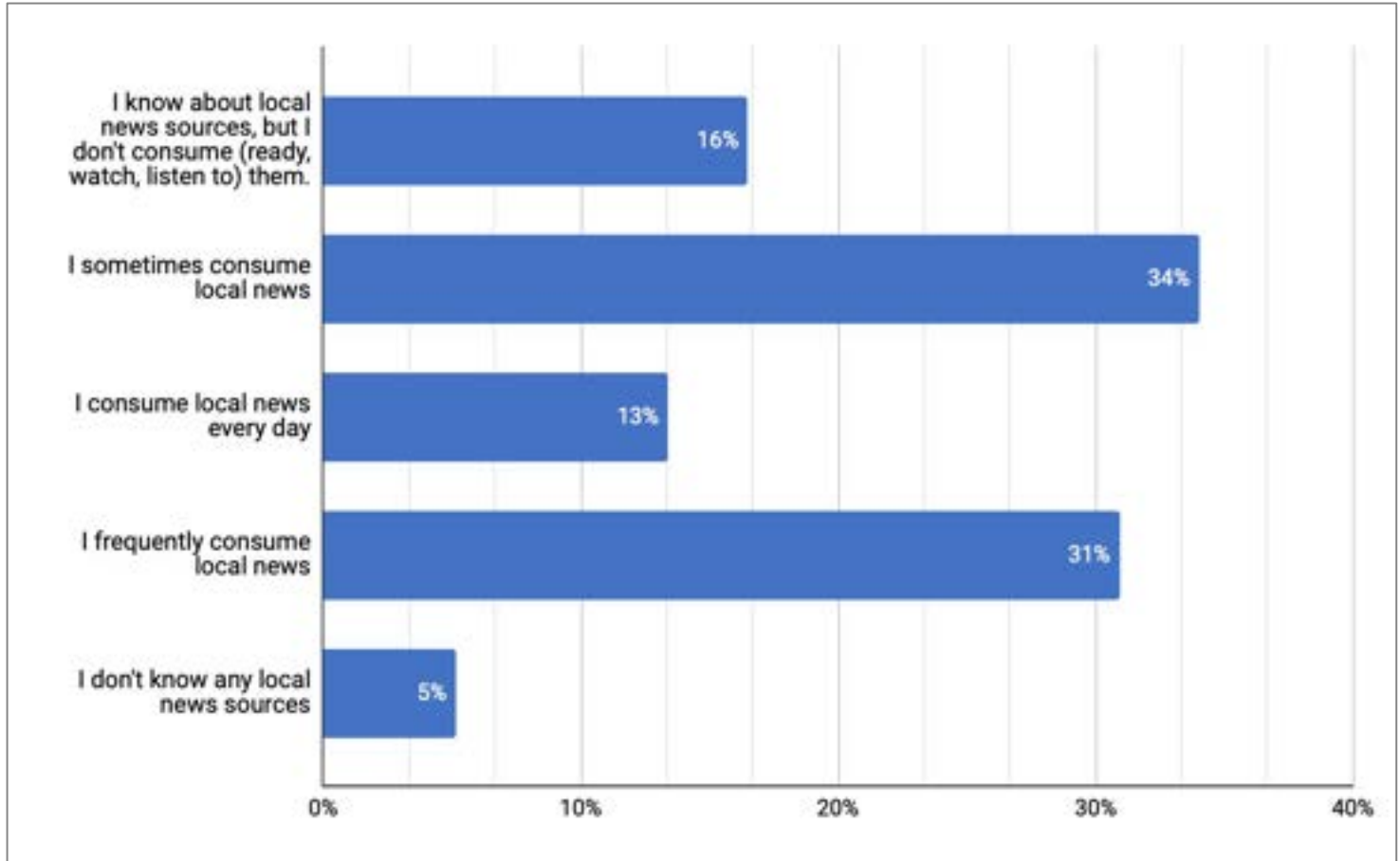
59% of respondents report paying for local news. This dramatically higher than the 14% nationally who report paying for a news source.

This response should be taken in context with who is mostly likely to have completed a survey of this nature.



7. Which statement best describes your relationship with local news sources dedicated to your community in New Mexico?

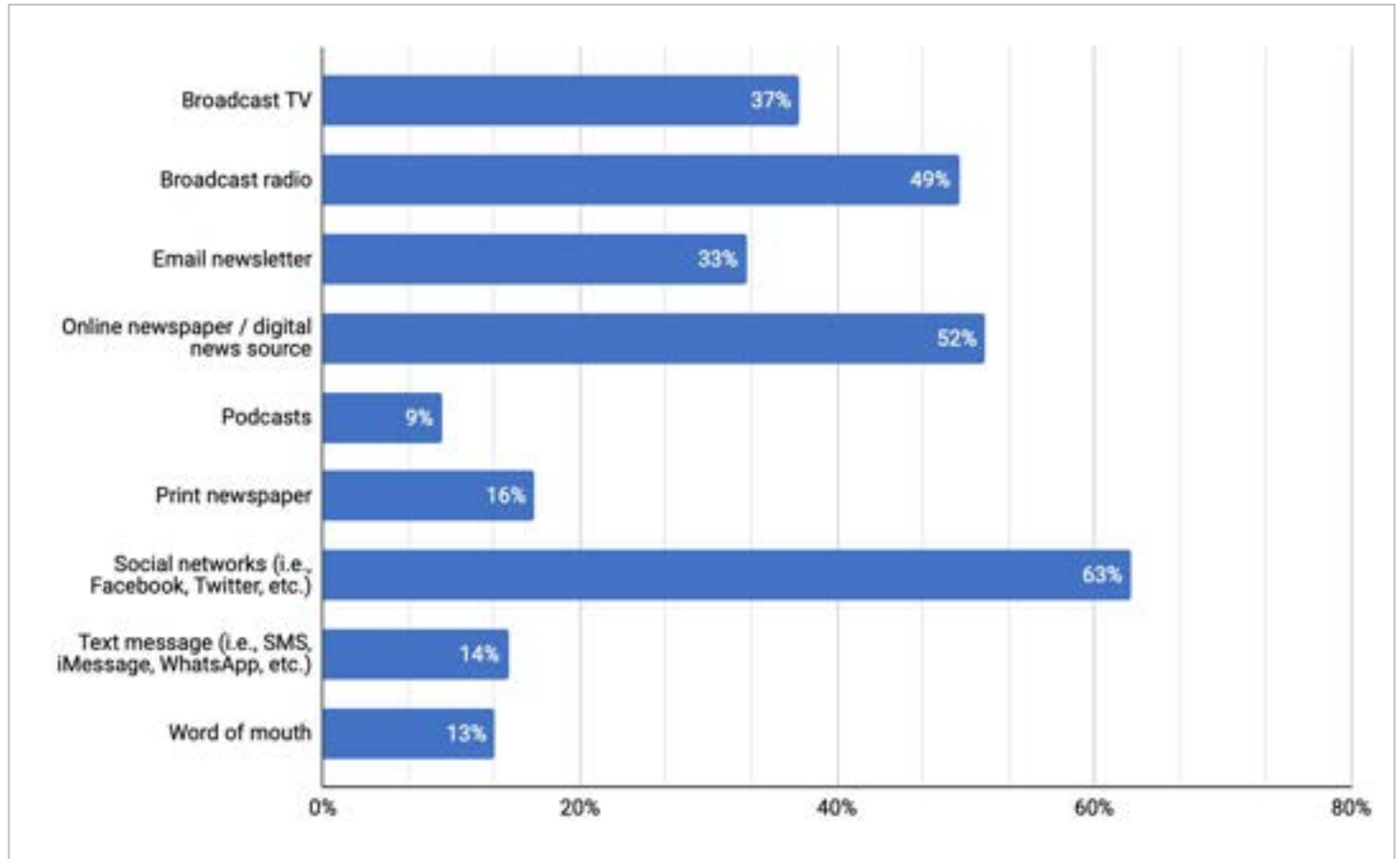
Respondents of the survey are high consumers of local news, with 44% (43 respondents) reporting consuming news frequently or everyday.



8. What do you consider to be your primary source of local news?

Select up to 3.

63% of respondents consider social networks to be one of their primary sources of local news, followed by 52% who report online newspapers or digital sites as one of their primary sources, and 49% radio.

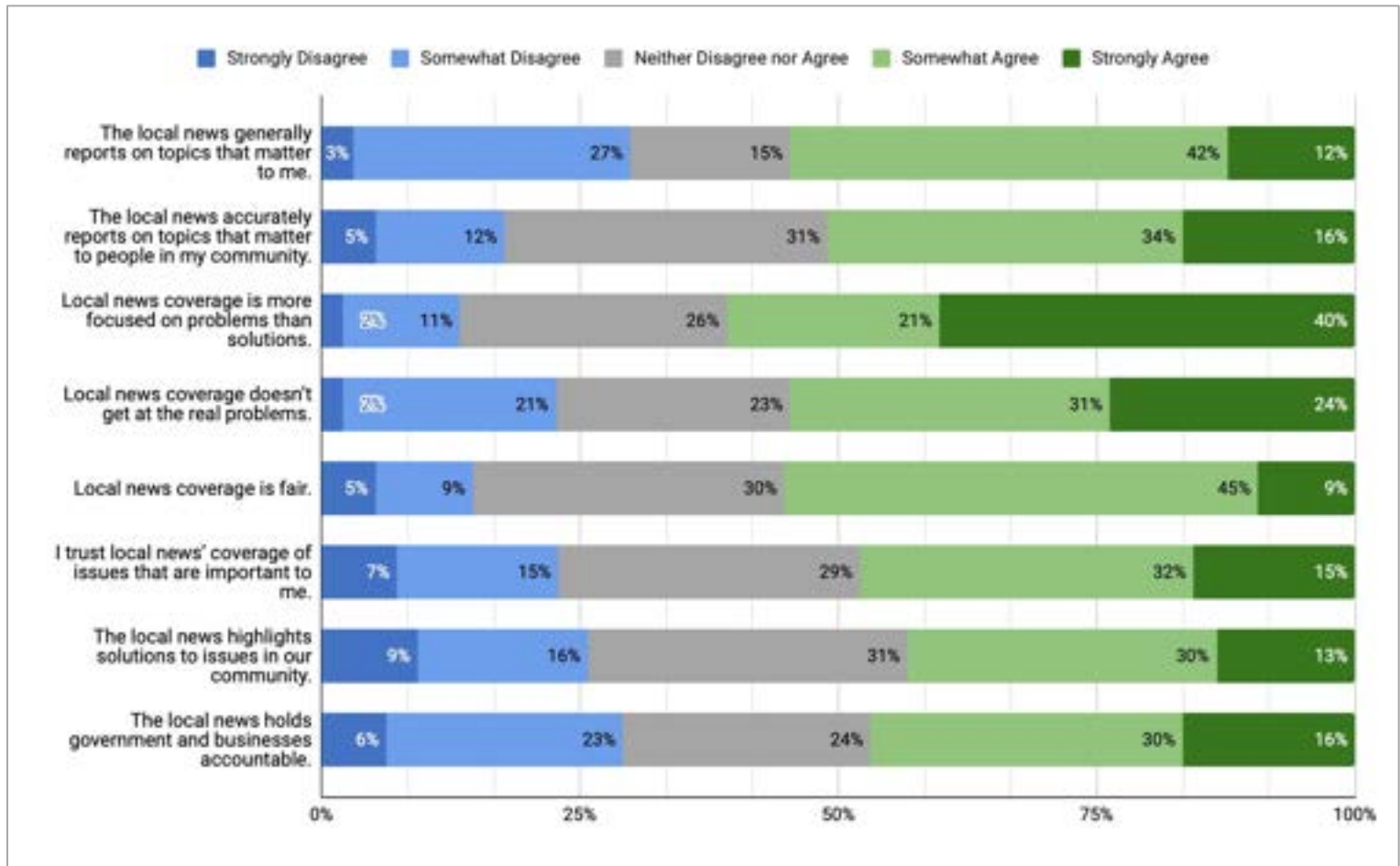


\*Other: Youtube

9. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your source or sources for local news?

On average, around 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with positive statements on their local news.

Though 61% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the local news is more focused on problems than solutions



9. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your source or sources for local news?

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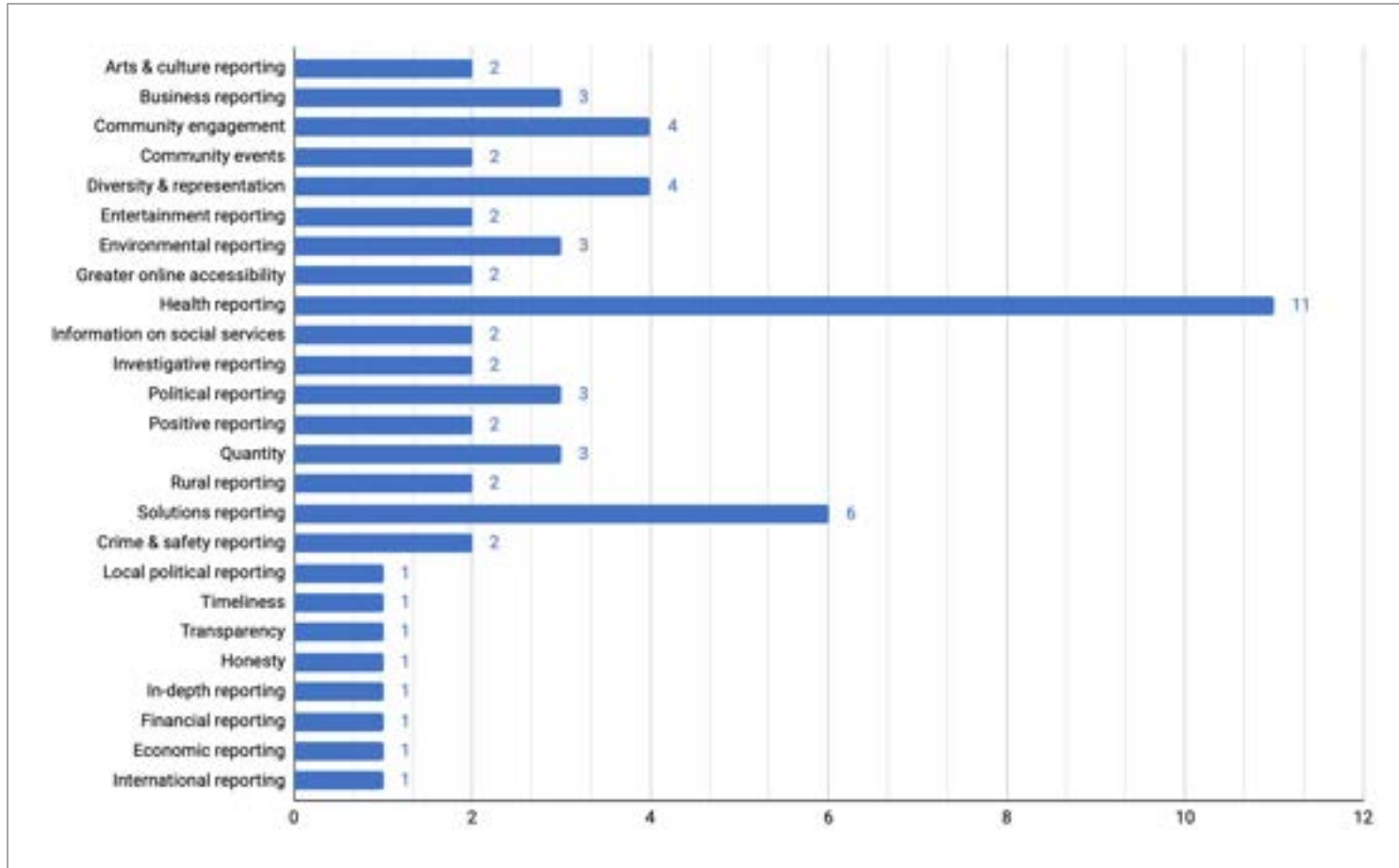
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>The local news generally reports on topics that matter to me.</b>	3%	27%	15%	42%	12%
<b>The local news accurately reports on topics that matter to people in my community.</b>	5%	12%	31%	34%	16%
<b>Local news coverage is more focused on problems than solutions.</b>	2%	11%	26%	21%	40%
<b>Local news coverage doesn't get at the real problems.</b>	2%	21%	23%	31%	24%
<b>Local news coverage is fair.</b>	5%	9%	30%	45%	9%
<b>I trust local news' coverage of issues that are important to me.</b>	7%	15%	29%	32%	15%
<b>The local news highlights solutions to issues in our community.</b>	9%	16%	31%	30%	13%
<b>The local news holds government and businesses accountable.</b>	6%	23%	24%	30%	16%

10. What does your community **need more of** from local news?

Open ended responses were coded to analyze trends. Health reporting was a common response (11 respondents, 11%), unsurprising given the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondents also cited desires for more solutions oriented reporting (6 respondents, 6%).

Additional trends included community engagement and diversity & representation.

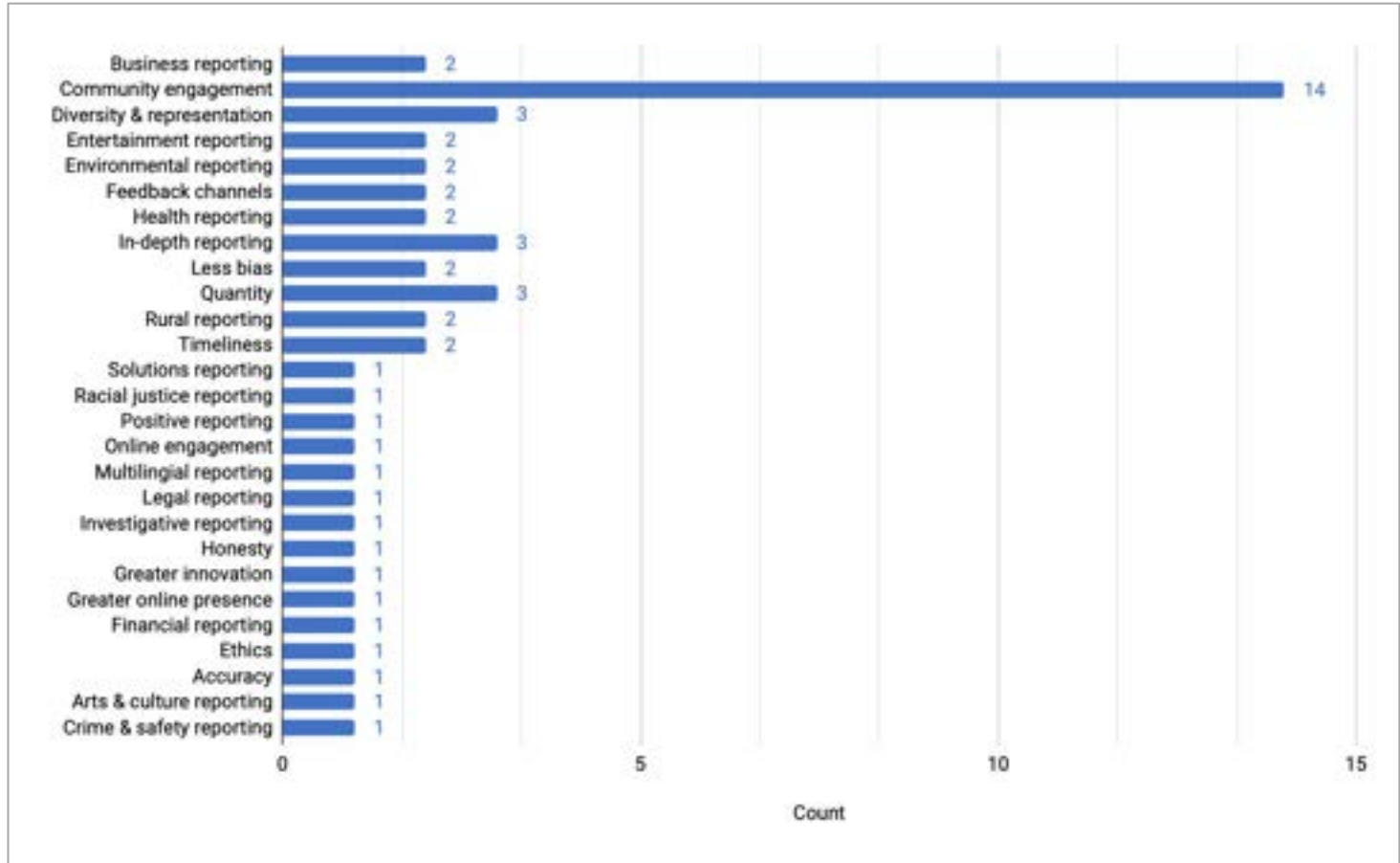




11. In your opinion, how can local news organizations improve their coverage of local issues that matter to you?

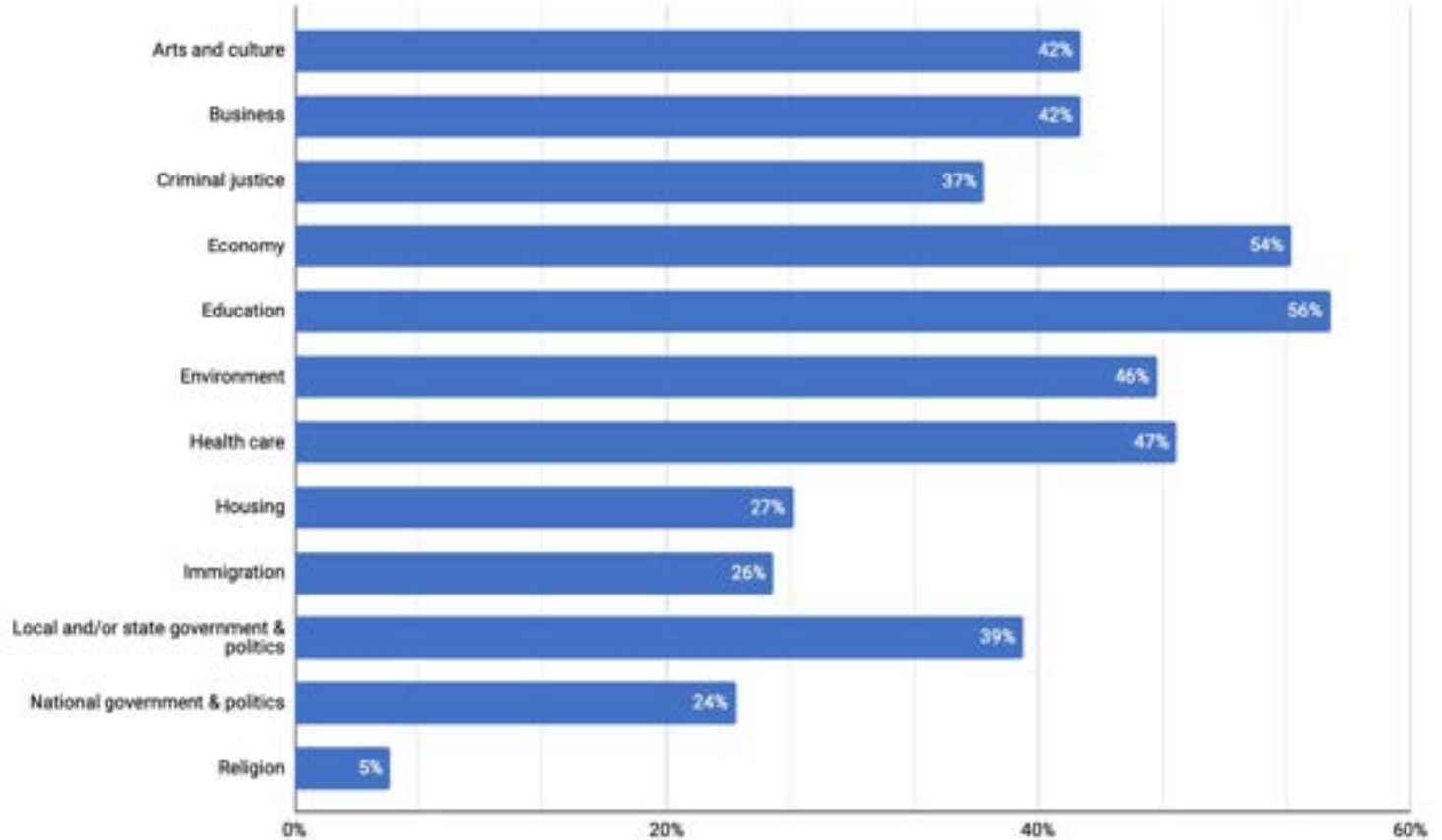
Open ended responses were coded to analyze trends. The most common desire was for community engagement (14 respondents, 14%).

Additional trends were for greater diversity and representation, in-depth reporting, and overall a greater amount of local news (coded as Quantity).



12. About which of the following topics do you regularly seek out news and information specifically relating to your local community in New Mexico?

50% or greater respondents cited seeking out news and information on education (54%), and the economy (50%). More than 40% of respondents seek out news and information on arts and culture, business, the environment, and health care.



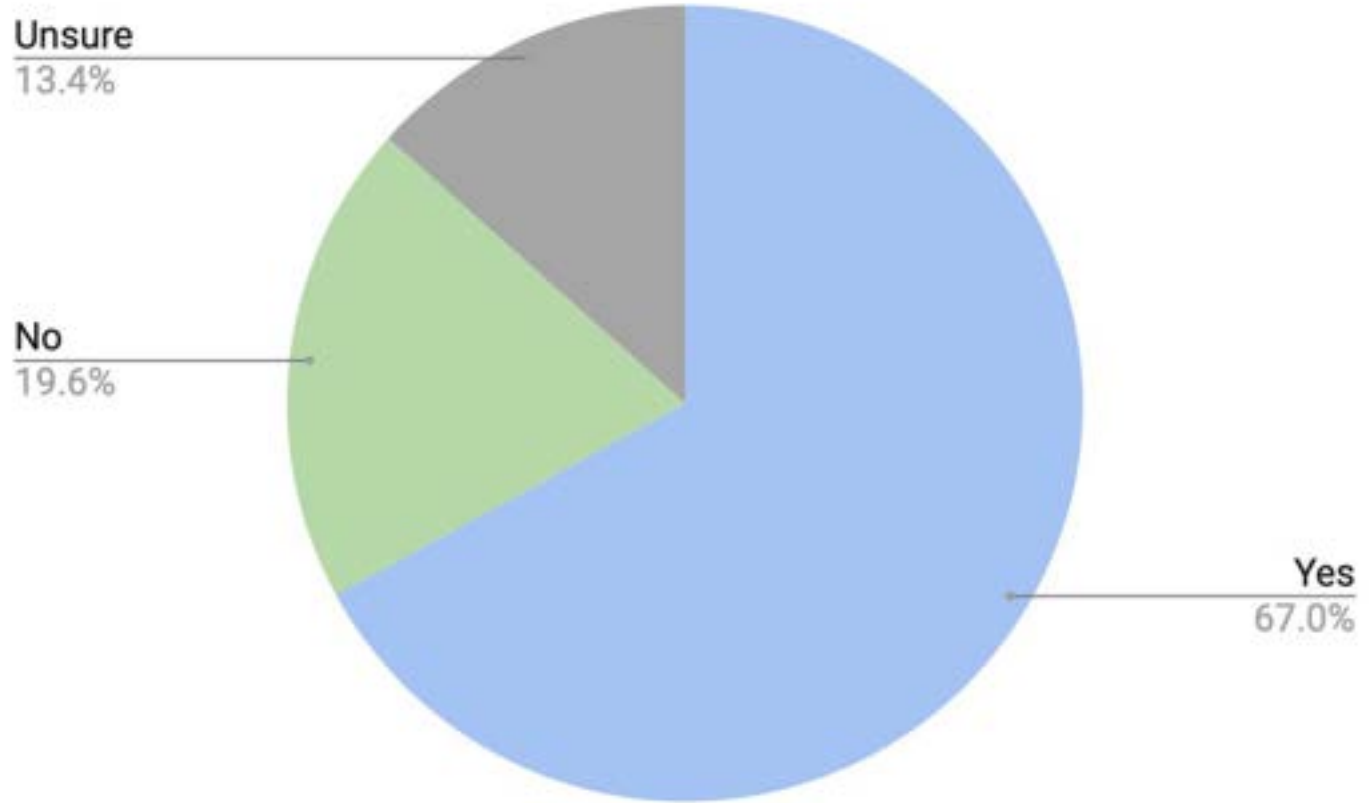
\*Other: Activism, COVID, Policing, Events

13. Do you feel that your community in New Mexico has a trustworthy and accessible source for local news and information?

**67%** of respondents feel that their community **does** have a trustworthy and accessible source for local news and information.

Nearly **20%** do not.

13% are unsure.

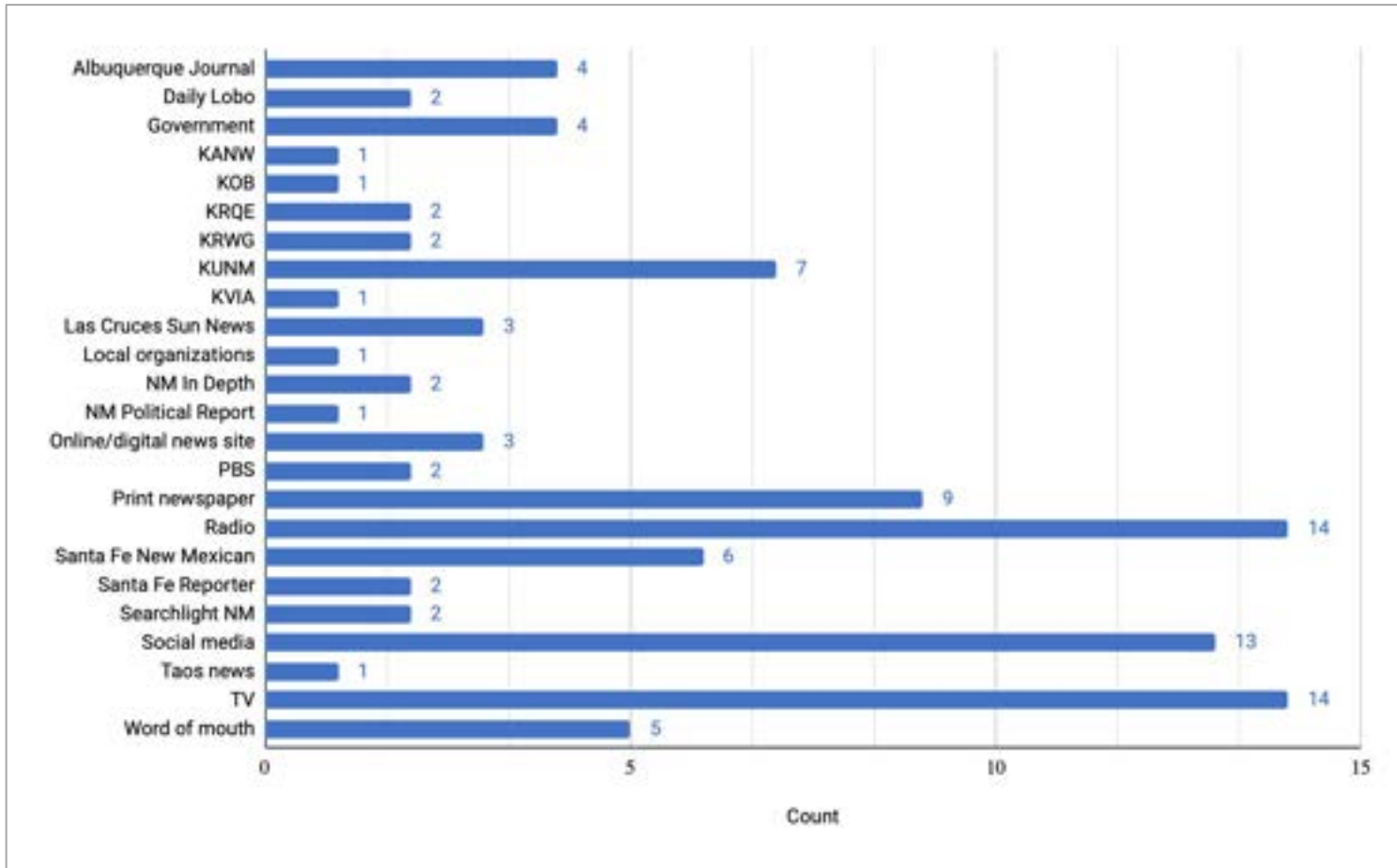


14. What is your most trusted source or sources for local news and information?

Open ended responses were coded to create groupings and analyze trends. One response could include multiple codes.

14 respondents (14%) report radio and TV each as their most trusted source. These are followed by social media, and print newspapers.

The most common outlets named were KUNM, the Sante Fe New Mexican, and the Albuquerque Journal.



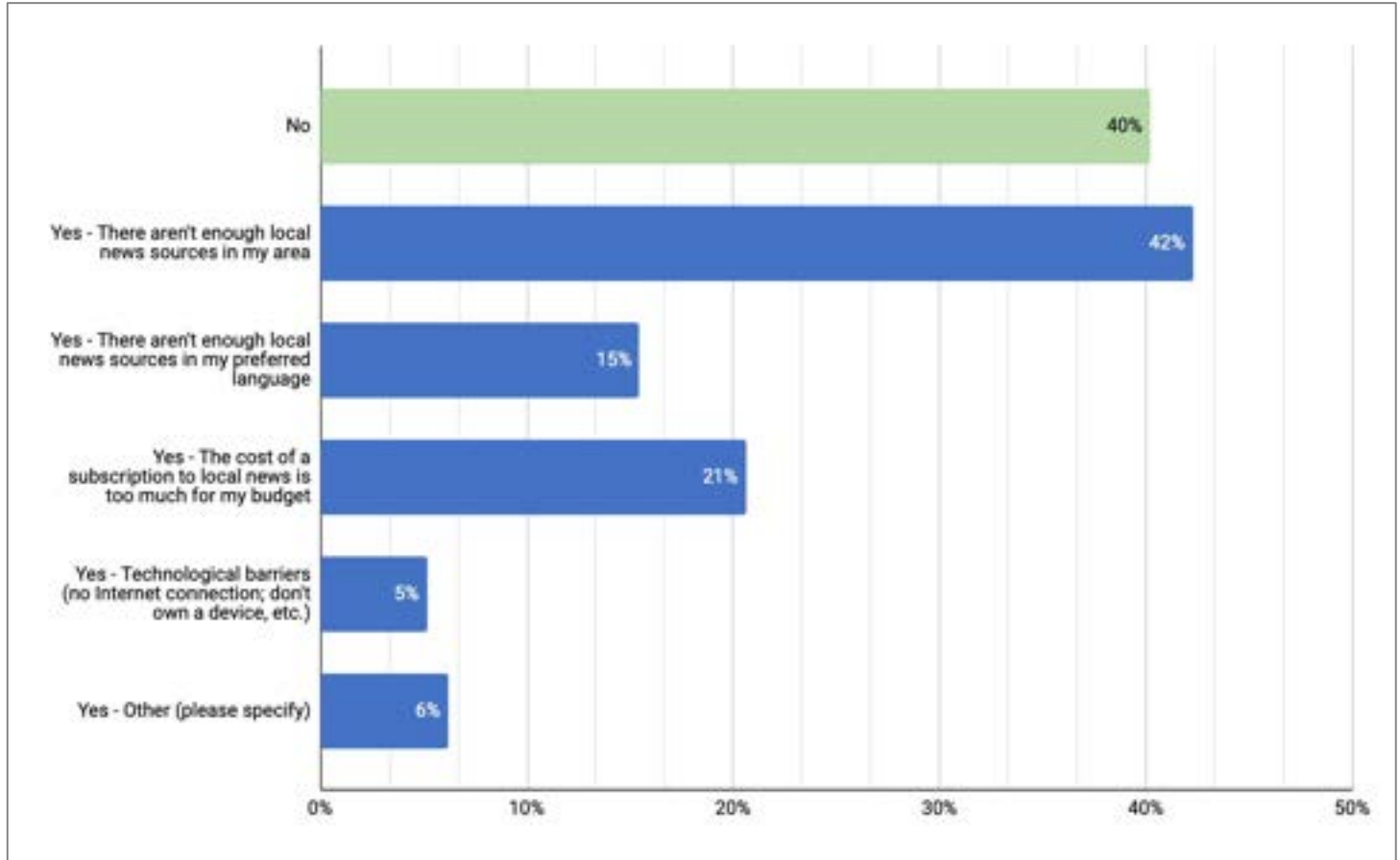
15. Do you feel you have any barriers to accessing local news?

*Select all that apply*

42% of respondents report there are not enough local news sources in their area.

21% report that subscription cost is too high. 15% do not have enough news sources in their preferred language.

40% do not feel they have any barriers to accessing local news.

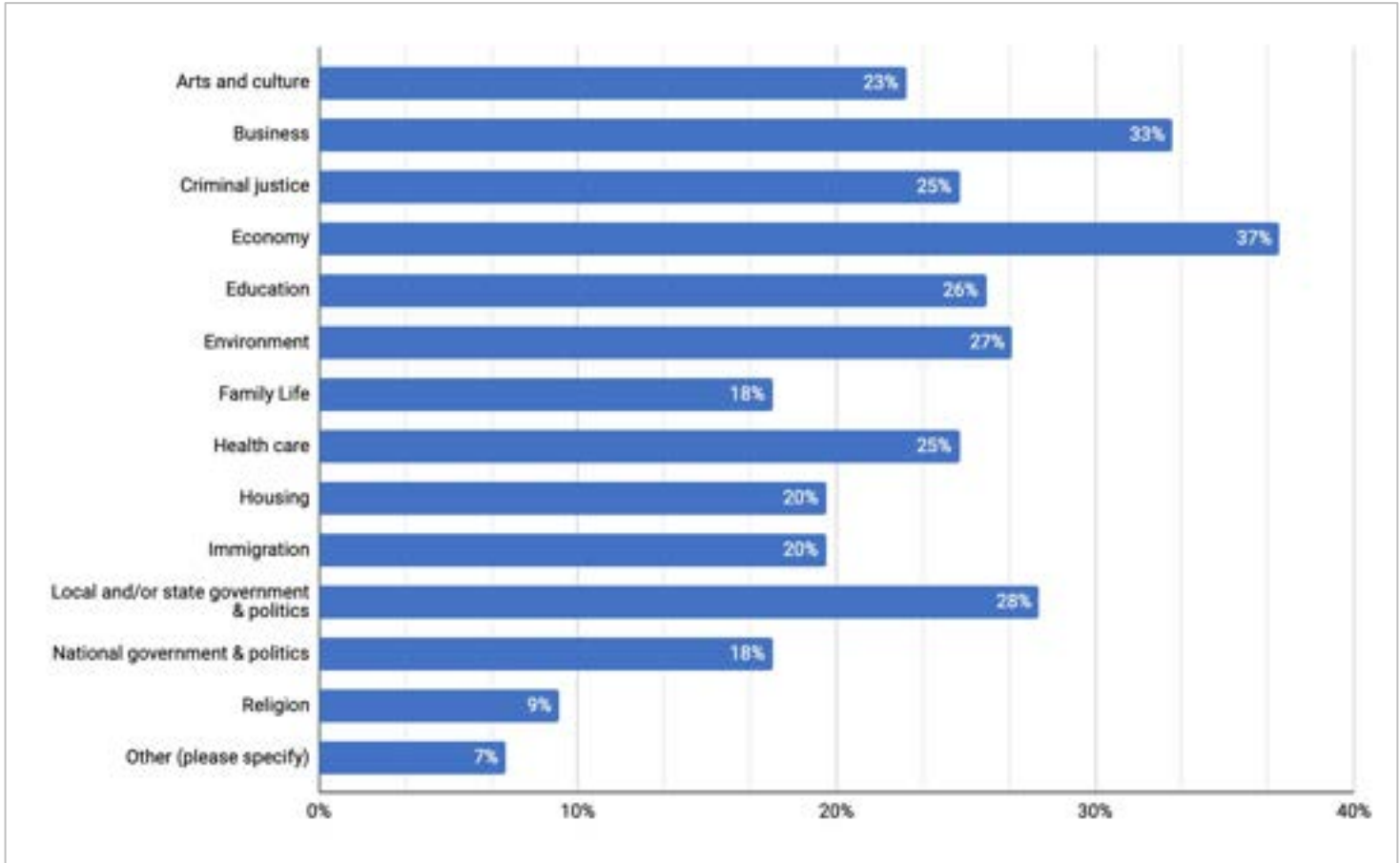


16. In your opinion, which of the following topics do you NOT have local, trustworthy news and information about?

*(Check all that apply)*

The most common topics on which respondents do NOT feel they have trustworthy local news are the economy (37%), and business (33%).

Over a quarter of respondents also feel they do not have trustworthy local news on criminal justice, education, the environment, health care, and local and/or state government and politics.



\*Other: Energy, Homelessness, Community Service

17. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about what you would want from a local news source?

*[Open ended]*

Responses varied and could not be coded to create groupings.

Themes included a desire for more reporting on:

- education;
- immigration;
- housing;
- business;
- health, particularly COVID related information;
- arts & culture; and
- crime & safety news.

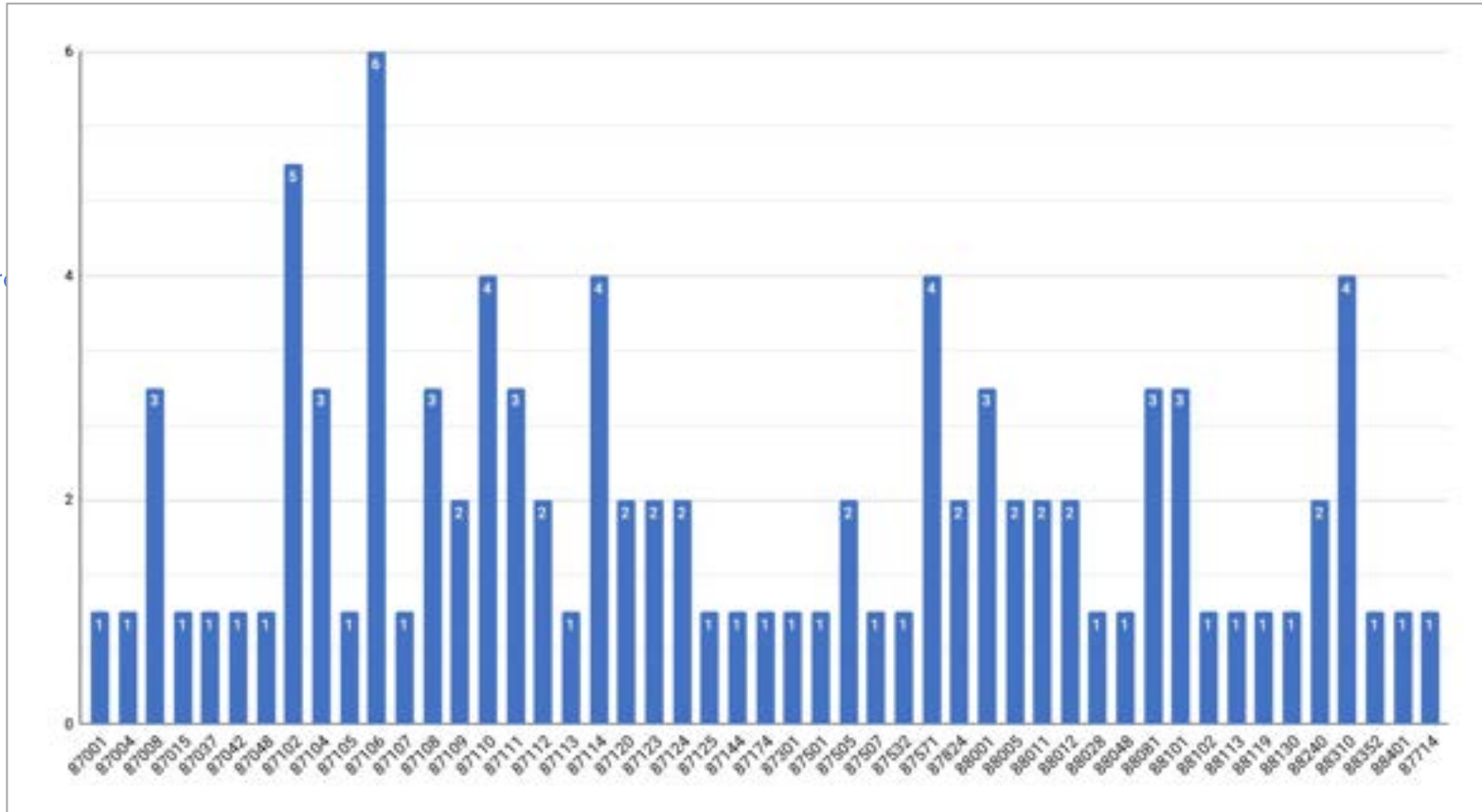
Respondents also wanted more

- ethics, impartiality, and fact-checking; as well as
- more follow up stories, deeper dives, and in depth stories.

22. What is your zip code?

49 zip codes are represented in the sample.

The most common are zip codes 87106, 87102, both in Albuquerque.





<b>18. How do you identify?</b>	
Female	52.6%
Male	41.20%
Third gender or gender nonconforming	1%
Prefer not to say	5.2%

<b>19. How do you describe yourself</b>	
White	62.9%
Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx	17.5%
Black or African American	4.1%
Asian or Asian American	6.2%
Native American or Native Alaskan	3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%
Middle Eastern or Arab	0%
Prefer not to say	8.2%

<b>20. What is your age?</b>	
0-18	0%
19-30	29%
31-45	46%
46-65	21%
66+	4%

<b>21. What level of formal education have you completed?</b>	
Some high school	0%
High School	5.2%
Some university or vocational training	12.4%
Bachelor from four year university	59.8%
M.A., M.S., M. Phil.	13.4%
Doctorate	9.3%

<b>23. How long have you lived in New Mexico?</b>	
Less than 1 year : 4:	3.7%
1 - 3 years: 9 :	8.3%
3 - 5 years: 16:	14.8%
5+ years: 80:	74.1%
	4.1%
	7.2%
	13.4%
	74.2%

<b>24. What is the annual income of your household?</b>	
\$0-\$50,000	18.6%
\$50,001-\$100,000	33%
\$100,001-\$150,000	27.8%
\$150,001-\$200,000	16.5%
More than \$200,000	3.1%

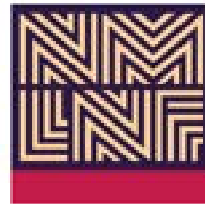


# Sustainable Local Journalism in New Mexico: Community Perspectives

November 2019



**NEW MEXICO FIRST**  
*People. Ideas. Progress.*



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**Participating Communities:**

Los Lunas Rotary Club- Los Lunas, NM

Mesilla Valley Rotary Club- Las Cruces, NM

Native Entrepreneurs in Residence- Albuquerque, NM

Portales Rotary Club- Portales, NM

Taos Entrepreneur Network- Taos, NM

Taos Rotary Club- Taos, NM

Peralta, Belen, and Los Lunas Ad Hoc- Valencia County, NM

**Researcher:** New Mexico First

**Facilitator and Lead Author:** Lilly B. Irvin-Vitela, MCRP

**New Mexico First**

P. O. Box 56549

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87187

Phone: 505-225-2140

Website: [www.nmfirst.org](http://www.nmfirst.org)

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# Foreword

## Purpose of this Report

This background report builds a rationale for the importance of vibrant local journalism to community well-being. By harvesting the wisdom of civically engaged leaders across New Mexico communities, this report acknowledges the need for accurate and relevant sources of information. Credible information from trustworthy sources allows community members to make informed decisions for their families, businesses, and civic institutions; engage in community-building efforts; and participate in the democratic process. As our world becomes increasingly complex, the value of local perspectives to inform community life, policy, and a sense of place is increasingly important.

The staff and board of New Mexico First believe that effective deliberations require a sound foundation in accurate information, community knowledge, and effective tools to examine opportunities and challenges facing communities. Funding and thought leadership from the New Mexico Local News Fund has provided New Mexico First with capacity to explore questions, concerns, and opportunities to strengthen local journalism in New Mexico. This effort is building on New Mexico First's ongoing commitment to good government. The role of the Fourth Estate in good government is time-honored and as relevant today as at the birth of our democracy. This working principle was amplified in the lively community conversations that emerged in our focus groups statewide.

The focus groups are part of an ongoing body of work that New Mexico has been committed to advancing to sustain community assets and strengthen New Mexico. In March 2018, New Mexico First published a report entitled, *“Advancing Sustainable, Reliable Journalism in New Mexico.”* In the Spring of 2019, New Mexico First hosted a public forum on sustainable journalism. This report is based on focus groups held in five communities across New Mexico, a few guided interviews with key informants, and research about emerging national strategies to protect and sustain local journalism.

**Note:** There are few right or wrong answers to any public policy question, and the problems and opportunities around our state's journalism and media capacity are complex. As a result, no brief explanation of the situation – including this report – can cover all information and opinions available. The people, media professionals, policymakers and government experts of New Mexico will lend their knowledge and expertise to the question of how to strengthen journalism in New Mexico.

## About New Mexico First

A statewide public policy organization committed to civic engagement, **New Mexico First** involves people in critical issues facing their state and communities. The nonpartisan, nonprofit group produces comprehensive policy reports – primarily on good governance, natural resources, education, health and the economy. These analyses inform policy discussions, legislative options and often student and community learning. These documents also provide

the foundation for New Mexico First's unique town halls and forums that convene people to develop proposals to improving the state. The reports are available at [nmfirst.org](http://nmfirst.org). Our state's two U.S. Senators – Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich – serve as New Mexico First's honorary co-chairs. The organization was co-founded in 1986 by retired U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici.

## **About The New Mexico Local News Fund**

The New Mexico Local News Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation is a collaborative fund that supports people and organizations building a more connected, collaborative and sustainable local news and information ecosystem.

## **Contributors and Reviewers**

Steve Fuhlendorf, Executive Director of the Taos Entrepreneurial Network and member of the Taos Rotary, was instrumental in our focus group convenings in Taos, NM. More than 30 residents of Taos, NM participated in one or more focus group convening in the community. Participants included life-long residents of Taos as well as people new to the community. There were people of diverse ages, races/ethnicities, genders and professional backgrounds. There were people with experience working in media and journalism at radio stations, newspapers, other print and on-line publications, and in television. There were people with experience in health, real estate, community development, education, government, and small to large businesses. Participants shared an interest in community life, local journalism, and the importance of civic engagement. The local publisher also attended one of the focus groups.

Karl Terry, Executive Director of the Roosevelt County Chamber of Commerce and Portales Rotarian, and Noelle Bartl, Associate Vice President for Advancement at Eastern New Mexico University, Executive Director of the ENMU Foundation, and President of the Portales Rotary, provided leadership and hosted a strong and engaged focus group in Portales. There were 23 adults ranging across the career lifespan from emerging leaders to seasoned professionals and retirees. A former journalist and editor, a university journalism professor, a local publisher, as well as community leaders with experience outside of the news business attended.

Andrea Dresser, member of Las Cruces Mesilla Valley Rotary International, was key to coordinating a successful early morning focus group with more than a dozen community leaders from diverse personal and professional backgrounds. Local health and human service providers, for profit and not for profit business leaders, high school and university educators, and entrepreneurs participated. There were people with professional experience in the news industry and people who read, watch, and listen to the news daily.

Jake Foreman, Program Manager at New Mexico Community Capital, recruited six members of the Native Entrepreneurs in Residence Program for a thoughtful and considered focus group about the meaning of news, sustainable local journalism, and cultural practices for sharing news. Participants were from Pueblos, Tribes, and Bands from New Mexico and across the United States. All participants were entrepreneurs, and many shared other experiences such as academic and non-profit program management.

Sammy Lopez, Executive Director of the New Mexico Press Association and Valencia County resident, was key in supporting the convening of a focus group in Valencia County which included six participants. Participants included people with significant experience in journalism, as well as people with diverse professional experience ranging from information technology and computer programming, to the travel industry, health, and research.

Judge John Chavez, President of the Los Lunas Rotary, arranged an opportunity for members to discuss the importance of local journalism and qualities of trusted media with New Mexico First. 13 community members participated and included current and retired educators, business leaders, elected officials, and a religious leader.

By working primarily with civic organizations and self-organizing community groups, this focus group research intentionally raised the voices of people who are leaders in their local communities and beyond. All the focus groups involved people who are actively involved in creating and participating in community life. Service and volunteerism were common characteristics of participants. People disclosed reading the paper, watching the news, and listening to radio and podcasts at higher rates than the general public. The groups were politically diverse. While no one was asked to disclose their political perspectives, several people disclosed their political ideology throughout the course of the focus groups. There were people who self-described as Libertarians, conservatives, liberals, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Socialists, progressives, and not political.

A special thanks to The New Mexico Foundation for Open Government (NMFOG), for honoring Senator Gregg Fulfer, a resident of Jal, New Mexico and co-owner of the Jal Record. Senator Fulfer won a Dixon Award for his efforts to promote open government. In his acceptance speech he spoke eloquently about the importance of local journalism in fair and effective governance. Senator Fulfer graciously agreed to an interview, quotes from which are included in this report.

Report reviewers include Sarah Gustavus and Rashad Mahmood of the New Mexico Local News Fund.

We are grateful for the shared commitment to New Mexico's future.

## **The New Mexico First Team**

This New Mexico First report was prepared by Lilly Irvin-Vitela, MCRP, Sharon Berman, MA, Gabrielle Ontiveros, BS, and Wendy Wintermute, PhD. Lilly Irvin-Vitela was the lead researcher, focus group facilitator, and author. The New Mexico First team reached out to communities to help organize focus groups with the assistance of local leaders. Staff recorded and transcribed hours of conversations, and team members reviewed the report to ensure that the voices of community leaders in New Mexico were accurately represented.

## Questions Used in the Focus Group Process

1. What is happening in your local press that is positive and strong?
2. How is local news part of the health of your community?
3. What makes you worry about local journalism in your community?
4. What qualities do you look for in local journalism that you trust?
5. How do you support local media right now in your community?
6. How is local news different than news from statewide or national news?
7. What things do you want to see covered in your local news outlets?
8. What challenges do you think news organizations are facing in your community?
9. For business owners or folks who might advertise with local media, how would you describe your role as an advertiser? Follow up: how could your role be different and better support local media?
10. How do you see your role as a subscriber or member of local news? Follow up: What do you think your role could be in order to better support local media?
11. If you were to imagine a new way of supporting local media in your community, what might that look like? (examples: trade of skills like graphic design, event planning, convening potential sources, etc.)
12. Advertising is one way that some local news outlets are currently raising revenue. How can local communities support advertising in local media in new ways?
13. What kind of local content do you think is most important for your local media to cover? Follow up: How could you ensure local media outlets have the resources they need to cover that?
14. What can local communities do to ensure that they are getting news that is locally relevant?
15. Is there a perspective you hoped to share today that you didn't have an opportunity to express?

### Where Do We Get Our Information?

Throughout this document, the primary data source is the voices of New Mexicans. We draw from focus group narratives that were facilitated by Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First President and Executive Director. Additionally, this report draws from previously published reports, newspaper and journal articles, first-hand interviews and online resources. All direct quotes are from focus groups or interviews conducted for this report unless otherwise noted. We know that policymakers, researchers and students use our reports, so we provide the details you need to learn more and answer your questions. Footnotes provide short references and full citations are in the Works Cited section.



# Introduction

Villages, small towns, and cities are trying to protect and preserve local media as an important community asset. National headlines lament challenges to local news, demonstrating a concerning pattern that resonates in New Mexico and beyond. In October 2019, in Vivian Wang’s article, “Local News Is Dying. New York May Try to Pass a Law to Save It,” she describes a “first-in-the nation bill” that legislators in New York are proposing to “force cable companies to offer independent local news.”<sup>1</sup> Legislators in New York are advocating for new requirements which would at a minimum require local news programming with coverage of “news, weather, and public affairs programming.”<sup>2</sup> This legislation builds on policy efforts at the federal level. The article notes that “Federal regulators have also long set regulations for broadcast networks, including an expectation that they promote a diversity of viewpoints, and foster public understanding of important problems and issues facing their local communities.”<sup>3</sup> Wang goes on to explain that this proposed legislation is a “concrete example of shifting attitudes toward corporate responsibility” as stakeholders “acknowledge the need for firms to think not only of profits but also of their impact on society.”<sup>4</sup> In Fall 2019 focus groups that were facilitated by New Mexico First, participants identified areas of shared responsibility among communities and news media to sustain local journalism.

April Simpson’s October 2019 article, “As Local News Outlets Shutter, Rural America Suffers Most,”<sup>5</sup> also resonates with what New Mexico leaders discussed in recent focus groups. The article explores the challenges people experience when they live in a “news desert.” While accustomed to deserts in New Mexico, adapting to news deserts and civic engagement deserts creates threats to our sense of community, connections, and democracy. “A vibrant free press, protected from government interference by the First Amendment, can hold the powerful to account and empower readers to make informed decisions on major issues.”<sup>6</sup> As local news declines and the complexity of decision-making expands in our globalized world, communities are looking for solutions.

The focus groups facilitated by New Mexico First invited community leaders in business, academia, media, faith communities, and civic life to explore the importance of local media, identify the qualities of local media that they want to advance, prioritize the kind of coverage that communities need and want, and consider strategies to sustain reliable local journalism.

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<sup>1</sup> Wang, V. (2019, September). *Local News is Dying. New York May Try to Pass a Law to Save It*. Retrieved from The New York Times: [www.nytimes.com/2019/10/21/nyregion/verizon-news-cable-ny.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/21/nyregion/verizon-news-cable-ny.html)

<sup>2</sup> (Wang, 2019)

<sup>3</sup> (Wang, 2019)

<sup>4</sup> (Wang, 2019)

<sup>5</sup> Simpson, A. (2019, October 21). *As Local News Outlets Shutter, Rural America Suffers Most*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2019/10/21/as-local-news-outlets-shutter-rural-america-suffers-mostv>

<sup>6</sup> (Simpson, 2019)

# The Importance of Local News

## Informing Community, Connections, & Decision-making

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Participants across five New Mexico communities participated in six focus groups in Fall 2019. They demonstrated a strong personal relationship with journalism. Facilitated focus group conversations tapped into core values, world views, our diverse and shared understandings of home town, nation and community. Several of the framing questions in the focus groups invited participants to explain and describe why local news is important to them

personally and why they think it is important in our respective communities. Four centering themes emerged. 1) Local news is an important tool for mobilizing and sustaining community involvement and civic life. 2) Local news facilitates community connections and creates and reflects a sense of place and community. 3) Local journalism is important because of its role as the Fourth Estate to be a vehicle for transparency and hold a standard for open government. 4) Reliable local journalism is an essential ingredient in a healthy democracy. This chapter of the focus group outcomes report raises the voices of participants across New Mexico on issues related to the importance of local news in informing communities, strengthening community connections, informing decision-making, and practicing democracy.

### A. Community Involvement and Civic Life

By reaching out to local leaders across New Mexico, the New Mexico First research team was able to learn from people with a strong track record of civic engagement. These business and community leaders participate routinely in civic organizations and events in a voluntary capacity. By virtue of their recruitment into the focus groups, they are people who lead and serve to strengthen community. It is no surprise that they saw sustainable local journalism as an important contribution to civic life and tool for advancing community involvement. Leaders were also able to identify concerns about the impacts to civic life when local journalism is absent.

#### Valuable Contributions

- “One of the things I love about eastern NM news is the fact that it is a conduit for the schedule and times and nature of everything, events occurring in Clovis, Portales, and sometimes Tucumcari and Fort Sumner. I read about events that are open to the public. I use it to determine what I want to be involved in. I find it invaluable.” ~Resident- Portales, NM

- “Those of us who want to perpetuate the vision of Portales know how important local news is. Well before WWI, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, we had local news. It’s such an essential part of the character of the community fabric... a character-building institution. Those of us who want to preserve Portales as an entity as the splendid place it is should support the newspaper.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “In terms of what’s working, KUNM, Native America Calling, and Green Fire Times. They cover Native communities, health, our local economies, and tell our stories.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “From an economic develop standpoint, one of the things that keeps people in community is quality of life. People may go off, have a job, then decide to come back home because there was something there that attracted them. Newspapers are one more thing that can get you involved, make you a part of the community. It’s a positive thing.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Community radio stations and a local paper are amazing assets to share information.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Local media lets people know what we’re doing, like Clothes for Kids.” ~Resident- Los Lunas, NM

## Concerns

- “When there are shrinking media outlets, that means there are shrinking perspectives, and fewer voices in community.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Businesses look at local media to decide to set up in a community. If there’s not much going on, it’s negative. Or if there is little investment, it might send the message to do business somewhere else.” ~Resident- Portales, New Mexico
- “In New Mexico, non-local papers have very little local news, or even local weather forecasts.” ~Resident- Taos, New Mexico
- “You get a different perspective when you’re getting your news from Colorado or Texas. How do you know what’s important in your community?” ~Resident- Taos, New Mexico

## B. Community Connections and a Sense of Place



Sim Van der Ryn, an American architect, researcher, and educator, once wrote, “Without local knowledge, places erode.”<sup>7</sup> While he was writing about physical and social ecology, this understanding speaks to the relationship between communities and local journalism. Sharing information about community relationships, happenings, and history are part of how people experience a connected sense of place. Focus group participants across communities described daily or at least frequent

<sup>7</sup> Sim Van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan. *Ecological Design*. Island Press. 1995.

personal rituals of accessing and sharing news as they develop their own working understanding of the world. They also described the complex process of processing information for themselves and others. People regularly reflected together about the importance of accessing and understanding information to make personal, community, and political decisions from issues ranging from work and home to their neighborhood, hometown, and the larger nation and world. Appreciation was expressed in communities where participants were able to use local news to stay informed and engaged. People who did not have regular access to local news described efforts to try to navigate communities and build an understanding of the people, places, and opportunities to connect to others around them. Participants also expressed concern about the viability of a community that does not have access to local news. In the following quotes from focus group participants, some of the most meaningful aspects of local news are highlighted.

- “A newspaper should be a reflection of its community. If you read the Espanola Rio Grande Sun, it’s a reflection of Espanola. If you look at the Taos paper, it’s very different than the Espanola paper. The Las Vegas paper is different too.” ~Resident- Belen, NM
- “There is opportunity in local news to provide more than chatter and gossip.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “I always appreciate Betty Williamson’s articles in The Eastern New Mexico News. It’s like having a conversation with your neighbor.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- Local news is important to get to know people. Otherwise, you’re stuck in your house instead of having community.” ~Resident- Belen, NM
- “Local media is important to draw value back to the community. If you see value in other communities outside of yours, you eventually become part of theirs, move to that community. If your children grow up on media over the state line, they are attracted to that and after school they may go there.” ~ Resident- Portales, NM
- “Youth are leaving the community; local news provides them with visibility and a sense of belonging.” ~Resident, Taos-NM
- “Local news is important in a tactical sense for safety and organization. Knowing what’s happening, or about traffic and roads.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “Community journalism that draws upon local resources, people and expertise, can provide rich and robust reporting on local sports, arts, etc.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- Some radio stations offer free PSAs, though one of our local radio stations is loathe to offer PSAs. It’s a missed opportunity. We have lots of great work being done by local nonprofits.” ~Resident- Taos, NM.
- “Coverage of *The Best of Taos*, *Citizen of the Year*, *Unsung Hero*, and my daughter’s ballet recital are important parts of celebrating a community and focusing on news that brings people together.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Places like Angel Fire and Raton are asking for a paper. Our local paper is trying to provide coverage but financially papers there would be hard to sustain.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Local news should be a community service and cover things like road closures, changes to city policy, school events, and community happenings.” ~Resident, Las Cruces, NM

- “We always want to be aware of our surroundings. We need people. We went to Senior Centers to begin with to sign-up. We felt line dancing would help us connect, so we joined line dancing.” ~Resident- Los Lunas, NM
- “I do enough with Albuquerque businesses that I like to know what is happening. More often, someone in the news is someone I work with.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “Local news is the closest news to where you are. It’s what impacts you most.” ~Resident- Los Lunas, NM
- “Local news can contribute to a sense of community or a sense of divisiveness.” ~Resident- Los Lunas, NM

### C. Transparency and Good Government



The Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics speaks to the importance of transparency in government. They identify the ethical obligation of journalists to, “Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government. Seek to ensure that the public’s business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open to all.”<sup>8</sup> They can play a role in how political issues are understood and acted upon. They inform people about would-be candidates and sitting and past elected and appointed officials. Media can and often does exert influence in public policy. Sometimes by framing and informing decisions. Sometimes by acting as the conscience of decision makers who have been entrusted with decisions impacting community, state, national, and world-wide issues.

As one resident of Taos, New Mexico noted, “If you don’t want it on the front page, don’t do it. Local news reinforces local accountability.”

- “We still have journalism that is holding government accountable. I fear it’s slipping in some places. We still have that to some degree here in our local journalism.” ~ Resident- Portales, NM
- “Media is important to resist the untruthful narratives about Native Americans. We can use it to talk about, name, and make visible issues, like the lack of comprehensive k-12 education about Native American people.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Local news covers local government.” ~ Resident- Los Lunas, NM
- “Media is the watchdog of government. Newspapers take that seriously. You don’t see that on social media. They’re not down at the courthouse...only newspapers and television stations. Most radio stations don’t have newsrooms anymore—they read the paper on air. Newspapers must survive for us to have a democracy. We must continue to have a fourth estate. I think they’re going to continue to be a factor in communities.” ~Resident- Belen, NM

<sup>8</sup> Society of Professional Journalists. Retrieved from <https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

## D. Sustaining Democracy

Not only is local journalism a check and balance on policy makers in a democracy, a reliable independent press is also a vehicle for democracy and justice. Journalism can raise awareness and understanding about issues that impact our personal and community lives. The press can help find information about candidates, ballot initiatives, and polling places. Local news can also shine a light on how governing bodies are fulfilling the public trust and act as a remedy when that trust is abused. Most participants in the focus group lived in small communities, and the need for local news to sustain a democracy was a resounding theme.

- “Without local news, no democracy has or will survive.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “News about local politics is huge. Local politics is where we have a chance to make an impact still. We can know what local officials are doing.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “I’m from New Mexico and I was away for a while. When I returned, I was alarmed and perplexed. We’ve always had a tradition in NM of closely following politics. I see our communities are disconnected. We don’t get connected until something is in your face, going wrong. Then we get negative about it.
- Maybe that’s not just local. But local media can help with that. There’s disconnect and a lack of training and seasoning on staff. We have a fairly well-connected person on the morning show on the radio who can get to the point on statewide issues. But reporters by-and-large don’t understand NM politics. Oftentimes, they’re not from here and don’t get the significance and nuances that used to be inherent in the reporting back 20-30 years ago.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Local news helps us keep up with local issues and make informed decisions; it creates an educated electorate.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “It was time to vote in Los Lunas. We always vote. We go in and they give us a sample ballot. We went home, researched everyone and everything. We went back to vote. They gave us the wrong sample ballot! I was so furious. On Next Door social media, everyone was asking where to go vote. Without local news, it’s hard.” ~Resident, Los Lunas, NM
- “Local news helps educate the next generation. Take the *Newspapers in Education* program where teachers use the Taos News and connect it to the curriculum.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- Local news creates community and preserves democracy on a local, regional, and national level. It’s critical. Without it, we lose everything.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Local news is less influenced by national trends that are being messaged by one partisan perspective or another.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Media literacy is important and educates people going to the polls. With ranked choice voting, the media should explain this is how it works, not create fear.” ~Resident- Las Cruces NM

## Local News is Vital to Democracy

The Jal Record has been an advocate for open government and transparent decision making. Locally, this commitment resulted in uncovering a \$1.3million dollar loss due to how water credits were administered. When asked about the role the Jal Record played in bringing this issue to light over the course of a two-year effort, the owner of the Jal Record, lifetime resident Gregg Fulfer stated, “The paper served its function. A local paper is really needed to shed light on what government is doing. Without a local newspaper, you have world-wide and statewide news, but not the local and it’s so important.”

Senator Fulfer also said a local paper is important because that’s how communities “know what’s happening locally and in the community. From City Council and school board meetings which are important to what’s happening in sports activity and people reading about their kids, local news is important.”

*(Phone Interview October 2019, Gregg Fulfer with Lilly Irvin-Vitela. See also Peters, (2016)*

## Qualities of a Trusted & Reliable News Source

### Credibility is Increasingly Difficult to Maintain

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Participants in the focus group conversations were asked to describe the qualities needed by local journalists to earn trust and be considered a reliable news source. Five aptitudes were repeatedly identified within and across communities:



- 1) the ability to share information in which fact and opinion are clearly distinguished;
- 2) inclusion of multiple voices and perspectives in coverage;
- 3) the capacity to deliver timely and accurate information;
- 4) the ability to build and maintain a credible reputation;
- 5) the skill to identify and report on issues that are culturally and locally relevant.

#### A. Distinguish between Fact and Opinion

Many focus group participants passionately expressed their frustrations about news that is slanted toward specific political views. The idea that if people do not like the news, they can change the TV channels, radio station, website, pod cast, etc., and find a perspective that is more aligned with their own was deeply problematic to most. Questions about what is factually accurate, standards of truthfulness, and how to make meaning with competing information were raised. One participant acknowledged that she too wants to listen to news that is aligned with her own views, and that it's "just the way it is. There's nothing we can do about it." Others used words like "propaganda" and "misinformation" to describe their perceptions about the veracity of news sources. Others analyzed this struggle for objectivity as part of the problem. "People distrust journalism because it is trying to claim to be objective. It's impossible to be objective. There are always points of view."

Mostly, people found the idea that someone would manipulate the media audience's thinking distasteful and offensive. One participant acknowledged that watching the news, "pisses him off."

Participants had conflicting perspectives on whether the line between fact and opinion was especially blurred now, or if it has always been and people just have a greater awareness now because there are so many sources of information.





“People distrust journalism because it is trying to claim it is objective. It’s impossible to be objective. There are always points of view.”

~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence

- “I’m relatively new here, one-and-a-half years. From my standpoint, in our local news opinion is separated from what the news is. You can get the news without a slant.” ~Resident-Portales, NM
- “No matter the issues, there are opportunities to sway public opinion. What happened to the line between facts and opinion? In

the past, knowing the reporter’s opinion was unclear. It was up to people to form their own opinions. The line is blurred.” ~Resident- Taos, NM

- “I’m interested in what is accurate and factual versus opinion and editorial.” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM
- “It’s important to know what news versus entertainment is.” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM
- “Fact-based reporting is important—distinguishing fact from falsehood. When our kids were in school and teachers gave students articles from The Onion, kids couldn’t distinguish between fact and parody. As an informed reader, I need to be able to make sense of it. I need to be able to look into the issue in different places. Some places have agendas, or just put out propaganda. Some places are laissez-faire about facts.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “If there is something I like, I will investigate. I look at different forums, TV, radio, church. If they all go together, okay. If not, I get concerned.” ~Resident- Belen, NM
- “Lack of access to unbiased reporting is the biggest challenge. Growing up, the journalist would give two sides. I see more and more local journalists following a national trend to only report one side. I want to know the facts. Even if it’s slanted toward my opinion, that’s not acceptable. I want to know the facts.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Readers need to have metacognitive understanding. View objectivity critically and raise voices to deepen understanding.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM

## B. Include Multiple Voices and Perspectives

Participants in focus groups across communities explained that a practice that makes a news source more trustworthy is the ability to include multiple perspectives. People described their appreciation for articles that demonstrated the reporter’s ability to identify and hear from people with a variety of perspectives on an issue. People wanted to be left to make up their own minds rather than feel like the reporter’s agenda was shaping the content. In addition, for communities who have been stereotyped by journalists throughout history, multiple diverse perspectives decrease the likelihood that the narrative will be one-dimensional and inaccurate. The issue of stereotypes and inaccurate depictions was a refrain when dissecting the dominant narrative about the experiences of indigenous people. One participant spoke pointedly about the importance of recognizing and lifting up dissenting voices. Another participant talked about

not seeing herself in the news and choosing as she's gotten older to intentionally choose news sources that don't erase her. She doesn't want to read articles in which stories about women are only relevant in relationship to men.

- “Print and radio are like the entry point to a house. They introduce you to what’s relevant. Then it’s important to understand diverse perspectives and go deeper.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Talk radio and call-in shows can be good, like Native America Calling. This means making news is a two-way street. We don’t have this kind of information sharing as much on local radio.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “It’s important (for journalists) to tap all sources in the community and go to all of the stakeholders involved in an issue so that your community is aware and can form their own opinions.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Radio and print media provide wider representation of community voices. On radio, people can get on the air and take more time. There are more interviews with local folks.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Native people understand that the cultural practices around news sharing are different. In Native American Pueblos and Nations. Outside news may be limited or of limited relevance.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Ask the community to be the eyes and ears to inform journalists.” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM
- “Some of the shifts in creating and publishing content mean that news is already dated once it gets on-line. As newsrooms empty, there are fewer reporters in the field, coverage is watered down. If the public is being called to be engaged and involved in reporting and sharing news rather than consuming ideas, who fact checks? Who determines is it true?” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM
- “If I’m following a story, I read 4-5 versions. While we have information at our finger tips, quality is up for grabs. Media literacy is important.” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM
- “If people are not educated about candidates and processes, that suppresses the vote.” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM
- “Money is driving lack of perspective and programming with local and regional news.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “As I’ve gotten older, I’ve tended toward feminist news sources. The other sources seem misogynistic. Since we’re in a time when we have so much access to so many news sources, I’m going to go toward things that resonate with my experiences and pay attention to how they’re positioned.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM

### **C. Aim for the Highest Standards of Accuracy**

Community leaders’ capacity for complexity in the news media they consume is profound. People are interested in coverage that has depth and breadth locally and otherwise. People want to hold themselves accountable for learning from multiple sources and remain open to a variety of perspectives. People demand professionalism in writing conventions as well as professionalism in the quality of information being shared.



- “The way journalists write matters. Journalists must avoid fake news. Instead news should help motivate people to get involved, inspire people to take action, and make decisions.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “We need more inclusion of Indigenous success, not just vulnerabilities and challenges.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Great editing, the absence of misspellings and bad grammar are important too.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “I appreciate sources that are less biased, like the

Associated Press. The Herald in Sierra County is community-owned. I’m able to connect by phone and they do fact checking.” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM

- “In the digital age, we can change history right on the device in our hands. With algorithms being used to decide what information we’ll see, I’m reminded of growing up in Germany. I understand history and think we should know and learn from our mistakes.” ~Resident- las Cruces, NM
- “I’m hungry for intersectional news coverage and an intersectional approach. I listen to radio out of Phoenix to get broader regional southwest perspectives. Sometimes media in New Mexico is hyper-localized. Even the timing of programing is difficult. Here news stops at 8:30 AM. I’m just getting warmed up. New Mexico as a whole is positioned as a orphan state, with gaps in service in the news it receives.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Dissent is part of the story. Journalists should reference challenges to a point of view.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Then, content is so commoditized. Yahoo has thousands of news stories at any given time. They have some ridiculous and not well-vetted stories. The grammar is awful and there is no fact-checking.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “I love click-bait. I know I’m not the only one reading it. It’s fun. It’s salacious. Top 10 Worst Crime stories, I’m in. I’m not taking it to be the gospel and an accurate source of information and base my thinking on it. You can read it because it is fun. However, as a community, country, and internationally, how can we work together to distinguish news sources that are meant to be entertainment and ones that are meant to be accurate?” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “In terms of how I assess whether a news source is legitimate, I take a multi-faceted approach. We don’t teach enough scientific literacy at school. I think about how that impacts people’s ability to assess where news is coming from. Looking at different news sources is important. When 911 happened, my dad was reading news sources in various languages from various countries. There have always been corporate interests—we live in a capitalist nation. That’s what happens. In the news, you need to find out what they are trying to sell you.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM

## D. Build and Maintain a Credible Reputation

Community members across geographies, ages, genders, race, and ethnicity are hungry for media that is credible. A theme that emerged in conversations in Taos, Portales, Albuquerque, and Valencia counties was concern about independent journalism. Participants questioned news outlets for their efforts to remain economically viable and independent. One participant asked, “is there ever an over-reliance on advertising - does it compromise reporting?”

### Trust

“As a publisher, you look at ethics and public trust. Once you lose the public’s trust, that damages your paper indefinitely. It is a constant daily effort to keep the public’s trust.”

~Resident- Belen, NM

- “One of the worst stories I had to cover was a school shooting, where two kids lost their lives in one afternoon. I guarantee you, kids were reading the newspaper. That month we had over a million views. Covering a story like that is so difficult. We had two editors and 11 other staff. There was a release that came out from the Navajo Nation stating that 30 people had been injured. We couldn’t run the press release until we corroborated the facts. Several of the television stations ran with it. We had to verify our information first. We had information, so we didn’t get the story wrong.” ~Resident- Belen, NM
- “As Rotarians, we wonder if news passes the Four-Way Test: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendship? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM



“I enjoy reading the news on my computer. Now we have access to TV news via an antenna. We have a daily feed of news now. News pisses me off, makes me angry. I’d rather read it.”

~Resident- Los Lunas, NM

- “When what’s considered breaking news is always horrible, tragic, and violent, the news outlet is then known for that approach.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “The editors/publishers are the experts in their community. They know elected officials, business people, the history of the community. One of the toughest things is when I went to a new community. I had to immerse myself in the history, the politicians, who were advocates for what. People have missions: schools, libraries, senior centers, hospitals, etc. That’s the diversity of coverage newspapers bring a community.” ~Resident- Belen, NM

- “When I’m reading news, I think about the way the outlet reported on news in the past. I think about the ways they talked about US involvement in Latin American in the 1980s. I take reporting with a grain of salt thinking about coverage not being fully factual.”  
~Resident- Peralta, NM

## E. Report in a Manner that is Culturally and Locally Relevant



Across communities, leaders spoke about the importance of news that is relatable. People want to learn and know about people, places, and ideas that resonate with their values and world view. New Mexicans do not want their only news to be from neighboring states, national political pundits, or cable news. People want news to be reported with an understanding of local place and cultural values of the people and communities in their audience.

- “So much innovation is happening here. Things are happening here that aren’t happening anywhere else. It’s like magic sauce.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Even when there have been news stories with national attention coming out of Taos, locals still provided the coverage locals valued.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Our local media should stay intensely and unapologetically local and commit resources to cover the school districts in the far reaches of the area.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “I used to write for the Green Fire Times. I curated the stories on the local economy. Letting people tell their stories in their own voices. For us it was free content!”  
~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Local news really matters in Taos. I think we have 10 local radio stations.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Local news provides a sense of “realness,” as in “real news,” or news you can trust, because it’s happening around you; local news breaks through skepticism.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “There’s a culturally appropriate way to navigate and not offend.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “How can the dominant white culture understand and respect Native stories? I’ve experienced some journalist who don’t even want to tell the Native story because they’re too scared to offend. There’s an education piece there for them.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM

## Valued Coverage

### Balancing What We Need to Know And Want to Know

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What people want from their local news is complex. People want truth-telling, and they want it in a way that they can relate to and connect with their own experiences. Communities want hard hitting investigative journalism as well as human interest stories that are heartfelt and uplifting. People want access to local heroes as well as some entertaining click-bait about celebrities. People want highly localized information as well as international news that is filtered through a local perspective that helps frame why those global issues matter at home. People want buffering from horror and tragedy and to read the crime blotter. People are nostalgic for newspaper columns that describe where their neighbors vacationed, who had tea, and who was promoted. There is a desire for timely and accurate coverage of current events and articles about the history of beloved places and people.

At the same time community members want to know what elected and appointed officials are doing with public resources and how they're making those decisions. Leaders want information that can help maintain democratic values and worry about how others will use information about their community. People want to be informed and entertained, find the local ball game and not miss the local feast day. We want so much to connect and are also overwhelmed by information and perspectives, and we're still navigating norms around how we address our own needs for information as well as community standards in a digital age.

#### A. Nested Perspectives: Local, State, Regional, National, and International



In New Mexico, there are counties without access to local news. At a time when people's appetite for information is growing and people have access to information that was difficult to conceive of just a few short decades ago, people value coverage that is place-based and local. Information feels both at the touch of our fingertips and inaccessible.

Many leaders in the focus group want to know what is happening statewide, within their region, and globally. Some people in New Mexico are getting the majority of their news from national sources. Others are getting their news from news outlets in neighboring states such as Arizona, Colorado, and Texas. Across the board, people expressed curiosity, concern, and commitment to their local communities.

- “It’s local, local, local. If you’re trying to get educated on state or national issues and news, you don’t get anything.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “News comes in many different flavors: entertainment, calendars, political reporting, information you need to know and information that excites you about your community. What we’re seeing now in the news business is local, local, local. Newspapers that used to handle national are refocusing to local.” ~Resident- Belen, NM
- “What’s happening to sacred sites, fracking, that’s what matters. National news, it’s like we’re just listening, it’s not as important as what’s coming out of our Governor’s mouth.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “There needs to be coverage of friction between Native and non-Native views, with water for example. ~Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Taos News is an award-winning paper, an amazing production, especially given the size of the community and the resources available. Acknowledging community activists, great sports coverage, and broad news coverage, it’s positive and covers concerns, too.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Stories need to be in depth and more than a paragraph.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “We know a story is worthy of being told when it meets a local intrinsic system of community values.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “When we’re living outside of our home community, coverage from back home connects us.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “TV news could do a better job of covering Taos. There’s very little TV coverage of Taos, and when we do get it, it tends to be negative or tragic.” ~Resident- Taos, NM.
- “Younger people are looking to social media for connection and information about what is going on in a local setting.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “I want to know about bad things as well as good things. I’m new here. It’s hard to find a way to get news. We belong to a group on-line that shares neighborhood or area news. We want to know if there was an accident or if someone had two bales of hay stolen, but we have no formal connection with the county.” ~Resident- Los Lunas, NM
- “I’ll spend an afternoon with the Sunday New York Times. It’s got well written stories that are well thought out, reporting at its finest. I also like the Washington Post.” ~Resident- Belen, NM
- “I really enjoy the crime report in almost any newspaper. It opens up an interesting dialogue nationally about why people are so interested in that. When there are so many horrific things going on, it gives people a feeling of control. I’m skeptical about the feel-good pieces.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “I read most national papers. I’ve lived in multiple places in the last couple of years. Reading local papers is interesting to me. In Galicia, I read La Galiciana, which was interesting, so I could understand and juxtapose local versus national perspectives. Now I spend a lot of time in the car and listen to podcasts. I stopped listening to the Washington Post, which reported on Spain. It was incorrect. I realized their priority isn’t to understand what the people are experiencing.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM

## B. Human Interest



The need to celebrate what is best in each other and community was another common theme. Not only do people want to see stories about their neighbors, children, and grandchildren, people want reminders that there is good in the world. However, people resent efforts to pacify them and soft-sell larger community concerns. The opposite is also true. People resent fear-based reporting that is meant to incite insecurity and mistrust. Human interest stories that are thoughtful and connected to relatable experiences are the kind of good news that many people expressed appreciation for in their local media.

- “Celebrate the good news, good things happening in the community.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “I’m invested in media informing the community about the work we’re doing to improve health and celebrating successes.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- We need more inclusion of Indigenous success, not just vulnerabilities and challenges.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “When journalism tells the hardest stories, it appeals to the shadow side of people. That’s why local TV is depressing instead of informative.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “When a story is bad, is there also the other view reported about resilience?” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “I like the feel-good stories. I really enjoy it. Now they have videos showing people going out of their way to do something good. A lot of the stories finish up with a moral: Not all cops are bad. They don’t need to justify it.” ~Resident- Los Lunas, NM
- “At this point in life, I want to be happy. I read about kids. I send it to my husband so he can read it too. The world has not been a great place lately. Somehow, once you have kids and grandkids, you think and care more about future generations. There comes a point when you worry about things that are going to happen. I’m a Jewish mother, I’m supposed to worry.” ~Resident- Los Lunas, NM

## C. Opportunities to Connect

- “I want to go to Pueblos, feast days and other festivals in the state. I want to know about football and basketball games. If there is information about the community, I’m getting the information I want.” ~Resident- Belen, NM
- “Media needs to go to all of the organizations in the community and have a person they can talk to about the issues if they need information.” ~Resident- Belen, NM



- “A constant complaint that I hear from all over Portales and Clovis is that there’s never anything to do. In point of fact, there’s an enormous number of things to do just at local schools and universities and colleges. The conduit is the Eastern New Mexico News. If you pay attention there’s plenty to do.”  
~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Being distracted by what’s going on outside of your community takes you away from special things here. After spending time outside my community, I’m getting back into what’s in the newspaper. It can draw back the attention of what’s actually valuable to me inside my community. We need something to draw back the attention to the local community.”  
~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Fifty to sixty years ago, we had a town square. Now we meet at high school basketball or football games. It takes sports coverage to make that happen. We may not be interested in sports. Knowing that, a lot of people go there to socialize in our small-town world. It’s important.” ~Resident- Portales, NM



#### D. Investigative Journalism



There are complex people, situations, policies, and courses of events that do not lend themselves to quick reporting. New Mexico has a growing body of on-line journalists focusing on in-depth investigative journalism. There are also emerging independent film makers who are focusing on newsworthy topics rather than entertainment. There were people in each community who talked about the importance of investigative journalism.

- John Acosta’s work to more deeply understand youth homicides by making a documentary showed that “he cares enough about the issue to talk to people.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “I want to know what is really happening. When things were better and people were paying attention to facts, it was still probably not all true. The School of the Americas was a training school run by the USA; there was little coverage.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “I’m most interested in investigative journalism, and international news is low on my scale.” ~Resident- Belen, NM

## E. Local Issues

Local issues were described as the issues that have the most practical impact in terms of safety, transportation, tracking life events, understanding local resources, and engaging in the issues that many feel they are able to exert influence on in decision-making. Local news also telegraphs how people within a community see and present themselves to people outside of a community. This has implications for who will visit and who will make a community home. As participants in Portales and Taos noted, it also influences economic development.

### People and Places

"I cover eight counties throughout southeastern New Mexico. I see a lot of communities rich with people who care about their community. I'd like to see feature articles on those people, their rich history of what they'd see through time. This is relevant and helpful." ~Resident- Portales, NM

- "If a local journalist slams a community too much with negative stories, the community becomes that and understands themselves in that way. Also, we can't have the country club view. It's important that coverage includes both and is balanced." ~Resident- Taos, NM
- "We need more conversations about how to improve the economy and how it is improving. Lots of times maintaining community comes down to economics. People need to understand that it's possible to make it." ~Resident- Taos, NM
- "We're not saying that national news isn't important, but it isn't sufficient." ~Resident- Taos, NM
- "Good visuals and compelling photos help inform." ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- "There's a legitimacy when you're covered in local news. My husband was in the Tribal paper, and my grandma saw him in a different light. When you have community members that are covered, that matters. Farmington daily news covers a lot of Navajo news. There's more accessibility of things happening in your community. It's an access question." ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- "I feel disconnected: what is local news? I am getting that it is Albuquerque and Santa Fe. I feel I am an outsider. We don't get local news in my Pueblo. If you get papers, you get it in the gas station. They stopped delivering newspaper in the '80's and '90's." ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- "One of the things I appreciate about local newspapers is that you can get more in-depth information. One thing I dislike about social media is that they tend to be very superficial, and they give a point of view that may not show much deliberation. Whereas the print media gives that opportunity for someone who has thought about the issues and can present a couple of sides succinctly and give you enough information that you can decide to explore it further. It would be a tragedy to lose it." ~Resident- Portales, NM

## F. Politics and Civic Institutions

The value that focus groups participants place on coverage of civic institutions and politics relates strongly to two of the primary reasons people want to sustain local journalism: 1) transparency and good governance; and 2) sustaining a healthy democracy. One participant noted that democracy is active sport, and local news is a tool to participate. One participant also spoke about the importance and challenges involved with trusting political leaders. In the absence of trust in civic institutions, reliable journalism about politics and governance is even more vital to people in communities.



- “When there is no local journalism, there is no investigation, no monitoring of right and wrong on the city council or county commission.” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM
- “I’m disturbed that there are places with no coverage of the county commission, school boards, and municipal boards.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Communities deserve to know what and how decisions are being made.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “Local news is important in terms of accountability and sharing information.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “This is the worst situation for people of color. We’ve never been in this kind of situation before. Politicians are liars. We want to trust what’s being said.” ~Resident- Los Lunas, NM

## G. History



People expressed appreciation for media coverage of local history. People are proud of their heritage and their family ties to communities. For people who are long-time residents and people who are newer to communities, there is curiosity about the rich history of local and neighboring communities. Print, radio, and electronic coverage that links our history to current events matters. Looking at history also allows communities that have gained more visibility and power to correct misperceptions based on incomplete and inaccurate coverage in the past.

- “One of the things that The Eastern New Mexico News has started that I really like is showing a photograph from time past and asking if people know anything about the photo. I love history. I thrive on it, anywhere, anytime. I really like that particular portion of the newspaper. It makes me really appreciate what we had. I come from Connecticut, which is almost like the other side of the world. I heard different stories growing up. I came here with a lot of ignorance about the local area. I appreciate the historical aspect that the newspaper brings. When I can talk to people who are longtime here, I appreciate the legacy that exists here.” ~Resident- Portales, NM

- I like the connection to our history, the *Tradiciones* section.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “We get siloed. People tokenize us and then ask, how can we include Native America? Open your front door! The county has a poor curriculum when it comes to Native, Black and other communities of color. That’s where journalism comes in. Our educational system doesn’t support a comprehensive system. Journalism can fill-in that discussion, name things, and talk about them. It can be a catalytic tool.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM

## Local Roles in Sustaining Local News

### Local Leaders See Themselves as Part of the Solution

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There were strong ideas and feelings that were on display in focus groups. People care about local journalism, and this concern is an asset. Many people described ways that they are already working to sustain local journalism and were open to listening to others and considering additional ways to be a part of the solution. The resilience of local journalism is tied to the resilience of communities and the smart, resourceful, innovative, and passionate people who comprise community.

#### A. Build a Relationship with Local Media

Several community leaders described an effective working relationship with media. Some described more ambivalence about their interactions with media. There were others who acknowledged limited if any collaborative interactions with local journalism. While people understand the necessary independence of the local media, people in focus groups routinely identified examples of how they could strengthen relationships in mutually beneficial ways. Local leaders saw ways to promote initiatives they care about while facilitating coverage of local relevant news.



- “We are bad at tooting our own horn. When we do have positive stories, they should be lifted up even higher.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “Liking local media pages, you use it as an amplifier.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “If I know of something that’s coming up or know it’s newsworthy, I let David (the publisher) know. I try to put something on the radar.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “It’s so important to do a news release. You’ll get the item onto the calendar at the news station, the radio. They may use it as an idea to put a story together. So, in this day and age of tired staff on local media, it’s important that we help them out. It’s not just by volunteering. If your group, like the Rotary Club, can disseminate information about your events, it will stimulate more news journalism than anything else you can do.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Media should think, what agencies are out there that work with Tribes? Like 19 Pueblos can take information in and then let it trickle down through the Pueblos. As one, their voice is that much stronger. When journalists are scared to offend, they can take it to the entity and they can filter. That’s their job.” ~Participant, Native Entrepreneur in Residence, ABQ, NM
- “We need local media to be a place where you feel welcomed. Know journalists and members of the community. Participate in on-line surveys.” ~Resident- Taos, NM

- “Media can promote more “My Turn” opportunities and allow people to write about the issues that are important to them. People have the opportunity to editorialize.”  
~Resident- Taos, NM

## B. Subscribe, Advertise, and Support Advertisers

While subscriptions and advertising alone do not provide enough income in most markets to sustain local media, they are a way to support local journalism. One-third of participants in Portales identified themselves as subscribers to one or more publications. One participant in Portales approached the facilitator after the community conversation. He shared a story about



being a subscriber to the paper for most of his life. He recently let his subscription lapse. It wasn't due to a lack of belief in the importance of local journalism. It was a response to a diminishing footprint of the local press. He explained that the most recent reduction in days that the local paper is published was too much. The daily routine of reading the printed paper was no longer routine. It was just too little of what he wanted to be satisfying.

Several Rotarians in Taos and members of the Taos Entrepreneurial Network identified themselves as advertisers and said that their decisions about who to do business with are in part informed by wanting to support other advertisers because, “I want to support businesses that are investing into our community.” ~Resident- Taos, NM

- “We can support local news by buying advertising; at public venues, praise and fully appreciate local media; take advantage of special publications; and use the news as a resource in local research.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “I’m thinking that it would be novel to have a “Go Fund Me” page and try to sustain local journalism as a community interest to take care of local media. Not pressure local businesses to buy advertising. The only other way is to go out and get your money elsewhere. Subscriptions – I subscribe. Think of it as a charitable organization. You give money to things because it makes you feel good and responds to your moral compass.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Use the local media to advertise for a job.”

## C. Consume News Ethically

Across communities, leaders acknowledged the importance of being ethical consumers of news media. By being intentional and purposeful about what news sources are used or ignored, that active role helps to sustain the sources that are reliable. Seeing ourselves as participants in news making and news sharing is an alternative perspective to passive news consumption that a few communities explored.

- “We need to not take our freedoms for granted; free press is what we’re all about as a country. We need to be active participants as we use news and not be vulnerable to undesirable directions.” ~Resident- Las Cruces, NM

- “So we’re responsible and community is responsible for knowing what is going on in a metropolitan sense, nationally, and internationally. Local issues are a microcosm of what’s going on.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “If we’re not happy with how something is being reported, if we don’t think it’s credible, we shouldn’t purchase it, click on it and give their advertisers mixed messages, or support their advertisers. We also need to distinguish for ourselves when we’re engaging in news media for fun versus something that looks like news but is really entertainment. When we can draw that line, we need to tell others too so we can all be more careful about what we’re supporting.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM

## D. Engage Youth

Every community had ideas about the important role youth will play in sustaining local journalism as well as other civic institutions. The role of youth was described as a burgeoning consumer of news. However, communities extended the understanding of youth’s role as newsworthy members of our community. Some thought was also given to mentoring and teaching youth about media literacy as well as journalism as a career option.

- “A youth radio station might encourage young people to stay here; KTAO used to do this – a youth night with youth DJ.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “There were multiple instances in the last five years with high school newspaper teams breaking huge national and international stories. Giving kids the opportunity to understand and take part is important.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM
- “If there was a way to align the students of the university (PR, communications, etc.) with the media industry, several students could write, and students and the newspaper could pick the best stories to run. The students could build their resumes, busy staff could have some relief, communities would get more coverage.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Reading newspapers is an art. I did not grow up with that. I learned later.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “I think we all like to read about ourselves. When I referenced how my parents would read the paper every day – I saw them reading it. But I didn’t read it. It was full of old stuff. Politics. Could our local paper have content that is more teen-oriented, issues that they are faced with (addictions, drugs, sex, etc.) and have to deal with? More stories with how teens are dealing with those issues, hopefully positively, could bring in younger readers.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Young people don’t feel they have to be involved in what their elders did. I think coverage of what they’re doing might be helpful. I remember when Rotary was comprised of 100 members instead the 23 it is now.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “Part of sustaining journalism is workforce development. We can partner with UNM Taos and have internship programs, work with students, have students earn money while learning a trade, consider grants and funding to grow our own. Look to early childhood workforce development as a parallel.” ~Resident- Taos, NM

- “We need to promote literacy, use media more in the classroom, and support teachers to use media in the classrooms.” ~Resident- Taos, NM
- “I was thinking about youth in the news. The puerile news we are subjected to daily—like the ridiculous things on Facebook. Kids are potentially in a place where everything they do is news. They have a well-documented and often embarrassing life story, the kind of thing I look at when hiring.” ~Resident- Peralta, NM

## E. Explore Business Models

Senator Gregg Fulfer, co-owner of the Jal Record and State Senator, really demonstrated his New Mexico values and belief in the importance of people. When asked about what’s needed to keep a local paper going, he said, “It’s a passion to keep the community informed. A good person can bring a small paper around. That’s the key.”

A journalism professor in Portales provided a historical perspective on some of the challenges to sustaining local journalism. “Between 1993-95, journalists gave away the ship. There was no economic model to sustain journalism. It’s been a slide downwards since then. In 1993 when the web became a big deal, we began using email, getting scores from espn.com or TV. They basically started giving away for free most of their content. It was only about 10-12 years ago that they started to take it back.

- “I have a crazy idea. This is starting to happen. There are billionaires who are taking over newspapers who are running it as an eco-train. An NFL owner who has made their money – they are doing that. We can use more of that. If the Eastern New Mexico News went poof, I would try to enlist one or more wealthy person to take up a newspaper, maybe have a competition. We can quit worrying about making money, or maybe breaking even. That way we have journalism still.” ~Resident- Portales, NM
- “One strength is that we have choices. We have Eastern New Mexico News, public radio, radio, an online newspaper, The Roosevelt Review, school newspapers. Where things fall, people can step up – Roosevelt Review is a semi-commercial publication.” ~Resident, Portales, NM
- I’m a lifelong journalist, didn’t care anything about making money. They made me publisher, and I am starting to learn about that aspect of it. I’m really humbled and very excited. You all said nice things about the paper. The question that really caught my eye is, do we want a community to support us like we’re a charity? I’m not sure that’s sustainable. We need to be relevant. We need for businesses to need us, that they feel they benefit by buying advertising, that readers benefit from reading the paper. I am uncomfortable with people feeling they need to support us. One thing – I don’t have numbers – I suspect that newspapers for the most part have mostly been free. Whatever small amount collected went into printing it and bringing it to the house. Advertising -- businesses who wanted to promote their business had to do it through the media. Now there are so many other choices, and most of them are free. We printed other people’s newspapers, business cards, horse race books at Ruidoso. Then our print shop went away. The last five to six years, we’ve gone from a daily to a twice weekly paper. That’s because we’ve had to rely strictly on paid advertising. There’s not



enough money, there hasn't been enough in forever. Print shops paid the way. We're trying to figure out how to be a business." ~Resident- Portales, NM

- "With media there is print but also online. Is there a place where all the news outlets could come together and figure out how to maintain a local perspective, economies of scale, sharing costs? It could be marketed by the whole and keep costs down." ~Resident- Portales, NM
- "We need to look at our business models. If we take care of business models, then the public good (news) takes care of itself. We need to invest not retreat. Take the example of Cid's Food Market. They have a good product. There's no retreat. They treat employees right. They have strong leadership and a customer orientation. They invest in the community, people, and programs." ~Resident- Taos, NM
- "Whatever direction the industry goes in, we go the other. We do a glossy magazine, like a summer guide. We have diversified income." ~Resident- Taos, NM

## Conclusion

When we make time and space together in community to engage in values-based conversations about the issues that matter to us, both common ground and respectful dissent emerge. Local journalism is a valued community resource. Local journalism at its best supports community involvement and civic engagement. From appreciation for community calendars and advertisements of local businesses to concern about the impact of losing opportunities to engage with others, the value of local perspectives was affirmed by focus group participants. Furthermore, local journalism was seen as an important way to reflect a community's values and sustain a sense of place that is vibrant and connected. Without local journalism, New Mexicans expressed concern about a community's ability to maintain transparency in decision-making about issues that impact our lives. In fact, participants across the communities visited by New Mexico First questioned the viability of our democracy in the absence of local journalism.

Focus group participants identified several qualities that are essential to their willingness to trust in local news media as a valuable and reliable resource. The overarching qualities that engender trust included the ability to discern fact and opinion; the commitment to raising multiple points of view on issues and give audiences the ability to form their own opinion; adherence to rigorous standards of accuracy and ability to acknowledge when mistakes are made; the ability to earn and maintain a credible reputation through consistency; and coverage that is locally and culturally relevant.

New Mexicans were also invited to name and describe the kind of coverage that they value most. People are curious and engaged in the world around them and want local news and local perspectives on issues outside of their communities. They want local news to help them find ways to connect with their neighbors and human-interest stories. People want political coverage and to know what's happening with people and issues that impact our communities.

Participants were eager to share ways that they already support local journalism while considering ways to sustain journalism now and into future generations. Standard forms of support such as advertising and subscribing were noted. In addition, people thought about creative ways to finance local news. From new business models for local news to the role of youth as an audience and creators of news, communities thought creatively and strategically about how to maintain local journalism as a valuable asset.

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Agency: Scripps Howard Foundation  
 PI: Gwyneth Doland  
 Project Title: Roy Howard Community News Center  
 To request a new PI org code go to:  
 Estimated Salary Increase:  
 Estimated Tuition Increase:

=Months  
 0.00

Budget Item	FY25			FY26			FY27			Total	NOTES
	Start Date	End Date	Amount	Start Date	End Date	Amount	Start Date	End Date	Amount		
	07/01/24	06/30/25		07/01/25	06/30/26		07/01/26	06/30/27			
	Months in FY	12		Months in FY	12		Months in FY	12		36	
<b>Salaries</b>											
Summer Research	Base	months	Amount	Base	months	Amount	Base	months	Amount		
Professor of Practice / Center Director	\$ 80,000	0.75	\$ 6,667	\$ 82,400	0.75	\$ 6,867	\$ 84,872	0.50	\$ 4,715	\$ 18,248	(Base salary from UNM)
Professor of Practice / Engagement Lead	\$ 80,000	0.75	\$ 6,667	\$ 82,400	0.75	\$ 6,867	\$ 84,872	0.75	\$ 7,073	\$ 20,606	
<b>Total Summer Research</b>			\$ 13,333			\$ 13,733			\$ 11,788	\$ 38,854	
Release Time	Base	months	Amount	Base	months	Amount	Base	months	Amount		
Professor of Practice / Engagement Lead	\$ 80,000	9	\$ 80,000	\$ 82,400	9	\$ 82,400	\$ 84,872	9	\$ 84,872	\$ 247,272	
Temporary Faculty / Journalist in Residence	\$ 52,000	9	\$ 52,000	\$ 52,000	9	\$ 52,000	\$ 52,000	9	\$ 52,000	\$ 156,000	
<b>Total Release Time</b>			\$ 132,000			\$ 134,400			\$ 136,872	\$ 403,272	
<b>Staff</b>	Base	months	Amount	Base	months	Amount	Base	months	Amount		
Managing Editor	\$ 75,000	12	\$ 75,000	\$ 77,250	12	\$ 77,250	\$ 79,568	12	\$ 79,568	\$ 231,818	
Indigenous Affairs Editor	\$ 62,000	12	\$ 62,000	\$ 63,860	12	\$ 63,860	\$ 65,776	12	\$ 65,776	\$ 191,636	
Hispanic Affairs Editor	\$ 62,000	12	\$ 62,000	\$ 63,860	12	\$ 63,860	\$ 65,776	12	\$ 65,776	\$ 191,636	
Program Admin (75%)	\$ 64,000	9	\$ 48,000	\$ 65,920	9	\$ 49,440	\$ 67,898	9	\$ 50,923	\$ 148,363	(25% from LNF)
Multimedia Producer	\$ 51,000	12	\$ 51,000	\$ 52,530	12	\$ 52,530	\$ 54,106	12	\$ 54,106	\$ 157,636	
Reporting Fellow (50%)	\$ 17,500	12	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,500	12	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,500	12	\$ 17,500	\$ 52,500	(50% from LNF)
Reporting Fellow (50%)	\$ 17,500	12	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,500	12	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,500	12	\$ 17,500	\$ 52,500	(50% from LNF)
Tech Fellow	\$ 35,000	12	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	12	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	12	\$ 35,000	\$ 105,000	
<b>Total Staff</b>			\$ 368,000			\$ 376,940			\$ 386,148	\$ 1,131,088	
<b>Graduate Students</b>	Rate/hour	hours	Amount	Rate/hour	hours	Amount	Rate/hour	hours	Amount		
PA Innovation Fellow	\$ 23.00	1040	\$ 23,920	\$ 23.69	1040	\$ 24,638	\$ 24.40	620	\$ 15,128	\$ 63,686	
	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>Total Research Assistants</b>			\$ 23,920			\$ 24,638			\$ 15,128	\$ 63,686	
<b>Undergraduate Students</b>	Rate/hr	hours	Amount	Rate/hr	hours	Amount	Rate/hr	hours	Amount		
Student Reporting Intern Academic	\$ 16.00	2304	\$ 36,864	\$ 16.00	2304	\$ 36,864	\$ 16.00	2304	\$ 36,864	\$ 110,592	6 students x 32 weeks x 12 hours
Student Reporting Intern Summer	\$ 16.00	960	\$ 15,360	\$ 16.00	960	\$ 15,360	\$ 16.00	960	\$ 15,360	\$ 46,080	6 Students x 8 weeks x 20 hours
Student Admin Academic	\$ 16.00	640	\$ 10,240	\$ 16.00	640	\$ 10,240	\$ 16.00	640	\$ 10,240	\$ 30,720	1 student x 32 weeks x 20 hours
Student Admin Summer	\$ 16.00	160	\$ 2,560	\$ 16.00	160	\$ 2,560	\$ 16.00	160	\$ 2,560	\$ 7,680	1 Student x 8 weeks x 40 hours
<b>Total Undergraduate Students</b>			\$ 65,024			\$ 65,024			\$ 65,024	\$ 195,072	
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>	Rate		Amount	Rate		Amount	Rate		Amount		
Summer Rsch	25.98%		\$ 3,464	25.98%		\$ 3,568	25.98%		\$ 3,062	\$ 10,094	
Rsch Fac & Release Time	40.76%		\$ 53,803	41.31%		\$ 55,521	41.88%		\$ 57,322	\$ 166,646	
Staff	44.78%		\$ 164,790	45.53%		\$ 171,621	46.32%		\$ 178,864	\$ 515,275	
Post Docs	26.20%		\$ -	26.40%		\$ -	26.60%		\$ -	\$ -	
RAs & Undergraduate Students	1.00%		\$ 710	1.00%		\$ 717	1.00%		\$ 622	\$ 2,050	
RAs & Undergraduate Summer Salary	7.76%		\$ 1,391	7.76%		\$ 1,391	7.76%		\$ 1,391	\$ 4,172	
	# of RAs	Unit Cost	Amount	# of RAs	Unit Cost	Amount	# of RAs	Unit Cost	Amount		
Rsch Asst - Fall health ins	1	\$1,770	\$ 1,770	1	\$2,036	\$ 2,036	1	\$2,341	\$ 2,341	\$ 6,147	
Rsch Asst - Sprg/Summer ins	1	\$2,478	\$ 2,478	1	\$2,850	\$ 2,850	0	\$3,278	\$ -	\$ 5,328	
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Wages</b>			\$ 602,277			\$ 614,735			\$ 614,960	\$ 1,831,973	
<b>Total Fringe Benefits</b>			\$ 228,406			\$ 237,703			\$ 243,602	\$ 709,712	
<b>Total Salaries, Wages &amp; Fringe Benefits</b>			\$ 830,684			\$ 852,438			\$ 858,563	\$ 2,541,685	
<b>Travel</b>											
Domestic			\$ 24,000			\$ 24,000			\$ 24,000	\$ 72,000	
Foreign			\$ -			\$ -			\$ -	\$ -	
<b>Total Travel</b>			\$ 24,000			\$ 24,000			\$ 24,000	\$ 72,000	
<b>Marketing / Recruitment</b>			\$ 8,000			\$ 7,000			\$ 7,000	\$ 22,000	
Start Up Pkg/Equipment			\$ 30,000			\$ 8,000			\$ 2,000	\$ 40,000	
Web Contracts			\$ 18,000			\$ 18,500			\$ 19,000	\$ 55,500	
Subscriptions			\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000	\$ 6,000	
Supplies			\$ 1,500			\$ 1,500			\$ 2,000	\$ 5,000	
Board Mtg			\$ 6,000			\$ 6,000			\$ 6,000	\$ 18,000	
Summer Experience			\$ 14,000			\$ 15,000			\$ 14,000	\$ 43,000	
Consulting (Fundraising, Assessment)			\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	\$ 30,000	
Community Engagement Events			\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	\$ 30,000	
Acquisitions			\$ 12,500			\$ 12,250			\$ 12,200	\$ 36,950	
Awards			\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000	\$ 12,000	
			\$ -			\$ -			\$ -	\$ -	
<b>Total Other Costs</b>			\$ 116,000			\$ 94,250			\$ 88,200	\$ 298,450	
<b>Total Direct Cost</b>			\$ 970,684			\$ 970,688			\$ 970,763	\$ 2,912,135	
<b>Modified Total Direct Costs</b>			\$ 970,684			\$ 970,688			\$ 970,763	\$ 2,912,135	
Facilities & Administrative Costs	@	3.000%	\$ 29,121	@	3.000%	\$ 29,121	@	3.000%	\$ 29,123	\$ 87,364	
<b>Total Budget</b>			\$ 999,804			\$ 999,809			\$ 999,886	\$ 2,999,499	

## ROY HOWARD COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER GRANT

### **University of Southern Mississippi**

#### Dean/Director

Edgar Simpson

Tel: (601) 266-4258

Edgar.Simpson@usm.edu

#### Person submitting this request

Edgar Simpson

Tel: (601) 266-4104

edgar.simpson@usm.edu

# **Roy Howard Community Journalism Center: Reporting What Matters**

**The Roy Howard  
Community Journalism  
Center at USM improves  
lives and communities  
through education and  
trusted information.**

Ed

**Final grant submission from the University  
of Southern Mississippi  
July 31, 2023**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN  
MISSISSIPPI**

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

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SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Phone: 601.266.4258 | Fax: 601.266.6473 | edgar.simpson@usm.edu |

### **Roy Howard Community Journalism Center: USM submission**

Mike Canan, director of Journalism Strategies  
Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation  
312 Walnut S.  
Cincinnati, OH, 45202

July 31, 2023

Dear Mr. Canan,

We are pleased to submit our final proposal for establishing the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. Since being fortunate enough to advance in the process this spring, a team across the university has worked diligently to put together an ambitious proposal for a new venture that will positively change the university, students' lives, and the communities we serve.

We believe we are presenting a workable, though flexible, blueprint for efficiently standing up an innovative, robust operation that will put students from high school through university to work in their chosen fields, provide important news to an underserved population, and build trust among a siloed audience searching for meaningful information.

We are happy to comply with naming the center the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center; the advisory board is addressed at length in the governance section, and the timeline addresses the quarterly financial and performance reports.

This proposal is supported by a wide range of research in the target area, including a media ecology study to help determine the information now available to residents, a resident survey of news use and trust, and a series of focus groups with students and residents that allowed for in-depth conversations about news and how the center could recruit and train future media professionals. The school team also listened intently to the news professionals involved as our partners in this process.

Where appropriate, initial concepts were changed or tweaked to accommodate the new information. For instance, college students told us they were excited about the idea of working in the center but wanted to make sure they could still take part in the full university experience of Study Abroad and summer school. The proposal was tweaked to account for these activities. The professionals told us a managing editor position was



essential to maintain the integrity of the journalism being done by the center. This has been incorporated into the submission.

What you will find is that the overall proposal is changed little from our letter of intent. Our plan rests on a unique coalition of partners who represent access to the best media expertise in Mississippi, a wide distribution network, and a passion for journalism as community service. They were routinely consulted in the development of the submission, and you will see their letters of commitment to the center in the attachment section. The one change is that the group has been expanded to include the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association.

Please also find letters of support in the attachment section from community college and high school representatives in the targeted region. Our fellow educators are excited about the potential of the proposed center and are eager to work with us and you on ensuring students are aware of the opportunities and to help navigate such issues as dual credit and reverse transfer credits. These discussions prompted a tweak from our initial letter by including an education advisory board, made up of high school and community college representatives who will make recommendations to the center's advisory board and director about how to best serve the students pedagogically.

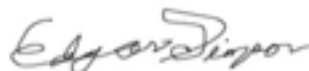
Throughout the submission, you will find examples of what the center could produce, as well as references to specific documents created to help the center get underway quickly and efficiently. For instance, job descriptions for the full-time positions proposed for the center are available in the attachment section, as are sample syllabi for curricula that will be tied to the center. In the proposal, you also will find examples of cross-platform content that the center could produce on a regular and routine basis, as well as an example of a *What is True* post and podcast.

A quick note on the submission, itself. We have attempted to compile a usable PDF with links where appropriate. We also have created a [Dropbox account](#) with which you should have access to all the supporting material, including video and sound packages for the example content, the above-mentioned documents, a sampling of letters of support from community colleges and high schools, research support documents, and other files as well as this document and the budget Excel file.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to think deeply about the state of journalism in Mississippi and how to make it stronger for a better democracy. It has been an honor and pleasure to be a part of this process and to help assemble what I believe is the best team in the nation to accomplish the truly noble goal of establishing a program where students help themselves and their communities to brighter futures.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may provide further information or explain any portion of our proposal. I know our partners and the many education leaders throughout the targeted region are excited about the prospects of working with you and the Scripps organization to stand up the center. We hope to see you in the fall if we are fortunate enough to advance in the process.

Sincerely,



Edgar Simpson,  
Director, School of Media and Communication

# **The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center: Reporting What Matters**

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***The vision:** The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at USM improves lives and communities through education and trusted information.*

---

***The mission:** The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at USM is charged with transparently producing people-centered, issue-oriented reporting, courageously tackling mis- and disinformation, and sharing high-quality news across media platforms. The center is operated through a collaboration between professionally guided student teams, a supervising director, and a partner-dominated advisory board.*

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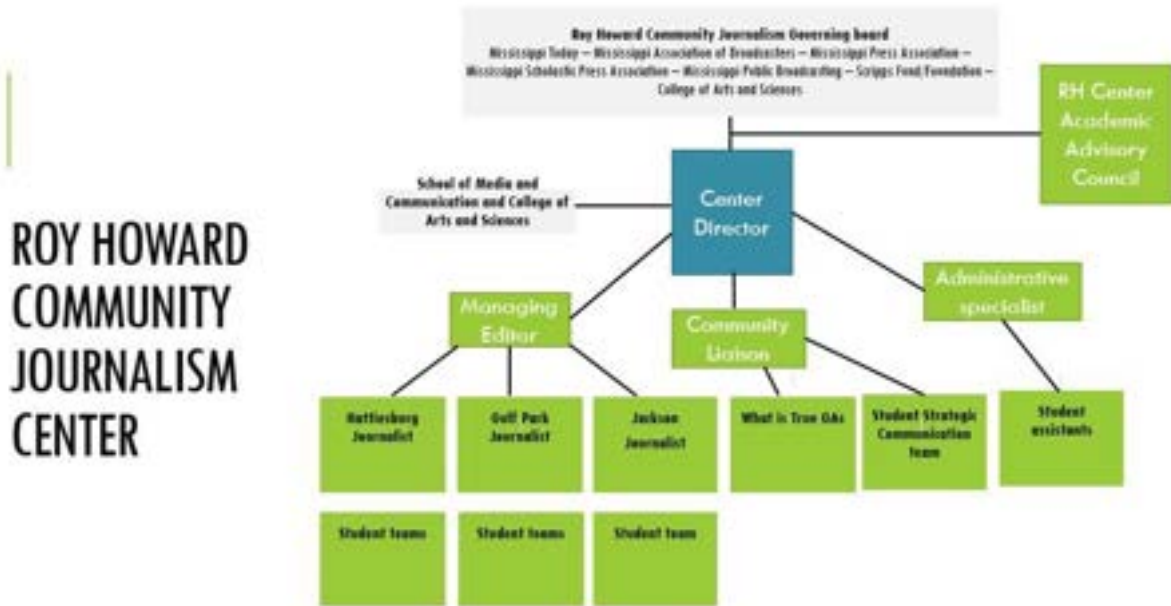
## **Project Description**

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at the University of Southern Mississippi will feature professionally guided teams of students under the direction of a center director. The director will be advised by and routinely consult with a unique coalition of statewide partners to produce important people-centered, issue-oriented enterprise reporting delivered across platforms. The content, including news broadcast packages (video stories), longer form documentary, radio wraps (audio stories), web and print reports, social media, and podcasts, will be managed day-to-day by a managing editor and will be focused on the target of 10 underserved counties in Southeast Mississippi (see examples in attachments and in the [Dropbox link](#)). Simultaneously, the center will feature an innovative media literacy advocacy and mis- and disinformation monitoring program that will respond directly to reports circulating in the target area through the *What is True* hotline (see example in the attachments and in the Dropbox under [What is True](#)). The center's primary efforts will follow three tracks:

1) **Experiential Learning:** Fashioning a pipeline of young talent for Mississippi’s newsrooms and those across the Deep South by putting high school, community college, and university students to work under professional guidance provided by staff, faculty, and the partners.

2) **Local Reporting:** Creating professional-level content, with source transparency as a fundamental value, across platform that connects with an underserved population in Southeast Mississippi.

3) **Trust Building:** Combating mis- and disinformation in the news ecosystem through a distinctive monitoring system of social media and pink slime websites, a standing *What Is True* hotline for residents, a *What is True* podcast and web feature (example in [Dropbox](#)), and a series of public events inviting communities to discuss their issues and build media literacy capacity.



**The vision:** A team of three professional journalists/instructors, each with affiliated faculty status and supported by a full-time administrative specialist and supervised by a center

director and managing editor, will lead students in producing relevant journalism daily, weekly and longer-form for communities who only have access to an ever-thinning supply of news and information. These professionals will mentor, assist and guide a broad team of student journalists and producers who will range in experience from high school to community college to four-year university seniors. Coverage assignments will be pulled from both broad issue-oriented beats (i.e., public education) and more localized beats (i.e., Forrest County government), suggestions from the *What Is True* hotline, and partner requests. The journalism produced will be run-ready across platform, including television packages, radio wraps, web and print stories, social media posts, and all necessary graphics, sound and video files. Further, the center will work to build capacity for longer-form and new journalism targeted at the area by producing at least one timely documentary per year with associated web content and working with the partners to develop podcasts and/or web and television shows on target-centered topics. What is produced by the center will be available to the partners for airing and distribution through a secure website and posted directly to a publicly available, center-branded website. Examples of content and other files can be found in the [Dropbox account](#) created for this submission.

Journalism efforts will be supported by a community liaison position in the center. The liaison will organize at least four community-listening events per year throughout the region, establish and supervise the *What Is True* (i.e., media literacy) outreach with libraries and schools in the region, and serve as the supervisor of graduate students tasked with operating the hotline. This position also will serve as the primary connection between the managing editor and the hotline for the purpose of story assignment.

**The principles:** The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will use the following principles as guidelines:

- **Students first:** *All center organizational efforts must be undertaken with students and their needs and circumstances as key considerations.*
- **Editorial independence:** *The board, working with the center director, have final say over editorial decisions.*
- **Center must enhance journalism, not replace existing journalism:** *Center partners agree that center staff or students will not displace existing staff or student positions.*
- **Pipeline to professional outlets, with a special emphasis on underserved students representing diversity:** *All center activities must make as a priority bringing in diverse students and preparing them for careers in media and strategic communication.*
- **Impactful, enterprise-centered, people-oriented, issue-driven storytelling across platforms:** *Journalism produced by the center will be meticulously tracked for impact and will be produced across all available legacy and digital platforms.*
- **Combating mis- and disinformation is fundamental to center activities:** *Center activities will work to build media literacy capacity in the audience, across demographics.*

#### The Partners

Five outlets and organizations representing the highest level of journalism in Mississippi have agreed to take part in various aspects of the center. The partners will primarily contribute expertise, awareness, and distribution. Letters of Commitment are attached at the end of this document and posted in [Dropbox](#). Each of the partners agree that content being run, posted or aired will be identified as coming from the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. The partners and their specific contributions are:

Mississippi Association of Broadcasters: Founded in 1941, the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters' membership includes all state TV stations, and 85 percent of Mississippi radio stations. MAB is a nonprofit trade association.

Duties/responsibilities in the proposed center:

- Appoint advisory board member.
- Serve as password gatekeeper for members to download content.
- Serve as primary promoter and information provider to members about center content and opportunities.
- Provide expertise for center training events.
- Provide speakers/panelists for center-organized public events.

Mississippi Press Association: The Mississippi Press Association was founded in 1866. Today, it has more than 100 members, reaching a potential of 1 million state residents. The MPA operates an educational non-profit division and a for-profit advertising arm.

Duties/responsibilities in the proposed center:

- Appoint advisory board member.
- Serve as password gatekeeper for members to download content.
- Serve as primary promoter and information provider to members about center content and opportunities.
- Provide expertise for center training events.
- Provide speakers/panelists for center-operation public events.

Mississippi Public Broadcasting: MPB launched in 1970, growing to eight television signals across the state and eight radio signals by the mid-1980s. MPB offers a variety of radio and television programming focused on Mississippi news, life and culture.

Duties/responsibilities in the proposed center:

- Appoint advisory board member.
- Provide office space for reporter/producer and up to three interns at MPB headquarters in Jackson.
- Work routinely with the center management to ensure coverage and quality are acceptable.
- Provide expertise for center training events.
- Air/post center content based on independent editorial judgement.
- Provide speakers/panelists for center-operation public events.

Mississippi Today: Founded in 2016, *Mississippi Today* is non-profit news organization with a focus on government watchdog journalism. *MS Today* reporter Anna Wolfe won the 2023 Pulitzer Prize in local reporting for her series “Backchannel,” which detailed the misappropriation of \$77 million in state welfare funds.

Duties/responsibilities in the proposed center:

- Appoint advisory board member.
- Work routinely with the center management to ensure coverage and quality are acceptable, especially that coming from the center’s Jackson bureau.
- Provide expertise for center training events.
- Post center content based on independent editorial judgement.
- Provide speakers/panelists for center-operation public events.

Mississippi Scholastic Press Association: Established in 1947, the MSPA knits together the state’s sprawling high school media programs. The association is based at the University of Mississippi and has a full-time executive director. The group conducts a statewide journalism contest each year and organizes two conventions, one in the fall at the University Southern Mississippi and one in the spring at Ole Miss. Combined, the two events attract more than 1,000 high school students.

Duties/responsibilities in the proposed center:

- Appoint advisory board member.
- Serve as primary recruiter and information provider for high school “apprenticeships” offered in the center.
- Provide expertise for center training events.
- Provide space and time for center staff and/or management at state conventions.
- Serve as collector of scholarship applications and recommender to center staff and board of scholarship winners.

**Center Set-up (Local Reporting and Experiential Learning):** Operations will be established in three locations, the main headquarters on the USM campus in Hattiesburg, a bureau on the Gulf Park coast campus, and a bureau embedded with Mississippi Public Broadcasting in Jackson. Each bureau will be equipped with a vehicle and the necessary

computers and equipment to produce stories across platform. Opportunities for students will be available at each location.

**Hattiesburg:** This space will serve as the main hub for management and leadership and the primary media literacy operation, housing the center director, a full-time professional journalist, the administrative specialist, the community liaison, and the majority of students from high school to community college to university. The main office is designed to support up to 19 students across a variety of disciplines. Classroom, conference, and studio/lab spaces also will be regularly reserved for center use.

**Gulf Park:** This location will include a professional journalist and teams of students. Given the proximity to the school's film program, which is housed on the coast campus, it is most likely documentary efforts will be led from here. The purpose of the bureau here is to allow a wider range of students to work closer to home in the targeted area. The office there is designed to support up to six students.

**City of Jackson (Capitol):** This bureau, embedded in Mississippi Public Broadcasting, will include a full-time journalist and a smaller team of three students. The purpose will be to cover state representatives, agencies, and actions that affect the targeted area. State government coverage from the Capitol was identified as a key need by the media ecology study done for this grant submission (see Target Area section).

**Types of possible content:** A key mission of the center will be to increase the amount of trusted information available to citizens in the underserved targeted region so that they may make informed decisions about the direction of their communities, culture, and civic life. This will be accomplished through three primary concepts:



- 1) Establishing geographic beats, performed by students under professional supervision, to collect information on the actions and anticipated actions of local government, business, non-profits and other entities.
- 2) Setting up subject area beats, worked by students under professional supervision. These beats will develop issues, profiles, and trends in such areas as public education, the economy, environmental changes and impact, healthcare, and other matters.
- 3) Working with partner outlets to develop local and regional stories.

These beats will create daily, weekly, and longer-term stories that will be made available to partners and partner outlets. They also will be posted to the center's publicly available website. Many of the stories will be worked across platform to include run-ready video stories, audio stories, and web/print reports that include graphics and images. An important facet of content delivery is that in addition to the completed packages media files developed for the stories will be made available through secure servers. The purpose of this is to allow the outlets to edit and produce the stories to best suit their needs for that particular day, show, episode or edition.

The vision for the content also includes detailed regular and routine communication with the partners and their member outlets. The center will have resources and cross-platform-expertise most individual outlets will not possess. Partners and partner outlets will be encouraged to work with the center director to involve students in covering a local, impactful issue in-depth and with the appropriate multimedia. An example of both the process and content is in the attachment section. The project, conducted with an editor for the Biloxi *Sun-Herald* and posted to the *Sun-Herald*, as a special project, focuses on the Vietnamese community along the Gulf

Coast that is facing increasing pressure from environmental, cultural, and economic changes in the region,.

***What is True* vision (Trust building):** The *What is True* arm of the center will monitor the websites and social media streams that have a track record of disseminating mis-, diss- or out-of-context information in the targeted region. The *What is True* team will work along three channels:

- 1) Responding directly to the audience through email, telephone and social media.
- 2) Creating a regular *What is True* report for the center website that is made available to partner outlets and agencies.
- 3) Serve as the primary content providers for the media literacy effort.

**The team:** The budget includes two full-time graduate assistants and one half-time graduate assistant. They will be recruited and overseen by the center's community liaison position.

**What they will produce:** An example of the type of report they could produce is in the attachments and the [Dropbox link](#) called "A Bridge and a Poem." A prototype *What is True* podcast is in the Dropbox link. Efforts will center, as one partner noted during a planning session, "the most dastardly lies" circulating in the area. While these will certainly evolve over time with board guidance and experience, the initial effort will focus on producing web reports that will be posted to the center website and the creation of an accompanying podcast. The example was developed during the media ecology study of the target area by a team of three graduate students. The example was put together using the best scholarship available on truth-telling: reporting in the form of a

“truth sandwich;” extreme transparency; reporting in digestible “nuggets;” offering context and sourcing, and reporting who did what to create the report.

**Public events (Trust building):** The center will work to build direct connections to stakeholders throughout the region by holding a series of public events. The listening sessions will include:

*Open community calls to discuss specific concerns.* For instance, healthcare cost and access are important issues throughout Mississippi and the South but are of particular concern in rural counties in Mississippi. The event will feature partner journalists, center journalists and center staff. The purpose of the event will be to offer data-informed overviews of the issue, develop sources for future stories, and allow communities to meet the journalists and discuss how ethical, transparent journalism is conducted.

*Open community calls for issues important to residents.* These events will allow community members to bring up any issue local residents feel should be made part of a broader, public discussion. These events also will feature center staff and journalists, as well as partner journalists. The purpose of these gatherings will be to allow residents to offer their own experiences and to develop potential future stories.

*Media literacy programs.* The center will reach out to high schools and public libraries in the targeted area to offer programs and seminars on decoding modern media. These programs will feature readily available information such as that from [Media Literacy Now](#). The programs also will highlight the *What is True* hotline with specific examples pulled from the region and explanations on how to take part in the hotline.



A [video](#) featuring USM alumni and a tour of College Hall is in the [Dropbox](#).

Why USM: The School of Media and Communication is perfectly poised to establish the center, geographically, pedagogically, and of the right size. We have more than 240 majors in media and journalism programs, as well as a vibrant social media minor. Our program is centered on cross-platform production that serves ever-demanding industries that need professionals with writing, visual, strategic communication, and social media skills. Students who successfully complete our program often have multiple offers from television and news outlets across the South.

The school's digital journalism and strategic communication programs are accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The school won unanimous re-accreditation this year on all eight standards. The school has 17 full-time faculty in the areas of media, journalism, and strategic communication. All have professional experience,

ranging from three to 17 years. In 2023, the school successfully completed a diversity cluster hire, bringing in two faculty of color. We also offer the only doctoral mass communication program in Mississippi, with an average annual cohort of about 21. The school offers a mass communication master's degree, with an average annual cohort of about nine, and a public relations master's degree with an average annual cohort of about eight. The graduate program is an important asset, giving the center routine and regular access to a pool of talented researchers and practitioners from around the world. The majority of our Ph.D. students are, in fact, international and provide varying perspectives on U.S. culture and society. An excellent example of their potential contribution is the study done for this grant submission in which a team of doctoral candidates developed the media profile for the targeted area and the *What is True* example. The school employs few adjuncts; on average, one to two a semester, though several of our doctoral students teach in the mass communication programs.

Our school is uniquely suited for a venture of this type because of our insistence on hands-on training and guidance for our students and the stress we put on acquiring internships and other experience. We are among the leaders in higher education urging convergence principles as a way of moving traditional journalism forward. In addition, the school enjoys relationships with the key media players in the state. Finally, we believe we are small enough to work individually with our students and to develop deep relationships with key stakeholders but large enough to provide the needed support for the center.

**Curriculum and student tie-ins:** The school has worked diligently in recent years to put students to work in the fields they see themselves entering by tying what we teach to what they need to know and do in their careers. This effort begins in the Student Media Center, where students work in one of five interconnected divisions producing stories, social media,

advertising, planning events, live streaming and other activities. They then use this work, as well as their course projects, to compile portfolios to obtain their first internships with the help and guidance of the school's internship coordinator. Students recruited for and accepted into positions at the center will have a variety of options to earn academic credit. As instructors as well as practicing professionals, center staff will offer practicum hours to students and serve as internship overseers. Center staff will be routinely available to either teach or guest lecture across the school curriculum, including in the writing, producing, strategic communication, and social media classes. In addition, many courses are research- and/or project-based, and center staff will be invited to work with faculty in those classes to develop projects suitable for the center's mission in the targeted area. For instance, the MCJ406 Digital Journalism Capstone class routinely takes on an in-depth issue for their final team production. The center will be a natural tie-in for both expanding reach and deepening the reporting and audience-building aspects of the project. Faculty across the university will be encouraged to have their classes work with the center on content-appropriate projects.

In addition, the school will work with high schools in the targeted region to develop a course that will serve as both high school and college credit. This will give students, especially those in more at-risk situations, a head start on attending college. A line item for scholarships on a needs-basis is included in the proposed budget worksheet in this grant proposal. Further, the university will work with four primary community colleges in the area – Jones, Pearl River, Meridian and Gulf Coast Community – to establish course, internship and practicum credits that could seamlessly transfer to state universities in what is called reverse transfer credits. The goal will be to allow students to take USM-initiated courses that will count in their community college programs as well as at the university level. Below is a list of courses that will be created

or already are on the books that will serve center students (sample syllabi are in the attachments and in [Dropbox](#)):

**COM105 (dual high school credit to be developed) Introduction to Community Journalism (3 credit hours)** – Course provides instruction in the fundamentals of news writing, reporting, and information gathering within the context of community journalism (draft course syllabi in attachments).

**COM429 (existing) Internship (1 to 6 credit hours)** – Students work in professional settings under supervision. Internship must be approved by school internship director and student adviser to ensure work is suitable for individual career plans. Community college students, in addition to USM permission, must get permission from their community college adviser.

**COM418 (existing) Practicum (1 to 6 credit hours)** – Individual course plans must be developed in conjunction with the instructor of record and approved by the school director.

**Sharing results and findings:** Transparency, tracking results, and sharing those results will be core values of the center. These values will be expressed in a variety of ways:

*Scholarship:* Graduate students and faculty will be challenged to conduct academic studies on center activities, especially innovations such as the high school apprenticeship program and the false information monitoring program. The graduate student team assembled for the development phase of this grant submission, for instance, has identified several studies they would like to pursue, regardless of the ultimate outcome of the grant process. The school also has been invited to share the results of the media ecology study done for this grant submission at the MPA's executive board retreat in October. Data pulled from these programs, cleansed of any identifying information, will be made available to any researcher.

*Annual reports:* All annual reports from the center will be made publicly available through the center website. The documents will include extensive self-studies on what worked, what didn't, and future goals to advance the center and address issues.

*Outreach to industry and education organizations and publications:* School and center staff will make regular and routine approaches to industry and higher education groups on specific aspects of the center's operation. Such groups and their affiliated publications will include the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and its affiliated accreditation arm, Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the Institute for Non-Profit News, the Center for Community News based at the University of Vermont, Quill, and other organizations. The outreach will include offers of academic case studies, columns and editorials on the impact of community journalism, and other material.

*Story pitches:* Part of the ongoing marketing efforts of the center will be regular and routine pitches to industry publications such as *Editor & Publisher* and *Columbia Journalism Review*. Because of its broad platform focus, center activities also could be of interest to broadcasting trade journals such as *DigiDay* and *Broadcasting and Cable* magazine.

**Interdisciplinary work:** The center, as proposed in this grant request, is interdisciplinary in concept, covering every area of current journalism and media practices, such as sound, video, writing, in-depth reporting, social media, content management systems, etc. We also are incorporating the related fields of strategic communication. For instance, the community liaison position, in addition to working with the graduate students, will work with a team of student workers from the strategic communication field in marketing the center, its community events, and the *What Is True* hotline. Our Strategic Communication major is offered in partnership with the School of Marketing, which is in the College of Business. We also anticipate working closely



with programs such as computer science, graphic design, and others to stand-up the center's backend as well as developing marketing materials. Further, the center will invite faculty from across the university to become "affiliated" with the center. Affiliation, in addition to awareness and support, will give the center a ready field of experts upon which to draw for ideas, perspective, and context. For instance, the university has a Black Studies Center that has a number of faculty affiliates from our school, political Science, nursing, etc. Affiliations for the Roy Howard Center will be recruited, in particular, within the School of Humanities and School of Visual and Performing Arts.

**Timeline and milestones:** The design grant has allowed the school to lay a solid foundation for starting up the center. Plans and estimates are in place for space and technology, hiring, student recruiting, transportation, curriculum, media creation, news delivery, and marketing. Below is the anticipated timeline, which assumes an Oct. 1 announcement and funds availability in early January. Following are dates for signature events. Below those are month-by-month breakdowns and milestones, concentrating on the planning, set-up, and launch of the center. The timeline and milestones were designed to be concrete but somewhat flexible while still meeting the deadlines of the signature events.

**Signature milestones:**

- **Nov. 4, 2023:** Announcement, press conference, press materials (referencing school web page on center development).
- **Feb. 12, 2024:** Center director hired (with accompanying press release).
- **March 31, 2024:** First quarterly financial and performance report.
- **June 17, 2024:** Center grand opening coinciding with first two-week training session for students; launch of web site.
- **June 30, 2032:** Second quarterly financial and performance report.

- **July 15, 2024:** First significant content packages distributed by center.
- **Sept. 18, 2024:** First official public meeting held in target area.
- **Sept. 30, 2024:** Third quarterly financial and performance report.
- **Oct. 7, 2024:** *What is True* hotline officially launched.
- **Dec. 31, 2024:** Fourth quarterly financial and performance report.
- **June 16, 2025:** Celebration marking center's first anniversary accompanied by first public annual report.

Timeline and milestones for the first 12 months after decision:

**October 2023:** Recruiting begins for center director; first meeting of the board; schoolwide meeting with students and graduate students to discuss what the center means; grant management established with USM Office of Research Administration (ORA); USM human relations signs off on job descriptions; communication with community colleges and targeted high schools; initial marketing begins with press announcements; curriculum changes initiated.

**Key milestones:** Job descriptions and job ads moved through university process; job position announcements placed.

**November 2023:** Remaining full-time positions announced, recruiting begins, and job ads placed; space, furniture, and equipment confirmed; bids sought; marketing materials underway, including final selection of logo and suite of design materials; contract web designers recruited; university technology team engaged.

**Key milestones:** Director hired in preparation for January start; marketing materials underway; recruiting underway for managing editor and community liaison scheduled.

**December 2023:** Work continues on marketing, hiring, curriculum process, and marketing plans; board bylaws drafted.

**Key milestone:** Process with ORA finalized.

**January 2024:** Work continues on marketing, personnel hiring; web back-end and public site architecture contracts confirmed; outreach to community colleges and high schools continues.

**Key milestones:** Orientation and induction for center director; first purchase orders on furniture/technology input.

**February 2024:** Second advisory board meeting; personnel interviews; student recruiting; plans for first intensive training session; social media plan under development.

**Key milestones:** Second wave hiring (managing editor, community liaison, administrative specialist) completed; first wave of furniture and technology installed.

**March and April 2024:** Work continues on marketing, recruiting students, and hiring for three professional journalists; tracking measures confirmed; beat system developed; media literacy program/*What is True* hotline under development.

**Key milestones:** Final furniture and technology purchased and installed; process for leasing transportation finalized; website prototype in beta; first two-week training schedule and timeframe set; curriculum process completed; intake and orientation on second wave hiring complete.

**May 2024:** Second-phase marketing plan confirmed; preparations for grand opening and first open house; student recruiting continues; final draft of board bylaws.

**Key milestones:** Hiring for center staff complete; paperwork for first group of students complete; computers, software, equipment purchased and ready; website back-end and public face launched in soft opening; editorial calendar set; first two public meetings scheduled.

**June 2024:** Final preparations for grand opening to coincide with first two-week training session for students; social media streams developed.

**Key milestones:** June 17 grand opening to coincide with first day of two-week training session; third board meeting with votes on bylaws, editorial and public meeting calendar, and training schedule.

**July and August 2024:** Students and staff move from planning and beta production to the first-wave reporting and distribution; students begin regular and routine duties; media literacy and *What is True* monitoring plans continued; first training seminar discussed.

**Key milestones:** First significant stories produced and distributed by the center by July 15; first public meeting planned; first COM105 scheduled and marketed; social media launched and populated; graduate students for media literacy and *What is True* hotline identified.

**September and October 2024:** Student recruiting continues; second public meeting planned; ongoing student recruitment.

**Key milestones:** First public meeting in Jackson County held on Sept. 18; *What is True* hotline launched with marketing effort on Oct. 7.

**November and December, 2024:** Operations regular and routine; in-depth review of operations, marketing, tracking, and recruiting; plans discussed for second mid-term training session.

**Key milestones:** Second public meeting held Nov. 12 in Forrest County; first mid-term training session held Nov. 15.

## **Students Trained**

**USM placement and student diversity:** The School of Media and Communication has a long history of successfully placing students in a variety of media and communication fields, ranging from daily journalists to television producers to non-profit managers to strategic communication and social specialists. Because the vast majority of our students come from mid-Mississippi south to the Coast, many of the students stay in Mississippi post-graduation. We have more than 240 majors in media and journalism programs, as well as a vibrant social media minor. Our program is centered on cross-platform production that serves ever-demanding industries that need professionals with writing, visual, and social media skills. Students who successfully complete our program often have multiple offers from television and news outlets across the South. Recent graduates have gone to news stations, newspapers and website operations throughout Mississippi and the South. Locations include Jackson, MS; Hattiesburg, MS; the Gulf Coast (WLOX and WXXV), Victoria, Texas, and many other markets. In addition, many USM graduates are part of the partner organizations, such as seven graduates at *Mississippi Today*. We host an annual Broadcasters Day, for instance, in which Mississippi news directors recruit and assist students in preparing their demo reels and job materials. Last spring, nineteen media executives attended the day.

In the last 18 months, the school has graduated 123 students in media and journalism majors. Attempts were made to contact each of the students, with 71 responding, for a response rate of 56.7 percent. Of the respondents, 10 reported not working in their chosen field, yielding a placement rate of 86 percent. Below is a partial list of where some of the graduates have gone, concentrating on the grant guidelines of graduates being placed in news outlets within a four-hour drive of USM's main campus:

2023:

Garret Grove (WJTV, Jackson, MS)  
Jackson Howell (*Columbian (MS) Progress*)  
Kyra Lampley (WDAM, Hattiesburg, MS)  
Loren Jones (Dixie Sports, Gulfport, MS)  
Tarra Dow (News Orleans lifestyle)

Madisone Hatten (WXXV, Gulfport, MS)  
Victoria Kiner (WJTV, Jackson, MS)  
Sethanie Smith (WHLT, Hattiesburg, MS)  
Austin Lindsey (WXXV, Gulfport, MS)

2022

Kobe Moore (WGSO AM, New Orleans)  
Charles Arnold (MPB, Jackson, MS)  
Makayla Marsalis (DeltanewsTV, Greenville)  
Jeremiah Henry (WJTV, Jackson, MS)  
Kaitlyn Hearn (*Laurel (MS) Leader-Call*)

Sara Kaufman (WDAM, Hattiesburg, MS)  
Alexander Dunaway (WXXV, Gulfport)  
Morgan Pierce (iHeart, Meridian, MS)  
Ansley Brent (WXXV, Gulfport, MS)

Fall 2021

Rose Scarlett Gully (KTVE, Monroe, LA)  
Margaret Matteson (WHNT, Huntsville, AL)  
Skylar Kimbrough (WLOX, Biloxi, MS)

Rachel Hernandez (WGNO-TV, N. Orleans)  
Malaysia McCoy (Hattiesburg, MS)

*Diversity:* The school has a significantly higher population of diverse students than the university at large, with 34.9 percent of the students being African-American, compared to 28.5 percent universitywide. The school also graduates a higher percentage of black students (66 percent) than does the university. Further, the school recently successfully completed a diversity cluster hire, bringing in two new faculty members of color. In addition, the incoming director of our Student Media Center is African-American, and top student leaders, including the executive producer of SMTV and the student director of the Creative Division, are both African-American. The school is committed to expanding outreach through its high school workshop, which partners with the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association to target recruitment in high schools in underserved areas of the state. The last two years of the workshop diverse student attendance has been at least 70 percent. In 2023, the school was one of 10 programs across the country awarded a grant by the Dow Jones News Fund, based in large part on diversity recruiting efforts. The percentage of diverse students at the workshop this summer was 89.9 percent.

**Students and recruiting:** The center will work closely with the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association to reach high schools and faculty at the four closest community colleges to bring students into the pipeline. The four community colleges are Jones College, Pearl River Community College, Gulf Coast Community College, and Meridian Community College. Though Jones and Meridian are technically outside the target area, the junior colleges all recruit from within the area. Meridian and Gulf Coast colleges, in particular, have strong media programs that will be a natural fit with center activities. USM faculty and administrators will recruit students at the four-year level. Special effort will be made to recruit students of diversity at all levels to work in the center and ultimately pursue media careers, continuing the school's longstanding focus on diversity. The vision is to replicate on a larger scale what has worked with recruiting for the school's annual high school Broadcast Boot Camp by targeting schools with a high population of diversity among students. In addition, recruiting efforts will include schools that do not currently have media programs. We have found it rewarding to offer students opportunities to explore fields they may not have considered before.

Regardless of school level, students will need a grade point average of 2.0 or above, a valid Mississippi driver's license, be available to attend the two-week orientation/training boot camp (or make acceptable alternative arrangements in the event of conflicts such as Study Abroad or outside internships), and be able to devote an agreed-upon number of hours per week (up to 19) to center duties. The students will be paid \$12 an hour. They will be eligible for mileage reimbursement, but only those 18 or older will be eligible to drive center vehicles after completing the necessary university-mandated records check. Here is a breakdown of the three groups of students, a recruiting goal for the number of students in that group after two years, their positions, and eligibility requirements.

*High school:* Recruitment will be focused on high schools in the target area, with a two-year goal of six students across the bureaus. Only rising juniors or seniors will be eligible. The ideal mix of students will be three juniors and three seniors. The vision is never having more than three new high school students at any given time. Selection will be based on application, portfolios, recommendations from their teachers, and an essay on interest and career goals. Selection will be made by the MSPA executive director in conjunction with the center executive director.

The high school students will serve as apprentices in the center, working directly with the professional staff on a variety of journalism-associated tasks. Work will include doing background on issues and interview subjects, collecting information such as government agendas and minutes, and so on. As they progress in confidence and skills, the students will be assigned to work with the university-level students on higher level skills tasks, such as setting up interviews, conducting interviews, and writing first drafts. They also will be thoroughly trained in technology used by the center, such as video and stills cameras, web content management, and sound production.

*Junior college:* Recruitment will be focused on the four community colleges closest to the target area, with a two-year goal of eight students. Selection will be based on portfolio reviews, faculty and/or adviser recommendations, application, and an essay addressing the student's interest and career goals. Selection will be made by the center director in conjunction with a committee assigned by school director.

Community college students will serve as entry-level interns/student workers. After an assessment by center staff of abilities and confidence, the students will be assigned to one of the center staff as beginning interns. They will do higher-level research on issues and interview



subjects, develop short pieces they will complete with their supervisor, and work on developing proficiency with the technology. The latter will include editing television and audio packages, working up graphics for the web, and other associated duties.

Letters of support from community college representatives are in the attachments and the [Dropbox link](#).

*University students:* Recruitment in the first two years will focus on junior and senior USM students, though any four-year student in the state will be eligible for the positions. The goal after the first two years of center operations will be 10 students on the journalism and production side of the center and four students on the Strategic Communication side. Selection will be based on portfolio reviews, faculty and/or adviser recommendations, application, and an essay addressing the student's interest and career goals. Selection will be made by the center director in conjunction with a committee assigned by school director.

These students will be expected to contribute significantly to the work being done daily, weekly and long-term by the center. Though still under the direction of the professional staff, the students will be expected to write and produce basic, professional-level reports across platform, in addition to significantly adding value to higher-level stories and packages. They also will assist partner members (such as newspapers or television stations in the target area) to expand digital offerings, such as public affairs oriented podcasts, television shows, or documentary specials. Students on the strategic communication side will be expected to contribute significantly to the smooth running of public events, assist directly or manage a professional social media presence, and assist in the publicizing of the *What is True* hotline.

*Graduate students:* Graduate students will be recruited on the basis of their interest in mass communication, journalism, and media literacy. Under USM assistantship guidelines,

students are required to work 20 hours per week for a \$15,000 annual stipend and tuition waiver. These hours are typically broken up among research duties, teaching, and other assignments. The center positions will be eligible for assistantships. The goal after the first year of operation of the center will be three graduate students working a combined 40 hours per week in the center on the *What is True* hotline, accompanying features, and the media literacy program.

**Recruiting plan:** A recruiting line item is included in the center's proposed budget. The proposal calls for the usual page on the center's web site, brochures, flyers and position announcements, as well as social media campaigns on opportunities within the center that will be demographically and geographically directed at students in the target area. However, the primary recruiting plan will be the development of relationships between center staff, especially and including the center director, and high school advisers and junior college and university faculty. The goal of these relationships will be to keep the center top of mind for students with a high interest and aptitude for journalism and related activities. Recruiting then will be done on a person-to-person basis. In order to foster these relationships and ensure the students have a foundation in which to see themselves working at the center and pursuing media careers, the following programs will be developed:

- 1) The center and its apprenticeship program will become a regular and routine part of the two annual conventions organized by the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association and hosted by the University of Mississippi and the University of Southern Mississippi. The convention at USM is routinely held in the fall and the event at Ole Miss in the spring. Each convention attracts between 400 and 600 high school students. Working with MSPA Executive Director R.J. Morgan, center staff will attend the conventions, lead content sessions, and be available to

advisers and students to answer questions about the center and its opportunities for high school students.

2) Center staff will visit each targeted community college once a year to meet with students interested in the fields available in the center and with faculty and administrators.

3) Working with the School of Media and Communication, the center will offer individual tours and information sessions with students at all levels, as well as the above-mentioned “lengthy shadowing” opportunities.

4) Borrowing from what has worked well at the USM Student Media Center, the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center also will host an annual Open House at the main bureau on the Hattiesburg campus. The Open House will feature some examples of the work done at the center, a chance to meet some of the partners’ best-known journalists, and learn about the student opportunities. In addition to specific invitations, the public at large will be able to attend the Open House.

**Mentorship and career development:** Students at each level will be continuously mentored and coached by center staff. In addition, the center will focus on developing a culture of student leadership in which the older, more experienced students will be expected to assist in the training and development of the younger ones. The students will have continuous access to the professionals at the partner agencies through working with them on assignments and through a series of training sessions.

**Training schedules:** Students at all levels working in the center will be required to attend or assist in the delivery of ongoing and routine training seminars. A key task for the center’s advisory board, in conjunction with the center’s director, will be to develop the training timeline, set priorities for the orientation and two-week boot camp, and establish topics for the mid-year

seminars. A primary commitment to being partner in the center is the acceptance of training and mentoring duties. Below is an envisioned schedule of training offered by the center. Center training also will be opened to all partner members, such as producers and journalists working with members of the Mississippi Press Association and the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters. A sample training schedule:

*(June or July) – Two-week Center Fundamentals Training.* Held on the USM Hattiesburg campus, the two-week session will serve as orientation on center operations, purpose, goals, and mission. Sessions and hands-on activities will include fundamental journalism practices, introduction to center technology, and overviews of law and ethics. Sample topics will include Mississippi’s Open Records and Open Meetings laws and how to file a FOIA; the state’s troubled journalism past, introduction to investigative journalism, making the best use of technology, and recent court decisions on information access. Session leaders will consist of state professionals selected and recruited by the partners from their organizations and select faculty. Students at all levels will be required to attend the training weeks as a condition of continued employment in the center, depending on whether other arrangements have been made in advance. Students brought in to the center during the year will undergo a shortened version, but will have to attend the session the next time it is offered.

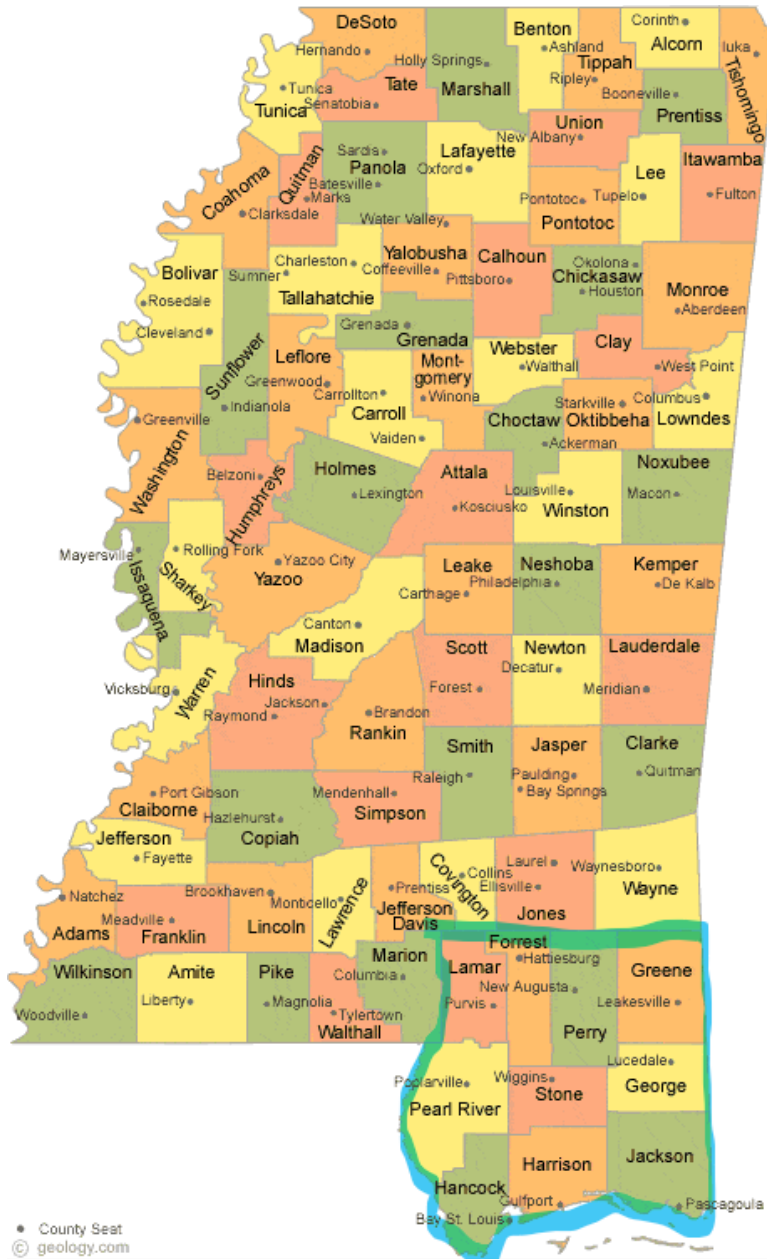
*(October-November) One Day Fall seminar:* The purpose of these one-day trainings mid-academic year will be for the center director and the board to address any deficiencies seen in the students’ work, top off fundamental skills, or advance initiatives of the center, such as documentaries, podcasting or online document databases.

*(March-April) One Day Spring seminar:* See above.

**Tracking career progress:** A specific tracking program will be developed for the students who move through the center. All students taking part in the center at any level will be entered into a database that will be regularly maintained and updated by center staff. Students at the high school level will be tracked to determine whether they enter a junior college or university and what subjects they were pursuing. Junior college and university students will be traced through their career in the center and then at least three years past their graduation. The latter will be achieved by collecting their telephone numbers and personal emails and through annual email and telephone surveys. Each year, students in the center will be required to fill out a short survey on their experiences in the center. Results will be reported by the center director to the board in four main buckets:

- 1) *College going:* Did the younger students (high school and junior college) go on to higher degrees? If so, what majors did they pursue?
- 2) *Time to degree:* Did university students graduate, from what field, and how long did the degree take them to earn?
- 3) *Placement:* In what field and where did center students find their first career position? Where are the students working three years after graduation?
- 4) *Satisfaction:* What was the students' experience working in the center? What suggestions will they will make for improvements for the generation coming behind them?

## Community served (target area)



### The Region

The center will focus on a 10-county region starting in Hattiesburg and stretching south to the Gulf Coast and east to the state line. The counties are Forrest, Lamar, Perry, Green, Pearl River, Stone, George, Hancock, Harrison and Jackson. Just under 675,000 people live in the

region. Minority populations range from a high of 37.6 percent in Forrest County to a low of 7.8 percent in George County, reflecting the wide diversity across Mississippi. As a region, the population tends to be poorer, less well-educated, and more diverse than the rest of the nation.

The area is underserved by professional local reporting, which consists primarily of television stations in Hattiesburg and on the Coast, a few radio stations that offer little local news, and primarily weekly newspapers that focus largely on crime, local sports, some government meetings, and business announcements. Further, the area is dramatically underserved in terms of state reporting, especially actions that concern the region. This grant submission has proposed the Jackson bureau to directly address this need.

National trends of thinning local journalism are on high display. Only two daily newspapers are in the region, the *Sun-Herald*, a McClatchy-owned operation based in Biloxi, and the *Hattiesburg American*, a Gannett outlet that now operates as a “ghost newspaper,” printed and produced out of a regional hub with little local content. The *Sun-Herald* has a reduced staff from historical levels but remains a solid source of local news. Television coverage is provided primarily by three stations, WDAM in Hattiesburg, and WLOX and WXXV, both physically based in Gulfport.

A media ecology study (raw documents are in attachments) was conducted for this grant submission by three doctoral candidates. Media ecology studies seek to find out what information is available to a specific audience. The purpose in this case was to define a news environment and to see what types of information live where. After an initial “look-see” period, the study team found that three primary streams of information existed and would be worth studying: legacy media (defined as newspapers and television stations), government social media, and alternative social media and websites. The reason government social media was

selected was because the team found the local sheriff's departments often had significant followers on social media, especially Facebook. In several cases, such as Perry County, the sheriff's office had significantly more followers than did the local weekly newspaper, 13,000 followers compared to the *Richton Dispatch*'s 2,100 followers. Further, the sheriff's departments were seen as "covering themselves," reporting the incidents they were investigating as often as the local media. The term alternative social media refers primarily to Facebook groups discovered during the study that appeared to be directed at local residents. Several of them have a significant number of followers, though many are private groups that require permission to see posts. By far the largest of these groups is the *Hattiesburg Patriot News* with 145,000 followers.

Overall, the study found the region an intense news desert, with local information being sparse and frequently without depth or context. Information available to residents was dominated by the local television stations, which tended to put out numerous short reports focusing on crime, weather, and sports. The local print media reports tended to look similar to the television coverage, short stories on traditional topics and announcements. While some of the alternative social media streams had sizable followings, few posted on a regular and routine basis and none with what most would consider objective reporting. Most of the print media and alternative social media streams tended to offer stories from more than one county. For the purposes of this study, local coverage was defined as any story based in one of the target counties.

Following is a breakdown of the demographics and media profile of each county:

### **Forrest County**

**Demographics:** With Hattiesburg as the county seat, a portion of the University of Southern Mississippi is located here (the university straddles Forrest and Lamar counties). The population was 77,875 people, with 28,876 households, in 2021. The median household income in 2021 was



\$45,780. 37.4 percent of the population is African-American, and 3.3 percent Hispanic or Latino. 90.1 percent of households have a computer, and most of them have a broadband Internet subscription.

**Media profile:** By far, the largest content provider in the county is television station WDAM. During the sampling period, the station reported 61 crime reports and 55 weather posts. No other categories were close. While the *Hattiesburg-American* continues to report on some local news, including running lists of ballot candidates in Forrest and Lamar counties, the newspaper averaged about one to two local stories a week.

*WDAM - Content analysis*

Category	Week One 11-17 June	Week two 4-10 June
Weather	30	25
Crime	33	28
Legal civil	3	1
Legal Criminal	4	0
Sports	12	14
Government	3	6
Health	6	3
Business	4	2
Education	2	3
Legal-other	3	0

Though carrying the name Hattiesburg Patriot News, the Facebook group proprietors offer occasional posts from a wide area, including a spate of posts during the study period involving the Jones County Sheriff’s Department. Despite its large following on social media, the site makes relatively infrequent postings.

*Hattiesburg Patriot News – Content analysis*

Category	Week One June 1-7	Week Two April 30-May 6
Business	0	0

Health	0	0
Government	1 (state)	0
Crime	3	4
Education	0	0
Legal Civil	3	1
Legal Criminal	0	0
Sports	0	0
Politics	1 (local)	0
Weather	1	0

### Lamar County

**Demographics:** This county, located west of Forrest, has a population of 65,353, with 24,929 households. The median household income in 2021 was \$63,925. 22.2 percent of the population is African-American, and 3.2 percent is Hispanic or Latino. 94.8 percent of households have a computer, and most of them have a broadband Internet subscription.

**Media profile:** Lamar has no newspapers based in the county, though the weekly *Pine Belt News* offers some stories based in the county, as does the *Hattiesburg American*. The *Pine Belt News* content analysis revealed a similar report to that of WDAM.

#### *Pine Belt News – Content analysis*

Category	Week One 11-17 June	Week Two 4-10 June
Weather	58	19
Crime	15	15
Legal civil	1	4
Legal Criminal	3	3
Sports State	7	4
Sports Regional	5	10
Sports National	3	0
Government	1	4
Health	7	5
Business	3	1
Education	3	2
Legal-other	1	1

## Perry County

**Demographics:** This county is the least populated in the target area, with 11,571 people and 5,466 households. The median household income was \$45,368. 19 percent of the population is African-American. 90 percent of households have a computer, but only 70.9 percent have a high-speed Internet subscription.

**Media Profile:** The county has a weekly newspaper, the *Richton Dispatch*, which offers a range of local stories, typically centering on local profiles and some crime reports. By far the largest social media presence in the county is the local Sheriff's Department, with 13,000 followers. During the study period, the department posted eight times, or about once every other day. By comparison, the weekly newspaper has 2,100 followers.

### *Richton Dispatch – Content analysis*

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	11
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	1
Politics	0
Sports	3
Government	1
Health	1
Business	2
Education	0
Legal-other	0

## Greene County

**Demographics:** This county is located on the east border of Mississippi. The population was 13,630, with 3,742 households. The median household income in 2021 was \$49,581. 25.4 percent of the population is African-American, and 1.4 percent is Hispanic or Latino. 80.5 percent of households have a computer, however only 67.1 percent have a broadband Internet subscription.

**Media profile:** The county is host to a weekly newspaper, the *Greene County Herald*, which offers the usual blend of local stories, though with a bit higher percentage on local government. The county has two Facebook groups purportedly devoted to local happenings. The largest is called Greene County News with 3,800 members. Posts were minimal during the study period, featuring a number of business announcements.

### *Greene County Herald – Content analysis*

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	2
Legal civil	2
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	1
Sports	6
Government	7
Health	3
Business	0
Education	1
Legal-other	0

## Pearl River

**Demographics:** In the latest 2021 Census report, the county had 56,503 residents. The median household income in 2021 was \$53,855. The county is one of the least diverse, with 12.2 percent African-American, and 3.5 percent Hispanic or Latino. 88.2 percent of households have a computer, and most of them have a broad Internet subscription.

**Media profile:** The county is home to the *Picayune Item* weekly newspaper. The paper offers a relatively broad range of stories, with weather and crime tending to dominate. The county also has one of the largest followings for the local Sheriff’s Department’s Facebook page, with 20,000 followers or 25 percent more than the local newspaper. During the study period, the Sheriff’s Department made 42 posts.

### *Picayune Item* – Content analysis

Category	Week 1 (June 4-10)	Week 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	11	9
Crime	19	23
Legal (Civil)	6	4
Legal (Criminal)	9	4
Sports	17	12
Government	5	3
Health	7	9
Business	4	6
Education	3	2
Legal-Other	2	1

## Stone County

**Demographics:** This county is in the center of the targeted area. The population is 18,644, with 6,429 households. The median household income in 2021 was \$50,807. 78.3 percent of

Stone’s population is white, with 19 percent African-American. 94.1 percent of households have a computer, and most of them have a broadband Internet subscription.

**Media profile:** The county has two weekly newspapers, the *Stone County Republican-Crane Chronicle* and the *Stone County Enterprise* based in Wiggin. Both newspapers report similar items. For the purpose of this study, the *Republican* was examined. During the study period, the newspaper reported a higher percentage of government and health stories than crime or weather.

*Stone County Republican – Content analysis*

Category	Week 1 (June 4-10)	Week 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	2	3
Crime	3	4
Legal (Civil)	2	2
Legal (Criminal)	3	2
Sports	5	4
Government	9	7
Health	2	3
Business	2	3
Education	4	5
Legal-Other	1	1

**George County**

**Demographics:** The population was 24,762, with 8,577 households. The median household income in 2021 was \$47,385. With the lowest diversity of all the counties, George’s population is 89.1 percent white, and less than 8 percent African-American. 84.7 percent of households have a computer, and 72.3 percent of them have a broadband Internet subscription.

**Media profile:** The *George County Times* is a weekly newspaper with similar coverage as seen in the other counties, though with a higher percentage during the study period of health stories.

George has among the most robust Facebook group pages. The George County News and Events page has 25,900 followers, more than twice the number of *Times* followers. Proprietors of the page post frequently across topics and comments are frequent. The George County Sheriff’s Department also has a significant following on Facebook, with 4,000 more than the *Times*’ 10,000 followers.

*George County Times – Content analysis*

<b>Category</b>	<b>May 1 – May 14</b>
Weather	4
Crime	2
Legal civil	2
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	3
Sports	2
Government	3
Health	8
Business	2
Education	2
Legal-other	3

*George County News and Events – Content analysis*

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	4
Crime	2
Legal civil	2
Legal Criminal	0

Politics	3
Sports	2
Government	3
Health	8
Business	2
Education	2
Legal-other	3

### Hancock County

**Demographics:** This county, together with Harrison and Jackson, forms the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. Hancock has 46,055 people, with 18,864 households. The median household income in 2021 was \$58,196. 87.2 percent of the population is white. 91.6 percent of households have a computer, and most of them have a broad Internet subscription.

**Media profile:** The county has a weekly, the *Sea Coast Echo*, that offers the typical local stories. It has more than 19,000 followers on Facebook. The *Sun-Herald* in Biloxi also offers a Hancock County page on its website. In contrast to several other counties in the target area, the Sheriff's Department has a relatively meager 3,600 followers on Facebook.

#### *Sea Coast Echo – Content analysis*

Category	Week 1 (June 4-10)	Week 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	10	11
Crime	18	17
Legal (Civil)	5	4
Legal (Criminal)	7	4
Sports	15	17
Government	5	3



Health	3	2
Business	3	2
Education	9	8
Legal-Other	2	3

### **Harrison County**

**Demographics:** This county is the most populated in the targeted area and is home to USM’s Gulf Park campus in Long Beach. In 2021, the population was 209,396, with 79,064 households. The median household income in 2021 was \$51,590. The county has the highest percentage of Hispanics and Latinos, with 5.7 percent. Just over a quarter of the residents, 26.3 percent, are African-American. 92.4 percent of households have a computer, and 84.5 percent of them have a broadband Internet subscription.

**Media Profile:** The county is home to the region’s only locally centered daily newspaper, the *Sun-Herald*. The newspaper offers a range of local stories and is the only legacy media outlet in targeted region to offer regular coverage of education and the courts. The newspaper has 85,000 followers on Facebook, in contrast to the Sheriff’s Department’s 18,000 followers. The county also is home to both WLOX TV and WXXV TV, both of which offer similar reports to WDAM. Like WDAM, the stations also reach into the surrounding counties. The stations both cover a variety of local events, weather, and crime.

#### *Biloxi Sun-Herald – Content analysis*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Week 1 (June 4-10)</b>	<b>Week 2 (June 11-17)</b>
Weather	17	15
Crime	12	11
Legal (Civil)	2	3
Legal (Criminal)	9	7

Sports	14	12
Government	13	15
Health	7	9
Business	7	9
Education	9	12

### Jackson County

**Demographics:** This county is at the far southeast of Mississippi, with a population of 149,761 and 61,942 households. 21.5 percent of residents are African-American. The median household income in 2021 was \$39,969. More than 92 percent of households had computers, and more than 84 percent had high speed Internet access.

**Media profile:** Its daily newspaper, the *Mississippi Press*, announced in February 2023 it will close. The paper was owned by the Alabama Media Group and had operated for several years as a “ghost” newspaper similar to the *Hattiesburg American*. The *Sun-Herald* has a Jackson County page on its website, and both WXXV and WLOX reach into the county. The county is a stark example of the thinning journalism across the country. The county is one of the largest in the country without a newspaper of any kind based within its borders. The county also is among the poorest in Mississippi. The Jackson County Sheriff’s Department, in line with the trend across the region, has a sizable following of 32,000. During the study period, the department posted nine times, eight of which were – not surprisingly – about crimes.

#### *Jackson County Sheriff’s Department – Content analysis*

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	8

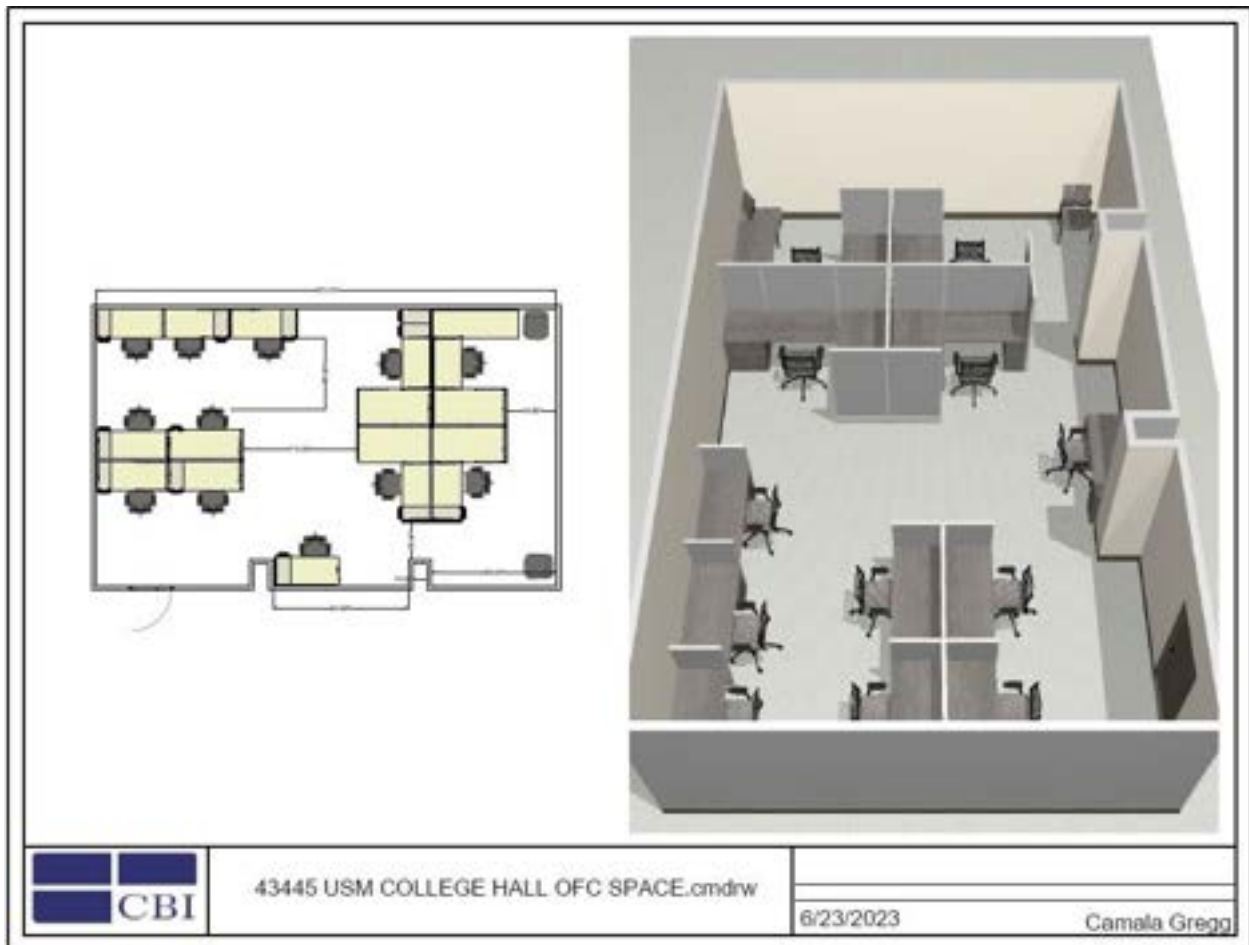
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	0
Sports	1
Government	0
Health	0
Business	0

**Capacity and operations**

The University of Southern Mississippi, as an R1 research-intensive institution with 14,000 students, has the institutional will and necessary infrastructure to support a start-up of this size and breadth (please see university President Joe Paul’s letter of support in the attachments and [Dropbox link](#)). The university has locations at the top and bottom of the target area, giving ready access for student and staff coverage and production. The campus has experienced offices of communication, grant oversight, technology, and financial administration to ensure the plans laid out in this proposal are followed, as well as to oversee guidelines set by Scripps. The center has the support of the faculty in the school, as well as the college and university administration. This grant proposal, itself, is a demonstration of the university’s capacity and desire to launch the center as both a public service and a continuation of USM’s long history of successful media education. In putting together this proposal, the school called on expertise on the Gulf Coast campus, the CAS dean’s office, the Office of Research Administration, the president’s office, the School of Visual and Performing Arts, the School of Computing Science, and other campus entities. The university also has a well-staffed technology office, which offers services such as web hosting and server set-up and maintenance. How these services will be used in the center is detailed in the budget section of this proposal.

The school offers the only doctoral program in mass communication in Mississippi, as well as two master's degree programs in mass communication and public relations. This is a unique and valuable asset for the center. For instance, the vast majority of the research for the target area was conducted by three doctoral candidates, at least one of whom will remain available should the university be fortunate enough to win the grant. As noted above, the center will rely heavily on graduate student assistance for the *What is True* initiative.

### Facilities and equipment

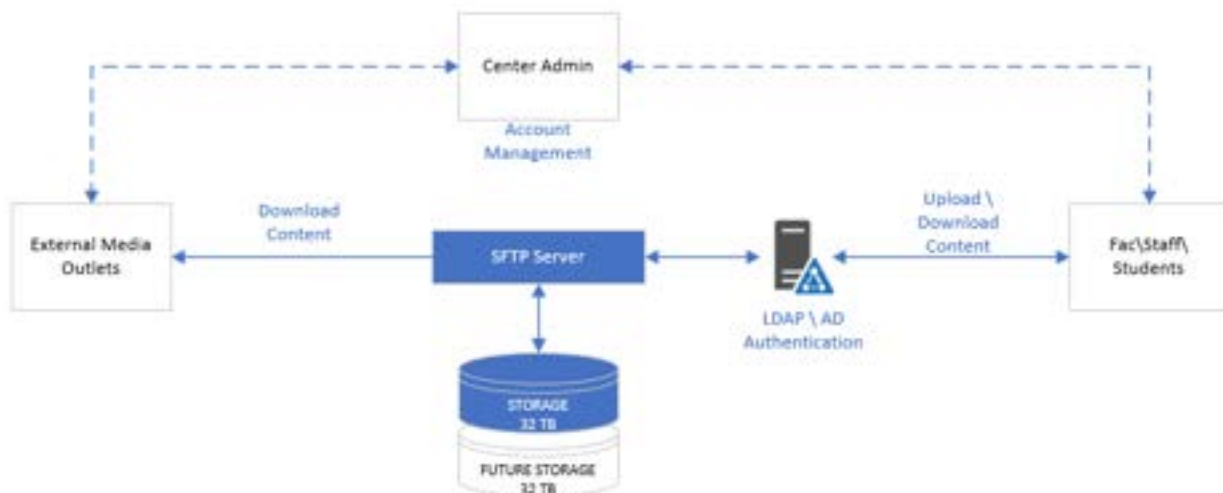


Schematic of proposed main office of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center in College Hall.

The center will have its main office on the Hattiesburg campus in a suite on the first floor of College Hall. This office will house the center director, a professional journalist, the community liaison, and the majority of student workers, interns and others. Two branch bureaus

will serve the targeted region, one at USM’s Gulfport campus and the other in Jackson. Each office will be equipped with the necessary furniture and equipment to support the staff and students working there. Each location also will be set up with the necessary equipment for cross-platform production, including computers, video set-ups (such as microphones, lights, tripods and so on), still cameras, software for production, and other accessories (the budget section has a complete breakdown). Vehicles will be placed in all three locations, a van in Hattiesburg, a small SUV in Gulfport, and a passenger vehicle in Jackson. The vehicles will enable staff and students to travel on story assignments and assist in logistics for public listening events or media literacy programs.

Content for the center will be delivered to the partners and news outlets through server(s) operated by USM. A public website will be hosted by Snoflo (a content management system common for campus media sites) and maintained by center staff and students. Other associated digital platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts will be populated and maintained by student workers and overseen by the community liaison and the managing editor.



**Center personnel:** Center personnel will consist of a director responsible for all operations and personnel; a managing editor in charge of day-to-day editing and management of the content; three reporter/producers, one in each of the bureaus and one in the main center in Hattiesburg; a community liaison, three graduate assistants, 28 student workers (including teams in Jackson and Gulfport), and interns and those taking practicum or internship hours. Detailed qualifications, responsibilities, and specific duties for the full-time positions are contained in separate job descriptions in the attachment section and the [Dropbox link](#).

**Center governance:** The center will be part of the School of Media and Communication, which is part of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern Mississippi, and as such will be a public entity as a division of the school and subject to the same regulations as the school, college and university. All center workers, including students, will be employees of the university. A center director will have responsibility for general operations and administration. The director will report to the director of the School of Media and Communication and serve as the primary liaison between the board and the center. A managing editor will be in charge of the day-to-day content of the center, overseeing the professional journalists and supervising teams of students. The managing editor will serve as the primary editor and final sign-off on content. Board bylaws, crafted in the first months of the center's existence, will include several mandates. Among them will be:

- 1) Recommending to the dean, through the school director, a nominee for center director, or, conversely, recommend to the dean, through the school director, the removal of the center director.
- 2) Establishing quality standards for the center, both in production and storytelling.
- 3) Establishing general coverage parameters for the center.

- 4) Establishing the yearly training schedule.
- 5) Recommending budget priorities to the center director.
- 6) Meeting at least twice yearly.
- 7) Voting on acceptance of the center's annual report.
- 8) Working with the center director on issues as they arise.
- 9) Agreeing on new partners or partnerships.
- 10) Establishing an annual editorial calendar.

The board will consist of the following:

- The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (or designee)
- Representative of the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association
- Representative of the Mississippi Press Association
- Representative of the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters
- Representative of Mississippi Today
- Representative of Mississippi Public Broadcasting
- Scripps Foundation representative
- Scripps Foundation representative
- Scripps Foundation representative

In addition to the advisory board, the school will establish an educational advisory board made up of select high school principals/media advisers and community college advisers/administrators in the target area. The advisory group will meet annually or as needed to discuss curricular issues associated with the center, such as dual credit and reverse transfer credits, practicums, and internships.

## Marketing Executive Summary

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will be branded as a trusted supplier of information by being a unique purveyor of quality local, enterprise journalism, home to the next generation of media professionals, an arbiter of public fact through its *What is True* hotline, and a developer of media literacy programs. The marketing strategy will involve three primary

channels: traditional strategic communication efforts such as press notices, regular, boosted social media updates, and a significant web presence; use by the partners of the center's logo and web address on center content wherever appropriate, and a series of public events. The success matrix is spelled out in the monitoring and evaluation section. Prototypes of branding suites, including logos, are in the attachment section and Dropbox link. What follows is the general plan that will be further developed as the center staff gets filled out.

**Vision:** *The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at USM improves lives and communities through education and trusted information.*

**Mission:** *The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at USM is charged with transparently producing people-centered, issue-oriented reporting, courageously tackling mis- and disinformation, and sharing high-quality news across media platforms. The center is operated through a collaboration between professionally-guided student teams, a supervising director, and a partner-dominated advisory board.*

**Target audience:** The primary target audience for content developed by the center will be voting age adults who are most likely to vote and are therefore more inclined toward news consumption. A study by the Mississippi Press Association reported that residents who read news, either digitally or in print, are more likely to vote and are more likely to be involved in their communities. As noted above, the targeted region tends to be poorer, more conservative, and, overall, less educated than the national average. Yet, the area is widely covered by some version of high speed internet and technology devices are found in a high majority of the homes.

**Marketing objective:** Build student, partner, and audience awareness, consumption, and usage of the Center's content and its unique media literacy program.



**SWOT analysis:** The proposed center faces a number of barriers, but also offers unique

opportunities:

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affiliation with the university provides credibility and visibility and access to a number of talented students.</li> <li>• Non-profit status enhances objectivity.</li> <li>• The center’s unique statewide partnerships will build an unparalleled network for students.</li> <li>• The partners also offer an instant distribution network.</li> <li>• Community colleges in or near the target area are excited about taking part.</li> <li>• A number of high school representatives are excited about center opportunities for their students.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The size of the target area and the fact about 60 percent is primarily rural presents challenges in expanding and serving the audience.</li> <li>• There are fewer high school media programs in the target area, which require more energy in recruiting at the high school level.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most local media outlets tend to focus on weather, crime, and sports, with thinner bands of coverage on business and health. This represents an excellent opportunity to offer a variety of lifestyle, enterprise, and state reporting.</li> <li>• The area is socially conservative and more prone than the national average to siloed news consumption. This represents an important opportunity to test and execute a variety of media literacy concepts and programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The political climate remains challenging for media and journalism practitioners. The targeted area is ruby red, albeit with a wide range of intensity.</li> <li>• The increasingly polarized public represents an ongoing challenge for media across the board.</li> </ul>

**Market research:** A school team attempted to reach as many residents in the target area as possible within the timeframe and means available. This was done through an informal survey distributed by groups and individuals affiliated with the school and USM and two focus groups, one held on USM's Gulf Park campus and one in Hattiesburg. The survey was kept brief and relatively high level, with questions designed to solicit reactions on the main areas of the grant submission, such as assessment on the current news available to them, how they acquired it, and what they would need to see in order to consume more news and to trust more of what they see. The focus groups, which were conducted as structured conversations, added the additional element of asking for reactions specifically to a hypothetical *What is True* feature.

**Demographics:** 174 residents responded to the survey, and a total of 11 attended the focus groups. About eight respondents to the survey were removed from the results after reporting they were not residents of one of the targeted counties. Six of the targeted 10 counties were represented in the survey. Respondents skewed older and more female than the population, which also was true of the focus groups. Overall, the survey and focus group findings were highly similar, and reflected remarkably similar trends to those seen in national surveys such as those done yearly by the Pew Center:

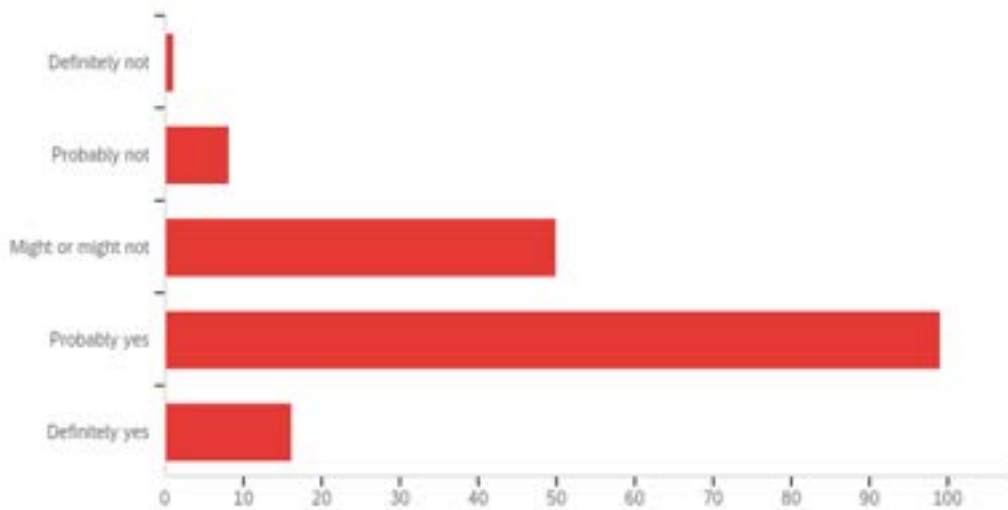
***Where they get their news:*** Like national surveys, the respondents reported getting their local news from a cocktail of television and Internet, though many did not specify what digital sources they consumed. However, a high minority did identify digital sources, indicating they looked at newspaper websites, especially when prompted to do so by social media or friend recommendations. A small percentage reported getting their news primarily through social media. Typical responses were “Websites and TV,” “Television and internet news,” and “Online,

TV and Podcasts.” Many respondents named specific outlets, such as WDAM, the Pine Belt News, *Mississippi Today*, or MPR (Mississippi Public Radio).

**Focus groups:** While the focus groups reported they also got their news from television and the Internet, no one in either group said they routinely visit web sites to get their news. Yet, five of the 11 reported they regularly consumed *Mississippi Today*. All reported they had signed up for a digital newsletter distributed by *MS Today* and used headlines to make decisions on whether to click through to the website to read full stories.

**Key finding:** The results indicate the proposal is headed in the right direction to connect with the audience by stressing cross-platform production (visual, audio and web stories) and by emphasizing marketing that relies on social media and a digital, emailed newsletter to deliver highlights (see marketing tactics).

Q5 - Do you generally trust the information from your local news sources?



**Do you trust your news:** Respondents in both the survey and focus groups were highly mixed. While only 5 percent reported either “definitely not” or “probably not,” when asked about whether they trust the local news they see, only 9.2 percent reported “definitely yes.” However,

28.7 percent reported they “might or might not” trust their news and 56.9 percent said they would “probably” trust their local news sources.

**Focus groups:** These responses were fleshed out by the focus groups. Overall, they were unhappy with the state of local coverage. Noted one Hattiesburg focus group member: “I look at *Mississippi Today*, Facebook, TV, but I have to wonder what is going on with City Hall, the [county] board of supervisors... we don’t know anything.” Several focus group members said they could only truly trust what they see if they see the story in more than one place. Said one Gulf Park focus group member: “It’s so easy to just twist something – you can’t compare it to different sources like we used to do. You just get ... brainwashed.”

Both focus groups were highly supportive of the idea of a *What is True* hotline and regular features, described as a hypothetical service to area residents. Noted one Gulf Park member: “Last week someone reported on Facebook that a meteor hit here in the area. But, I could never find anything else about it. I would love to be able to ask someone. I love that idea and I think it would be good for the area.”

**Key finding:** Like the rest of the nation, these veteran news consumers were largely unhappy with what they see and are becoming increasingly suspicious of the news in general, both local and national. One interpretation, and arguably the most valuable one, is that more journalism begets more trust. This supports the center’s proposed focus on local news that directly affects how people live and the decisions they need to make for their communities.

***What would make the news more trustworthy:*** A majority of survey respondents (74) reported that some version of removing bias and sensationalism from the news would help them trust it more. Another portion (58) said they would be more likely to trust their local news if a variety of visible quality measures were taken to ensure accuracy and completeness. These

ranged from “more local reporters” to “fewer grammatical errors” to a number of respondents who said they wanted more “investigative reporting” and more “in-depth” stories. Wrote one respondent: “A news outlet that provides more than what local officials provide. I want journalism that digs beneath the service and tackles the issues with well-rounded, unbiased reporting.” A number also reported a version of source transparency was important to them. Noted one simply, “Creditable sources.”

**Focus groups:** Both focus groups reported similar themes but added some layers of complexity. Said one Hattiesburg member: “Editorial independence is really important. Who is making the decisions?” A Gulf Park focus group member said understanding how news is perceived in various communities is vital: “As a black American, it seems they (the local media) pick the worst of us to highlight.”

**Key finding:** These findings led to a greater emphasis in the monitoring and evaluation section on independently examining what the center produces and how the stories are presented. The evaluation measures were designed to look at key points of trustworthiness, such as the make-up of sources, completeness in reporting, and transparency of sources.

***What would entice more news consumption:*** Respondents were nearly unanimous in reporting some version of the phrase “better journalism.” The focus groups, also nearly unanimously, shrugged and reported similar responses. One insight that developed from both the survey and the focus groups was that access was an important issue, with some reporting that cost of pay walls and cable services were a barrier to consuming more news. (A note: None of the television stations, but all of the newspapers in the target area had pay walls to content beyond the headlines on home pages).

**Marketing strategy:** The center is a bit unusual in that it must ultimately succeed with three very different groups: the students it seeks to attract for career opportunities; the outlets and partner organizations who will distribute its content, and news and information consumers in Southeast Mississippi. Efforts designed to attract and keep students have been addressed in the recruiting and student-tie and curriculum sections. Addressing the needs of partners and partner outlets, while infused throughout this proposal, are specifically addressed in the content and experiential learning sections. Attracting and building audience among the residents of Southeast Mississippi will rest on three strategies:

- Developing partner and member outlet buy-in for content produced, opportunities to expand in-depth projects, and *What is True* features.
- Creating a sufficient mass of journalism to be considered a significant presence in the region.
- Building public awareness and consumption.

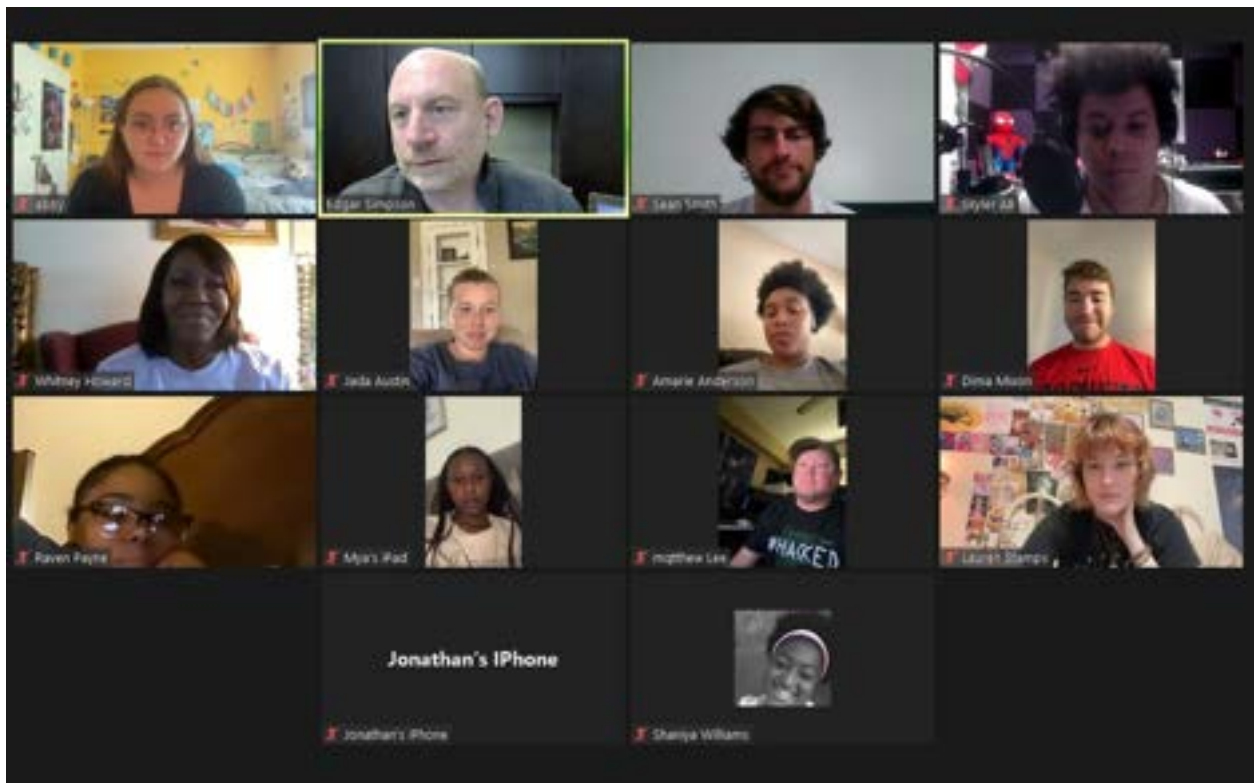
**Marketing tactics:** Of course, the best marketing is great content. However, compelling stories created across genre and delivered to where the audience is only have impact if people consume them. In order to achieve the overall goal of gathering audience, the following tactics will be developed and routinely monitored for evidence of success. The matrix for what constitutes success is addressed in the monitoring and evaluation sections, and the proposed marketing budget is addressed in the budget section:

- Creation of a weekly email newsletter, delivered to audience members, partners and partner outlets, highlighting center content and events.
- Development of a robust website highlighting center content and activities.
- Work with partners to get center web address and logo on member outlet websites.
- Establish social media streams that are regularly updated with center content and events.
- Development of social media marketing that includes geographic- and demographic-based content boosting as well as boosting of center promotional and behind-the-scenes videos.
- Public events that include community “listening sessions,” premiers of in-depth projects, and regular media literacy programming.

## The Design Grant

Our philosophy in using the grant and university resources was to pay for services or expertise that would result in concrete parts of the final grant submission. The design grant was used to develop various aspects of the final submission, from the technology plan to the budget to examples of content to marketing research with both news consumers (or potential news consumers) and students. This was necessary to test initial ideas and concepts. While the survey and adult focus groups confirmed the center's direction, conversations with high school and college students resulted several changes in initial plans.

### **Barriers to taking part (university student focus group):**



The school director met with 12 students via Zoom to discuss the possibility of the community journalism center. Student demographics in the group adequately reflected the school's mix of diversity, interests, and class rank. The director went over the high points of

USM's grant proposal and asked them to comment generally about the school submitting the grant and reactions to the main ideas. Several of the students asked clarifying questions about potential center operations. The director answered by saying everything will have to be finalized with the Scripps Foundation and the center board should the university be fortunate enough to win the grant. He related, however, several specifics in USM's grant proposal, such as academic credit being available.

Overall, the students were enthusiastic. Said one student: "I think it's great; it will draw in more students and it will allow some of us to cover things back home rather than focus on the campus." Another student said being able to work more directly one-on-one with partner and center staff was exciting. "I think it would be great to work constantly with professionals."

The students also were asked about potential barriers to taking part in the center. They raised several insightful issues:

- Will the summer training program preclude students from taking part in programs like Study Abroad, taking summer courses, or doing other internships?
- Will the students be eligible for Work Study?
- Will students involved in the production fields have positions available?
- Will students primarily interested in sports have positions available?
- Will the students be eligible for mileage reimbursement?
- Will the center be eligible for internship credit?

The director, again framing the responses as nothing could be promised or set, responded that since the center will be part of USM, general university policies will apply. The director also said the center will make efforts to ensure students taking part will not have diminished opportunities elsewhere. Here are the responses, some of which have been incorporated into the grant proposal where appropriate:

1) *The summer training session.* Taking summer courses will not preclude working in the center. The center board and director will be advised of potential Study Abroad conflicts so that



the training session could be scheduled around them if possible. It will not be possible to do both an outside internship and one at the center at the same time. However, outside internships are highly encouraged, and students will be able to work in the center, leave for the summer, and return in the fall.

2) *Work Study*. As a USM center, students will be eligible for work study at the \$12 per hour rate.

3) *Production and other fields*. Students from production, strategic communication, marketing and other fields will be highly encouraged to take part in the center. Positions needing those skills will be available. However, the students should understand that working information across platform requires multiple skills, and they will be expected to learn and demonstrate basic proficiency in those skills.

4) *Sports*. Center activities do not contemplate covering sports as contests. However, there are a variety of issue stories involving sports (such as equity in opportunity; gender laws, public school financing of athletic programs, etc.) that the center board and director could consider.

5) *Mileage and internships*. Yes, students will be eligible for both mileage reimbursement and internships in the center.

**Barriers to taking part (high school focus group):**



The school director met with 19 high school students visiting campus for the university's annual high school journalism workshop. He gave a broad outline of the proposed center at USM and the anticipated roles high school students will play. The goal was to bring out reactions to the concept and to discuss potential barriers to taking part.

Overall, the group reacted positively to the idea of working in the center during the latter part of their high school careers. Several in the group were particularly enthused about potentially earning college credit. While no one in the college group suggested athletics as a barrier, several of the high schoolers expressed concern that working at the center will interfere with their participation in sports. Several also said that scholarships for college tuition will be as attractive to them as an hourly wage. Others disagreed, saying money was more important.

Among suggestions made by the group that has been incorporated into this grant proposal in the appropriate sections:

1) “Lengthy shadowing” opportunities. A few of the students said they will be highly interested in taking part in the center but worried being “hired” was too much of a commitment. That led to an excellent discussion on how best to introduce the center to high schoolers. One student suggested a weeklong introduction, or shadowing program. That has been incorporated into this proposal.

2) Distance from their homes was a significant concern, which all agreed could be alleviated through the payment of mileage. This, too, has been incorporated into this grant request.

3) Scholarships have been included in the proposed grant budget.

4) It is quite likely some high school students who have both an interest in community journalism and athletics will have to choose. This will not preclude “lengthy shadows” to determine interest for off-season or future opportunities.

**Bottomline:** We anticipate coming within a few hundred dollars of the \$15,000 development grant, likely finishing at about \$14,700. The school and university contributed an additional \$9,000 or so in the form of personnel salaries, such as the director's and staff time, and graduate assistantships and associated benefits. The majority of the funding, about \$11,600, was spread among the students and professionals on campus and off for help in developing the final grant submission. Those included:

- About \$3,500 – Split between Sethanie Smith and Michela Guidali. Sethanie worked on the content examples, as well as contacting alumni and other duties. Michela was the primary organizer, serving as contact for the partners and education leaders in the targeted region.
- \$2,000 - Dr. Jacob Cotton, head of the USM graphics arts program, who is working on developing prototype logos and web site wireframes.
- \$1,000 – Dr. Lindsey Maxwell, associate professor and graduate coordinator for the School of Media & Communication, who consulted on the media literacy arm and the *What is True* example.
- \$1,000 – Elizabeth Goff, School of Media & Communication financial coordinator, who put together the proposed budget.
- \$1,000 – Jonathan McGowan, technical operations manager for the School of Media & Communication, who developed bids for equipment, technology, furniture, and transportation.
- \$1,000 – Brandy McGee, WDAM morning anchor and 2019 USM alum who consulted on the content portions and served as talent for the Why USM video.
- \$750 – Justin Mitchell, a Biloxi *Sun-Herald* editor, who worked with a USM student and faculty to develop the content examples and served as a sounding board for content.
- \$750 – Dr. Shelly Hinck, retired associate dean and interim dean of the College of Fine Arts at Central Michigan University, who served as grant submission editor and sounding board.

We spent less than anticipated on things like travel and commodities. We quickly found that many in the region preferred to Zoom or to have telephone conversations, resulting in less money being spent on mileage and hotels. We did purchase two meals (lunches) for meetings between university representatives and the partners, amounting to about \$500.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Regularly and routinely testing for the success of the center's operations and products will be instilled as part of its cultural DNA, allowing for day-to-day and longer-term decisions to be data informed. The matrices described below are designed to capture the necessary information, human and numerical, to allow the center board and director to make routine reassessments and adjustments to center operations. The expectation is rising usage of center services and content. Since, of course, the center will be starting at zero across the board, no specific numbers are attached. Specific numerical goals will be developed for the second year of the center's operation as baselines are collected.

**Goal 1 (Trust Building):** The center seeks to raise trust in its target audience through the creation and delivery of high quality, enterprise content across platform. In order to gauge the effectiveness of its efforts, the following matrix will be used.

**TB-Measure no. 1:** Public engagement with the *What is True* hotline. This will include:

- Shares, comments, and reactions to social media posts.
- Questions and comments left digitally or telephonically.
- Downloads or "listens" of the periodic *What is True* podcast.
- Visits to the *What is True* section of the center website.

**TB-Measure no. 2:** Participation at public events. This will include:

- Voluntary collection of names and email addresses at all center gatherings.
- Followers of all streamed events.
- Evaluation forms distributed and collected at public events and digital forms available for those attending virtually.

**TB-Measure no. 3:** Trust rests in large measure on how the center does its work.

In order to gauge and reinforce the core values of inclusive sourcing and transparency in method and data, a statistically valid content analysis of center-distributed products will be

commissioned annually and findings made available to the board. The goal is to empirically determine who center journalists are talking to and for what, whether full interviews are made available to the public, and how original documents and material are referenced and made accessible. The analysis will include:

- Source categories, such as “authority,” “witness,” “participant,” and “perspective.”
- Source demographics, including race, gender, class, etc.
- Availability of source data, files, and documents.
- Categories of stories, such as “local government,” “healthcare,” “economic,” etc.

**TB-Measure no. 4:** Longitudinal, or serial, focus groups. Residents in the target area will be strategically recruited to serve on focus groups whose opinions and observations will be collected periodically. The individuals will be asked to regularly consume center content, including the *What is True* offerings and attend at least one public event. The main areas of data collection will be:

- Assessment of center content in meeting its goals of inclusive, transparent reporting.
- Self-assessment of whether center activities raised their trust levels in journalism or the media in general.
- Suggestions for improvement.

**T-Measure no. 5:** Number of media literacy events and participation in the overall program through seminar requests at schools and public libraries.

**Goal 2 (Experiential Learning):** In order to determine whether the center is meeting its key goal of creating and maintaining a pipeline for students from scholastic to professional newsroom, the following will be tracked:

**EL-Measure no. 1:** The number of high school students taking part in the center, broken down by position (i.e., apprentice, shadow, student worker).

**EL-Measure no. 2:** The number of junior (or community) college students taking part in the center, broken down by position (i.e., shadow, student worker, special project).

**EL-Measure no. 3:** The number of university students taking part in the center, broken down by position (shadow, student worker, special project).

**EL-Measure no. 4:** Enrollment in the various curricula associated with the center (i.e., COM105, COM429, and COM418).

**Goal 3 (Local Reporting):** Tracking the amount and use of content produced by the center will be important in determining whether the center is meeting its goal of enhancing local reporting in the target area. In order to capture that data, the following will be tracked:

**LR-Measure no. 1:** The number of center-produced narratives used by partners or partner-affiliated outlets. This will be traced three ways: Downloads from the center servers; periodic audits by center staff of the public offerings from partners and partner outlets, self-report from partners and partner outlets.

**LR-Measure no. 2:** Annual survey of news staff at the partners and partner outlets to determine usage and issues.

**LR-Measure no. 3:** Visits and audience engagement with the center's primary website. In addition to unique monthly visitors, statistics collected will include entry points, time on site, and place of origin of the visitor.

**LR-Measure no. 4:** Number of empirical impact events resulting from center reporting. These will include public demonstrations; lawsuits filed; policy changes at every level; law enforcement action; state agency action, and other demonstrable effects that can be reasonably tied to center reporting.

## Budget

**Overview:** The budget, of course, is an expression of both strategy and tactical planning. We have attempted to craft a spending plan, per our principles, that sets students up with the best chance of success by supporting and mentoring them throughout their scholastic and college careers and on into professional newsrooms. The goal was to ensure the only barrier students, whether high school, community college or university, will face to working at the center will be their own energy and passion. Full details are included in the Excel spreadsheet sent along with this grant submission. Below are the highlights and justifications:

University direct contributions: The school, university and the partners anticipate devoting approximately \$400,000 over 3.5 years to center operations. The majority of this total will come in the form of \$218,550 in the form of graduate assistant support, including stipends and tuition. The GAs will work in media literacy and the *What is True* hotline. The budget proposal also includes \$100,703 in school staff salaries over the 3.5 years. The latter is based on 10 percent time of the school's director, financial coordinator, technical operations manager, and graduate coordinator. These personnel will work on center start-up and help bridge the center's training and pedagogical missions with that of the school's, including working on dual credit course options, training and the like. Further, the school will support necessities such as supplies and training costs. The university and the College of Arts and Sciences will contribute \$60,000 toward technology start-up costs. Mississippi Public Broadcasting has pledged office and parking space for the bureau in the city of Jackson. The estimated value of that space, about \$6,000 per year based on the average square foot cost of commercial real estate in Jackson, MS.

In-direct contributions: USM appreciates the Foundation's support of indirect costs for the center. USM's full indirect cost rate, negotiated with and approved by the federal



government, is 46 percent. Therefore, we are cost sharing the difference between our full indirect cost rate and the portion the Foundation is providing. This indirect cost rate covers facilities usage, utilities, maintenance, security, general administration, and other costs necessary for operation and management of a university program. No individual line items are charged for these same costs.

**Staffing:** We propose devoting \$1.125 million of the three-year total to professional personnel. As outlined earlier, these will include a center director, managing editor, three journalists, community liaison, and administrative specialist. Another \$400,000 or so over the 3.5-year period will go toward fringe benefits. The center director will be the primary leader/driver of the center. The journalists will produce journalism, as well as work and lead student teams. In consultation with the partners, the managing editor position was deemed necessary to ensure the integrity of the journalism being produced and to effectively work with the professional outlets. The community liaison is needed to oversee the media literacy program and the *What is True* hotline and associated features. The administrative specialist is needed to support hiring and maintaining the students and staff, ensuring expenditures are following Scripps and university guidelines, and to generally support the operation.

**Student support:** While the professionals noted above are necessary to work with the students and drive the content, the budget proposal devotes significant resources to directly aid students in the center. A total of \$781,000 is being proposed for direct student support. This includes \$643,500 in salaries. We anticipate an average of 18 students working 19 hours a week at \$12 per hour for 45 weeks of the year. Of course, we anticipate the total number of students in the center to be significantly higher than that at any given time. This is because many students will work in the center for academic credit; some will be on work study, and some will work

fewer than 19 hours. The total also includes \$69,000 in scholarships, \$54,000 in costs associated with training, and \$15,000 in mileage. The remainder is for the relatively small amount benefits cost for student workers.

**Technology and facilities:** The budget anticipates providing all necessary computers, technology, furniture and other items needed for the professional staff and students in all three locations. We expect an initial outlay of \$120,000 in technology costs, with yearly maintenance costs of about \$5,000 for video, photo and other equipment. The \$120,000 includes computers, equipment and servers. We propose the center be Apple-based. The associated software cost will be about \$29,500 over the three years, including the Adobe Creative Suite, Snoflo hosting, and server software maintenance. A complete breakdown of the equipment list is in the attachment section and in [Dropbox](#).

**Transportation:** Given the size of the target area and the overall lack of public transportation in Southeast Mississippi, the proposed budget includes purchasing vehicles to be placed at each office, a sedan each in Jackson and USM's campus in Long Beach, and a passenger van in Hattiesburg. We anticipate this to cost about \$119,000 initially, with insurance and maintenance coming in at about \$2,500 per year. Students with valid Mississippi driver's licenses and clean records may drive university-owned vehicles. We believe the vehicles, coupled with the above-mentioned mileage, will allow even the remotest students to take part in the center without a financial burden. The vehicles also will save significant money in mileage reimbursement for center staff.

**Marketing:** The partners encouraged a marketing budget sufficient to support the journalism and public events anticipated as part of regular and routine center operations. The budget proposal includes a \$35,000 prelaunch/launch budget that encompasses boosting social

media posts, printing of initial brochures, and supporting various events. We propose an additional \$30,000 per year, which include primarily social media boosting, though this budget line also will be used to re-up printed materials and pay for any costs associated with the planned public events.

## Attachments

### Partner letters of commitment



750 Woodlands Parkway, Suite 100  
Ridgeland, MS 39157  
[www.mississippitoday.org](http://www.mississippitoday.org)  
Phone: 601-533-4860

July 12, 2023

Dear Dr. Simpson,

I am so pleased that the University of Southern Mississippi is a finalist for the Roy Howard Centers for Investigative Journalism initiative through the Scripps Howard Fund and Foundation. I believe this project will be an integral solution to meeting the information needs of citizens in Southeast Mississippi who have less local news and resources than ever before. We know that local news is essential to vibrant communities and to our democracy, and we are hopeful that more journalism will come to our state through the Howard Center initiative at USM.

As the state's flagship nonprofit newsroom, Mississippi Today is pleased to offer our partnership and support as you pursue this important opportunity. Specifically, we are excited to collaborate with your reporters on editorial projects and to serve as a distribution partner for the vital local reporting produced at the Center. Furthermore, we hope the Center will deepen the pipeline of USM graduates who join our newsroom as fulltime reporters, as we have already benefited greatly from having six well-trained USM journalists currently on staff.

Mississippi Today has made great strides over the past seven years to help meet the critical need for local news that inspires accountability, and our communities deserve more. I am certain that establishing a Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at the University of Mississippi will further both of our missions to create a better-informed citizenry, and a stronger trajectory for our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Margaret White".

Mary Margaret White  
CEO & Executive Director



July 5, 2023

Dear Dr. Simpson,

I am pleased to inform you that the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters, with the full support of the Board of Directors, will participate in project activities for the proposed Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at the University of Southern Mississippi. Our organization believes this project will allow for the development of trusting relationships within the community through local reporting and experiential learning. MAB will also provide further support to the program by serving on the Advisory Board.

With a long and proud history of supporting journalists in the state of Mississippi, MAB believes the proposed activities of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center are in keeping with the mission and values of our organization. We are eager to partner with the University of Southern Mississippi and other media organizations in supporting the training of journalists to bring high-quality, fair, and ethical news coverage to the citizens of Mississippi.

We heartily believe in the purpose and goals of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center, and we look forward to sharing in the success of this program in Mississippi.

Sincerely yours,

Amanda S. Fontaine

Executive Director



371 Edgewood Terrace  
Jackson, MS 39206  
Phone 601.981.3060  
mspress.org  
mpa@mspress.org

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Sun Herald  
Biloxi

July 12, 2023

Dr. Edgar Simpson  
Director  
School of Media and Communication  
University of Southern Mississippi  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406

Dear Ed,

It is a pleasure to support your School in its efforts to launch the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at USM. We believe this project holds great potential not only for your students but the members of our Association and the news consumers of south Mississippi as well.

As we all know, the landscape for local media has been fundamentally disrupted over the past few decades, and the once tried-and-true models of news reporting at the community level have been severely tested. In south Mississippi alone, Jackson County, which once was home to its own daily newspaper, is now without a local print or digital newsroom located there. That creates a huge information vacuum for one of largest counties in our state.

Your stated mission of bolstering local reporting would be a welcome resource for our members who are seeking to keep their bases covered under ever increasing constraints of time and expense.

The Mississippi Press Association and its 100 print and digital members are committed to finding new avenues to provide local news coverage for all Mississippians. And we are excited to partner with you in this effort to identify them. We wholeheartedly commit to promoting the work of the Roy Howard Center to our members and to help deliver its content to them.

Please do not hesitate to let me know how else we can be of help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Layne Bruce", written in a cursive style.

Layne Bruce  
Executive Director  
Jackson, MS



June 26, 2023

**Memo: Re: Roy Howard Community Journalism Center**

Dr. Simpson,

The Mississippi Scholastic Press Association is pleased to participate as a partnering entity in the proposed Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at the University of Southern Mississippi. We believe this program will make a major difference in the quality of both journalism and journalism education. Aside from the obvious civic benefits of providing better, stronger news coverage to a region that desperately needs it, these types of real world, embedded apprenticeships are probably our best shot at scaffolding a new generation to locally-focused reporters into the profession.

MSPA is committed to participating in the following ways:

- Recruit top-tier high school students into the program
- Offer training assistance at our standard high school conventions and beyond
- Provide instructors with online resources and mentorship
- Underwrite or waive scholastic association membership fees, both state and national
- Promote student/center work via our website and socials

As an organization built on developing student voices through experiential learning, this proposal aligns perfectly with the mission and values of MSPA. I applaud Dr. Simpson's leadership in developing a robust, big-tent strategy to address a robust, big-tent problem. We are excited to join the University of Southern Mississippi and other media organizations in supporting these efforts.

If anything further is needed or required, please let me know. We're all in.

Sincerely,

Dr. R.J. Morgan, MJE  
MSPA Executive Director



Dr. Simpson,

The mission of Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) has always been to serve the citizens of this state with engaging, thought-provoking programs and services and provide trusted journalism/information. We are pleased to join your proposal to create the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at the University of Southern Mississippi. With our statewide reach, MPB is uniquely positioned to help alleviate news deserts, as well as enhance coverage of news, particularly in rural/underserved communities. In addition to our reach, we have the expertise, the trust of the public and the capacity to help advance a successful collaborative journalism effort.

MPB is committed to supporting this collaborative in the following ways:

- Provide facilities and office space for center staffer/reporter, including phones, office supplies and furniture
- Share and distribute content (audio, video, photos, web text) we deem appropriate via online and on-air
- Provide technical and editorial support and training for the center journalists and staff, so that local capacity is built and strengthened.

The need and opportunity for this collaboration is great. Mississippi has some of the deepest problems in the country and communities across the state are starved for information about issues distinctive to them. We believe this collaborative approach to journalism is an investment in the reporters and editors who will hold officials accountable for inadequate services.

There are powerful stories to be told here. This proposed collaborative among newsrooms across the state will allow us to better identify issues and build capacity to do more work together more efficiently. Additionally, we are excited about this opportunity to join the University of Southern Mississippi and other media organizations in developing, building, and training a new generation of journalists who are talented and diverse.

This is an important project that has the capacity to make a difference in the lives of Mississippi citizens. Accurate information is important to making good decision and we are pleased to be part of the solution.

Sincerely yours,

*Royal Aills*

Executive Director  
MS Public Broadcasting





## USM president's letter



### OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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118 College Drive #5001 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406  
P: 601.266.5001 | F: 601.266.5756 | usm.edu

July 19, 2023

Mr. Mike Canan  
Director of Journalism Strategies  
Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation  
312 Walnut S.  
Cincinnati, OH, 45202

#### **Letter of support: Roy Howard Community Journalism Center**

Dear Mr. Canan,

Please accept this letter as enthusiastic university support for the School of Media and Communication's pursuit of the grant for the establishment of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. The university has long been an important provider of media and journalism professionals in Mississippi, the South, and throughout the nation. Our alumni occupy high positions in outlets and agencies around the globe. They are always keen to help the next generation of Eagles soar.

I am aware that journalism and the media industries in general have seen shifts in the last decade. Just recently, the media world has changed again, with the introduction of large language learning models such as ChatGPT that will impact many of our knowledge fields. Our School of Media and Communication has worked to meet these challenges through curriculum changes, continual outreach to the industries we serve, and standing up a vibrant Student Media Center where the students get hands-on experience.

The school's work has been rewarded with the placement of a number of recent graduates at news outlets across Mississippi, particularly WXXV, WDAM, and WJTV, as well as newspapers and radio stations. The school received unanimous reaccreditation on all eight standards this summer by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, one of only 119 programs in the world to achieve this distinction. The university has demonstrated its faith in the program through the approval of recent hires, as well as ongoing technology support.

Establishing the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center would be the next step for the university. Our resources on the Gulf Coast and at the main campus in Hattiesburg would be a natural fit for the proposed targeted region, an underserved area of the Deep South. I am familiar with the proposal put together by the school team. I believe that should we be fortunate enough to win the center, together we can make a significant difference in the lives of our communities and students.

I am positive the center would have a deep impact on the already robust offerings at USM. I often speak to our students of the unique quality of "grit" our Eagles display. We do not expect things to come easy or without work and sacrifice. The center, as proposed, is a good example of that. While it offers exceptional opportunities to earn while learning, the onus is on the students, staff and faculty to make it happen. This is in the best traditions of USM.

In addition, I am confident we have the leadership in place, College of Arts and Sciences Dean Chris Winstead and school Director Dr. Ed Simpson, who have extensive experience in local journalism and to do whatever it takes to not only establish the center but make it the success we all wish it to be. Further, USM is an R-1 research-intensive university. As such, we routinely work with multi-million-dollar grants that support projects across the South and nation. We have deep expertise in grant administration and our professionals are eager to work with Drs. Winstead and Simpson as well as your team to ensure all Scripps guidelines are met.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or wish follow-up information. I am hopeful I will meet you and your team this fall should USM be fortunate enough to take the center forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. S. Paul". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph S. Paul, Ph.D.  
President

## Community College and High School letters of support



July 11, 2023

Dear Dr. Edgar Simpson,

Please consider this a letter of support for the School of Media and Communication at the University of Southern Mississippi to be designated as the ideal location for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. After our meeting, I've been excited about the potential of our local communities benefitting from this grant. This center will be a win-win for everyone involved: the students, while still in college and high school, will have the advantage of developing needed knowledge early in their education and meeting professionals in the field; our local media will have potential new employees fresh from college but already possessing needed skills and experience for their careers, and our communities, some of which are currently information deserts, will benefit from having actual journalism coverage, shedding a much-needed light on local politics and activities.

As you well know, our communities are in dire need of such a center due to scarce reliable news sources or, worse yet, plentiful misinformation shared on social media. Additionally, our local journalism outlets consistently struggle to find qualified employees to meet the demands of our community. I teach on the community college level and have media contacting me every year, looking for someone to hire, so I understand firsthand the need for more journalists in Mississippi. By establishing this center, we can bridge the gaps and provide ample opportunities for high school, community college and university students to gain invaluable experience and enter the field of journalism with confidence. As a communication advisor, I can't wait to be a part of this vibrant hub for aspiring journalists and help ensure the future of quality reporting in our communities and state.

If I can be of any assistance in this endeavor, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Kelly Atwood



PEARL RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MISSISSIPPI'S PIONEER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mike Canan, director of Journalism Strategies  
Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation  
312 Walnut S.  
Cincinnati, OH, 45202

July 25, 2023

Dear Mr. Canan,

We are pleased to support the University of Southern Mississippi's proposal for forming the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. Pearl River Community College and USM have had a longstanding, mutually beneficial relationship.

We see the journalism center as a natural extension of our two schools' shared vision of preparing our students to add their unique talents to Mississippi's professional landscape. Further, Pearl River is perfectly situated geographically to support the center, with our campuses in or close to the targeted region as spelled out in the grant proposal.

We are particularly excited about continuing to discuss with Dr. Simpson and his team at the university the possibilities associated with curriculum development, including dual credit and reverse transfer credits that are becoming ever-more important to our high school students as they wrestle with the rising costs of attending higher education.

As Pearl River's provost and an advocate for our students and their paths to professional careers, I am particularly intrigued with the wide range of potential opportunities for our students to work alongside professional practitioners and to earn college credit in the proposed center.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may provide further information or discuss in more detail our interest in this project.

Sincerely,

Martha Lou Smith, PhD  
Pearl River Community College  
Senior Vice President for Instruction/Provost

101 Highway 11 North • Poplarville, Mississippi, 39470 • 601-403-1000 • Website: [www.prcc.edu](http://www.prcc.edu)



910 Highway 19 North  
Meridian, Mississippi 39307  
800.MCC.THE.1 | meridiancc.edu

Mike Canan  
Director of Journalism Strategies  
Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation

Dear Mr. Canan,

It's my pleasure to recommend the School of Media & Communication at the University of Southern Mississippi for your grant opportunity!

I've been professionally associated with the USM School of Media & Communication for many years and have always been impressed with their dedication to local journalism. They serve the vital role of training the next generation of journalists.

I'd like to brag a bit on USM's current summer journalism workshop aimed at secondary students from diverse backgrounds and economic environments. This program highlights USM's forward thinking regarding local journalism. They recognize the important of an educated media as well as an educated audience. For kids dreaming of being the next Edward Scripps, USM's School of Media & Communication has always been an excellent opportunity.

As a community college veteran, I'm hyper focused on serving our actual community. I can honestly say that USM's location in the deep south is ideal for your grant opportunity. The university already acts as a lighthouse for knowledge in the region. The largely rural population of Mississippi counts on them to lead the way. This grant opportunity will further enhance their reach.

The university has existing relationships with excellent partners in the field including Mississippi Today, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters, and the Mississippi Press Association. These are all top-notch organizations that prioritize ethics over ego.

I have full faith that USM's School of Media & Communication will be an excellent ambassador for your grant program. I'm more than happy to put my name on this endorsement! Please reach out if you would like to discuss further.



Joshua Taylor  
Media Production Coordinator/DC  
Meridian Community College  
jtaylor@meridiancc.edu



2300 Government Street  
Ocean Springs, MS 39564  
Phone: (228) 875-7706  
**Michael Lindsey**  
*Superintendent*

### Letter of Support: Roy Howard Community Journalism Center

Dear Mr. Canan,

Please accept this as a letter of support for the University of Southern Mississippi's School of Media & Communication proposal for the establishment of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. Southern Miss and their prestigious School of Media & Communication have served as a pillar for preparing many of our local journalists and students for successful careers in the industry. Our own school district has seen the success firsthand of the program with graduates of ours attending USM and returning to the area or even OSSD.

In the ever-changing landscape of education, we have made it a priority to provide opportunities for our students to experience work-based learning in addition to the traditional classroom environment. Establishing the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center would provide an excellent opportunity for our high school students to work alongside and learn from experienced journalists from around the state, and receive invaluable on-the-job training and career opportunities. Our region is a hotbed for journalism talent, and with no such program currently in place, we are losing valuable talent to larger markets.

I am extremely confident in the planning and execution of the proposed plan. Dr. Ed Simpson is a passionate educator and genuinely cares about any student that walks through the doors of College Hall. Dr. Simpson is extremely experienced and understands the changing landscape of the career field.

I speak for everyone in the Ocean Springs community when I say we are extremely excited about the possibility of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. I look forward to working with Dr. Simpson and this fantastic project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Michael Lindsey'.

**Michael Lindsey**  
*Superintendent*



**North Forrest High School**  
693 Eatonville Road  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
Phone: 601-545-9304 Fax: 601-545-9318

July 19, 2023

Dr. Edgar Simpson  
Director, School of Media & Communication  
(601) 266-4014

Dear Dr. Simpson,

Please accept this letter of support on the behalf of North Forrest High School. We are very excited about the possibilities associated with the School of Media and Communication at the University of Southern Mississippi's application for the Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation grants.

I am very excited about the potential community involvement and the many opportunities this can provide for our students. This is a very much needed community outreach program that is full of possibilities where students could gain valuable experience in a possible career in their near future. We at North Forrest are committed to encouraging student involvement in this program.

If you require more information about North Forrest High School, please contact us via phone or email - [mtriggs@fcsd.us](mailto:mtriggs@fcsd.us)

Sincerely,

Malia Triggs

Dean of Students  
North Forrest High School



9899 Hwy 98  
New Augusta, MS 39402

Phone: (601) 964-3238  
Fax: (601) 964-3273

Joshua L. Yeager  
Principal

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July 18, 2023

University of Southern Mississippi  
Dr. Edgar Simpson  
Director, School of Media & Communication

Dr. Simpson,

Thank you for reaching out to Perry Central High School. I am excited for the opportunity that you are implementing. Myself, alongside all of our Perry Central High School staff, students, and parents are in full support of the vision that you shared in reference to the development of a communication program that embodies what PCHS envisions for its graduates.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 601-964-3235

Educationally yours,

Joshua L. Yeager - Principal





Matthew L. Dillon, Ph.D.,  
Superintendent of Schools  
Tyler Watkins, Principal

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**PETAL HIGH SCHOOL**

1145 Highway 42 | Petal, MS 39465  
Phone: 601.583.3538 | Fax: 601.545.1229 | [www.petalschools.com](http://www.petalschools.com)

July 12, 2023  
Keshia Coulter  
Petal High School  
1145 Hwy 42E  
Petal, MS 39465

Mike Canan, Director of Journalism Strategies  
Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation  
312 Walnut S.  
Cincinnati, OH, 45202

Subject: Grant Recommendation for the University of  
Southern Mississippi Media & Communication

Dear Mr. Canan,

I am writing to provide my highest recommendation for the University of Southern Mississippi in support of a grant application for the Community Journalism offered by Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation. Petal High School has worked closely with Edgar Simpson and the Communication and Media School at the University of Southern Mississippi. I can confidently attest to their exceptional qualifications, dedication, and the potential impact they can make with the grant funding.

During our collaboration, I have been consistently impressed by the School of Communication and its outstanding skills, knowledge, and passion for community journalism. Their expertise in media has been instrumental in achieving remarkable results in the lives of my students at Petal High School. Their ability to think critically, devise innovative solutions, and implement effective strategies sets them apart as a true leader in their field.

Moreover, USM Communication and Media School possesses remarkable organizational and project management skills. They have successfully led and coordinated a week-long summer journalism program for high school students. It allows students to explore the field of journalism and ensures that the project meets its objectives within the allocated resources and timeframes. Their exceptional ability to work collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams, stakeholders, and community members has gained the confidence of the Petal School District. Furthermore, the passion of this organization is truly inspiring. They are deeply committed to making a meaningful difference for high school students and their community.

Given their outstanding achievements and unwavering commitment to their work, I believe that USM Communication and Media exceptionally deserves this grant. The financial support provided by this grant would undoubtedly empower them to advance the community journalism center further and positively impact the lives of many individuals in the community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any information or have any questions.

Sincerely,

Keshia Coulter  
Digital Media Technology Teacher, Petal High School

*Glenn Gehrman*  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

*Fred Williams*  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

**JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**St. Martin High School**

*Home of the Yellow Jackets*  
11300 YELLOW JACKET BLVD. ST. MARTIN, MS 39564  
PHONE - (228) 283-3420  
FAX - (228) 875-8426  
Website - St. Martin High School/Homepage jcsd.ms

*Shea Scarborough*  
PRINCIPAL

*April Parkman*  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

*Mary Miller*  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

***One School...One Team...One Dream...GRADUATION***

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June 30, 2023  
Dr. Edgar Simpson  
Director, School of Media & Communication  
(601) 266-4014

Dear Dr. Simpson,

Please accept this letter of support on the behalf of St. Martin High School. We are very pleased to potentially have some of our students involved with the School of Media and Communication at the University of Southern Mississippi as you and the University apply for the Scripps Howard Fund/Foundation grants.

I am very excited to hear about the community involvement and the possible opportunity that this could provide to some of our students. A community outreach program like this is full of possibilities where students could gain valuable experience in a possible career in their near future.

If you require more information about St. Martin High School, please contact us via website, phone or email.

Sincerely,

Shea Scarborough  
Principal  
St. Martin High School

## What is True: The Bridge and a Poem

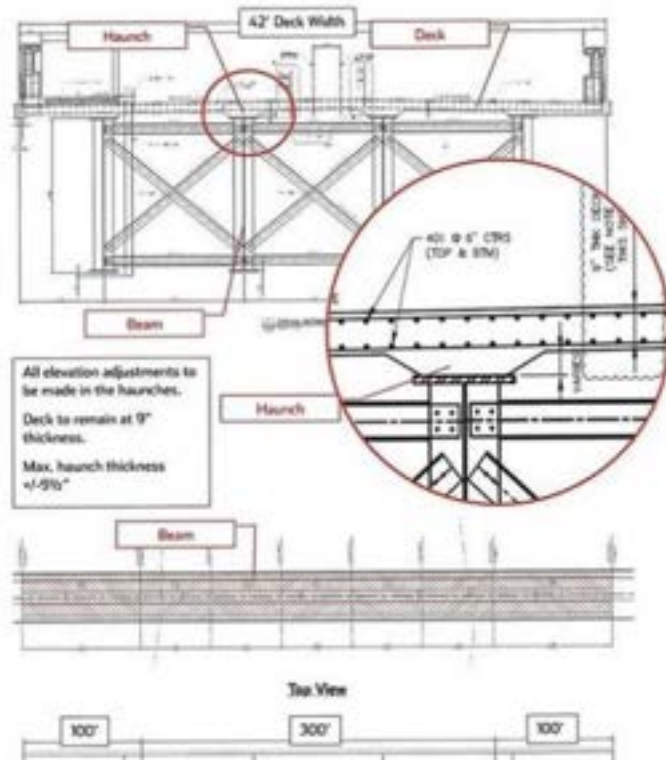
An incomplete and potentially misleading post in an area Facebook group has roiled some residents and caused several to respond with suspicions about a local construction project. The *Hattiesburg Patriot News*, a social media group with 140,000 members and an accompanying website, recently posted about a “mistake” in the construction of an unnamed new bridge. Here is the entirety of the post:

*There once was an engineer “skilled,”  
Whose bridge had local residents thrilled.  
But alas, one fateful day,  
A mistake came into play,  
And the consequences, he couldn’t shield.*

The post was accompanied by what appeared to be a schematic of bridge supports:

**The issue:** The post implies a problem with the engineering of the bridge and a questionable solution.

**Why we should care:** The safety of a community’s basic infrastructure is central to its trust in local institutions and its perception of quality of life. Incomplete or inaccurate reports can mislead and result in skewed perceptions.



**The reaction:** The post got more than 72 responses over the course of 24 hours, with many attempting to fill in the information gaps, questioning whether the bridge will be safe and more than a few attempts at humor, such as this comment: “Oh I see now, the flux capacitor is upside down.” Other comments reported serious worries: “I told my daughter that I wasn't going to cross that bridge when they finished it didn't look right way before it went public that's so sad taxes flushed down the toilet again it makes you think how many more mistakes he has made?”

**What is True:** As several commenters noted, the bridge referred to in the poem is the new span being constructed on East Hardy Street, connecting Hattiesburg and Petal. The *Patriot News* apparently picked up on an executive session of the Forrest County Board of Supervisors in which engineers on the project reported a need to change the original design. The alteration includes the addition of “haunches” at the bridge supports to address a change in grade discovered after construction had started. The engineer on the project, Nick Connolly, vice president of engineering firm Shows, Dearman & Waits of Hattiesburg, growled when asked about the report. “That bull---,” he said. “There are routinely changes when projects start.” He was familiar with the post and confirmed the schematic as posted was the adopted change to the plans for the East Hardy Street bridge. Ann Ehrigott, a public affairs spokeswoman for the Mississippi Department of Transportation, said the state reviewed initial plans for the bridge and MDOT workers visit each state grant project monthly. The latest report is that the bridge is 91 percent complete. The mayors of both Petal and Hattiesburg addressed in a report by WDAM Television a delay in construction and its resumption after the altered plans. The report can be found here: [Bridge report](#).

**The context:** The bridge is being built with a \$15.2 million state Emergency Road and Bridge Repair Fund grant. While the bridge spans the cities of Hattiesburg and Petal, the project is actually overseen by Forrest County Road and Bridge Manager Kyle Mimms.

**Public resources:** More information about road and bridge projects can be found here:

<https://forrestcountymms.us/> This is Forrest County’s primary website and includes links to the Road Department, as well as the county supervisors and past meeting minutes of the Board of Supervisors, which are elected officials.

<https://path.mdod.ms.gov/> This is the state’s highway and bridge “accountability” site. On the site are interactive maps showing details of the state’s major transportation projects.

**Difficulty in getting the information: Medium.** Repeated emails and telephone calls by the *What is True* team went unanswered. Shortly after a conversation with the public affairs division of the state Transportation Department, Mimms sent an email referring the team to its contract engineering company. Connolly responded quickly and specifically.

**Recommendations for building trust:**

*For government:*

- 1) Maintain current meeting minutes on websites and post public documents in readily accessible places.
- 2) Respond, at a minimum by proxy or spokesperson, when queries are made.
- 3) Avoid executive sessions when dealing with public projects. Though altering plans, whether routine or the result of correcting an error, behind closed doors may feel better in the moment, secrecy begets mistrust.

*For the public:*

- 1) Question reports that imply without stating specifics.

- 2) Seek out legitimate media reports, such as WDAM’s story on the bridge.
- 3) If you still have questions, call or email your local government offices.
- 4) And, of course, you can contact the *What is True* hotline at the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center: 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

**Bottomline:** The search for What is True in this case was made more difficult than it should have been. No public documents could be found on local, county, or state websites. The bridge project, though state funded, is not on its “Accountability Hub.” The Forrest County Board of Supervisors minutes are available online but only through 2022. Any minutes for meetings in 2023 will have to be asked for specifically.

**What is True contributors on this post:** Doctoral candidate Tariro Tandi ([Tariro.tandi@usm.edu](mailto:Tariro.tandi@usm.edu)); Dr. Edgar Simpson ([edgar.simpson@usm.edu](mailto:edgar.simpson@usm.edu)).

**What is True supervisor on this post:** Dr. Lindsey Maxwell ([lindsey.conlin@usm.edu](mailto:lindsey.conlin@usm.edu))

Content example: The school recruited a team from the Biloxi *Sun-Herald* and used a small portion of the development grant to support the creation of an enterprise story across platform. The Biloxi editors chose an in-depth profile of the Vietnamese diaspora near the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the target region. Working with a student from USM, faculty in the school, and their own personnel, the small team created a written package, an audio story, a television package, and associated social media.

**SPECIAL REPORT**

## The new Vietnamese generation leaves the seafood business behind in Mississippi. Why?

BY MARTHA SANCHEZ  
UPDATED JULY 13, 2023 1:04 PM



Elvis Ta and his father Sau Truong on Truong's shrimping boat, Miss Mimi, at Bayou Caddy in Bay St. Louis on Thursday, June 29, 2023.  
HANNAH RUSHOFF / SUN HERALD

*Editor's note: This article was done in conjunction with the School of Media & Communication at the University of Southern Mississippi as part of a grant exploring how to support local journalism.*

The son does not know how to sew the nets. The father took the old boat out last month, but caught no shrimp. And the docks at Bayou Caddy, where Sau Truong

The web story can be found here: [Vietnamese diaspora.](#)

Social media can be found here:

**TikTok:**

<https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZT8d7PFC9/>

Instagram reel:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CupcSMIJmtu/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==>

Instagram post:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cupwrytvfhi/?igshid=NTc4MTIwNjQ2YQ==>



Sethanie Smith, a USM senior, served as talent for the television and audio story, working under the guidance of *Sun-Herald* city editor Justin Mitchell, a USM alum. Those stories can be found in the Dropbox that was set up to accompany this grant submission. Sethanie is a good example of how the center could impact the lives of students and the communities they serve. Sethanie struggled a bit to find her path as she neared the end of her



college career. She watched her friends take jobs in the media industry, and her confidence flagged. As she worked with Justin and the faculty to develop the stories for this grant submission, she became more sure of herself, her abilities and what she had learned. We said good-bye to Sethanie several weeks earlier than anticipated so she could begin her new job as a digital producer for WHLT, the Hattiesburg arm of WJTV in Jackson. Here is Justin's note to Sethanie after watching the television package: "AMAZING! Thank you so much, Sethanie! I had so much fun working with you and can't wait to watch you shine!"

## Sample Curriculum

# COM105 Introduction to Community Journalism

Class No.:

Instructor:

Instructor email:

Office hours:

**Course Description:** This course provides instruction in both theory and practice in the fundamentals of community journalism, including fundamental newswriting skills, basic reporting, basic information gathering, basic digital presentation, and the concepts of diversity, law, ethics and information access such as Open Meetings and Open Records laws. The focus is on introducing the skills and judgment necessary to perform journalism activities across platform for a local audience.

**Course Objectives:** At the end of the semester, you will be able to demonstrate the following:

**Identify appropriate sourcing:** Source selection should be based on the principles of those in authority, those who add perspective, and those who can provide first-hand knowledge. Sourcing also includes appropriate documents and institutional background and information.

**Demonstrate newswriting principles:** Stories should reflect basic journalism standards of accuracy, fairness, and completeness, as well as demonstrate command of journalism language conventions, including crafting various types of leads, AP Style, grammar, and spelling.

**Demonstrate interviewing principles:** Interview subjects should be appropriately researched before interviewed; questions should be open-ended.

**Demonstrate ability to report quotes:** Quotes should be accurate and placed within appropriate context. Technology should be used where and when appropriate to capture sound and video.

**Articulate media literacy principles:** Journalism principles of accuracy, fairness, and completeness are necessary for a community to understand what decisions need to be made.

**Demonstrate basic digital content management:** News operations from the small to the large rely on content management systems to serve up their audio, visual, and written stories.

**Demonstrate understanding of Mississippi's Open Meetings and Open Records laws:** By law and practice, public business is to be conducted in public.

**Demonstrate the importance of diversity:** A community journalist's job is to ensure all legitimate voices are heard, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, disability or other factors.

**Course format:** This course is either online or face to face and is designed to be intensive and fast-paced, covering a number of important aspects of community journalism. The course Lectures will be in the form of discussion and critique, and participation is an important consideration in final grades.

Please note that failure to attend class or to actively take part – even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably - could affect your final grade by as much as a full letter.

**Academic integrity:** Plagiarism cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as presenting the work of another as your own. This includes copying from classmates and using published sources without proper attribution. Anyone caught engaging in such behavior will fail the assignment and may be given an F for the course with a potential for an XF. Please see your Student Handbook for a full explanation on Academic Integrity and potential ramifications.

**Barriers:** It is the university's goal as a learning institution to ensure each student has the best possible opportunity to succeed. Any barrier to those goals, whether physical or other, should be brought immediately to the instructor's attention. All possible efforts will be made to make reasonable accommodations for special needs as identified by the school, college and university.

**Diversity:** As aspiring communications professionals and/or college attendees, the concept of diversity is second only to the rarely achieved ideals of free speech and free dissemination of ideas. Diversity is defined as respecting the opinions, viewpoints, and life experiences of others who do not look, act, or think like ourselves. In class, that means we honor all earnest contributions and all viewpoints. For the journalism projects we create, that means we have given deep thought and all effort into ensuring that we represent sufficiently diverse viewpoints.

**Required materials:**

- **Access to the Associated Press Style guide. (Electronic is preferred).**

**Textbooks.**

Wenze, Andrea. Community-Centered Journalism: Engaging People, Exploring Solutions, and Building Trust Paperback (University of Illinois Press, 2020).

- **Cappon, Rene.** The Associated Press Guide to News Writing (latest edition) (Peterson's).
- **Digital storage device of 1 terabyte or greater.**

**Assignments:**

Assignments will be turned in digitally through Canvas as either Word files or PDFs.

**Other requirements:**

**Story Assignments** – This course will include “live” story assignments in your local community. This will require being flexible in your time availability.

**Class participation** – In order for us all to learn from each other, it is imperative that each of us take part in discussions, offering fact-based opinions, thoughts, and ideas. This is an important part of your grade and should not be neglected. If you in any way feel reticent to take part for any reason, please see the instructor as soon as possible so barriers can be identified and overcome.

**Grading Scale (in percent):**

- 90 - 100      A
- 80 - 89        B
- 70 - 79        C
- 60- 69         D
- 0 - 59         F

**Assignments:**

*Leads* (4 X 20): Demonstrate the various types of leads used in local reporting  
Subtotal = 80 points.

*News stories* (8 X 50): Demonstrate writing conventions used in breaking and typical coverage stories.  
Subtotal = 400 points.

*News and style quizzes* (12 X 10): Questions will be pulled from the home pages of the New York Times, Mississippi Today, and Mississippi Public Broadcasting.  
Subtotal = 120 points

*Midterm test*: Covers Weeks 1 through 8.  
Subtotal = 100 points

*Final project*: Community issue story with at least four sources (at least one of which must be an “authority.”) Story, which must be approved by instructor, must be accompanied by 90-second video interview and two stills.  
Subtotal: 150 points

*Final exam*: Covers Weeks 9 through 15.  
Subtotal: 100 points

Total points: 950

**Grading criteria:**

Grades will be based on the overall quality of the completed assignments, and taking part in class.

Please pay close attention to the following:

- Spelling, grammar and style count for each activity.
- Deadlines are imperative. Missing a deadline without prior approval will result in a grade no higher than a “C” on any assignment.
- Assignments will be judged on creativity, accuracy, completeness, clarity, precise language, audience interest, organization and demonstration of basic principles.

**Semester outline:**

**Week One:** Syllabus review; policies; etc.; overview of AP Style; why journalism matters

Assignments: Wenz, Introduction and Chapt. 1

Cappon, Chapt. 1

**Week Two:** News fundamentals; what is news; important vs. loud; structure of a news story.

Assignments: Wenz, Chapt. 2  
Cappon, Chapt. 2  
News/Style Quiz no. 1

**Week Three:** News fundamentals II; sorting the facts; connecting with an audience; leads.

Assignment(s): Cappon, Chapt. 3 (pgs. 27-33)  
Leads no. 1  
News/Style Quiz no. 2

**Week Four:** News fundamentals III; different kinds of leads; building the story.

Assignment(s): Cappon, Chapt. 3 (pgs. 34-41)  
Leads no. 2  
News/Style Quiz no. 3

**Week Five:** News fundamentals IV; sorting facts II; the long and short of it.

Assignment(s): Cappon, Chapt. 4 and 5  
Leads nos. 3-4  
Story no. 1  
News/Style Quiz no. 4

**Week Six:** Introducing the interview; sources; purposes; types; developing questions; source relationships.

Assignment(s): Wenz, Chapt. 3  
Cappon, Chapt. 8 (pgs. 75-81)  
Story no. 2  
News/Style Quiz no. 5

**Week Seven:** Interviews II; purposes; research, questions.

Assignment(s): Cappon, Chapt. 8 (pgs. 82-88)  
Story no. 3  
News/Style Quiz no. 6

**Week Eight:** Pause and review; principles of news; writing that connects.

Assignment(s): Mid-term (on Canvas)

**Week Nine:** Interviews III; interviews as part of information gathering; listening for the quote.

Assignment(s): Story no. 4  
News/Style quiz no. 7

**Week 10:** Information Gathering; meetings; documents; introducing Open Meetings and Open records; agendas and what-all

Assignment(s): Story no. 5  
News/Style quiz no. 8

**Week 11:** Information gathering II; observation; more on Open Meetings and Records; the art of gray and colors

Assignment(s): Cappon, Chapt. 9  
Story no. 6  
News/Style quiz no. 9

**Week 12:** Live stories and the art of deadline; content management systems.

Assignment(s): Story no. 7  
News/Style quiz no. 10

**Week 13:** Live stories II; being there; introducing the final project; content management II.

Assignment(s): Story no. 8

News/Style quiz no. 11

**Week 14:** Putting it all together; features vs. news.

Assignment(s): Cappon, Chapt. 11

Wenz, Chapt. 5

**Week 15:** Wrap-up; individual meetings; massaging the final project.

Assignment(s): News/Style quiz no. 12

**Week 16:** Final presentation of packages

Assignment: In-class presentation

Final exam (on Canvas)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

Cheating (including copying from others' work)

Plagiarism (representing another person's words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)

Falsification of documents

Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student

Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members' involved

Unauthorized academic collaboration with others

Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of "XF" for the course, which will be on the student's transcript with the notation "Failure due to academic misconduct." For more details, please see the University's Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012> . Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.

### **ADA Syllabus Statement**

If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

Address:

The University of Southern Mississippi

Office for Disability Accommodations

118 College Drive # 8586

Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Voice Telephone: 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232 Fax: 601.266.6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or email ODA at [oda@usm.edu](mailto:oda@usm.edu).

### **Mental Well-Being Statement**

USM recognizes that students sometimes experience challenges that make learning difficult. If you find that life stressors such as anxiety, depression, relationship problems, difficulty concentrating, alcohol/drug problems, or other stressful experiences are interfering with your academic or personal success, consider contacting Student Counseling Services on campus at 601-266-4829. More information is also available at <https://www.usm.edu/student-counseling-services>. All students are eligible for free, confidential individual or group counseling services. *In the event of emergency, please call 911 or contact the counselor on call at 601-606-HELP (4357).*

### **Nondiscrimination Statement:**

The University of Southern Mississippi offers to all persons equal access to educational, programmatic and employment opportunities without regard to age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, gender identity, genetic information, religion, race, color, national origin, and/or veteran status pursuant to applicable state and federal law.

### **Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting**

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create and maintain a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on USM's campus with certain University officials responsible for the investigation and remediation of sexual misconduct. The information will remain private and will only be shared with those officials necessary to resolve the matter. If you would like to speak in confidence, resources available to students include Confidential Advisors with the Shafer Center for Crisis Intervention, the Counseling Center, Student Health Services, and Clergy. More information on these resources and University Policies is available at <https://www.usm.edu/sexual-misconduct>.

## **COM 418: Practicum – Roy Howard Community Journalism Center**

**Course:** COM 418

**Credit Hours:** 1-3

**Date:** Spring 2023

**Instructor of Record:** XXXXX

**Course Description:** Students in the practicum class will have various duties, depending on their job within the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. Specific duties will be detailed in a Special Problems/Practicum Request Form.

**Course Outcomes:** Generally, your work will be associated with one of the Journalism Center operations: reporting and writing; media production; event planning; social media; media literacy outreach and promotion, or assisting on the What is True feature. Expectations for time and “deliverables” associated with the practicum are dependent on how many credit hours are being awarded. In general, students during the semester in:

- A **one** hour practicum must commit to three hours of work per week.
- A **two** hour practicum must commit to five hours of work per week.
- A **three** hour practicum must commit eight hours of work per week.

All work for this practicum course is based strictly on the final products produced or performance of the specific duties assigned. The following criteria will be considered: meeting all deadlines; properly following Center policies; proper use of AP style; proper story-telling/narrative use, proper presentation, good production values.

### **Getting Help**

I want you to succeed not only in this practicum, but in your college career and your eventual employment. If you feel overwhelmed or falling behind, don't ignore it – please contact me as soon as possible and we will get you caught up. The longer you wait, the more difficult it becomes to stay on course. If you have outside factors affecting your performance, please bring them to my attention and we will figure out a solution together. If you just want to talk, my door is always open.

### **Evaluation**

Placing yourself in the right situation to succeed takes hard work, planning and a good deal of luck. I will attempt to provide you with the tools needed to advance and thrive. I believe the learning process is a collaborative effort. If you do not understand a concept or assignment, please speak up! It is never inappropriate to ask a legitimate question. **There are no questions that will go unanswered.** If you still do not understand, don't panic. Together, we will find a way to help you become a better student, as well as ways to help me become a better instructor.

### **Diversity**

The Center strives in all things to put into practice the highest ethical standards in all we do. That means we search for silenced voices, be relentless in our quest to ensure all have access to what we do, and batter any barrier to taking part. These values are expressed from the mundane (i.e., ensuring public events are handicapped accessible) to the extraordinary (i.e., traveling those extra miles to get the source needed for a complete story).

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

Cheating (including copying from others' work)

Plagiarism (representing another person's words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)



Falsification of documents

Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student

Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members' involved

Unauthorized academic collaboration with others

Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of "XF" for the course, which will be on the student's transcript with the notation "Failure due to academic misconduct." For more details, please see the University's Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012> . Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.

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## **COM419 – Internship**

**Course Description:** Internships for credit are designed students “real-world” experience in the student’s chosen field under the direction of an experienced professional. Credit may not be given retroactively.

### *INTERNSHIP ADVICE*

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Most students find the internship experience rewarding and fulfilling. Remember ADAP to help your internship experience be successful.

***Attitude***—be eager to learn and find projects on your own. Showing initiative and being a pleasant coworker will make you a valuable member of the team.

***Dependability***—showing up to work on time each time you are expected is important. Interns who fail to show up or who are habitually late may be fired from their internship positions.

***Appearance***—be well-groomed and dress appropriately.

***Professionalism***—internships lead to professional contacts that become important when you enter the job market. Be confident and courteous, ambitious and friendly.

### Internship Qualifications

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The following requirements must be met for all students applying for a class-credit internship:

1. Have a 2.0 or better GPA.

2. Attend an internship information session to get instruction on how to pursue and acquire an internship.
3. Obtain permission from his or her adviser (see form, page 4).
4. Submit an internship application (see application, pages 5 and 6) to the internship coordinator and the director no later than the end of the second week of the semester.

## Internship Requirements

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To successfully complete the requirements of your class-credit internship, each student must:

1. Develop an internship portfolio that includes **samples of the work** you executed during your internship. Submit this at the conclusion of your internship in a format that is attractive and easy to use.
2. Write a report at the conclusion of your internship. The report should discuss your internship experience.
3. Make sure your internship supervisor/coordinator completes and submits an evaluation form. This evaluation form may be completed and submitted via the school's website.

## Internship Application Procedure

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To arrange an internship, the following steps must be completed in order:

1. Review the internship qualification requirements to determine if you are eligible.
2. Attend an internship information session to get instruction on pursuing a class-credit internship option.
3. Discuss your internship interests with your faculty adviser – during regular advising sessions at the midpoint in the fall and spring semesters or by making an appointment with the adviser.
4. Have the faculty adviser complete the adviser permission form included in the internship packet.
5. Complete Part 1 of the Internship Application. Part 1 elicits information about you and the proposed internship.
6. Have the internship supervisor/coordinator at the organization at which you hope to intern complete Part 2 of the internship application. The provider and the student should sign the bottom of the form.
7. Internships require of **160 total hours** of work during the semester. This averages to 10-15 hours per week during fall and spring semesters and 20 hours per week during the summer.
8. Make a copy of all this information for yourself (and for your internship provider if requested).

## Adviser permission form:

The student listed below would like to do an internship for class credit in his or her field.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser \_\_\_\_\_

This student intends to pursue the internship during the \_\_\_\_ Fall \_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_ Summer semester of \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

\_\_\_\_\_ This student has a 2.0 GPA.

\_\_\_\_\_ This student has the interest, energy, and skills to be successful at an internship during the semester designated above.

\_\_\_\_\_ This student has my permission to pursue an internship during the semester indicated above.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Adviser's signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Internship Application

**Part 1: To be completed by the student**

\_\_\_\_\_

You must complete the following form and get the appropriate signatures before you will be enrolled in the internship class for the semester.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID \_\_\_\_\_ Interest Area \_\_\_\_\_

GPA \_\_\_\_\_

Local address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home email address (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Semester of proposed internship \_\_\_\_ Fall \_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_ Summer Year \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed internship supervisor at the Center:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Website address (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Internship supervisor (name and title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Description of proposed internship responsibilities:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

Internship Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Center Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

School Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Internship Application

**Part 2: To be completed by the Internship Supervisor/Coordinator**

\_\_\_\_\_

Internship Supervisor/Coordinator (name and title)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of internship: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this internship paid? \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ yes

Projected weekly schedule for intern \_\_\_\_\_

Description of internship duties:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Please read before signing:** I understand that this internship is a learning experience for this student and that as his/her internship supervisor/coordinator I will provide opportunities for the student to learn more about his/her chosen career, build his/her portfolio, and/or establish professional contacts. Furthermore, I understand that this intern is to be evaluated by his/her internship supervisor/coordinator **twice** during the term of the internship.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Internship Supervisor/Coordinator

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Center Director

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### Guidelines for Student's Internship Reports

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Each intern is required to turn in a report concerning the internship experience to his/her faculty advisor in accordance to the following guidelines:

**Report: (Due on the date below).**

This report is to be three to four pages of double-spaced, typed copy which contains:

1. A list and explanation of all duties assigned by the internship provider.
2. An explanation of the work completed so far.
3. A review/explanation of the challenges you have faced
4. How you have managed these challenges.
5. What your outlook is or expectations are for the remainder of the internship.

**Report deadline is** \_\_\_\_\_

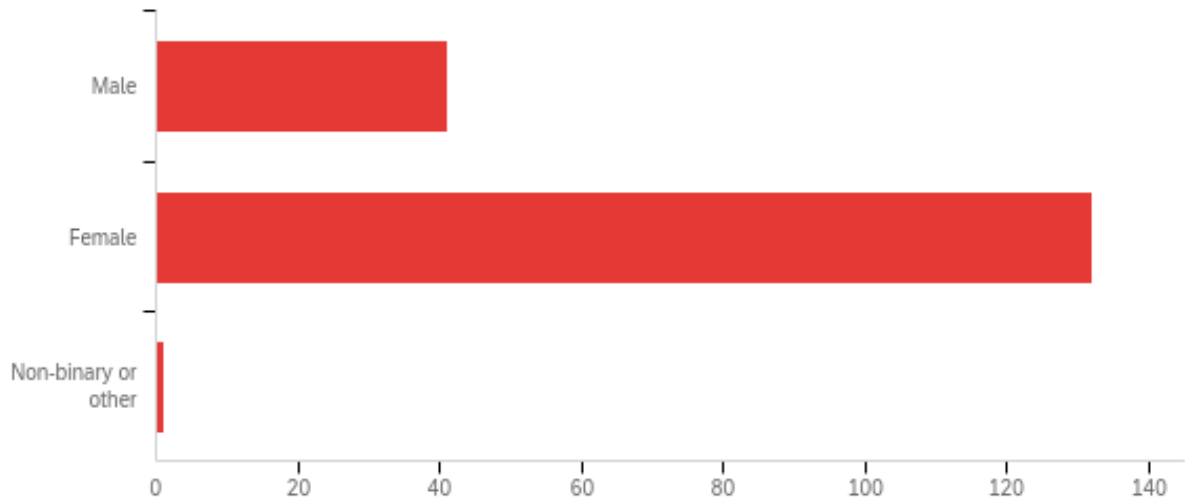
This is to be filled in at the beginning of the internship.

---

Research materials

*Scripps Survey*  
July 21, 2023

**Q1 - Gender:**



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Gender:	1.00	3.00	1.77	0.43	0.19	174

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	23.56%	41
2	Female	75.86%	132
3	Non-binary or other	0.57%	1
	Total	100%	174

### Q3 - County of residence:

County of residence:

Lamar

Forrest

forrest

Forrest

US

Lamar

Harrison

Lamar

Forrest

Forrest

Forrest

Forrest

US

USA

Forrest

Lamar

Lamar

Forrest

Lamar

United States

Forrest

Forrest

Forrest

Smith, TN



Hancock

---

Forrest

---

Forrest

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Forrest County

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Stone

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Rankin

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Forrest

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United States of America

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Lamar

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Harrison

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Fiitrest

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Forrest

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US

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USA

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Cobb

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Lamar

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Forrest

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USA

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Harrison

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Covington

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Forrest County

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Lame

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Lamar

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Forrest

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USA

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Harrison not sure

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Forrest

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Lamar

Jackson

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Lamar

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Hinds

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Lamar

---

Lamar

---

United States of America

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Forrest

---

Lamar

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Forrest

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Forrest

---

Forrest

---

Jefferson Parish

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Harrison

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Lamar

forrest

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Jones County

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Harrison

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Mississippi

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Forrest

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Harrison

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Harrison

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Lamar

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Pike

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Harrison county

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Forrest

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Forrest

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Forest

lamar

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Forest

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Harrison

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Hancock

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Harrison

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Lamar

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Forrest

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Lamar

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Lamar

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Harrison

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Lamar

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Harrison

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Forrest

Harrison

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Forrest

Forrest

Lamar

Lamar

Lamar

Perry

Lamar

Forrest

#### Q4 - How do you get your local news?

How do you get your local news?

Newspaper, tv, and other online media

TV, newspapers

radio, television

WDAM app

Local TV station WDAM

Online newspapers, local and national.TV

Television and Internet news

TV, News Apps

Local news webpage articles. I do not like watching news.

New York Times or Washington Post but sometimes local news stations

Internet

WDAM TV

WDAM

social media

Radio

---

Tv

---

TV and once a week local newspaper

---

Apps

---

Pine Belt News and TV

---

Tv

---

Websites and TV

---

Online

---

Apps

---

YouTube TV

---

Internet, radio, weekly newspaper

---

Web newspaper

---

Facebook

---

News App or TV

---

Tv, newspaper, AP, NPR

---

Sometimes WDAM, online and Facebook family members and friends.

---

Internet, radio, email

---

Online, media websites

---

Twitter

---

Reading headlines and certain news articles on phone

---

WDAM

---

TV WDAM, Pine Belt news, occasionally Hattiesburg American, MS Today.

---

Internet

---

Tv

---

Streaming

---

Tv and internet

---

WDAM television

---

Twitter

Facebook

---

tv

---

Online

---

Facebook, word of mouth, WDAM app

---

On line, TV and Podcasts

---

Facebook & Pine Belt News

---

Social media/TV

---

WDAM app

---

Social Media

---

Hattiesburg American

---

YouTube tv

---

local newspapers and TV news

---

Television

---

TV

---

Facebook or Instagram

---

TV

---

Local news channels, social media

---

Television

---

Online

---

Social media and Television Broadcast

---

TV and app

---

WLOX TV

---

Facebook

---

Social media and TV

---

Social media

---

Internet

---

Online principally, most often through articles shared on social media, though I am still a subscriber in the weekly newspaper.

---

radio, internet



Facebook

---

I don't watch/read the news

---

Internet and tv

---

WDAM, Facebook

---

Facebook

---

Local news app

---

Social media, television, radio

---

Good morning America/ABC news

---

Social Media

---

TV, daily newsletter

---

Websites

---

Ambivalent

---

By computer (Google search) or by phone (app). From sources like CNN or Wallstreet.

---

News App

---

WDAM

---

TV, internet, internet news

---

Social media

---

Streaming on TV

---

WDAM App

---

Tv or social media

---

Social Media -- Facebook, Twitter

---

Newspaper or TV

---

App and online

---

WDAM

---

Websites

---

Online

---

Facebook, Nola.com

---

Social media, Apple News

Online

---

Internet

---

TV

---

Local TV news, occasionally FB or IG

---

TV- WDAM, NBC daily and nightly news

---

WDAM

---

Television and the local news social media platforms

---

Locally owned and managed newspaper/local media outlets

---

Online

---

Phone

---

newspaper websites and local tv stations

---

Local news social media page and FM radio

---

Social media

---

Internet and tv

---

Facebook

---

Social Media

---

TV

---

Local paper; TV, Internet

---

Mostly online with occasional hard copy.

---

TV and newspaper

---

I don't.

---

Television and on-line

---

As a retired newspaperman, now depend on tv.

---

Print/online (MS Today; Hattiesburg American); occasionally tv (WDAM)

---

Tv and Radio, some online

---

Newspaper

---

Tv, epaper

---

TV, TV app, local weekly newspaper

Local and national TV, radio, newspaper

---

Word of mouth

---

TV, Internet

---

Newspaper, online newspaper, major networks local news near my town

---

TV Bridge table

---

News paper

---

Television/computer

---

TV, local papers, blogs

---

Newspaper, Television

---

Tv. Internet

---

radio

---

television, newspapers, social media and word of mouth

---

Tv, social media, some newspaper

---

Internet

---

Tv

---

WLBT, Hattiesurg American online, Pine Belt News

---

TV and apps on iPhone

---

Weekly news paper and internet Mississippi Today

---

Hub City Spokes, social media posts by the mayor or other city representatives, Mississippi Today for state news

---

TV, digital newspaper

---

Hattiesburg American on line

---

Television, Internet, Periodicals. Newspapers

---

Tv, MPR, news apps

---

Pine Belt News and social media

---

Magazines. TV. Newspapers

---

YouTube Streaming/local and national news, phone apps for local and national newspapers and magazines

---

TV. Internet

Internet

---

TV,internet,and radio

---

TV

---

Sun Herald newspaper, WLOX TV, WXXV TV

---

Hattiesburg American and Pine Belt News

---

TV

---

Television - WDAM

---

television

---

Hattiesburg American & WDAM TV

---

Hattiesburg American newspaper

---

Newspaper, TV, and NPR

---

Online, on tv, local newsletters/ papers.

---

WDAM

---

WDAM, Pinebelt News

---

local NBC, CBS on cable

---

TV

---

Online and TV

---

TV

---

WDAM. Hattiesburg American. Mississippi Today.

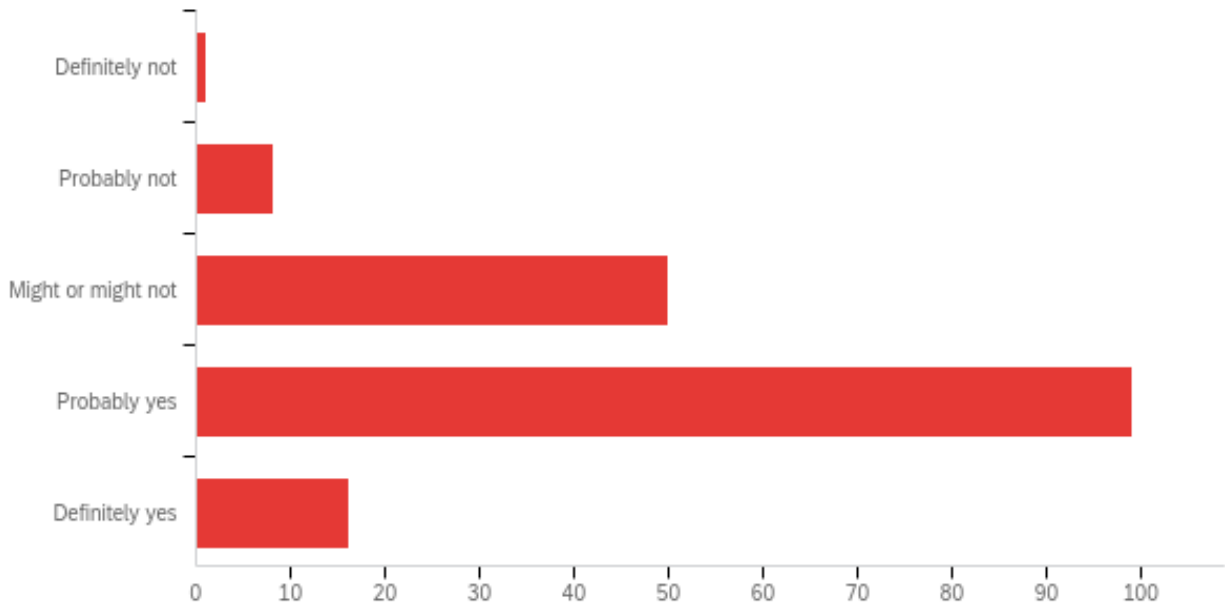
---

Internet and antenna tv

---

Pine Belt News

### Q5 - Do you generally trust the information from your local news sources?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you generally trust the information from your local news sources?	1.00	5.00	3.70	0.72	0.52	174

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Definitely not	0.57%	1
2	Probably not	4.60%	8
3	Might or might not	28.74%	50
4	Probably yes	56.90%	99
5	Definitely yes	9.20%	16
	Total	100%	174

## Q6 - What, in your opinion, would make the news more trustworthy?

What, in your opinion, would make the news more trustworthy?

Balance reporting is always best in earning my trust. I do think we have a good valance in most areas of reporting here in Hattiesburg. I never feel comfortable when I have totally one-sided point of reference.

Less control of news by small number of people. Less corruption of cable news.

giving both sides and sources of information

Less dramatic effect

Hire more people that can speak properly instead of hiring to fill diversity quotas

More investigative subjects

Having more sources

More investigative reporting

More timely. More info included on events clearly happening locally

If they covered stories that affected us and not the 1% rich ppl. They are usually trying to divide us and a lot of it is misinformation

Less editorial

Report on actual news including controversial topics, but I know that won't happen because the conservative nature of the audience.

If the newspeople would be able to pronounce words correctly

Creditable sources

Randy Bell (Jackson area journalist) 🌐

Proof of sources

More focus on issues rather than fluff

If they weren't all owned by the same mega coronations controlling the narrative

Serious attention to both sides of issues

A more even representation of stories and interests

More in-depth

More positive stories. Less bias

Referencing sources

Less, overt bias

If it wasn't so slanted

---

Local reporters

---

Nothing

---

More context and background details

---

Better research on topics.

---

If they started telling the truth rather than the echo chamber (all saying the same thing dictated to them by whoever is directing them They all say the same thing, use the same words they are not reporting but are parrots. But even if you change the words, the content will tell us.

---

Less bias and more statement of info so viewer can form their own opinion

---

Take money and/or incentives to networks and pundits OUT.

---

Less click bait more perspective on news worthiness

---

Not trying to make all stories so "dramatic" and not relying so heavily on state/regional/national news outlets to pick up stories from

---

Unbiased reporting. Accountability beyond social media blasts

---

News vs Opinions

---

I don't have any reason not to think news is untrustworthy

---

Completely take politics out

---

Better research, fact checking and referencing of what they find.

---

Noting

---

Facts

---

Not giving their personal opinions!

---

Not being political

---

less editorializing

---

Knowing it's from a credible, non biased source

---

Knowing they check sources and don't share news on a whim

---

Tell the truth

---

On Facebook, everything is geared as click bait. Sometimes it's not even Mississippi stuff that WDAM posts.

---

Credible sources/confidence in delivery.

---

More facts, less opinion and agenda

---

Diverse topics, more uplifting positive stories

---

Local journalist who are active in the community.

---

Stick to facts and not emotional testimony

---

Educated and trained reporters

---

If the news people knew what they were reading. They just read words.

---

More intelligent news people

---

Trustworthy news outlets that are not attempting to skew the opinion of readers or listeners

---

Fact checking

---

More rehearsal for anchors

---

Multiple viewpoints

---

Unbiased

---

Less political slander at the national level

---

More investigative reports

---

More professional newscasters instead of silly giggling news readers

---

Telling us events before they happen instead of after

---

More transparency on sources

---

Reliable and non bias reporting

---

Consistency in neutrality

---

Local news is generally trustworthy. Communities are too small for mistruths to be published without ramifications. State and national news, however, are full of political and philosophical leanings and often written with an agenda to the point you're left asking what's their stance and why is this how the information was portrayed.

---

not sure

---

Not sure

---

If the source wouldn't be so one sided

---

Have a good mix of bad and good

---

N/A

---

Non partisan reporting

---

If stories didn't change so often.

---

Not being bought and paid for by politicians and big pharma

---

Balanced stories and perspectives

---



If they wouldn't use sensationalized headlines to make you think the story is bigger than it is.

---

More unbiased opinions on political candidates/issues

---

Upfront headlines

---

More diverse writers

---

Opportunity for peer review public comments or certification/verification. A "truthfulness" score could be given by AI.

---

Less grammatical errors in reporting. Reporting on worthwhile topics.

---

Fewer typos and mispronunciations, and better grammar

---

Not broadcasting/printing stories that they knew were untrue

---

Less bias in outlets

---

Good question. I'm not sure. I don't trust any news sources

---

Less sensationalism and money driven behavior

---

More neutral headlines

---

More reporters doing quality journalism -- seeking local newsworthy stories, building relationships among the community leaders + companies, and presenting a top-tier level of professionalism.

---

More local news outlets

---

Not sure

---

More consistent news anchors--it's always someone new

---

Scale - its hard to trust a group only putting out a few articles a week.

---

Having reporters who stayed in the market long enough to get to know the local landscape

---

Better journalism with more quality content

---

Unbiased reporting, fact checking

---

For one reason, I would find local news more trustworthy if it was less sloppy, in terms of issues with misidentification of sources, places, etc. and what i perceive as a general laziness in overall reportage, though this may be largely due to staffing shortages due to cutbacks.

---

Covering ALL news.

---

Equitable discussions on all topics not just what the news organization wants to promote.

---

Visible, verifiable fact checking

---

Reporting without political bias

---

Factual statements, language that is impartial and objective, world perspective

---

Stop putting bogus clickbait headlines

---

Leaving a political slant out of the news.

If it presented more info, more facts

Vetted their news source

more in-depth coverage of issues

Improved accuracy, fewer errors in reporting

Don't take a political stance at your workplace. Just report facts (news).

More in depth analysis

Just reporting the news stories and not opinion

To have both sides shared of a story. Not biased advertising

Report the news and not opinion

Based on facts

I would prefer to read news stories with broader perspectives and stronger expert clarification. It would be helpful to understand implications of material presented: how does it affect our community, its citizens, etc.

if they would state the facts with out their opinon

Keep personal opinion/bias out of news. Tell both sides of the story, not just the favored one.

Statistics and supporting data

Better writing and intelligent question a issue me.

More in-depth reporting

National news seems more biased

Local ownership and Local editorial decisions

Less bias & opinions from commentators

I think local news IS trustworthy.

Less rancor and more checkable facts. Opinions should be revealed as opinions.

Personal interest stories, local news about industries locating here, infrastructure renewal, growth that affects us all.

Reporting news after all facts are secured.

Truthful news, not slanted to a particular view. Journalist being investigators, reporting facts, not their opinion

revealing sources

Civil exchanges from different socio-political sides

More current national information/international information

---

Credentials of the reporters

---

Less bias in written articles

---

Give information not opinion

---

multiple sources, from known reporters/commentators

---

On the national level, unbiased newscasts. On the local level more local news.

---

More facts, less drama

---

Less opinionated coverage

---

Quit being so far left.

---

less emphasis on negative aspects and people and more emphasis on good things that are countering the negative

---

News casters just giving the news. No personal comments

---

Local reporters

---

I trust media sources that are reputable and believe I can judge that by the way they present news

---

I do not like the fact that people can publish what used to be letters to the editor...anonymously...mostly rants.

---

Variety of reputable sources. Research rigor.

---

Sources of information

---

More facts, less opinion

---

A news outlet that provides more than what local officials provide. I want journalism that digs beneath the service and tackles the issues with well-rounded, unbiased reporting.

---

Printing the truth. More than 40 second bites

---

Good quality journalism integrity- balanced and well-researched to avoid bias

---

Both sides of current issues were given

---

Professional unbiased journalism

---

Just facts not opinion

---

I don't know

---

If the news was not considered "entertainment" by TV producers and if it would not present a biased slant in any direction.

---

Having multiple news outlets in order to have varied viewpoints.

---

Report facts; no commentary or opinions.

If it could be delivered in an unbiased manner and if the newscasters could simply report the facts without sensationalizing it

---

Less editorializing; more factual news

---

Depends on who is reporting it

---

Better journalistic writing with vetted sources

---

Less biased reporting from certain news outlets

---

Evidence that the announcement for ex does or does not comes to pass. If not why not

---

Covering both views or all views, sticking to facts and less drama

---

Less opinions

---

Basic facts without commentary; anytime I hear the phrase, "trust me" I tend to question the deliverer!

---

Less opinions, just the facts.

---

Verification source

---

I don't have a problem with the local news

---

Fact check when lies are told.

---

Better balance between negative and positive events

---

Knowledge of reporter's bias.

---

## **Q7 - What would entice you to consume more local news?**

What would entice you to consume more local news?

---

Availability of a source that concentrates what is going around here in our area of the state as well as state wide. Often it seems that the local news is slighted in favor of national and worldwide news. Both of those areas are important, but I do like it when my source focuses on local more than they generally do now.

---

Bring back our newspapers.

---

if news was not so superficial

---

Less cluttered app

---

There is more than USM news and sports - cover those things too

---

More feature stories

---

More people stories

---

More diversity, more news than sports reporting

---

Not having to pay for access. Broader subject matter. Articles available on a slightly higher reading level

---

If they covered stories about everyone. Not just the well off and not just murder and negative things.

---

More positive stories to tell

---

More professionalism. Almost every newscast has technical issues: camera on wrong person, mic not on, etc

---

Less diversity and more intelligent people

---

Positive news

---

A friendly focus at least once per news cast- telling the story of a local

---

Unsure

---

Features on future plans for Hattiesburg & the pine belt like improved roads, 5 year plans. Etc.

---

Same answer as above

---

More real news and less fluff

---

Shorter easy to digest stories

---

More in-depth stories

---

More positive news stories. Easier access and less clicking

---

Professionalism

---

Unaffiliated sources that are not held captive by their parent networks would be a good start..

---

Availability on streaming services and no paywall

---

Daily paper

---

Love reporting or interviewing

---

A feeling of a greater connection with the local stories and/or anchors

---

Stop repeating stories so much.

---

Sources that I can trust that give both sides of any event. Real journalism Questioning the situations fair investigations into the story all sides..

---

More info about local activities.

---

If they showed more of a presence.

---

Relevance and timeliness to local quality of life

---

More "good news" local interest stories about specific people, schools, students, businesses in our community

---

A strong local paper and/or ease of access electronically and printed

More stories from political meetings. City Hall, County Supervisor , School board

---

Less sports, more, local politics, coming cultural events

---

More stories of goodness instead of bad behaviors

---

More reports with greater detail online. Better apps for local news access.

---

More professional news anchors and staff.

---

Better reliability

---

If it was more accurate

---

Nothing

---

scheduling

---

Coverage of a broader scope of topics

---

Easy access such as, live, up to date social media post

---

A stronger local newspaper

---

A social media local account that is current (updated daily), local (Pine Belt/ Mississippi), and factual (not sensationalized as click bait )

---

Local relevance/confidence in delivery.

---

Actual local news

---

Highlighting more upcoming events

---

More local news.

---

Not sure. I prefer reading the news.

---

Objective reporting

---

Hire more intelligent news people

---

People who could speak correctly

---

Objective reporting

---

Concentrate on stories local to our city & state

---

Less political news

---

Less sad/bad news, more positive content

---

Better anchors

---

More appealing local media personalities

---

Better content

---

Would like to see more in depth news reporting and hear about events ahead of time instead of after the event.

More coverage. Hattiesburg Patriot covers far more than wdam

Targeted social

Better coverage of current and local events

Less inflammatory slants

I'm plugged in to the local community pretty extensively, so there's very little news that's "news" to me. Much of the news is uninteresting or doesn't apply to me. And if it doesn't call me to action, I'm also less interested.

not likely

Not sure

If the news actually reported relevant information and not just silly things and tragedies

Easier access

More access

I'm not sure- probably if it was less biased

If it wasn't always so negative.

News sources who are not beholden to other entities/persons/government groups

Not sure. I already rely on my local news station

If they covered more interesting topics.

Easier access/better local coverage

Less political bias

Ease of consumption

Free news station or cable television. We only pay for streaming services, like Netflix or Disney+

I would consume more local news if the stories were more about actual happenings in our town.

I already watch it most nights. I don't want any more than that

Make it easier to find and/or give more details. Stop running the exact same story for days with no updates (online newspapers)

More time to read

Less negativity

Accuracy and sincerity

I think I consume an adequate amount

Higher quality journalism with trained professionals who seek to enhance our community through their work.

---

Local newspaper daily

---

Usually watch if i like the news anchor delivering the news

---

Not sure

---

A decent physical paper

---

Relevancy of information reported

---

Free news without paywalls

---

Reporting local stories and features

---

I cannot think of a reason for a potential increase.

---

More readily available online without a fee.

---

Unsure

---

Relevant local stories

---

I actually consume a lot of local news

---

More updated news on the news app

---

To have quality, confident news anchors that understand the communities they are talking about and they actually pronounce names of places correctly. Nothing is more cringeworthy than an anchor mispronouncing a formal name of a community.

---

Less overly political flaming

---

Broader more interesting scope

---

Not having all bad news. Good stories

---

better coverage of local issues--too much of the local "newspaper" coverage is Ganett. From the JCL to the HA it is very redundant

---

Increased access and visibility online

---

More professional reporters.

---

More coverage of Southern Miss

---

Quickness of reporting

---

A trusted platform

---

I intentionally consume the bare minimum of all news

---

News supported by truth/facts.

---



A more pro-active approach to news gathering and reporting would be encouraging. Let us know that what is happening in our community is important and worthy of our support.

straight forward nfo, let me decide on right or wrong

The local newspaper would have to become \*local\* again. It's mostly just a national chain at this point.

Newscasters that look more professional; less redundant weather reporting; more dependable streaming services.

More local up-to-date information, less think pieces that don't affect me, and better presentation.

Excellent journalists

I watch most local news broadcasts and listen to radio

More local investigative reporting

Better journalism instead of jokes

Dont know

Don't know

Email or news delivered to mailbox

Newspapers at lower rates. This has always been my favorite.

If more news was reported & I didnt have to search all over the internet for it. Need more reporters for small town papers

better coverage

A daily news paper

Pertinent

More details....

fact based articles versus majority opinion based guest columnists

Nothing

better/more detailed reporting, complete stories with follow-ups

I already keep informed as much as possible

Price

Availability on streaming services

Stop wokeness. Quit pushing left wing agendas.

hearing from local leaders in education, healthcare, the economy, politics and unfrastucture about what is happening in these areas.

Nothing

A daily paper with local reporters

---

fewer ads on established media websites (e.g. WDAM, Hattiesburg American)

---

Easier access for digital and more diversity.

---

Talented columnists (I.e, Molly Ivan type)

---

Local events (enrichment)

---

Positive local stories of accomplishment

---

A news organization that had a team of reporters, editors and photographers focused on watchdog journalism.

---

More information that we s local events.

---

Online updated news reports of ongoing issues. I like the way MS Today accomplished this.

---

More news about upcoming events rather than what's already happened

---

Availability of local new source. Not nationally syndicated.

---

More relevant

---

More good news stories

---

Pretty much keep up with local news.

---

Ease of access, user friendly Digital format, reasonable cost

---

More choices.

---

News anchors that were a little more seasoned and didn't struggle pronouncing words

---

Better presentation

---

Nothing

---

Better coverage of local events in e-edition

---

I already get enough local news.

---

Easy accessibility

---

Focus on local news, not a repeat of National news

---

More in depth coverage

---

I feel like I get plenty of local news because I consider it important.

---

nothing

---

More human interest and features

---

Less weather more in depth reporting

Facts. More than two sentences needed to cover a subject.

More positive events like economic development and local investment in businesses. Cut the overwhelming devastation

Resumption of a daily news paper

### **Target area analysis**

Grids and content analysis

### **GEORGE COUNTY**

#### **George County Times – 10K Followers (Subscription needed)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	4
Crime	2
Legal civil	2
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	3
Sports	2
Government	3
Health	8
Business	2
Education	2
Legal-other	3
Examples: Memories, History go up in flames along with former Community Medical Center building, Wacky Watermelon games a week away, A girl, a football game and a fight, Home grown tomatoes plenty at Farmers Market.	

#### **George County News and Events – 25.9K Members (Private Facebook Group)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	2
Crime	5
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	0
Sports	4
Government	3
Health	3
Business	2
Education	0
Legal-other	0
Examples: The socialist democrats and Rino republicans have taken us to the limits of debt with significant consequences shortly, I NOW KNOW HOW HILLARY CLINTON FEELS, EMPIRES DON'T FAIL; POLITICIANS FAIL EMPIRES?, Over 300 guns to choose from! Come see us!	

**George County Sheriff's Office – 14K Followers (Facebook Page)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	3
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	1
Politics	0
Sports	1
Government	3
Health	3

Business	2
Education	0
Legal-other	0
Examples: HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WOMAN??. TORNADO RELIEF ASSISTANCE, PRESS RELEASE TWO ARRESTED FOR SEXUAL BATTERY, TRAFFIC ALERT - ROAD CLOSED.	

**PERRY COUNTY**

**Perry County Local News – 61 Followers (Facebook Page)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	11
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	1
Politics	0
Sports	3
Government	1
Health	1
Business	2
Education	0
Legal-other	0
Examples: Adrian is expected to change into a hurricane, Firing Rankin deputies accused of brutality not enough, mom says: They need to be charged, Severe Storms Forecast Locally Tonight, Extreme Heat to Follow.	

**Perry County Sheriff's Office – 13K Followers (Facebook Page)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	5
Legal civil	3
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	0
Sports	0
Government	0
Health	0
Business	0
Education	0
Legal-other	0
<p>Examples: On June 27, 2023, a little after 6 pm, we received a 911 call about a reckless driver on Highway 42, Happy Father's Day from the Perry County Sheriff's Office, County Equipment Vandalized, Another one picked up on sale charges.</p>	

**The Richton Dispatch newspaper – Subscription needed**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	4
Crime	2
Legal civil	3
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	2

Sports	3
Government	9
Health	6
Business	1
Education	2
Legal-other	0
Examples: Local man dies following crash in police chase, Tim Odom makes formal bid for re-election as Justice Court Judge, Jason Mayo declares candidacy for Dist. 3 Supervisor position, Former Perry Central standout off to fast start as new Top Dawg at PCHS.	

### **Biloxi TV**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	5
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	0
Sports	3
Government	6
Health	1
Business	3
Education	2
Legal-other	0
Examples: Jackson Co. investigating Dog River drowning, New inductees into Mississippi Gaming Hall of Fame include former Gov. Haley Barbour, Federal judge blocks law that would prohibit protests at state-owned buildings.	

**GREENE COUNTY**

**Greene County News – 3.8K Members (Private Facebook Group)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	1
Crime	0
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	0
Sports	2
Government	0
Health	1
Business	5
Education	1
Legal-other	0
Examples: Missing Dog! If you have any information please contact Courtney at 724-833-4327, Do you need your home cleaned? Insured and Bonded, Missing in sycamore area there names are bear and chole if you see them contact 724-710-7864.	

**Greene County News and Events – 2.4K Members (Private Facebook Group)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	0
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	0
Sports	0



Government	0
Health	0
Business	0
Education	0
Legal-other	0

**Greene County Herald newspaper – Subscription needed**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	2
Legal civil	2
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	1
Sports	6
Government	7
Health	3
Business	0
Education	1
Legal-other	0
Examples: David Tingle seeking Dist. 5 post on Board of Supervisors, Robin Robinson makes case for State Senator for Dist. 42, Lady Cats win game one thriller over Newton Co., Former Arkansas quarterback Ryan Mallett dies at 35 in an apparent drowning.	

**JACKSON COUNTY**

**Jackson County Sheriff's Department – 32K Followers (Facebook Page)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	0
Crime	8
Legal civil	0
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	0
Sports	1
Government	0
Health	0
Business	0
Education	0
Legal-other	0
Examples: Our investigators are staying busy with car break-ins and burglaries that are occurring across the county, Happy Father's Day to all the dads out there. Enjoy your special day!	

**Jackson County, Mississippi Government (Facebook Page)**

Category	May 1 – May 14
Weather	
Crime	0
Legal civil	1
Legal Criminal	0
Politics	0
Sports	1
Government	4
Health	0
Business	0
Education	0

Legal-other	0
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The data shows the George County Times newspaper has the widest media coverage in George County, with 27 news articles. The newspaper focuses the most on the health sector in its coverage with 8 articles. However, the newspaper does not give much interest in legal criminal issues with zero news articles. As for Perry County, The Richton Dispatch newspaper had the most comprehensive media coverage, with 28 news articles. The newspaper focused on the government and health news, whereas it had no interest in legal criminal issues.

As for Perry County, The Richton Dispatch newspaper had the most comprehensive media coverage, with 28 news articles. The newspaper focused on the government and health news, whereas it had no interest in legal criminal issues.

Biloxi TV covers the four counties and had a coverage of 20 articles. The data shows that Biloxi TV focuses on the government and crime issues, and the weather and political issues had no news articles. The TV website dedicates a special section for weather in which it publishes weather news and updates. For this reason, the TV might does not include media articles about the weather in the primary news section.

The data also shows that Greene County has no government site on social media, and the media coverage in the county is tremendously low. The only active media outlet is the Greene County Herald newspaper that covers the county. The data shows that the newspaper focuses on government issues and sports other than other topics. As for Jackson County, the data indicates that the SunHerald news website is the most active media outlet in the county, with 57 news articles. The website focuses on weather and crime topics. Also, the data shows the Jackson County Sheriff's Department page on Facebook and the Jackson County, Mississippi Government are inactive, with only nine news posts and six posts, respectively.

In general, according to the data, it has been noticed that legacy media is more active than alternative media in covering the area. Also, it has been shown that the government sites on social media are not as active as the legacy media and lack coverage.

## **PEARL RIVER COUNTY**

### **Picayune Item newspaper**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	11	9
Crime	19	23
Legal (Civil)	6	4
Legal (Criminal)	9	4

Sports	17	12
Government	5	3
Health	7	9
Business	4	6
Education	3	2
Legal-Other	2	1
Exemplary News Headlines: a. Picayune Memorial High School Football Team Honored with Commemorative Plaque (sports); b. Tropical Storm Bret (weather); c. Police Investigate Fatal Shooting on Morris Street (crime); d. Severe Thunderstorm- June 15 (weather)		

**Pearl River County Sheriff's Department – 20K Followers (Facebook page)**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	0	0
Crime	23	17
Legal (Civil)	0	0
Legal (Criminal)	0	0
Sports	0	0
Government	0	0
Health	2	0
Business	0	0
Education	0	0
Legal-Other	0	0
Exemplary News Headlines: a. Pearl River County Sheriff's Office Narcotic Investigators responded to complaints of drug activity in the vicinity of Lilac Dr. in the Nicholson area (crime); b. Narcotic Investigators with the Pearl River County Sheriff's Office were conducting operations in the Sam Smith Area of Poplarville, MS (crime); c. Narcotic Investigators with the Pearl River County		

Sheriff's Department were operating in the area of 38 White Sand Rd. in Poplarville MS, when they observed Gene Wagner sitting in a pick-up truck (crime)

**Pearl River County website**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	0	0
Crime	0	0
Legal (Civil)	0	0
Legal (Criminal)	0	0
Sports	0	0
Government	Yes	Yes
Health	0	0
Business	Yes	Yes
Education	Yes	Yes
Legal-Other	Yes	Yes
Exemplary News Headlines: Pearl River County's official website, <a href="http://www.pearlrivercounty.net">www.pearlrivercounty.net</a> , offers public services such as property taxes, marriage licenses, voter registration, emergency management, education, planning and development, court information, and general board meeting documents.		

**STONE COUNTY**

**The Stone County Republican/Crane Chronicle**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	2	3

Crime	3	4
Legal (Civil)	2	2
Legal (Criminal)	3	2
Sports	5	4
Government	9	7
Health	2	3
Business	2	3
Education	4	5
Legal-Other	1	1
Exemplary News Headlines: a. Legislative Highlights Discussed at Republican Club Meeting (politics); b. Governor Signs Legislation to Protect Children from Harmful Experimental Surgeries and Treatment; c. Weekly Stock Market Insights: Federal Reserve Carburetor (Business); d. Hurley Archers made it to Worlds Archery Tournament (sports); e. More than 100 Reeds Spring students receive free shoes and socks (education)		

**Stone County Sheriff's Department – 7.6K Followers (Facebook page)**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	0	0
Crime	3	4
Legal (Civil)	0	0
Legal (Criminal)	0	0
Sports	0	0
Government	0	0
Health	2	0

Business	0	0
Education	0	0
Legal-Other	1	0
<p>Exemplary News Headlines: a. Any information please call Forrest County Sheriff Department or remain anonymous by calling <a href="#">Mississippi Coast Crime Stoppers</a> at (877) 787-5898, new came with a picture for public attention (Crime); b. shared news “If you recognize me please call Rose's to let somebody know. I'm ready to go home” with picture of a dog (other); c. <b>!!!Vehicle Stolen !!!</b>, news came up with image for public attention (crime).</p>		

### Stone County Website

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	YES	YES
Crime	0	0
Legal (Civil)	YES	YES
Legal (Criminal)	0	0
Sports	0	0
Government	YES	YES
Health	YES	YES
Business	YES	YES
Education	YES	YES
Legal-Other	0	0
<p>Exemplary News Headlines: Stone County's official website, <a href="https://stonecountymys.gov/">https://stonecountymys.gov/</a>, offers public services such as property taxes, marriage licenses, voter registration, emergency management, education, planning and development, court information, and local entertainment resources.</p>		

### HARRISON COUNTY

**Sun Herald – Subscription needed**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	17	15
Crime	12	11
Legal (Civil)	2	3
Legal (Criminal)	9	7
Sports	14	12
Government	13	15
Health	7	9
Business	7	9
Education	9	12
Legal-Other	4	2
<p>Exemplary News Headlines: a. A person may have drowned in the water off the beach in Biloxi, police say (weather); b. Dangerous heatwave blankets the Mississippi Coast this week. How hot will it get? (weather); c. Meet the Sun Herald All-South Mississippi Baseball Team for the 2023 season (sports); d. Does Tate Reeves really need to delay returning welfare scandal-related campaign donations? (politics);</p>		

**Harrison County Sheriff's Office - 18k Followers (Facebook page)**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	0	0
Crime	0	0
Legal (Civil)	0	0
Legal (Criminal)	0	0
Sports	0	0



Government	0	0
Health	0	0
Business	0	0
Education	0	0
Legal-Other	0	0
<p>Exemplary News Headlines: This is surprising! Instead of sharing crime news, this page shares community work and internal news such as celebrations, meetings, retirement news etc. For example, data demonstrates news on. a. Law Enforcement Appreciation Week; b. Employee of the Month news; c. Officer's retirement news; d. remembering ex officer's legacy.</p>		

#### Harrison County website

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	0	0
Crime	0	0
Legal (Civil)	YES	YES
Legal (Criminal)	0	0
Sports	0	0
Government	YES	YES
Health	0	0
Business	YES	YES
Education	YES	YES
Legal-Other	0	0
<p>Exemplary News Headlines: Harrison County's official website, <a href="https://harrisoncountymys.gov/index.php">https://harrisoncountymys.gov/index.php</a>, offers public services such as property taxes, marriage</p>		

licenses, voter registration, emergency management, education, planning and development, court information, and local entertainment resources.

**HANCOCK COUNTY**

**The Sea Coast Echo**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	10	11
Crime	18	17
Legal (Civil)	5	4
Legal (Criminal)	7	4
Sports	15	17
Government	5	3
Health	3	2
Business	3	2
Education	9	8
Legal-Other	2	3

Exemplary News Headlines: a. Waveland man charged with sexual battery (crime); b. Above-normal temperatures predicted to return (weather); c. Pass man convicted of manslaughter in 2021 Bay St. Louis shooting (crime); d. West Virginia names Josh Eilert interim head coach for 2023-24 (sports);

**Residents Of Hancock County – 2.0K Members (Uncensored Public Facebook Group)**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	0	0

Crime	0	0
Legal (Civil)	0	0
Legal (Criminal)	0	0
Sports	0	0
Government	0	0
Health	0	0
Business	14	12
Education	0	0
Legal-Other	0	0
Exemplary News Headlines: a. Yard sale by Dedeaux store come see us..... need everything gone (business); b. Please message me if you need any odd jobs done. We have plenty of young men looking to work this summer (business); c. Farmers' market schedule (business); d. car dealership advertisement (business)		

**Hancock County website**

Category	WEEK1 (June4-10)	WEEK 2 (June 11-17)
Weather	0	0
Crime	0	0
Legal (Civil)	YES	YES
Legal (Criminal)	0	0
Sports	0	0
Government	YES	YES
Health	YES	YES
Business	YES	YES

Education	YES	YES
Legal-Other	0	0
Exemplary News Headlines: Hancock County's official website, <a href="https://hancockcounty.ms.gov/35/Business">https://hancockcounty.ms.gov/35/Business</a> , offers information about public services such as taxes, licenses, voter registration, emergency management, waste control, entertainment resources, education, planning and development, and court information, etc.		

According to the data, the most frequently reported news topics during the time the data was gathered were weather, crime, and sports in the mainstream media outlets. Likewise, even though mainstream media outlets also provide coverage on business, education, and health, those topics are not widely covered. For alternative media outlets, news and/or information about crime issues seems to be the prominent in coverage in terms of number of reporting and audience engagement in social media. The Harrison County Sheriff's Office Facebook page stands out as the only alternative media platform since it reports on internal events of the police department such as celebrations, important meetings, and retirement news rather than just news on crime. In addition, all the government media outlets offer information on public services such as property taxes, marriage licenses, voter registration, emergency management, education, planning and development, court information, and local entertainment resources.

#### **WDAM**

Category	Week One 11-17 June	Week two 4-10 June
Weather	30	25
Crime	33	28
Legal civil	3	1
Legal Criminal	4	-
Sports	12	14
Government	3	6
Health	6	3
Business	4	2
Education	2	3
Legal-other	3	-

**WDAM** is an active news outlet that primarily reports on breaking news, severe weather forecasting, and sports coverage in the Mississippi Pine Belt. It does a great job in coverage crime incidences happening locally. It looks like most of the crimes are being committed by young men in possession of arms. There is also a lot of violence that is reported in this analysis including a hit and run incidence of a 13 year old.

**FORREST COUNTY**

**Forrest County Sherriff’s office website**

Category	Week One 11-17 June	Week two 4-10 June
Weather		
Crime		2
Legal civil		1
Legal Criminal		-
Sports	1	
Government		
Health		
Business		
Education		
Legal-other	1	-

This page is committed to covering news from the perspective of the Sheriffs, shedding a positive light on the work that they are doing and contributing to the community. The other pages actually give more information on crimes than this page. However, the page allows for citizens to post their own news or reports of crimes therefore making it more interactive. As it is not really that active there is therefore need for citizenry journalism to capture what is happening and to shed more light so that the community has an appreciation of the profile of the crimes that are happening in their area for awareness as well as for their own protection.

**Magnolia Tribune newspaper**

The Magnolia Tribune offers insightful commentary on what is happening within the community especially on the political front, serving as a platform for divergent opinions. It's worth noting that the news organization is a non-profit and non-partisan entity.

Category	Week One 11-17 June	Week two 4-10 June
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Weather	1	
Crime	1	
Legal civil		
Legal Criminal	1	1
Sports	1	3
Government	5	5
Health	1	2
Business	10	6
Education	4	2
Legal-other	1	3

**LAMAR COUNTY**

**Hattiesburg Patriot News Media – Subscription for newspaper or Facebook page with 145K Followers**

Category	Week One June 1-7	Week Two April 30-May 6
Business	-	
Health	-	
Government	State 1	
Crime	3	4
Education	-	
Legal Civil	3	1
Legal Criminal		
Sports	-	
Politics	Local-1	
Weather	1	

The page is quite interactive as most posts have above 30 comments-this shows that the people really engage with the news that is posted on the page.

**Misinformation1:**

Development-Faulty bridge construction(84 comments, 17 shares)- This story contains unverifiable information and it does not give fuller details of what transpired but the comment section is awash with ideas and comments about the engineering of the bridge that is questionable. This has the potential to make people anxious and distrustful about construction that is being done in the County.

**Incomplete Information**

Crime-Police raided the apartment of a woman who was sleeping with her children-there is no adequate information as to the steps that have been taken for redress. As it is it leaves an impression that the Police are above the law and instils fear into civilians.

<https://www.facebook.com/HattiesburgPatriot/videos/207542705559067/>

Trend:

The page seems to cover 80 percent of the stories from Jones County even though it's a Hattiesburg page and mostly the news pertains to the Police from how badly and unlawfully it is that they treat civilians to the misdemeanours that they commit during and after duty like using work vehicles for personal work or committing DUI.

**Pinebelt News – 14K Followers**

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Category	Week One 11-17 June	Week two 4-10 June
Weather	58	19
Crime	15	15
Legal civil	1	4
Legal Criminal	3	3
Sports State	7	4
Sports Regional	5	10
Sports National	3	-
Government	1	4
Health	7	5
Business	3	1
Education	3	2
Legal-other	1	1

Inadequate Information

Article on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June covering the requirement by Covington schools to have see through book bags. There is not much of an expansive discussion of why this is so and so there is lack of clarity.

Trends

The page mostly gives timely weather updates, giving warning about impending storms as well as alerts of damages post storms that motorists should be wary of. Most of the crime news is covering the use of guns and murder.

**Impact 601 <https://impact601.com/news/>**

Category	Week One 11-17 June	Week two 4-10 June
Weather	7	5
Crime	1	1
Legal civil	1	
Legal Criminal		
Sports State	1	1
Sports Regional	3	
Sports National		
Government	1	
Health		
Business	10	8
Education	2	
Legal-other		1

Trends

Impact 601 mostly reports on severe weather risks, developments in local infrastructure projects as well as local law enforcement activities for instance a story that covered a man who was sentenced for meth distribution.



IDENTITY SUITE / OPTION 1



PRIMARY

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SECONDARY / COMPACT

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MARK / SEAL

IDENTITY SUITE / OPTION 1



PRIMARY

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**THE ROY HOWARD**  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER



**THE  
ROY  
HOWARD**  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER

SECONDARY / COMPACT

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MARK / SEAL

IDENTITY SUITE / OPTION 1



PRIMARY

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SECONDARY / COMPACT

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MARK / SEAL

IDENTITY SUITE / OPTION 1



PRIMARY

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SECONDARY / COMPACT

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**THE ROY HOWARD**  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER

PRIMARY



**THE ROY HOWARD**  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER



**THE ROY HOWARD**  
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SECONDARY / COMPACT



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IDENTITY SUITE / OPTION 1



**THE ROY HOWARD**  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER  
*Reporting what matters.*

PRIMARY

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**THE ROY HOWARD**  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER  
*Reporting what matters.*



**THE ROY HOWARD**  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER  
*Reporting what matters.*

SECONDARY / COMPACT

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MARK / SEAL

## Technology Budget

Scripps Technology Budget Per Location						
Location	Est. Equipment Cost	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total Budgeted	Total Spent
Hattiesburg - Southern Miss	\$47,479.98					
Long Beach - Southern Miss Gulf Coast	\$22,033.28					
Jackson	\$22,528.28					
Grand Total	\$92,041.54					

Equipment	Company
Panasonic HC-X20 4K Mobile Camcorder with Rich Connectivity	B&H
Nikon D7500 DSLR Camera with 18-55mm and 70-300mm Lenses	B&H
Magnus REX VT-5000 2-Stage Video Tripod with Fluid Head	B&H
SanDisk 128GB Extreme PRO	B&H
Sony MDR-756 Headphones	B&H
Glyph Technologies 18TB Blackbox PRO	B&H
Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 USB-C Audio Interface	B&H
Kopul Studio Elite 4000 Series Neutrik XLR M to XLR F Microphone Cable (25'	B&H
Zoom PodTrak P4 Portable Multitrack Podcast Recorder with 4-Person Podcas	B&H
Sony UWP-D26 Camera-Mount Wireless Combo Microphone System (UC14: 4	B&H
ikan Small Interview Dual Color Kit with Two iLED312-v2 and One IB508-v2	B&H
Panasonic 7.28V 65Wh Lithium-Ion Battery for DVX200 (8850mAh)	B&H
Nikon EN-EL15c Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery	B&H
Adobe Creative License	CDW
Apple 14" MacBook Pro (M2 Pro, Space Gray)	B&H
HP Color LaserJet Pro M479FDW Multifunction Printer	B&H
HP 414X High-Yield Black LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H
ASUS ProArt 31.5" 1440p HDR10 Monitor	B&H
Apple Mac Studio with M1 Max (Early 2022)	B&H
SNO FLOW(CRM SYSTEM)	
Samsung TU7000 65" Class HDR 4K UHD Smart LED TV	B&H
HP 414X High-Yield Magenta LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H
HP 414X High-Yield Cyan LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H
HP 414X High-Yield Yellow LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H
Nissan Altima	Petro Nissan
Ford Transit 15 Passenger	Courtesy Ford



Price	Product Number	Product Link	Quantity	Total
\$2,302.55	BH #PAHCX20	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$4,605.10
\$1,396.00	BH #NID75002LH	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$2,792.00
\$202.49	BH #MAVT5000	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$404.98
\$22.88	BH #SA128GBEF	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	4	\$91.52
\$87.05	BH #SOMDR750	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	6	\$522.30
\$493.56	BH #GLBBPR18	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$987.12
\$153.89	BH #FOSCARL2I	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$307.78
\$18.71	BH #KOM4025	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	4	\$74.84
\$389.95	BH #ZOPTP4PCI	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$389.95
\$676.36	BH #SOUWPD2E	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$1,352.72
\$850.49	BH #IKIBK23150	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$850.49
\$270.51	BH #PAAGVBR8	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$541.02
\$51.75	BH #NIENEL15C	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$103.50
			8	\$0.00
\$2,299.00	B&H # APMBP14M206	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	4	\$9,196.00
\$675.61	BH #HEM479FD	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$675.61
\$165.38	B&H # HE414XB	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$165.38
\$347.26	BH #ASPA328Q	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	8	\$2,778.08
\$2,499.00	B&H # APBHZ14J06 MF	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	8	\$19,992.00
			1	\$0.00
\$485.87	BH #SAUN65TU7	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$971.74
\$225.95	BH #HE414XMA	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$225.95
\$225.95	BH #HE414XCYP	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$225.95
\$225.95	BH #HE414XYLV	<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$225.95
			1	\$0.00
			1	\$0.00
			Grand Total	\$47,479.98

Equipment	Company	Price	Product Number
Panasonic HC-X20 4K Mobile Camcorder	B&H	\$2,597.99	BH #PAHCX20
Nikon D7500 DSLR Camera with 18-55mm Lens	B&H	\$1,396.00	BH #NID75002LK
Magnus REX VT-5000 2-Stage Video Tally Light	B&H	\$269.99	BH #MAVT5000
SanDisk 128GB Extreme PRO SDXC Memory Card	B&H	\$21.99	BH #SA128GBEF
Sony MDR-756 Headphones	B&H	\$89.99	BH #SOMDR7506
Glyph Technologies 18TB Blackbox PR18 Storage	B&H	\$499.95	BH #GLBBPR18
Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 USB-C Audio Interface	B&H	\$169.99	BH #FOSCARL2I
Kopul Studio Elite 4000 Series Neutrik XLR Cable	B&H	\$24.95	BH #KOM4025
Zoom PodTrak P4 Portable Multitrack Recorder	B&H	\$389.95	BH #ZOPTP4PCI
Sony UWP-D26 Camera-Mount Wireless Microphone	B&H	\$679.78	BH #SOUWPD26
Ikan Small Interview Dual Color Kit with 2x Microphones	B&H	\$1,049.00	BH #IKIBK23150
Panasonic 7.28V 65Wh Lithium-Ion Battery	B&H	\$279.00	BH #PAAGVBR8
Nikon EN-EL15c Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery	B&H	\$69.00	BH #NIENEL15C
Adobe Creative License	CDW		
Apple 14" MacBook Pro (M2 Pro, Space Gray)	B&H	\$2,299.00	B&H # APM8P14M206
HP Color LaserJet Pro M479FDW Multifunction Printer	B&H	\$679.00	BH #HEM479FDW
HP 414X High-Yield Black LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H	\$189.00	B&H # HE414XBI
ASUS ProArt 31.5" 1440p HDR10 Monitor	B&H	\$399.00	BH #ASPA328QV
Apple Mac Studio with M1 Max (Early 2023)	B&H	\$2,499.00	B&H # APBHZ14J06 M1
Samsung TU7000 65" Class HDR 4K UHD TV	B&H	\$495.00	BH #SAUN65TU7
HP 414X High-Yield Magenta LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H	\$295.00	BH #HE414XMAK
HP 414X High-Yield Cyan LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H	\$295.00	BH #HE414XCYN
HP 414X High-Yield Yellow LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H	\$295.00	BH #HE414XYLV



Equipment	Company	Price	Product Number
Panasonic HC-X20 4K Mobile Camcorder	B&H	\$2,597.99	BH #PAHCX20
Nikon D7500 DSLR Camera with 18-55mm lens	B&H	\$1,396.00	BH #NID75002LK
Magnus REX VT-5000 2-Stage Video Tally Light	B&H	\$269.99	BH #MAVT5000
SanDisk 128GB Extreme PRO SD Card	B&H	\$21.99	BH #SA128GBEF
Sony MDR-756 Headphones	B&H	\$89.99	BH #SOMDR750
Glyph Technologies 18TB Blackbox PR	B&H	\$499.95	BH #GLBBPR18
Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 USB-C Audio Interface	B&H	\$169.99	BH #FOSCARL2I
Kopul Studio Elite 4000 Series Neutrik XLR Cable	B&H	\$24.95	BH #KOM4025
Zoom PodTrak P4 Portable Multitrack Recorder	B&H	\$389.95	BH #ZOPTP4PCI
Sony UWP-D26 Camera-Mount Wireless Microphone	B&H	\$679.78	BH #SOUWPD26
Canon Small Interview Dual Color Kit with 2x AA Batteries	B&H	\$1,049.00	BH #IKIBK23150
Panasonic 7.28V 65Wh Lithium-Ion Battery	B&H	\$279.00	BH #PAAGVBR8
Nikon EN-EL15c Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery	B&H	\$69.00	BH #NIENEL15C
Adobe Creative License	CDW		
Apple 14" MacBook Pro (M2 Pro, Space Gray)	B&H	\$2,299.00	BH #APMBP14M206
HP Color LaserJet Pro M479FDW Multifunction Printer	B&H	\$679.00	BH #HEM479FDW
HP 414X High-Yield Black LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H	\$189.00	BH #HE414XBI
ASUS ProArt 31.5" 1440p HDR10 Monitor	B&H	\$399.00	BH #ASPA328QV
Apple Mac Studio with M1 Max (Early 2023)	B&H	\$2,499.00	BH #APBHZ14J06 M1
Samsung TU7000 65" Class HDR 4K UHD TV	B&H	\$495.00	BH #SAUN65TU7
HP 414X High-Yield Magenta LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H	\$295.00	BH #HE414XMAK
HP 414X High-Yield Cyan LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H	\$295.00	BH #HE414XCYT
HP 414X High-Yield Yellow LaserJet Toner Cartridge	B&H	\$295.00	BH #HE414XYLV

Product Link	Quantity	
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$2,587.99
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$1,366.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$289.99
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$43.98
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	3	\$289.97
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$499.95
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$189.99
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$49.90
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$389.95
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$1,359.56
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$1,049.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$558.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$138.00
	3	\$0.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$2,299.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$679.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$189.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	3	\$1,197.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	3	\$7,497.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	2	\$990.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$295.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$295.00
<a href="https://www.bhphotovideo.co">https://www.bhphotovideo.co</a>	1	\$295.00
	Grand Total	\$22,528.28

## Center Job Descriptions



**Job Title:** Director, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

**Department:** School of Media & Communication

**Date Prepared:** 1/1/2023

**Reports To:** Director, School of Media & Communication

### **Job Summary:**

The director is responsible for the efficient and visionary general operations of the journalism center. The director works closely with an advisory board and oversees a team of media professionals and teams of student journalists, ranging from high school age to seniors in college. The director ensures the center meets all production, pedagogic, and budgetary mandates with the highest integrity and adherence to journalistic values and ethics.

### **Primary Job Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Oversees three full-time journalists, including those in Hattiesburg, the Gulfpark Campus, and Jackson.
2. Oversees one community liaison.
3. Oversees, trains and establishes duties for administrative assistant.
4. Serves as the primary recruiter for student and professional journalists.
5. Serves as the public face of the center for the media, public, university administration and other key stakeholders.
6. Acts as liaison to center Advisory Board, including making regular reports as directed by the board, establishing meeting agendas, annual budgets, and other matters.

7. Works closely with the director of the School of Media & Communication and advisory board to establish and maintain the center's strategic plan.
8. Performs and/or supervises all necessary functions pertaining to equipment inventorying, maintenance, and reservation in accordance with university policy.
9. Teaches at least one course per academic year as assigned by the school director.
10. Serves as practicum instructor of record for the center.
11. Other duties as assigned by the board or school director.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

Master's degree from four-year college or university in media or related field. At least three years experience in professional media or higher education management.

**Preferred**

**Qualifications:**

Ph.D. in mass communication or related field and at least five years industry or higher education management experience.

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA):**

- 1) Ability to effectively lead teams with a wide variety of backgrounds, experiences and skill sets.
- 2) Ability to understand and implement all appropriate university and board-established center policies.
- 3) Ability to assimilate large amounts of data quickly and accurately.
- 4) Ability to communicate effectively with those from a wide range of backgrounds, education levels and varying skills.
- 5) Ability to effectively deal with the public and establish long-standing relationships with key stakeholders.
- 6) Ability to establish and meet professional journalistic standards, such as deadlines, adequate sourcing, ethical and considerations, language and production, and other measures as established by the board.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:**

Supervise professional staff members of the center.

Supervise student apprentices, interns, practicum students and other student workers.

**Physical Requirements:**

Please identify all physical requirements for the position. Enter **NR, O, F, C**, in the Maximum Required Frequency column below.

Frequency Ranking	Percent of Time	Range of Hours Worked Given Length of Shift:			
		8 Hours	9 Hours	10 Hours	12 Hours
<b>Not Required Or Never (NR)</b>					
<b>Occasionally (O)</b>	0 - 33%	0 to 2.5	0 to 3	0 to 3.5	0 to 4
<b>Frequently (F)</b>	34 - 66%	2.5 to 5.5	3 to 6	3.5 to 7	4 to 8
<b>Continuously (C)</b>	67 - 100%	5.5 to 8	6 to 9	7 to 10	8 to 12

Maximum Required Frequency	Functional Activities (Typical)
F	Sitting - able to remain in a stationary position
O	Standing - able to remain standing in a stationary position
O	Climbing - use objects to ascend and/or descend
F	Positions self to accomplish tasks (squat, stoop, crouch, crawl, kneel)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 10 pounds (0 – 10 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 20 pounds (11 – 20 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 35 pounds (21 – 35 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 50 pounds (36 – 50 lbs.)
O	Lift/move items weighing up to 100+ pounds (76 ≥ 100 lbs.)
F	Push/pull - move items from one area to another
F	Reach – ability to retrieve items above shoulders
F	Use of keyboard and mouse (sporadic 10 key)
O	Able to communicate with internal and external customers
F	Must be able to detect items from a close distance
O	Must be able to detect items from a long distance
F	Must be able to distinguish colors

Maximum Required	Work Environment/Conditions
O	Works in outdoor weather conditions
F	Works inside



NR	Exposure to solvents or chemicals
O	Exposure to excess noise
NR	Exposure to dust, fumes, gases, or other irritating substances (paint, glue)



**Job Title:** Managing editor, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

**Department:** School of Media & Communication

**Date Prepared:** 1/1/2023

**Reports To:** Director, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center

**Job Summary:**

The managing editor is responsible for ensuring professional-level editing, production and quality standards of the center are enforced. The managing editor works closely with the center director to oversee teams of media professionals and teams of student journalists, ranging from high school age to seniors in college.

**Primary Job Duties and Responsibilities:**

- 12. Oversees three full-time journalists, including those in Hattiesburg, the Gulfpark Campus, and Jackson.
- 13. Works closely with the center’s community liaison.
- 14. Works closely with the center’s administrative specialist.
- 15. Oversees teams of student journalists in a variety of contexts.
- 16. Serves as the primary editor for all center content.

17. Helps establish quality standards across all platforms and enforces standards.
18. Works closely with the director of the center to enact center's strategic plan.
19. May teach at least one course per academic year as assigned by the school director.
20. Serves as practicum instructor of record.
21. Other duties as assigned by the board or school director.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

Master's degree from four-year college or university in media or related field. At least three years experience in professional media or higher education management.

**Preferred**

Ph.D. in mass communication or related field and at least five years industry or higher education management experience.

**Qualifications:**

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA):**

- 7) Ability to effectively lead teams with a wide variety of backgrounds, experiences and skill sets.
- 8) Ability to understand and implement all appropriate university and board-established center policies.
- 9) Ability to assimilate large amounts of data quickly and accurately.
- 10) Ability to communicate effectively with those from a wide range of backgrounds, education levels and varying skills.
- 11) Ability to effectively deal with the public and establish long-standing relationships with key stakeholders.
- 12) Ability to establish and meet professional journalistic standards, such as deadlines, adequate sourcing, ethical and considerations, language and production, and other measures as established by the board.
- 13) Familiarity with Adobe Creative Suite photo, video and graphics software.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:**

Supervise professional staff members of the center.

Supervise student apprentices, interns, practicum students and other student workers.

**Physical Requirements:**

Please identify all physical requirements for the position. Enter **NR, O, F, C**, in the Maximum Required Frequency column below.

Frequency Ranking	Percent of Time	Range of Hours Worked Given Length of Shift:			
		8 Hours	9 Hours	10 Hours	12 Hours
<b>Not Required Or Never (NR)</b>					
<b>Occasionally (O)</b>	0 - 33%	0 to 2.5	0 to 3	0 to 3.5	0 to 4
<b>Frequently (F)</b>	34 - 66%	2.5 to 5.5	3 to 6	3.5 to 7	4 to 8
<b>Continuously (C)</b>	67 - 100%	5.5 to 8	6 to 9	7 to 10	8 to 12

Maximum Required Frequency	Functional Activities (Typical)
F	Sitting - able to remain in a stationary position
O	Standing - able to remain standing in a stationary position
O	Climbing - use objects to ascend and/or descend
F	Positions self to accomplish tasks (squat, stoop, crouch, crawl, kneel)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 10 pounds (0 – 10 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 20 pounds (11 – 20 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 35 pounds (21 – 35 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 50 pounds (36 – 50 lbs.)
O	Lift/move items weighing up to 100+ pounds (76 ≥ 100 lbs.)
F	Push/pull - move items from one area to another
F	Reach – ability to retrieve items above shoulders
F	Use of keyboard and mouse (sporadic 10 key)
O	Able to communicate with internal and external customers
F	Must be able to detect items from a close distance
O	Must be able to detect items from a long distance
F	Must be able to distinguish colors

Maximum Required	Work Environment/Conditions
O	Works in outdoor weather conditions
F	Works inside

NR	Exposure to solvents or chemicals
O	Exposure to excess noise
NR	Exposure to dust, fumes, gases, or other irritating substances (paint, glue)



**Job Title:** Reporter/producer, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

**Department:** School of Media & Communication

**Date Prepared:** 6/2/2023

**Reports To:** Director, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center

**Job Summary:**

The Community Liaison is responsible for implementing a media literacy program as part of the center’s regular and routine activities; overseeing the center’s mis- and disinformation hotline, and coordinating all public events for the center. The Community Liaison is responsible for ensuring all reporting meets production, pedagogic, and budgetary mandates with the highest integrity and adherence to journalistic values and ethics.

**Primary Job Duties and Responsibilities:**

- 22. Journalistically covers a section of the center’s target area as assigned by the center director and managing editor.
- 23. Captures appropriate sound, video, still and other data and information types for the professional production of a variety of news products that will be delivered across platform.
- 24. Works closely with apprentices and student journalists to ensure professional standards are met.

25. Assists center director in recruiting students.
26. Attends and assists in the set-up and promotion of all public center activities.
27. Supervises individual students and/or reporting teams.
28. May teach or serve as teaching assistant at least one course per academic year as assigned by the school director in concert with the center director.
29. Serves as practicum supervisor or TA as assigned by the center director.
30. Other duties as assigned by the center director.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

Bachelor's degree from four-year college or university in media or related field. At least three years experience in professional media.

**Preferred**

**Qualifications:**

Master's degree in mass communication or related field and at least five years media industry.

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA):**

- 14) Demonstrates high proficiency in news writing, including AP style, grammar and spelling.
- 15) Ability to capture video and still images suitable for professional presentation.
- 16) Ability to edit photos, video and other files and material in common industry software, such as the Adobe Creative Suite.
- 17) Demonstrates knowledge of social media and other digital platforms.
- 18) Demonstrates knowledge of journalism ethics and law, including libel standards, Open Record and Open Meeting statutes, and Mississippi and federal Freedom of Information Acts.
- 19) Ability to understand and implement all appropriate university and board-established center policies.
- 20) Ability to assimilate large amounts of data quickly and accurately.
- 21) Ability to communicate effectively with those from a wide range of backgrounds, education levels and varying skills.
- 22) Ability to effectively deal with the public and establish long-standing relationships with key stakeholders.
- 23) Ability to meet deadlines.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:** Supervise student workers (interns).

**Physical Requirements:**

Please identify all physical requirements for the position. Enter **NR, O, F, C**, in the Maximum Required Frequency column below.

Frequency Ranking	Percent of Time	Range of Hours Worked Given Length of Shift:			
		8 Hours	9 Hours	10 Hours	12 Hours
<b>Not Required Or Never (NR)</b>					
<b>Occasionally (O)</b>	0 - 33%	0 to 2.5	0 to 3	0 to 3.5	0 to 4
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<b>Continuously (C)</b>	67 - 100%	5.5 to 8	6 to 9	7 to 10	8 to 12

Maximum Required Frequency	Functional Activities (Typical)
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O	Standing - able to remain standing in a stationary position
O	Climbing - use objects to ascend and/or descend
F	Positions self to accomplish tasks (squat, stoop, crouch, crawl, kneel)
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F	Lift/move items weighing up to 20 pounds (11 – 20 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 35 pounds (21 – 35 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 50 pounds (36 – 50 lbs.)
O	Lift/move items weighing up to 100+ pounds (76 ≥ 100 lbs.)
F	Push/pull - move items from one area to another
F	Reach – ability to retrieve items above shoulders
F	Use of keyboard and mouse (sporadic 10 key)
O	Able to communicate with internal and external customers
F	Must be able to detect items from a close distance
O	Must be able to detect items from a long distance
F	Must be able to distinguish colors

Maximum Required	Work Environment/Conditions
O	Works in outdoor weather conditions
F	Works inside

NR	Exposure to solvents or chemicals
O	Exposure to excess noise
NR	Exposure to dust, fumes, gases, or other irritating substances (paint, glue)



**Job Title:** Community Liaison, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

**Department:** School of Media & Communication

**Date Prepared:** 6/2/2023

**Reports To:** Director, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center

**Job Summary:**

The Community Liaison is responsible for implementing a media literacy program as part of the center’s regular and routine activities; overseeing the center’s mis- and disinformation hotline, and coordinating all public events for the center. The Community Liaison is responsible for ensuring all activities meet mission, pedagogic, and budgetary mandates with the highest integrity and adherence to the center’s values and ethics.

**Primary Job Duties and Responsibilities:**

- 31. Oversees the monitoring of pink slime websites and social media streams identified as being associated with mis- or disinformation.
- 32. Coordinates at least four public, community listening events in the target area each year.
- 33. Maintains a robust media literacy program, including coordinating events with high schools and public libraries.
- 34. Oversees up to three graduate assistants whose duties primarily involve working on the mis-

and disinformation hotline and monitoring websites and social media streams.

35. Works closely with the center director to ensure professional standards are met.
36. Assists center director in recruiting students.
37. Leads, coordinates, and promotes all public center activities.
38. Supervises team of strategic communication students.
39. May teach, or serve as teaching assistant, at least one course per academic year as assigned by the school director.
40. Serves as practicum or internship supervisor or TA as assigned by the center director.
41. Other duties as assigned by the center director.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

Bachelor’s degree from four-year college or university in media or related field. At least three years experience in media, strategic communication or community relations.

**Preferred**

Master’s degree in mass communication or related field and at least five years experience in media industry, teaching or community relations.

**Qualifications:**

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA):**

- 24) Demonstrates high proficiency in media literacy concepts.
- 25) Demonstrates high level of organization.
- 26) Ability to coordinate complex public events successfully.
- 27) Ability to meet multiple deadlines across various types of projects.
- 28) Demonstrates in-depth knowledge of social media and other digital platforms.
- 29) Ability to understand and implement all appropriate university and board-established center policies.
- 30) Ability to assimilate large amounts of data quickly and accurately.
- 31) Ability to communicate effectively with those from a wide range of backgrounds, education levels and varying skills.
- 32) Ability to effectively deal with the public and establish long-standing relationships with key



stakeholders.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:**

Supervise student workers (up to 3 graduate assistants).

Supervise student workers (up to eight undergraduates).

**Physical Requirements:**

Please identify all physical requirements for the position. Enter **NR, O, F, C**, in the Maximum Required Frequency column below.

Frequency Ranking	Percent of Time	Range of Hours Worked Given Length of Shift:			
		8 Hours	9 Hours	10 Hours	12 Hours
<b>Not Required Or Never</b> (NR)					
<b>Occasionally</b> (O)	0 - 33%	0 to 2.5	0 to 3	0 to 3.5	0 to 4
<b>Frequently</b> (F)	34 - 66%	2.5 to 5.5	3 to 6	3.5 to 7	4 to 8
<b>Continuously</b> (C)	67 - 100%	5.5 to 8	6 to 9	7 to 10	8 to 12

Maximum Required Frequency	Functional Activities (Typical)
F	Sitting - able to remain in a stationary position
O	Standing - able to remain standing in a stationary position
O	Climbing - use objects to ascend and/or descend
F	Positions self to accomplish tasks (squat, stoop, crouch, crawl, kneel)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 10 pounds (0 – 10 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 20 pounds (11 – 20 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 35 pounds (21 – 35 lbs.)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 50 pounds (36 – 50 lbs.)
O	Lift/move items weighing up to 100+ pounds (76 ≥ 100 lbs.)
F	Push/pull - move items from one area to another
F	Reach – ability to retrieve items above shoulders
F	Use of keyboard and mouse (sporadic 10 key)
O	Able to communicate with internal and external customers

F	Must be able to detect items from a close distance
O	Must be able to detect items from a long distance
F	Must be able to distinguish colors

Maximum Required	Work Environment/Conditions
O	Works in outdoor weather conditions
F	Works inside
NR	Exposure to solvents or chemicals
O	Exposure to excess noise
NR	Exposure to dust, fumes, gases, or other irritating substances (paint, glue)



**Job Title:** Administrative specialist, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

**Department:** School of Media & Communication

**Date Prepared:** 6/2/2023

**Reports To:** Director, Roy Howard Community Journalism Center

**Job Summary:**

The Administrative Specialist is the primary professional, administrative position for the Center. The Administrative Specialist ensures a professional, efficient flow of all necessary paperwork and correspondence necessary to support the center, its relationship to the school and wider university and all stakeholders.

**Primary Job Duties and Responsibilities:**

- 42. Ensures all Center, Scripps, School and University policies are met.

43. Manages budget implementation for the center, including but not limited to monthly reconciliation, purchasing, salary and benefits, center expense reimbursements, and travel for staff and students.
44. Works closely with center director to establish office procedures and appropriate communication between campuses and bureaus.
45. Ensures all paperwork necessary to support the center and its affiliated employees or graduate assistants is completed in a timely, efficient manner.
46. Attends and assists in the set-up and promotion of all public center activities.
47. Supervises and recruits individual student workers assigned to administrative duties in the center.
48. Other duties as assigned by the board or school director.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

Bachelor's degree from four-year college or university. At least three years experience in professional office setting.

**Preferred**

**Qualifications:**

Bachelor's degree and five years experience in administrative capacity in higher education.

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA):**

- 33) Demonstrates excellent communication skills, including but not limited, to e-mail etiquette, telephone etiquette and formal correspondence.
- 34) Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite, including Excel and Word.
- 35) Ability to learn and implement all applicable policies.
- 36) Ability to deal with a variety of people from all backgrounds and perspectives.
- 37) Ability to work in team environment.
- 38) Ability to assimilate large amounts of data quickly and accurately.
- 39) Ability to effectively deal with the public and establish long-standing relationships with key stakeholders.
- 40) Ability to meet deadlines.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:** Supervise student workers.

**Physical Requirements:**

Please identify all physical requirements for the position. Enter **NR, O, F, C**, in the Maximum Required Frequency column below.

Frequency Ranking	Percent of Time	Range of Hours Worked Given Length of Shift:			
		8 Hours	9 Hours	10 Hours	12 Hours
<b>Not Required Or Never (NR)</b>					
<b>Occasionally (O)</b>	0 - 33%	0 to 2.5	0 to 3	0 to 3.5	0 to 4
<b>Frequently (F)</b>	34 - 66%	2.5 to 5.5	3 to 6	3.5 to 7	4 to 8
<b>Continuously (C)</b>	67 - 100%	5.5 to 8	6 to 9	7 to 10	8 to 12

Maximum Required Frequency	Functional Activities (Typical)
F	Sitting - able to remain in a stationary position
O	Standing - able to remain standing in a stationary position
O	Climbing - use objects to ascend and/or descend
F	Positions self to accomplish tasks (squat, stoop, crouch, crawl, kneel)
F	Lift/move items weighing up to 10 pounds (0 – 10 lbs.)
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F	Push/pull - move items from one area to another
F	Reach – ability to retrieve items above shoulders
F	Use of keyboard and mouse (sporadic 10 key)
O	Able to communicate with internal and external customers
F	Must be able to detect items from a close distance
O	Must be able to detect items from a long distance
F	Must be able to distinguish colors

Maximum Required	Work Environment/Conditions
O	Works in outdoor weather conditions
F	Works inside

NR	Exposure to solvents or chemicals
O	Exposure to excess noise
NR	Exposure to dust, fumes, gases, or other irritating substances (paint, glue)

**Roy Howard Community Journalism Center  
School of Media and Communication  
Three-Year Budget**

	Start-Up			Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Total		
	January–June 2024			July 2024–June 2025			July 2025–June 2026			July 2026–June 2027			January 2024–June 2027		
	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing School of Media and	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing School of Media and	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing School of Media and	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing School of Media and	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing School of Media and	Total
<b>Expenditures</b>															
<b>Personnel*</b>															
Reporter	22,500		22,500	45,000		45,000	45,000		45,000	45,000		45,000	157,500	0	157,500
Reporter	22,500		22,500	45,000		45,000	45,000		45,000	45,000		45,000	157,500	0	157,500
Reporter	22,500		22,500	45,000		45,000	45,000		45,000	45,000		45,000	157,500	0	157,500
Community Liaison	22,500		22,500	45,000		45,000	45,000		45,000	45,000		45,000	157,500	0	157,500
Center Director	37,500		37,500	75,000		75,000	75,000		75,000	75,000		75,000	262,500	0	262,500
Administrative Specialist	17,500		17,500	35,000		35,000	35,000		35,000	35,000		35,000	122,500	0	122,500
Managing Editor	30,000		30,000	60,000		60,000	60,000		60,000	60,000		60,000	210,000	0	210,000
Graduate Assistant Stipends		15,000	15,000		37,500	37,500		37,500	37,500		37,500	37,500	0	127,500	127,500
Student Workers	91,500		91,500	184,000		184,000	184,000		184,000	184,000		184,000	643,500	0	643,500
Employee Related Expenses (Benefits)	65,034	6,036	71,070	130,078	12,669	142,747	130,078	12,669	142,747	130,078	12,669	142,747	455,268	44,042	499,310
School Staff		14,675	14,675		29,350	29,350		29,350	29,350		29,350	29,350	0	102,725	102,725
			0			0			0			0	0	0	0
<b>Student Support</b>															
Scholarships			0	23,000		23,000	23,000		23,000	23,000		23,000	69,000	0	69,000
Training	18,000		18,000			0	18,000		18,000	18,000		18,000	54,000	0	54,000
Assistantship Tuition		4,809	4,809		23,350	23,350		23,350	23,350		23,350	23,350	0	74,859	74,859
<b>Operations**</b>															
Supplies	11,936		11,936	3,100	1,000	4,100	3,100	1,000	4,100	3,053	1,000	4,053	21,189	3,000	24,189
Equipment purchases, replacements and repairs (cameras, etc.)	60,000	60,000	120,000	7,000		7,000	7,000		7,000	6,999		6,999	80,999	60,000	140,999
Furniture	50,000		50,000			0			0			0	50,000	0	50,000
software	8,000		8,000	7,200		7,200	7,200		7,200	7,200		7,200	29,600	0	29,600
Marketing, promotion and recruitment	35,000		35,000	30,000		30,000	30,000		30,000	30,000		30,000	125,000	0	125,000
Facilities Use	2,300	3,000	5,300		6,000	6,000	1,800	6,000	7,800	1,800	6,000	7,800	5,900	21,000	26,900
Non-student travel			0	6,000		6,000	6,000		6,000	6,000		6,000	18,000	0	18,000
Student travel			0	5,000		5,000	5,000		5,000	5,000		5,000	15,000	0	15,000
Other (two sedan; one mini-van)	119,000		119,000	3,000		3,000	3,000		3,000	3,000		3,000	128,000	0	128,000
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>635,770</b>	<b>103,520</b>	<b>739,290</b>	<b>748,378</b>	<b>109,869</b>	<b>858,247</b>	<b>768,178</b>	<b>109,869</b>	<b>878,047</b>	<b>768,130</b>	<b>109,869</b>	<b>877,999</b>	<b>2,920,456</b>	<b>433,126</b>	<b>3,353,582</b>
<b>Indirect Costs (capped at 3% of Direct Costs)</b>															
Indirects on foundation cost	13,703	196,411	210,114	21,551	308,903	330,454	22,145	317,417	339,562	22,144	317,396	339,540	79,544	1,140,127	1,219,670
Indirects on University cost		17,807	17,807		39,799	39,799		39,799	39,799		39,799	39,799	0	137,203	137,203
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>649,473</b>	<b>317,738</b>	<b>967,212</b>	<b>769,929</b>	<b>458,570</b>	<b>1,228,498</b>	<b>790,323</b>	<b>467,084</b>	<b>1,257,406</b>	<b>790,274</b>	<b>467,063</b>	<b>1,257,337</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>1,710,455</b>	<b>4,710,455</b>
<b>Revenue Sources</b>															
Scripps Howard Foundation			0	1,000,000		1,000,000	1,000,000		1,000,000	1,000,000		1,000,000	3,000,000		3,000,000
School of Media and Communication		317,738	317,738		458,570	458,570		467,084	467,084		467,063	467,063		1,710,455	1,710,455
<b>Total Revenue Sources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>317,738</b>	<b>317,738</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>458,570</b>	<b>1,458,570</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>467,084</b>	<b>1,467,084</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>467,063</b>	<b>1,467,063</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>1,710,455</b>	<b>4,710,455</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>(649,473)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(649,473)</b>	<b>230,071</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>230,072</b>	<b>209,677</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>209,678</b>	<b>209,726</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>209,726</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## ROY HOWARD COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER GRANT

### **West Virginia University Reed College of Media**

#### Dean/Director

Dana Coester

Tel: (412) 275-7724

dana.coester@mail.wvu.edu

#### Person submitting this request

Dana Coester

Tel: (412) 275-7724

dana.coester@mail.wvu.edu

# ROY HOWARD COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CENTER SITE PROPOSAL



Prepared by:  
Dana Coester, Creative Director, Media Innovation Center  
Diana Martinelli, Dean, Reed College of Media  
West Virginia University



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# Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at WVU

West Virginia University Reed College of Media Innovation Center offers a proposal to the Scripps Howard Foundation to serve as the site for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. This proposal will outline the team's innovative program and curriculum strategy, uniquely qualified experience and expertise, skilled staff, world-class facilities, deep regional community engagement, and relevant community partners, and a proposed budget to support a collaborative Community Journalism Center at West Virginia University.

This Center will serve the Appalachian region in partnership with the independent, award-winning nonprofit media outlet 100 Days in Appalachia, which was originally incubated at the Media Innovation Center as an open-source project. As a leading collaborative media outlet in the region, 100 Days in Appalachia brings a rich network of local, regional and national publishing partners as sites for real-world practice and publication opportunities for students participating in this program. The Appalachian region is comprised of 420 counties across 13 states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia, and 100 Days in Appalachia has one or more partner publications in each of the Appalachian states. West Virginia is the only state wholly within Appalachia and is considered a geographic, socio-economic and cultural center for the region, making WVU an ideal site for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.



# Background

Often called a “canary in a coal mine” for rural America, Appalachia has pockets of wealth, but the majority of the population has less generational wealth than the rest of rural America and includes underreported non-white communities. Many of our underrepresented community members and students haven’t seen themselves reflected accurately – or at all – in news coverage. This is a gap our program and lab publication 100 Days in Appalachia have strived to fill, becoming a destination outlet for the region’s diverse community voices. 100 Days’ reporting includes award-winning coverage of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrant, Spanish speaking, and Muslim communities. In addition to covering issues in the region that are also resonant across the country, such as labor, addiction and environmental issues, 100 Days has also become a leader in covering the rise of domestic violent extremism. The publication was recognized with a national Edward R. Murrow Award for this reporting in 2021, with editors/faculty testifying before Congress on the topic.

Our program’s curriculum, projects, research, and creative work have long focused on overcoming cultural, political, economic, racial, and geographic divides, and we have been at the forefront of addressing trust in media and our nation’s growing polarization and its impact on student learning, on the field and, most importantly, democratic processes. Our faculty and students engaged in this work have investigated mis/disinformation aimed at susceptible members of our opioid traumatized, post-industrial region and are trained in fact-checking, local accountability reporting, understanding regional threats to election integrity, and have deep experience in community outreach, experiments in audience development and local news sustainability.



# Program and Curriculum Strategy

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center (RHCJC) at WVU will be an experiential center for engaged learning and reporting practice that addresses the unique issues facing local journalism in rural communities. Students, faculty, professionals, and community members will collaborate in a real-world laboratory publication across a range of courses tied to a network of local and regional publishing partners to experiment with innovative models for community journalism practice. This will include hands-on reporting skills that are uniquely rooted in trauma-informed community engagement, trust building and digital resiliency in the rural landscape.

The proposed Center will be situated in the Reed College's groundbreaking Media Innovation facility, which has expertise in curriculum and experiential learning projects in community media and local news sustainability, including reporting, research and outreach addressing rural resilience and susceptibility to polarization, mis/disinformation and harmful rhetoric. The Center's overall activities detailed in this proposal will comprise the following areas of focus:

- 1 Curriculum:** Development/revision of undergraduate and graduate curriculum to support Center-specific, hands-on student work across the community journalism enterprise within a real-world publication serving multiple courses and capstone experiences.
- 2 Experiential Capstone:** A Community Journalism Center-specific capstone experience combining undergraduate students and graduate students — incorporating team-based, digital community-engaged reporting, editing and publication alongside graduate community field experience research to serve diverse audience members in Appalachia with trust-building at the forefront of student work.
- 3 Community Engagement:** Trauma-informed community engagement, audience development experiments, fact-checking, and mis/disinformation outreach will be designed to build trust in collaboration with the Center, 100 Days and affiliated community publishing partners and their audiences.
- 4 Fact-Checking:** Training in, production and dissemination of community/student-produced fact-checks each semester, published by 100 Days in Appalachia and PolitiFact and distributed as open-source content through regional publishing partners, local news outlets and the WV Press Association newswire. Training community members in fact-checking and publishing community-originated tips for fact-checks and concurrent Center community engagement activities will help to further trust-building through student/local media reporting of communities' concerns.
- 5 Reporting Fellowships:** Placement of up to three competitive community journalism fellows in regional newsrooms that include 100 Days and its network of collaborating partners across Appalachia. Undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to apply for this one-year fellowship after completion of their studies in the Center's community journalism curriculum, bringing new skills in community-engaged local journalism practice to newsrooms in the region.

- 6 Community Reporting Projects:** Production and publication of one major community-focused, engaged reporting project per year as part of an innovative inter-institutional partnership between West Virginia University and Morgan State University. The collaborative project between two journalism programs represents an experimental classroom designed to advance a dialogue on race and justice with students working across divides between and within their communities. The project creates an immersive environment where students can conduct in-depth local reporting on a shared topic and learn from each other as they accelerate their journalistic, reporting and community engagement skills.
- 7 Community Journalism Scholarships:** The Center will provide Roy Howard Community Journalism Scholarships for two undergraduate students and one RHCJC MSJ graduate student scholarship, and graduate scholarships for six MS in Media Innovation and Solutions (MESO) students.
- 8 Events:** Production of a major Community Journalism event in Years 2 and 3. This “social hackathon” style event will convene innovators in community media, practitioners, local reporters, educators, and students from collaborating institutions and publishing partners. As signature activities for the program, these events will assemble diverse perspectives from local and rural communities across the country in a hands-on, solutions-oriented experience, inspiring participants to envision their role as leaders, creators, innovators, and problem solvers in community media.
- 9 Shared Learnings:** Dissemination across journalism education and industry of learnings, field-facing resources and skills training on topics relevant to local news in rural communities. These resources will be disseminated via a Center website and social media and other outreach methods, and in hosted virtual and in-person workshops and major events, as well as presented at such academic and industry conferences as AEJMC, state and regional press association and ONA. Example topics may include *Trauma-informed Engagement and Reporting in Local News* and *The Speed of Trust: Building Mutually Beneficial Relationships w/ Impacted Communities*. Specialized local trainings in *Reporting on Addiction*, *Reporting on Extremism*, *Reporting on Religion*, *Reporting on Elections*, *Digital and Physical Safety for Local Newsrooms*, and, *Generative AI and Local Newsrooms*, among other essential training/resources/learning outcomes specific for small community media nationwide.

In addition to training students, faculty and professionals in best practices in community journalism, right-sized for small newsrooms, the Center will serve as a driver of narrative change in the field. The objective of this change is to center the perspectives of underrepresented rural community members and the challenges facing small newsrooms nationwide in serving their audiences, especially in times of political and cultural polarization threatening democratic institutions and community stability.

These Center activities will help to establish new transferable practices for audience-centered local journalism through a holistic rural lens that fosters trust and increases community resilience to digital manipulation, providing a valuable journalistic service for underserved community members in the Appalachian region, which extends from New York state into the Alabama and Mississippi. These practices will be made available to the field through publications, community conversations and educator and professional panels, trainings and workshop events as part of the Center's mission to benefit journalism education and community news efforts in Appalachia and across the country. In addition to establishing a Roy Howard Community Journalism Center advisory board with appointees made in collaboration with the Scripps Foundation, the Center will also collaborate with and amplify whenever appropriate the work of the other Roy Howard Journalism Centers at the University of Maryland and Arizona State University and will consider its role as a sister effort within a growing network of impactful centers nationwide.



# Program Details

## Curriculum

We will develop new/revise courses to support a cohort of up to 20 undergraduate RHCJC-affiliated students and up to six RHCJC-affiliated graduate students, which will be taught by faculty associates as part of a digital lab for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. While these courses will prioritize RHCJC-affiliated students, select curriculum will also be available for enrollment to students from across the school, amplifying the materials, training and resources of the RHCJC for all students. RHCJC curriculum prioritizes hands-on experiential learning while also incorporating key interdisciplinary contexts in trauma-informed community history, ethics, media literacy, and community engagement, among other supporting learnings. RHCJC courses include:

- 1 Community Journalism:** This course focuses on understanding the role of local news as central to a healthy community ecosystem. We will review the traditional roles local journalism has played, as well as focus on critical new roles for local journalism, such as hosting and moderating community dialogue, increasing news literacy, building trust and engaging underserved communities. This course incorporates curriculum adapted from collaborators at the Trusting News Project, and we are sharing rural insights and practices to this project as part of our community work.
- 2 Editing and Curation:** This required course will host the 100 Days/Politifact partnership, in which students each semester will work with community members trained to identify and report on fact-checks for the region. Students will produce between 10-15 fact-checks per course, which are co-published by 100 Days, our current partners Politifact and further disseminated by the West Virginia Press Association's newswire and other regional outlets in the network. This course also introduces students to cultural sensitivity in reporting and style guides, ethics for engaged reporting practices, preventing implicit bias/implicit audience in editing/reporting, and other essential insights for working in a real-world regional publication serving diverse audiences.
- 3 Public Affairs Reporting:** In the spring semester, this course will offer students the opportunity to cover the WV legislative session in collaboration with WVPA for potential publication in the WVPA newswire that goes to every outlet in the state, as well as with 100 Days in Appalachia and affiliated partner news organizations. In the fall semester, this course will focus on local civic reporting, including election-related coverage, with an emphasis on supporting local and regional engagement with civic processes, accountability reporting and addressing mis/disinformation and trust-building with affected community members, including a growing Spanish language audience in Appalachia.
- 4 Audience Development and Engagement:** This required course works directly with the lab publication's audience behavior data to examine past, current and future audiences and to experiment with new audience development and engagement strategies. This course emphasizes transferable audience-first strategies for all facets of digital newsroom production — from story selection and acquisition to storytelling methods and distribution. The course also emphasizes innovative, culturally sensitive methods for engaging local community audiences.

- 5 Advanced Video Production:** This elective course is a hands-on digital lab focused on multi-platform social video production, audience engagement and analytics using real-world practices and standards for the lab publication and its regional partners. Students work with editors/producers and a social media team to produce videos addressing local and regional topics from cultural content to issue-based storytelling, fact-checking and topical explainer videos. This course includes audience engagement activities and experiments in publishing for such social platforms as Instagram, TikTok, Discord, and others. Each class and reporting project necessarily centers and celebrates diverse perspectives as part of the 100 Days in Appalachia’s mission. In this course, up to 20 students per semester will serve as social media video producers for 100 Days in Appalachia, producing video and graphics, which includes Generation Z-themed content focused on telling stories of underrepresented communities in Appalachia, including those who are defined as diverse due to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religious affiliation.
- 6 Next Gen Analytics for Local News:** This course examines how small local and regional news media are utilizing digital measuring tools, audience data and metrics to inform publishing decisions. Students will analyze data-centric trends in journalism, understand how analytical data is collected and analyze and evaluate different metric types, working directly with real-world data from the lab publication or other local newsrooms in the region.
- 7 News Product Development for Local News: -** This course explores how small local news media approach community-oriented product development and management for an audience-focused, digital newsroom. Students will learn the best methods for envisioning and managing new products and services within small news organizations to effectively engage with and serve targeted community members.
- 8 Media, Identity & Power:** This innovative community-focused media literacy course explores the interrelated issues of media, identity and power through a variety of disciplines, theoretical, historical, and ethical approaches. The course uses history to understand how social institutions, worldviews, culture, and community members’ lives have changed over time, and explores media’s role in this process. This course explicitly addresses how media invite individuals and groups into their identities, the power dynamics of media, the physical, social and political-economic consequences of cultural messages, how media messages operate to create/reinforce values and worldviews, how media influences various social institutions and the workings of society and impacts lived experience, and how media embodies identities and everyday life.



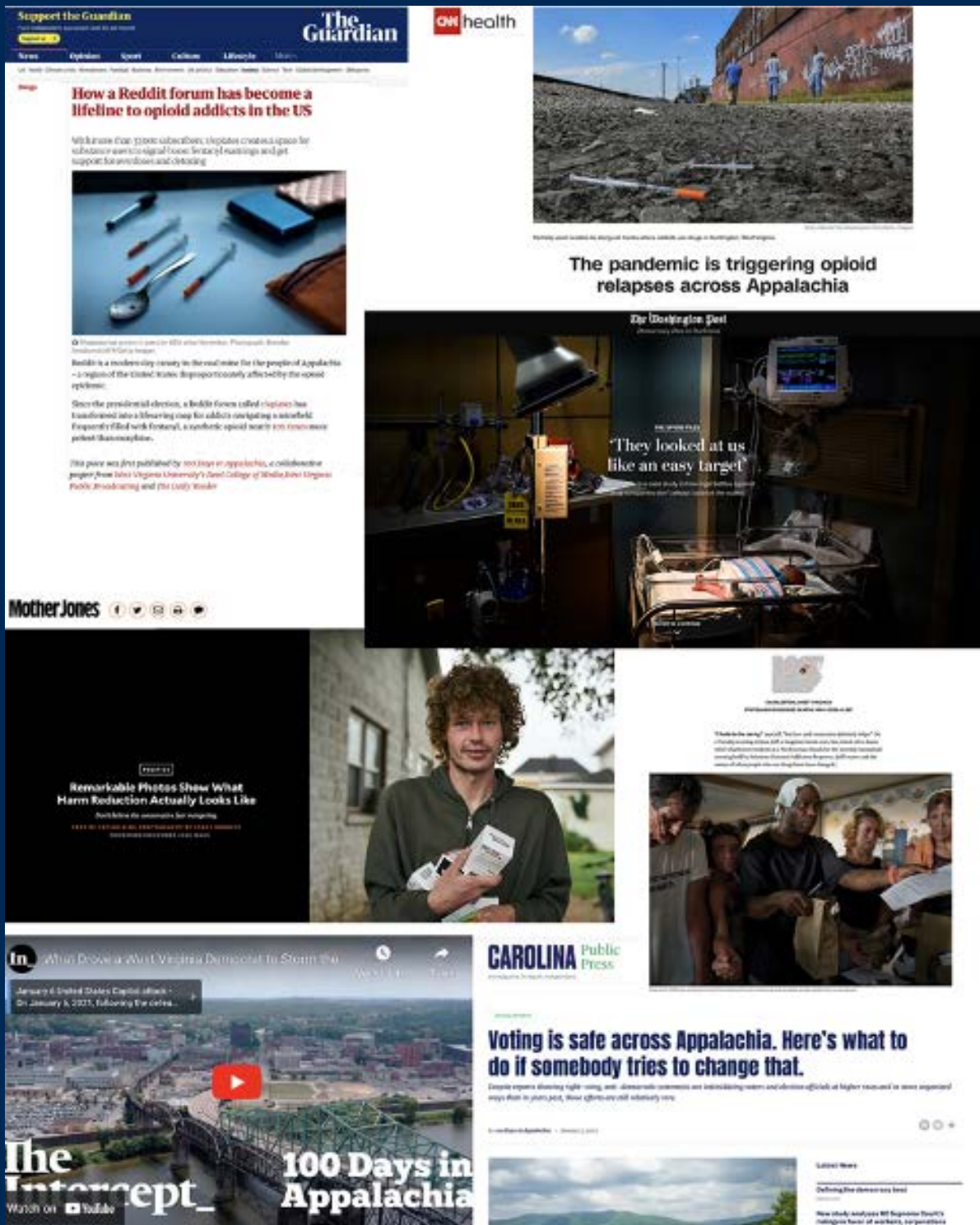
## Capstone Experiences w/ Community Reporting Projects

The Community Journalism Center will sponsor a robust integrated undergraduate/graduate capstone experiences in Years 2 and 3 – with up to 15 RHCJC-affiliated undergraduates and up to six RHCJC-affiliated graduate students (MSJ and MESO). The capstone will host the inter-institutional WVU-MSU collaboration, in which students and faculty from both programs will conceptualize, research, report, and publish an in-depth investigation of a social issue impacting communities on both sides of the rural/predominately white, urban/historically Black divides. This course features dual-university, team-based, community-engaged reporting, editing and publication of an in-depth multimedia reporting product that looks at a topic impacting both communities using solutions journalism and community-engagement perspectives. Students from both programs are immersed in the real-world activities of field research, reporting and engaging diverse audience members across geographic, racial and cultural divides and explicitly forefronts trust-building with each other and each other's community members as a part of the learning/reporting experience.

The resulting reporting project will be featured by the Center, showcased at the annual Community Journalism convening event, published on a project-specific site hosted by the Center, and distributed by the lab publication and collaborating regional and national publishing partners, as well as being submitted to major professional and academic organizations for possible teaching panels and awards.

Examples of prior reporting projects that have been published in collaboration with regional and national news outlets include work co-published with The Washington Post, The Guardian, CNN, The Intercept, Mother Jones, and others:

A cohort of Roy Howard Community Journalism Center MESO graduate students will be recruited for Year 3 of the program to conduct transdisciplinary research rooted in community journalism and will serve their community field research hours in the experiential capstone course working with RHCJC-affiliated faculty, faculty from other disciplines and institutions, as well as mentors from the field, within the Center's lab publication or with one of our network of local/regional newsrooms. Their graduate work will address a specific local journalism challenge posed by the newsroom or will include a major community-engaged reporting project for that newsroom. Research and reporting products will be shared to the field as part of the Center publications and dissemination, showcased at the annual convening event and shared through relevant academic and industry-based conferences.



Examples of prior reporting projects that have been published in collaboration with regional and national news outlets



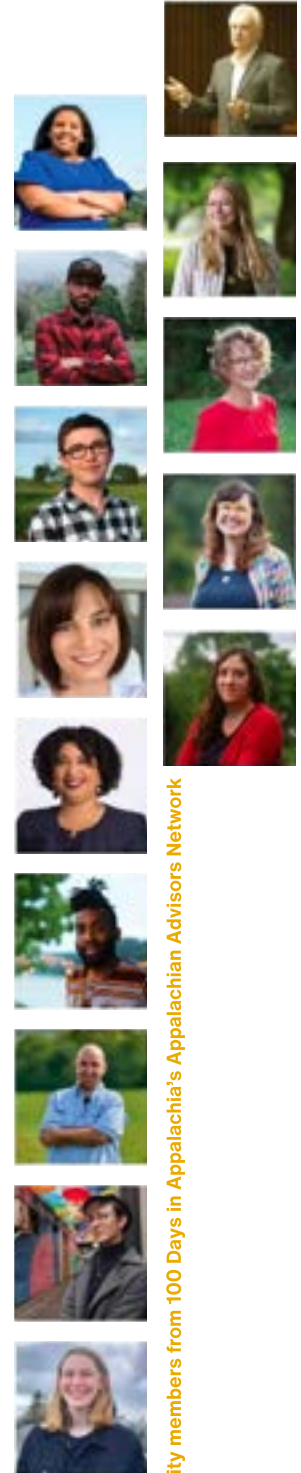
Examples of experiential learning for students and faculty conducting work in the field in the WVU/MSU collaboration

## Community Engagement

All RHCJC-affiliated curriculum and accompanying programmatic activities and reporting projects will emphasize trauma-informed community engagement as a central tenet. Activities will include a variety of engaged journalism practices, such as community listening sessions; training in generational, collective and community trauma; workshops and outreach in fact-checking, media literacy and resilience to mis/disinformation; and other engagement activities and experiments to assess and strengthen trust in journalism and engagement with local civic processes. These activities include curriculum and outreach resources in mis/disinformation that we have adapted and extended from First Draft News and collaborators at Pen America.

Additionally, our faculty expertise, research and community activities has focused specifically on rural digital resilience to mis/disinformation, conspiracy and other harmful rhetoric, including risks of radicalization to political violence, and this informs the creation of resources that are uniquely designed for susceptible rural communities (this is central to our trauma-informed resources and training). This emphasis in rural resilience and holistic community engagement includes the creation of two new positions to serve as the Collaboration Manager and a Community Engagement Editor for the Center. These positions will work across all affiliated courses, within the reporting projects and in direct engagement with all partner organizations and communities served to integrate consistent collaboration and community engagement into all aspects of the learning experience and production of reporting projects, activities and events in service to communities.

Working with the lab publication ensures that students and partners are working with a rich network of Appalachian community leaders, reporters, videographers, photographers, graphic designers, illustrators, and creators of all kinds in the region who represent the cultural complexities of Appalachia. Community-engaged resources will include the 100 Days' "How to Cover Appalachia" reporting guide. This downloadable resource will include data and research about many of the issues journalists cover in the region – coal, substance abuse, education, health, environment, etc. – but also includes tips, written by Appalachians and in partnership with regional organizations such as the Mountain Association, for how to do trauma-informed reporting that treats Appalachians with respect and dignity. The 100 Days in Appalachia network includes a community of Appalachian Advisors – people who live and work in our communities. They have backgrounds and expertise that are as diverse as our region itself and, through this network, will serve as resources for the students, faculty and participants of the RHCJC across communities in West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Alabama.



Community members from 100 Days in Appalachia's Appalachian Advisors Network

## Reporting Fellowships

The Roy Howard Community Journalism Center will sponsor and facilitate the placement of up to three competitive community journalism fellows in regional newsrooms in Year 3 of the program. These newsrooms include the lab publication 100 Days as well as a network of collaborating newsroom partners from across Appalachia. Both undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to apply for this one-year fellowship upon completion of the Center's community journalism curriculum and graduation. This fellowship program is designed to transfer innovative new skills and Center learnings in community-engaged local journalism practice into participating newsrooms in the region. 100 Days has existing partner news organizations across all Appalachian states that would be eligible to host a RHCJC Fellow.

## Events

A major proposed highlight and feature of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center is an immersive full-day event in Years 2 and 3. This event will convene innovators in community media, practitioners, local reporters, community members, educators, and students from collaborating institutions and publishing partners to collaboratively problem solve issues impacting community journalism. These “social hackathon” style events will reflect a diversity of voices and perspectives from local and rural communities across the country and will feature speakers and mentors to facilitate a collaborative, hands-on, solutions-oriented experience for participants. These events will also serve as spaces to share learnings, provide training sessions and to showcase reporting products and other activities of the Center.

These events provide an opportunity for students to network with community news innovators, local news leaders and other community members in facilitated conversations designed to address community-specific solutions, with an emphasis on trust building, trauma-informed engagement, addressing mis/disinformation and polarization, and other topical issues surfaced by participants. Training and workshops within the hackathon provide targeted curriculum and activities to lead students, community participants and practitioners through a guided, generative process that also reinforces pride in the dignity and role of community media. Students and professionals alike will come away with new tools, insights and inspiration that will enable them to initiate change in their current and future positions.

Overall, this social hackathon model serves to immerse participants in a structured series of problem-solving, leadership and innovation workshops and activities – enabling students and other participants to envision their role as leaders, creators, innovators, and problem solvers in community media.



Examples of previous hackathon-style events

# Program Timeline

Startup Phase  
June 2024

Recruitment and assignment of RHCJC-affiliated faculty/staff to teach the core curriculum and lead activities and training/events programming for the Center

Establish and invite select advisory board members for the Center, including three Scripps Howard-appointed advisory members

Begin development and revision of undergraduate and graduate RHCJC-affiliated courses that will comprise the core curriculum of the Center's programming and activities

Position design and recruitment for two new positions: Collaboration Manager and a Community Engagement Editor

Begin renovation at the Media Innovation Center to prepare a digital lab space for RHCJC students and faculty

Outreach to partner networks to promote/market the Center and all upcoming programming/activities

Synthesis of Design Grant findings and begin formal design and scheduling for RHCJC-affiliated courses, programming, activities, and events

Begin recruiting undergraduate and graduate students for participation in the RHCJC-affiliated courses for enrollment beginning in fall 2024

Establish scholarships and recruit applications for potential scholarship recipients beginning fall 2024 with an emphasis on underrepresented and minority populations

Work with comms team to develop an integrated marketing communication strategy for the Center

Design and implement assessment and ongoing documentation of all Center activities

Year One  
July 2024 - June 2025

RHCJC-affiliated faculty/staff begin teaching the core RHCJC-affiliated courses in the fall 2024/spring 2025 academic year

Begin fact-checking curriculum in fall 2024, alongside accompanying community engagement activities and including a community fact-checking workshop in advance of the 2024 elections

Hire and onboard Collaboration Manager and Community Engagement Editor to begin work August 2024 and January 2025 respectively

Complete renovation and outfitting of digital lab space for the Center students and faculty by December 2024

Lab Publication editors/staff and affiliated faculty begins working with students across all RHCJC-affiliated courses. Year 1 courses will include tweaking existing courses, Editing and Curation, Public Affairs Reporting, Audience Engagement and Development, Advanced Video Production, and Community Journalism

Community Engagement Editor works with lab publication editors/staff, faculty and students across all RHCJC-affiliated courses to begin community outreach, workshops and listening sessions in support of fact-checking activities and reporting projects

Recruitment of subject matter experts to support student reporting and engagement projects in the classroom and in the field

Conduct research, planning and student recruitment for the first capstone hosting the 100 Days/WVU/MSU community reporting project (to be held either spring or fall 2026 semester)

Award Year 1 scholarship recipients and begin recruitment for Year 2-3 scholarship cycle with an emphasis on underrepresented and minority populations

Continued recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students for participation in the RHCJC-affiliated courses for enrollment beginning in fall 2025

Begin to assess community responses to the Center activities and reporting products



Year One (cont)  
July 2024 - June 2025

Begin disseminations of initial learnings, trainings, publications of fact-checking and course reporting products among networks, amplification of student/faculty/community partner work, and multimedia documentation of other Center activities

Ongoing assessment and documentation of all Center activities

Prepare and submit quarterly narrative and budget reports on progress

Year Two  
July 2025 - June 2026

RHCJC-affiliated faculty/staff continue teaching the core RHCJC-affiliated courses in the fall 2025/spring 2026 academic year

Continue fact-checking curriculum and expand accompanying community engagement activities designed in response to assessment of community responses

Lab Publication editors/staff and affiliated faculty continue to work with students across all RHCJC-affiliated courses. Year 2 courses will include appropriate revisions and reporting project design in response to assessment of community responses and collaborating org responses

Implement the first Experiential Capstone, which will host the 100 Days/WVU/MSU community reporting project in either spring or fall 2026 semester

Collaborations Manager coordinates, edits and produces all final reporting products, publication and engagement activities across all RHCJC-affiliated courses

Community Engagement Editor works with lab publication editors/staff, faculty and students across all RHCJC-affiliated courses to continue community outreach, workshops and listening sessions in support of all fact-checking activities and all reporting projects

Collaborations Manager and Community Engagement Editor work with event staff, faculty and lab publication leadership to design, recruit, market, and produce the Year 2 major Community Journalism Social Hackathon event, to be held in fall 2026

Year Two (cont)  
July 2025 - June 2026

- Award Year 2 scholarship recipients and continue assessment and recruitment or award extensions for Year 3 scholarship recipients
- Market, recruit and award scholarships for six MESO students for an immersive Community Journalism Master program to begin in summer 2026
- Continued recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students for participation in the RHCJC-affiliated courses for enrollment beginning in fall 2026
- Market, recruit and place eligible students for RHCJC Fellows for Year 3 of the program in one of the collaborating Appalachian newsrooms
- Ongoing assessment and documentation of all Center activities
- Ongoing preparation and submission of narrative and budget reports on progress
- Continue disseminations of initial learnings, trainings, publications of fact-checking, and course reporting products among networks, amplification of student/faculty/community partner work and documentation of other Center activities

Year Three  
July 2026 - June 2027

- RHCJC-affiliated faculty/staff continue teaching the core RHCJC-affiliated courses in the fall 2025/spring 2026 academic year
- Continue and adapt fact-checking curriculum and associated community engagement activities in response to assessment of community needs
- Conduct first RHCJC MESO cohort in Community Journalism curriculum and Community Field Experience Research/Reporting
- Lab Publication editors/staff and affiliated faculty continue to work with students across all RHCJC-affiliated courses. Continue to revise and design reporting projects in response to assessment of community needs, collaborating organization responses and other audience data
- Implement the second Experiential Capstone, which will host the second 100 Days/WVU/MSU community reporting project in spring 2027

Year Three (cont)  
July 2026 - June 2027

Community Manager continues to coordinate, edit and produce all final reporting products, publication and audience engagement activities across all RHCJC-affiliated courses, with an emphasis on amplifying projects across collaborating news organizations throughout Appalachia and to appropriate national audiences

Community Manager and Center leadership support the RHCJC Fellowship process from start to finish, providing resources, mentorship and ongoing support/assessment of the fellow and host organization's experience

Community Engagement Editor continues to work with lab publication editors/staff, faculty and students across all RHCJC-affiliated courses to continue community outreach in support of all fact-checking activities and all reporting projects

Community Manager and Community Engagement Editor work with event staff, faculty and lab publication leadership to design, recruit, market, and produce the Year 3 major Community Journalism Social Hackathon event, to be held in June 2027

Award Year 3 scholarship recipients with an emphasis on underrepresented populations

Prepare and submit final narrative and budget reports on all Center activities to date

Assemble and promote to the public and to the field a final portfolio of disseminations of all resources, research and reporting products emerging from Center activities

Conclude assessment and documentation of all Center activities to date

# Community Served

Placing the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at West Virginia University positions it in the heart of Appalachia, a region with a transitioning news ecosystem in need of investment. Appalachia is a large, complex region comprising 13 states and 25 million people. The region features urban centers and suburban counties that contain diverse stories from the Black Belt in Alabama and Mississippi to the Rust Belt in Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. 100 Days is designed to share these stories globally, as we cover the complicated landscape of American policy through the prism of Appalachia. Through the Center, students will join in that work.

With a mix of socio-economic backgrounds, Appalachia generally reflects much of rural America. There are pockets of wealth in the region, but the population we serve is generally poorer than the rest of rural America. Appalachia also skews toward older generations, in terms of age, when compared to the rest of the U.S., but there are often-overlooked, non-white communities in Appalachia, too – Hispanic, Black, Asian, and South Asian people who settled here in waves beginning in the late 1800s and ongoing to this day. Members of these communities, however, do not necessarily see themselves reflected in the mainstream media coverage serving the region, which is a gap 100 Days in Appalachia fills.

Appalachia is experiencing increasing rates of news deserts and dramatic losses in local legacy news operations, even as it has seen a rise in independent media outlets, from PublicSource in Pennsylvania to Mississippi Today to Mountain State Spotlight, West Virginia Watch and Black By God in West Virginia, and other Appalachian states. However, no news community has enough of what it needs to hold officials and companies accountable across the region. The pandemic placed additional financial strain on independent news outlets, increasing the rate of small, local publications being bought up or put out of business by large companies able to consolidate news operations to save money in exchange for less local news coverage and, in turn, the decline of trust in news. Trust-building across divides within communities remains a formidable task, but as challenging as it is, we believe that home-grown, local outlets may be the only viable option for addressing the trust gap in creative new ways.

An oft-cited study on news deserts by Penny Abernathy Muse asserted that “more than one in five newspapers has closed over the past decade and a half, leaving thousands of our communities at risk of becoming news deserts.” Half of the counties in the United States now have only one newspaper, and many of the local newspapers that are left have become “ghost newspapers,” meaning while they are still in print, they feature little to no original reporting on the communities they serve. In addition, the number of U.S. newspaper newsroom employees dropped 57 percent between 2008 and 2020.

Meanwhile, 44 out of 55 counties in the state are at risk of losing their local weekly or daily newspapers, while two counties, McDowell and Wyoming, recently lost theirs this year, becoming “media deserts,” according to data from the Appalachian Regional Commission on the impact of potential newspaper closures on West Virginia communities.

Further emphasizing the stability issues found in the news industry in the state, of the West Virginia Press Association’s 70 member newspapers, 58 primarily weekly newspapers in more rural areas said their operational stability was at risk and closure was a real concern. Polling by the WV Press Association showed that, of the state’s 1,767,850 residents, 54% or 962,309 residents were at risk of losing their community newspapers.

Closures have demonstrated impacts with the loss of community news ecosystems, inhibiting trust and engagement with the civic process. Local newspapers have traditionally served as “keystone media,” producing the largest amount of original reporting about an individual place. In many of these communities, local television and FM radio news are not part of the media landscape. Without local community newspapers, much that goes on in these communities, such as local school board and county commission meetings, community events, school sports, resources, and even obituaries, go unreported and unwitnessed.

McDowell County is one of the most diverse counties in West Virginia and also the poorest. The former self-proclaimed “heart of the nation’s Coal Bin,” McDowell has been stung particularly hard by coal’s decline. Unfortunately, as reported in an April 2021 Christian Science Monitor article, the newspaper industry has “shed jobs at the same rate as the coal industry.” Newspaper closures not only have a civic and social cost, but also an economic one. States that experience newspaper closures have a significantly adverse economic impact on communities, increasing municipal borrowing costs in the long run. Researchers found that these impacts were not ameliorated by alternative sources of media, such as the internet, according to a recent [study](#) published by researchers at Notre Dame.

As eloquently reported in this recent story on the harms of local news closures by the Associated Press – [Residents are at a loss after newspaper that bound community together shuts in declining coal county](#) – “The political and socioeconomic implications of the [McDowell County’s] newspaper’s closure are widespread, but not always immediately visible. Although the county is now without a local news source, residents are no strangers to news coverage – often by national outlets that focus on the poverty rate, opioid use, infrastructure woes and the declining coal industry. The paper was a vital platform for residents to tell their story from their perspective—a lifeline for a community that’s often been misinterpreted and misunderstood.”

“Our people here have nothing,” said Nester, 57, Welch Daily News former publisher. “Like, can any of y’all hear us out here screaming?”

*In March, the McDowell County weekly became another one of the thousands of U.S. newspapers that have shuttered since 2005, a crisis Nester called “terrifying for democracy” and one that disproportionately impacts rural Americans like her.*

*Instead, residents know less about their communities, with the gaps in coverage not being covered by the remaining alternatives of cable news and unverified information from social media. In McDowell County in May 2022, The Welch News had quickly helped dispel rumors of election tampering at local precincts during the May primary with a series of stories. Trusted local news sources act to counter misinformation, which can spread even more quickly online with social media.*

As a state with the third oldest population and ranked 48th in fixed broadband service, local newspapers are a community lifeline and an important part of the development and maintenance of local identity. While national and mainstream news typically only comes to these communities in times of political or economic strife, the residents of these often economically stressed communities know their local newspapers as a civic asset, where good news about their communities and neighbors can be found alongside reporting on infrastructure and local politics. National news narratives retrofitted to local contexts cannot fill the void left by this invaluable community-building resource. As Duke University professor Philip Napoli, author of “Social Media and Public Interest: Media Regulation in the Misinformation Age,” points out, increased reliance on increasingly partisan national news “causes people to lose touch with their community.” Local news performs an important social role, facilitating community conversation and collective memory.

Since its inception, 100 Days has worked to amplify missing voices and unique perspectives from Appalachia. 100 Days has an open-source, co-publishing model to share content with regional, national and international media organizations, which makes the potential for reach and impact of the work larger than what can be measured by its direct audience. 100 Days often says they have been “aggressively collaborative” in their efforts to reach out to other media organizations in search of ways to partner for maximum impact in shared reporting efforts. That model allows the outlet to support – not compete with – the work of local, regional and national partners and to help ease the publishing pressures they feel, but also help serve their audiences with timely and nuanced reporting, fact-checking and other services, such as providing vital information on harm reduction and impacts of addiction.

With local newspapers under threat of closure, it's important to establish and strengthen other avenues for media in the region to develop connections and trust with each other and their residents. Supporting existing, trusted local media partners is key to this work. According to the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, over 90 percent of U.S. newspapers are considered "small market," are often family-owned and -operated, and remain trusted sources of news for the communities they serve. Many small-market newspapers remain profitable because there is still demand for the hyper-local content that only they can provide. These newspapers act as a link to the community's past, a chronicler of its present and help build the narrative of its future. They help provide crucial community information and strengthen both small businesses and Main Street—invaluable in economically depressed regions. By working with these already trusted community partners, the RHCJC can help build more operational capacity for local and regional watchdog journalism.

"How Loud Does the Watchdog Bark? A Reconsideration of Local Journalism, News Non-profits, and Political Corruption," a recent study from Nikki Usher and Sanghoon Kim-Leffingwell in *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, demonstrated that "nonprofit interventions in failing local commercial news markets may be an important safeguard for keeping public officials accountable." Their study provides strong support for nonprofit watchdog journalism serving an important supplemental role in alleviating the impact of the decline in local newspapers, with both the existence of the outlets in a geographic location and the level of funding they receive facilitating democratically beneficial outcomes.

The number of local news nonprofits has more than doubled between 2017 and 2021. A report by the Brookings Institute shows local newspaper closures are felt harder by more rural communities, which are less likely to find the newly formed gaps in local coverage filled by new media ventures than when urban areas experience similar media closures. When a community loses its government watchdog after a newspaper closure, corporate governance declines and government inefficiencies increase, leading to greater risk of default. Through the partnership of 100 Days in Appalachia and the WVPA with the RHCJC, we have the infrastructure and network to help support, serve and amplify local community media across West Virginia and the Appalachian region.

*"...when those who read, listen, and watch the news are thought of purely as consumers, the economic challenges confronting today's local newsrooms are not particularly troubling. But when news consumers are also seen as citizens and participants in civic life, threats to the commercial viability of the local news industry greatly diminishes the ability to meet the demands of living in a democracy."*

100 Days in Appalachia’s work has intentionally engaged diverse community members, independent media and media-makers throughout the region, and they have sought to become a destination outlet and source for underrepresented voices – both as contributors and as readers. 100 Days has a reporting, research and community engagement team and advisory board that includes gender, racial and religious diversity essential to covering our region. Specifically, the part-time and advisory editorial staff includes 6 women (3 white, 1 Black, 2 Muslim); and 4 men (4 white, 2 transgender, 1 disabled).



100 Days also actively nurtures the next generation of news readers with such initiatives such as the Appalachian Youth Creators vertical, which publishes stories written by Gen Z Appalachians, documenting the voice of a generation. The College is leading a series of collaborative community events throughout Appalachia to explore voting rights and engage young people in democratic processes. These efforts are connecting community media with future news consumers, building media consumer habits and user behaviors by reflecting their concerns across platforms. We continue to invest in creative experiments that focus on the behaviors and content needs of this age group by taking to their platforms of choice, whether that is within Discord or Twitch or Instagram or TikTok to grow this generation’s habit of investing in news and, hopefully, their investment in journalism as essential to their community in the long term.





# Students Trained

In addition to selectively recruited student participants for special experiential courses and community reporting projects, all Reed College of Media students will have an opportunity to engage with and benefit from activities, events, training, and curriculum of the Center. Current demographics of the Reed College of Media 2022-23 student population across all majors was comprised of 32 Black males, 356 white males, 8 Asian males, 6 Hispanic males, 41 males of two or more races, 52 Black females, 576 white females, 14 Asian females, 6 Hispanic females, 89 females of two or more races. 179 are first generation students.

- The total number of **students** in the College of Media: **698**
- The total number of **undergraduate students** in the Journalism program: **152**
- The total number of journalism **graduate students** in the College: **15**

Fall 2022 - Reed College of Media Retention and Graduation from WVU at Large																			
Cohort Year	%Cont	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad
	tu_2nd_Yr	tu_3rd_Yr	tu_4th_Yr	tu_5th_Yr	tu_6th_Yr	tu_7th_Yr	tu_8th_Yr	tu_9th_Yr	tu_10th_Yr	tu_11th_Yr	tu_12th_Yr	tu_13th_Yr	tu_14th_Yr	tu_15th_Yr	tu_16th_Yr	tu_17th_Yr	tu_18th_Yr	tu_19th_Yr	tu_20th_Yr
2012	83.8%	82.4%	4.2%	75.7%	56.8%	21.6%	30.3%	4.1%	73.0%	0.0%	34.3%	0.0%	34.3%	1.4%	75.7%	0.0%	75.7%	0.0%	
2013	85.2%	79.6%	3.7%	75.9%	65.1%	14.8%	71.3%	2.8%	73.1%	2.8%	34.2%	2.8%	75.9%	0.9%	76.9%	0.0%			
2014	86.3%	81.3%	5.0%	71.3%	56.3%	11.3%	71.3%	0.0%	73.8%	0.0%	73.8%	1.3%	73.8%	0.0%					
2015	80.7%	85.0%	5.2%	77.1%	68.1%	11.8%	76.3%	3.4%	78.0%	0.0%	78.8%	0.0%							
2016	83.9%	74.5%	4.4%	70.8%	58.9%	13.9%	67.9%	2.9%	70.1%	0.0%									
2017	84.1%	77.9%	2.7%	69.0%	64.0%	3.5%	69.9%	0.0%											
2018	88.2%	85.3%	2.2%	77.2%	68.9%	0.0%													
2019	85.8%	81.3%	6.5%	71.0%															
2020	85.7%	75.7%																	
2021	76.7%																		

Fall 2022 - Retention to and Graduation From Reed College of Media																			
Cohort Year	%Cont	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad	%Cont	%Grad
	tu_2nd_Yr	tu_3rd_Yr	tu_4th_Yr	tu_5th_Yr	tu_6th_Yr	tu_7th_Yr	tu_8th_Yr	tu_9th_Yr	tu_10th_Yr	tu_11th_Yr	tu_12th_Yr	tu_13th_Yr	tu_14th_Yr	tu_15th_Yr	tu_16th_Yr	tu_17th_Yr	tu_18th_Yr	tu_19th_Yr	tu_20th_Yr
2012	81.1%	67.6%	4.1%	58.5%	48.0%	12.2%	56.8%	1.4%	56.8%	0.0%	58.2%	0.0%	58.1%	0.0%	58.2%	0.0%			
2013	77.8%	67.6%	3.7%	65.7%	53.7%	12.8%	62.8%	1.9%	63.9%	0.0%	64.8%	0.0%	65.7%	0.0%	65.7%	0.0%			
2014	73.8%	66.3%	5.0%	55.0%	48.8%	5.0%	57.5%	0.0%	58.8%	0.0%	58.8%	0.0%	58.8%	0.0%					
2015	73.7%	65.3%	5.1%	58.3%	50.8%	8.5%	58.5%	1.7%	59.3%	0.0%	60.2%	0.0%							
2016	75.9%	61.5%	4.4%	56.8%	52.0%	8.0%	56.2%	2.2%	57.7%	0.0%									
2017	71.7%	65.5%	2.7%	62.2%	58.4%	0.9%	61.2%	0.8%											
2018	77.9%	71.9%	2.2%	66.2%	57.4%	4.4%													
2019	77.4%	71.0%	6.5%	60.0%															
2020	77.9%	62.1%																	
2021	68.1%																		

2022 retention and graduation rates for undergraduate students at the College of Media

Respondents from our 2022 bachelor’s in journalism alumni survey (of 2019, 2020 and 2021 graduates) reported being news producers, reporters, news anchors, editors, podcast hosts, and social media managers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Alabama, Michigan, South Carolina, and West Virginia. Employers included broadcast networks, the AP, Nexstar Media Group, and other local media. We have graduates who work for 100 Days in Appalachia and Mountain State Spotlight. NewStart students launched startup media products, such as The Diversity Pledge Institute, AZ Luminaria, The Riverside Record, Black By God, as well as assumed leadership positions, such as at WBUR in Boston. While we do not have formal data collection on all recent graduate placement (but will incorporate as part of the conditions of this grant), the following is a partial list of student placement after graduation in local news roles within 200 miles of the school:

## Students Trained

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[Abigail Riggs](#) - Research Assistant for the WVU PIC Lab in Morgantown, WV

[Adam Payne](#) - YNST Magazine Editor & Chief (“Connecting artists and creatives from Appalachia to the rest of the world.”)

[Alayna Fuller](#) - Researcher/Editor at 100 Days in Appalachia/WVU in Morgantown, WV

[Alex Johnson](#) - Freelance Camera Operator/Utility for NBC Golf, ESPN + for WVU & VideoBoard in Ashburn, VA

[Alexis Weyandt](#) - Social Media Manager at Dogtopia of Belden-Canto in New Philadelphia, OH

[Andrew Nogowski](#) - Producer at WCHS TV in Charleston, WV

[Andrew Sealy](#) - President of Cardinal Creative in Morgantown, WV

[Annika Godwin](#) - Editorial Director and Social Media Assistant at YNST Magazine in Morgantown, WV

[Bailey Staats](#)- Client Service Associate at Morgan Stanley in Charleston, WV

[Ben Powell](#) - Photojournalist at The Dominion Post in Morgantown, WV

[Beshay Sakla](#)- Engagement Producer at The Charleston Gazette-Mail in Charleston, WV

[Blake Bowers](#)- Reporter at WV Today Newscast in Clarksburg, WV

[Brooklynn Slaughter](#) - Marketing Coordinator at Crump Life Insurance Services in Harrisburg, PA

[Bryce O’Leary](#) - Contributing Writer for Rum Bunter - A Pittsburgh Pirates Sports Blog in Pittsburgh, PA

[Caity Coyne](#) - Reporter at Mountain State Spotlight/ West Virginia Watch News/Fairness WV in Charleston, WV

[Carleigh Minor](#)- News Anchor/Reporter at WVU Today in Morgantown, WV

[Carli Berkhouse](#) - Multimedia Specialist at HD Media LLC in South Charleston, WV

[Cavan Tarley](#) - Digital Media Coordinator at The Dominion Post in Morgantown, WV

[Chance Pickens](#) - Brand Manager at Racer X Illustrated in Morgantown, WV

[Chase Hughart](#)- Reporter at The Register-Herald in Beckley, WV

[Chloe Paugh](#) - Digital Media Intern at the WV Media Department in Morgantown, WV

[Christian Meffert](#)- Digital Producer at WBOY-TV in Clarksburg, WV

[Christian Ryan](#) - Leasing Agent at Cardinal Group Management in Morgantown, WV

[Cole Pancake](#)- Digital Content Manager at onWater in Morgantown, WV

[Connor Taylor](#) - Producer at SiriusXM in Washington, DC

[Daniel Woods](#) - Sports Anchor/Reporter at WBOY-TV in Clarksburg, WV

[Natalie Bowman](#) - BARBRI Student Representative at BARBRI Global in Morgantown, WV

[David Roe](#) - Graduate Assistant/Communications Assistant at Saint Francis University in Loretto, PA

[Deniel \(Danny\) Delanty](#) - Senior Videographer at WOAY-TV in Fayetteville, WV

[Duncan Slade](#) - Managing Editor at Mountain State Spotlight in Charleston, WV

## Students Trained

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[Elle Colbert](#) - Multimedia Content Creator at The Martinsburg Initiative in Martinsburg, WV

[Emily Lanham](#) - Commercial Editor at WBOY-TV in Clarksburg, WV

[Emily Martin](#)- Copy Editor at The Hill in Washington, DC

[Ethan Bock](#) - Reporter at WV Sports Now in Morgantown, WV

[Griffin McMorrow](#)- Editor/Producer at 100 Days in Appalachia in Morgantown, WV

[Haley Mozingo](#) - Copy Editor at The Dominion Post in Morgantown, WV

[Hannah Williams](#)- Destination Marketing Manager at Visit Mountaineer Country CVB in Morgantown, WV

[Harrison Dover](#) - Grad Student Sports Management at WVU in Morgantown, WV

[Ian Miller](#)- Producer at Spectrum News Washington, DC Bureau in Washington, DC

[Jake Howard](#) - Sportscaster at U92 The Moose in Morgantown, WV

[Jared Serre](#) - Washington Capitals Beat Writer in Washington, DC

[Jeffrey Boggess](#)- Editor at Mtn Craft in Fairmont, WV

[Jessica Riley](#)- Multimedia Journalist at WTOV News9 in Steubenville, OH

[John Raley](#) - Self-Employed Sports Blogger at The Raley Report in Morgantown, WV

[Joseph Rather](#) - Reporter at WBOY- TV in Clarksburg, WV

[Julia Manley](#) - Leadership and Service Coordinator at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, WV

[Kaitlin Persinger](#)- P.J. Boatwright Marketing Intern at the West Virginia Golf Association in Huntington, WV

[Kamden Ludwig](#) - Staff Writer at The Hampshire Review in Romney, WV

[Kaycee Kiser](#)- Communications Manager at WVU EcoCAR Challenge in Morgantown, WV

[Kayla Gagnon](#)- Content Coordinator at Central Outreach Wellness Center in Pittsburgh, PA

[Kayla Starcher](#)- Administrative Assistant to Student Ministries, Missions Support, Communication, and the Stewardship Commission at WVBC in Morgantown, WV

[Kristen Uppercue](#) - Deputy Editor at 100 Days in Appalachia in Morgantown, WV

[Lara Bonatesta](#) - Digital Content Producer at Nexstar Media Group, Inc. in Harrisburg, PA

[Lauren Farnsworth](#) - Anchor/Producer at WDTV in Bridgeport, WV

[Liam Belan](#) - Staff Writer at Mon Valley Independent in Pittsburgh, PA

[Lily Hicks](#) - Marketing Manager at the West Virginia Department of Commerce in Charleston, WV

[Luke Wiggs](#)- Co-Host of Panhandle Sports Live in Martinsburg, WV

[Madison Urse](#) - Office Assistant at West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey in Morgantown, WV

[Makenna Liesefer](#) - News Producer at WSAZ-TV in Huntington, WV

## Students Trained

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[Maxwell Ionno](#) - Media Journalism Graduate in Barboursville, WV

[Melissa Stone](#) - Marketing Proposal Coordinator at Karpinski Engineering in Lakewood, OH

[Olivia Gianettino](#) - Freelance Artist and Creative Director at YNST Magazine in Morgantown, WV

[Patrick Orsagos](#) - Video Journalist at The Associated Press in Columbus, OH

[Patrick Strong](#) - Freelance Replay Operator at Big 12 Now on ESPN+ in Morgantown, WV

[Raeanne Beckner](#) - Koch Intern at Stand Together in Arlington, VA

[Sadaf Nikzad](#) - Producer at WDTV 5 News in Bridgeport, WV

[Sam Gorski](#) - Reporter at WBOY-TV in Clarksburg, WV

[Savanna Shriver](#) - Multimedia Journalist at Times West Virginian in Fairmont, WV

[Sean Lowdermilk](#) - Marketing & Communications Graduate Assistant at West Virginia University Campus Recreation & Adventure WV in Morgantown, WV

[Sean McCallister](#) - Multimedia Specialist at The Charleston Gazette-Mail in Charleston, WV

[Kaeli Ricottilli](#) - Multimedia Journalist at Gray Television in Bridgeport, WV

[Kat Bruch](#) - Reporter at WBOY-TV (part time for summer) in Clarksburg, WV

[Seth Mitchell](#) - Freelance Journalist in the Greater Pittsburgh Region

[Shayla Klein](#) - Reporter at WCHS-TV in Charleston, WV

[Sophia Pisano](#) - Reporter at WOWK 13 News in Huntington, WV

[Stephen Bergeman](#) - Video Coordinator for West Virginia Women's Basketball in Morgantown, WV

[Tanner Halstead](#) - Independent Business Owner of The Southern Pineapple in Madison, WV

[Taylor Kennedy](#) - Multimedia Sports Reporter at The Charleston Gazette-Mail in Charleston, WV

[Teran Malone](#) - Sports Reporter at WV MetroNews in Morgantown, WV

[Tolu Olasoji](#) - Freelance Journalist for Al Jazeera, VICE, New Frame, etc.

[Tom Markland](#) - Multimedia Journalist at The Martinsburg Journal in Martinsburg, WV

[Will Aldrich](#) - Reporter/Producer for Major League Baseball in Pittsburgh, PA

[William Arnett](#) - Co-Program Director and Engagement Director at U92 The Moose in Morgantown, WV

[William Dean](#) - Reporter at The Dominion Post in Morgantown, WV

[Zebulon Meyer](#) - Audio Visual Technician at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV

The number of students who will be selectively recruited into RHCJC-affiliated experiential learning courses, community reporting projects, capstones, scholarships, and fellowships are:

- Affiliated courses: 20 students per course in up to 8 courses (Years 1, 2 and 3)
- Affiliated capstones: Up to 20 students per undergraduate capstone, with up to 10 graduate participants (Years 2 and 3)
- Trainings, workshops, speaker activities: 20 undergraduate + 6 graduate students + open to the full student body (698) of College of Media (Years 1, 2 and 3)
- Scholarships: 2 undergraduate and 6 graduate students (Years 1, 2 and 3)
- Community Journalism Event: 20 undergraduate + 6 graduate students + open to the full student body (698) of the College of Media (Years 2, 3)
- Fellowships: Open to 3 undergraduate or graduate students in (Year 3)

In addition to the recruitment and student mentorship and development outlined within the section Diversity, Equity and Inclusion-informed Recruitment and Support, the program includes the following activities:

## Student Recruitment and Retention Plan

RHCJC will work with the College of Media's Student Services Team to ensure tailored recruitment and retention for students working with the Center. These include recruitment across the Appalachian region and from select rural states in the Midwest and West. In addition to in-person recruitment at select high schools throughout the state and region, RHCJC will conduct its own outreach and marketing targeting underrepresented rural students, including in collaboration with 100 Days in Appalachia, which has an engaged, active, Gen Z audience and network throughout Appalachia. The Center will also work with our other rural youth facing networks to conduct outreach and recruitment such as Rural Civic Collaboratory, the Rural Youth Catalyst and the Rural Youth Summit with the Center for Rural Strategies.

In addition to the recruitment, retention and mentoring efforts outlined in the DEI Recruitment and Support, the College employs an evidence-based, multi-touch student support plan for retention. These include active monitoring of each students' progress with an assigned advisor, personal phone calls and texts to provide support and map progress, and outreach after completion of 100 hours to ensure degree completion is on progress. The support team also uses an early alert system and works closely with faculty to identify students who may be struggling with coursework at the beginning of the semester. We reach out to these students by sending them targeted coaching and tutoring/mentoring services provided by the university and other relevant resources as determined by the advisor, student services team and faculty.

## Student Mentorship

100 Days in Appalachia has actively centered the next generation of both news creators and news consumers in their work since first launching, and will bring that commitment and expertise to the students involved in the RHCJC. Young journalists work under the guidance of experienced Appalachian editors across the region, guiding story development and strengthening their reporting while preserving their voices. 100 Days has also employed nearly half a dozen interns over the past seven years, almost exclusively from Appalachia, who work alongside their editorial team, learning the inner workings of a nonprofit, digital newsroom, supporting all aspects of the digital enterprise, from audience engagement, community programming and special initiatives, social media production, documentary film production, news product development, fundraising efforts, and of course individual reporting ranging from investigative work to cultural stories.



In all of these capacities, the next generation of Appalachian journalists gain real-world experience that centers the complexities of covering communities often harmed or extracted by larger, external media outlets. Their work is deeply informed by the historical context of the place in their coverage, and they learn as young reporters how to factor in the community trauma that is present in so many of the issues on which they're reporting. Because they are of this place, their learning is also informed by their own personal experiences as members of our communities, allowing them to more easily build trust with community members and taking on leadership positions in Appalachian-based newsrooms. 100 Days currently employs four Reed College of Media graduates/students, one serving as our deputy editor for special projects, assisting in critical editorial and partnership work. Notably, this key leading member of the team said she once felt like she had to leave her home of West Virginia to go to New York City to work in media, but that 100 Days in Appalachia helped her feel pride in place as a journalist and influenced her decision to stay and work in the region.

# Capacity

## Background

We have long focused on creative, award-winning experiments in community journalism: media literacy and First Amendment initiatives, local news sustainability, fact-checking, nonprofit collaborative media, and others. Our college and Media Innovation Center have been pioneers in creative projects, including “social hackathons” that brought scholars, journalists, technologists, and community members from around the country together to tackle complex social challenges at the intersection of technology, media and society. The college incubated the Edward R. Murrow award-winning outlet 100 Days in Appalachia, a vital partner as a laboratory publication and a leader in the field of community journalism. This proposed program builds on our core strengths and is naturally—and deeply—aligned with the goals of this call. The proposed center provides an opportunity to build on existing collaborations, programming and faculty expertise to extend our impact in the Appalachian region and the journalism field. With 100 Days we have established ourselves nationally in several areas of expertise that have been translated into resources for community members, civic organizations and other media, including the Reporting on Addiction project co-founded with the Opioid Policy Institute, an Appalachian Advisors Network that serves national media, a database of regional reporters to inhibit “parachute journalism,” nationwide trainings in open-source investigative reporting and Reporting on Extremism. When we saw this call for a Center for Community Journalism, our response was simply: “This is us.”

The Center will support the following key positions:

- Center Director – Dana Coester (administrative assignment, Center Director and Editor in Chief for 100 Days in Appalachia)
- Center Associate Director – Ashton Marra (administrative assignment, Associate Director and Executive Editor for 100 Days in Appalachia)
- Community Manager – New Position
- Community Editor – New Position
- Center-Affiliated Faculty – (faculty assignments)

The College will also designate portions of administrative, recruitment and other support staff to the Center including the following:

- Student Services and Recruitment
- Marketing and Communications
- Web Development
- Technology Support and Equipment Management
- Event Management
- Grants Administration

## Center Leadership

The Director for the Center will provide strategic and creative direction for all initiatives, activities and reporting projects of the proposed Center; will oversee all program design, curriculum development, constituent, and community engagement, student/faculty and partner recruitment, supervise the Collaborations Manager and Community Engagement Editor, as well as oversee all budgeting and documentation for grant administration and reporting for the Center and holding all participants accountable to ensure that Center goals are being met.

**Dana Coester:** In addition to serving as the founding creative director for the college's Media Innovation Center in 2015, for which she has served as a lead on strategic initiatives for the College and MIC, Coester is also the founder of the partner lab publication, 100 Days in Appalachia. Coester has been awarded and directed more than \$2 million in successful research, reporting and community media and engagement projects, with funding from the Knight Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Democracy Fund, the Mellon Foundation, and others. She, along with fellow faculty member Joel Beeson, were recipients of WVU's highest research award in 2022 – the Benedum Distinguished Scholar Award, and she is the recent recipient of the 2023 Unicorn Award from the Media Democracy Fund – “for prominent journalists...who inspire us to take a stand and exercise courage, persistence, and bold visions that advance equity and justice and disrupt divisive toxic narratives.” Her work has also been honored by the Online News Association, and other industry and academic awards. In her tenure, Coester has designed and produced innovative “social” hackathons at the college, university and national levels to address critical challenges facing the local news ecosystem. Coester also leads a team of researchers and journalists investigating networks of mis/disinformation in rural communities and susceptibility of rural community members to mis/disinformation. She is recognized nationally as an expert in community journalism and innovation, and her testimony for Knight Commission on Trust Media and Democracy has been cited as a “manifesto” regarding the challenges in trust facing our communities. She has led trainings, outreach and peer support nationwide for local reporters and newsrooms across the country covering extremism, mis/disinformation and elections, including for the SOS Elections Project, and her research on rural resilience to extremism, political violence and mis/disinformation has been cited in briefings with policy makers/influencers that have included team members at Data & Society's Media Manipulation Initiative; senior researchers at the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection, the Bridging Divides Initiative at Princeton, American Press Institute, International Women's Media Foundation's Coalition Against Online Violence and others.

She, along with colleague Joel Beeson, have provided briefings to congressional staff including for hearings held by Sen. Richard Blumenthal's Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety and Data Security, and to the House Veterans Affairs House Committee investigation and hearings on domestic violent extremist groups recruitment of veterans. She has been an invited speaker on these topics at the Aspen Festival of Ideas, Newsgeist North America, the Council on Foreign Relations, Our Body Politic, among others. Coester earned her master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia.



The Associate Director for the RHCJC will oversee implementation and project management for all initiatives, activities and reporting projects of the proposed Center; will execute program design; facilitate curriculum development among faculty associates, and will work closely with the Collaborations Manager and Community Engagement Editor in constituent and community engagement, student, faculty, and partner management, and will serve as the executive editor and supervising project manager for experiential learning/reporting projects within the lab publication.

**Ashton Marra:** In addition to her role as a teaching assistant professor in the West Virginia University Reed College of Media, Marra serves as the executive editor of 100 Days in Appalachia, a 2021 national Edward R. Murrow award-winning publication. There, she oversees the work of a team of editors, contributors and reporters across Appalachia to create content by Appalachians for Appalachians. She has extensive experience in leading collaborative, community-focused reporting efforts and oversees 100 Days' partnerships, working with more than 60 newsrooms – from national publications like CNN and The Intercept to local newsrooms like Black By God and Eye on Ohio – over the past five years.

In her role in the media college, Marra has led curriculum development in community engaged journalism across a variety of platforms. She developed a course focused on understanding the role of local news as central to a healthy community with an informed citizenry, reviewing the traditional roles of local journalism as well as focus on important new roles for local journalism, such as hosting and moderating community dialogue, increasing news literacy, building trust, and engaging with a community. Her course on social media video production focused on teaching undergraduate students to identify issues important to Appalachians and use analytics to make news decisions based on engagement, and in West Virginia Today, a television capstone course, Marra sent students to rural communities across the state to cover pressing issues post COVID-19 on a news broadcast seen statewide on West Virginia Public Broadcasting, winning two national Society of Professional Journalist Mark of Excellence Awards.

In addition to her work in the classroom, Marra leads the college's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee and is a member of the university's DEI Council. She has also helped lead the reporting partnership between the Reed College and Morgan State University, an HBCU, which brings students from a mostly white, rural institution and a mostly Black, urban institution together to report on topics that have impacted communities across racial, socio-economic and geographic settings, including a 2020 project focused on the opioid epidemic's impact.

Marra is also the co-founder and co-director of Reporting on Addiction, a collaborative project working to train professional and student journalists in solutions-focused journalism methods that help break cycles of stigma often perpetuated through media coverage of our communities. Since its launch in September 2021, Reporting on Addiction has trained journalists in more than a dozen newsrooms, eight student-run newsrooms, and spoken at six national research conferences. 2023 marked the second year in RoA's journalism educator training, an intensive two-week training process presenting journalism educators from across the country curriculum Marra developed to help them integrate ethical, empathetic and trauma-informed reporting methods into their classrooms. Thirteen educators are now teaching this curriculum nationally, including at Northwestern, Penn State, University of Kentucky, Ithaca College, and St. Mary's University in Texas. Marra spent more than a decade working as a professional journalist for both public media and commercial news outlets, including at ABC News and Good Morning America. Her work has been featured on NPR, PBS and Marketplace.

**Joel William Beeson** is a professor at the WVU Reed College of Media, whose collaborative work with Coester has long focused on engaged public scholarship and community journalism, pioneering new work in trauma-informed digital resilience to mis/disinformation and training local reporters in how to better report on political violence and extremism. Beeson's scholarship is informed by two decades of research in community media, digital humanities and documentary studies using emerging media. Beeson has an M.A. in Journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia and received his doctorate in American Studies at the Union Institute and University investigating counter narratives in social documentary projects using oral history and experimental methods for inclusive storytelling.

Beeson's work includes leading the collaborative initiative with Morgan State University's School of Global Communication and Journalism called StoryBridge. This collaboration will pair students from WVU and MSU to collaboratively report on social issues impacting two seemingly disparate communities across urban/rural and racial divides. This includes reporting on impacts of opioid addiction in West Virginia and Baltimore, Maryland in 2020; the award-winning Food Justice project in 2018, and Bridging Selma and the immersive app, Fractured Tour in 2015 for the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's voting rights march in Selma, Alabama in 1965. Beeson produced and directed the award-winning 2008 documentary, *Fighting on Two Fronts: The Untold Stories of African American WWII Veterans* and several experimental documentary projects about the experience of Black veterans of WWI, including *Soldiers of the Coalfields* and *WWI Through the Eyes of the Chicago Defender*, a Google Expedition in collaboration with the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust and the US WWI Centennial Commission and is currently co-producing a JustFilms-supported documentary film *Raised by Wolves*, about youth being radicalized online.

Beeson is a grantee of the West Virginia Humanities Council, the Mellon Foundation and Democracy Fund, and his current research investigates the mis/disinformation online and its role in the rise of domestic extremism, with an emphasis on youth exposure to extremism in social media and online gaming. He has briefed Congress on the rise of reactionary movements in post-WWI America and the parallels to today's political landscape. In 2021 and 2022 he was invited to submit written testimonies to House and Senate Committees on his research on youth exposure to extremist content on Instagram, and the recruitment of veterans by extremist groups. He is a member of the Rural Youth Catalyst group, the AEJMC Minorities and Communication Division, a delegate to the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), and former Chair of BEA Interactive Media & Emerging Technologies Division.

He comes to journalism practice from a background of community organizing based on grassroots cultural organizing methods. Beeson oversees reporting and research and ensures empathy-based, ethical standards of conduct are followed to protect the data, dignity, and rights of all participants.

## Strategic New Positions

Because the activities of the proposed Center are focused on community, this proposal supports the creation and hiring of two new positions – A Collaboration Manager and a Community Engagement Editor. We will recruit for these positions from our network in collaborative media, including via INN, ONA, Rural News Network, The Center for Cooperative Media, Solutions Journalism Network, and via academic and industry organizations and coalitions, including IWWMF, BEA, AEJMC, ONA, NAHJ, AAJA, NABJ, NAJA, and other organizations.

These innovative positions will work across all affiliated courses, within the reporting projects and in direct engagement with all partner organizations and communities to integrate consistent collaboration and community engagement into all aspects of the learning experience and production of reporting projects, activities and events in service to communities. We have been part of establishing new practices and job descriptions for these types of positions in our work with the Center for Cooperative Media and INN (Institute for Nonprofit News), and we consider the role of these positions to be a further opportunity to experiment and share learnings with other academic and industry partners about these emerging roles in collaborative projects that bridge academic and industry practice and that prioritize community-engaged local media. While these positions are still in developments, we envision these positions to serve the following essential roles of the Center:

**The Collaboration Manager** will be focused on developing and managing community collaborations to work with all participants across academic, community and industry partners, in order to help produce high-impact reporting for local and regional audiences on a variety of platforms. The person in this position will work alongside Center leadership, faculty and students - and closely with the Community Engagement Editor - to create lasting relationships between local/regional news organizations, student participants, the communities they serve, and the Center. The Collaboration Manager will work closely with the Community Engagement Editor and with all participants and all local/regional community media partners to edit, design and distribute stories, ensuring they reach diverse audiences, as well as to measure and document the work's impact, and to facilitate regional and national publishing partnerships for applicable work. They will help oversee community-based training, workshops, events, and reporting project execution, ensuring smooth communication among all parties, advise the reporting process and track progress on projects. They will also serve as the primary contact between the Center, and all collaborating partners to coordinate Center and Community Reporting Projects activities.

**The Community Engagement Editor** will work with faculty, students, staff, and all community partners to develop and execute all Center community reporting projects/products, and all community-engaged practices and audience-centric dissemination in learning, research, reporting, and publishing processes. This position will work closely with each class and the lab publication in producing community-focused reporting products and engagement activities, as well as working on the longer-term major community journalism projects and working with students in the real-world lab publication environment. The CEE will serve as a lead editor/producer on all Center's community reporting projects, working with community members, partners and other constituents to surface topics, and overseeing the successful production and publication of these works. They will coordinate community engagement outreach and dissemination of Center materials, resources and reporting products with partners, staff and students. The CEE will also lead experiments in trauma-informed, culturally sensitive community engagement to facilitate conversations with the communities served, and will regularly monitor feedback, documentation and measurement of Center activities.

The Center will include at least six Faculty Affiliates with targeted expertise in fact-checking, trust building, community-engaged reporting projects, and other topical expertise. These faculty will participate in the primary activities of the Center, helping to recruit and mentor students, teaching affiliated courses and capstones, hosting workshops and serving as trainers, speakers and facilitators at event, and leading experiential community reporting projects. Faculty affiliates will have their roles designated as part of their annual workload assignment between 15%-40% FTE and will receive semester or summer stipends as well as select project, student travel and other support for their RHCJC-affiliated coursework and projects.

## Facilities

The Center will be based out of one of WVU's premier locations, the Media Innovation Center (MIC). The MIC provides space, technology, curriculum, and culture for building a highly collaborative community. Our programs are designed to work closely with industry and community partners to tackle the challenges presented in community media and to incubate a next generation of media change agents and startups. We welcome you to take a virtual tour of the space. The MIC is housed in the Crossings, the student union for the WVU Evansdale campus. The Crossings is in close proximity to other academic units, the WVU Art Museum and the WVU Recreation Center, which houses a climbing wall, pool, track, courts, and nearby trails for students to be active within the community.

This space has been deliberately designed for high-profile convening events, community building, entrepreneurship, and innovation, featuring moveable furniture, huddle rooms, maker spaces, and other features similar to those found in high-tech incubator spaces across the country. Completed in January 2016, the Media Innovation Center has been used for high-profile community events spearheaded by our college faculty, including national hackathons, creatathons, conferences, and distinguished journalism speakers from national, regional, local, and hyper-local publications and outlets.



**BLUE SKY ROOM**



**VIEWING LOUNGE AND CATERING BAR**



**MAKER SPACE**



**THE FORUM**



## Organizational Structure

The Center will operate under the school's leadership, Dean Diana Martinelli. The Center Director reports to the dean, and also serves as a key member of the school's leadership team, which includes the school's assistant and associate deans, directors, creative directors, program chairs, and the marketing and communication and recruitment leadership. RHCJC staff will report directly to the RHCJC Director, while other RHCJC leadership who hold faculty positions will also report to the dean, while working closely with the RHCJC Director. A Visiting Committee made up of alums and industry innovators – while it does not have a governance role in the activities of the school – holds an influential advisory and support role on all activities of the school and will be updated and engaged in RHCJC activities. RHCJC Faculty Affiliates will report directly to the Chair and Dean, and their RHCJC-affiliated work assignments will be credited and evaluated by the Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee in their annual review process reflecting the goals, metrics and outputs outlined in the grant. Other governance includes curriculum review by the Curriculum Committee and oversight by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and the Assistant Dean of Student Services, who oversees recruitment, advising, retention, mentorship, networking, internships, and placement of students.

## Advisory Board

As a first order of duty, the school will assemble the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Advisory Board. This board will initially be made up of seven members, which will include three appointees selected by the Scripps Howard Foundation, three appointees invited from the school's network of community news leaders and alumni, and at least one student advisory member, with an emphasis on seeking diverse representation across the advisory board.

The advisory purpose of the RHCJC board will include helping to advise on productive research, project, curriculum, and funding partnerships as well as helping to elevate the reputation of the Center and to help serve as ambassadors and advisors for the activities and programs of the Center. Members may also: Provide advice and counsel to the Center's faculty and administration on curriculum and program development in relation to the center's areas of emphasis; Utilize professional expertise and industry connections to promote the Center's programs and achievements in regional and national media; Help students achieve professional success by offering internships, jobs and networking opportunities; Provide advice and counsel in soliciting private and public financial support to maintain and enhance the Center's activities.

## Marketing and Promotion

Award-winning, multi-platform integrated marketing communications is a demonstrated strength of the College of Media. A key component of the proposed Center will be the creation of an IMC plan to ensure strategic communication to all constituents of the Center's activities. The college will also work with the Scripps Howard foundation to coordinate branding dimensions and all applicable guidelines and restrictions required by Scripps Howard. The College's communications, design, web, and media innovation staff will work directly with RHCJC leadership and WVU University Relations to create a robust digital and social media presence for the Center, which will include a primary website hosting the mission, activities and goals for the center; key resources and training materials for targeted constituents; micro sites for reporting projects; multimedia documentation of all activities of RHCJC faculty, students and community partners; and social media promotion of Center activities.

The IMC plan will include an explicit process for assessing and communicating progress of the RHCJC's stated goals. This plan will ensure accountability to the mission and ensure that all stakeholders of the Center understand and have an opportunity to engage in the scope of the Center's programming and outcomes. The Center's website will highlight the Center's philosophy, mission, activities and resources, and the Center's leadership will work with the advisory committee and other constituents to advise, inform, assess, revise, and report on the Center's progress toward stated goals.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion-informed Recruitment and Support

This work necessarily assembles different perspectives. Our network of reporters, researchers, engaged community members, and consultants in collaboration with faculty and students represent intentionally diverse perspectives as we investigate the complicated social tensions in rural environments around race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, politics, and class in our work. Furthermore, our differences in background, culture and life experiences are not merely aspirational, but are essential to doing this work with accuracy, empathy and impact. The scope of the RHCJC's work will represent the affected communities we are serving, which affirms and extends the commitment of the school's and 100 Days in Appalachia's respective missions.

This includes designing our research and reporting methodologies and our engagement practices to focus on the concerns of affected community members in our audience, including susceptible communities and those directly targeted by mis/disinformation and harmful rhetoric, who may lack trust in journalism. This also involves our commitment to establishing collaborative communities of practice around the activities of the Center. We also recognize the unique challenges that affect members of our rural communities, including a backdrop of shared trauma in which families are decimated by opioid epidemic, economic adversity, inequitable healthcare and education access, environmental injustice and other impacts.

Our goals are to build our core team and board in alignment with our mission and to accurately reflect and engage our communities, especially those disproportionately impacted by harms. This includes building a network of experts and community alliances to collaboratively address the impacts on susceptible community members that include perspectives reflecting race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, gender identity, and class.

The RHCJC commits to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff, including adjuncts, consultants and advisory committee members that exceed the University's faculty and staff racial and ethnic composition and is reflective of our student population make-up and in service to our community.

RHCJC leadership will work directly with the College's university-trained, college-appointed social justice liaison within any search committee to ensure equitable screening and selection of potential candidates.

The RHCJC will prioritize engagement with and recruitment of staff, participants, partners, and community members from historically underrepresented groups, and the proposed Center will include outreach with joint/collaborative student organizations, invitation of subject matter experts, community innovators, and other consultants to broaden community member and student exposure to diverse leadership, experiences, insights, and learnings.

As a key RHCJC activity, the partnership with Morgan State University will bring together students from an HBCU with our population of largely rural, first-generation college attendees to expose them to not just a valuable community reporting experience, but also enable students to experience the perspectives and lived experiences of students in a collaborative reporting experience designed to explicitly navigate the tensions of bridging racial and cultural divides in our region.



RHCJC-affiliated faculty and staff will participate in workshops and trainings with the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and access to resources and best diversity pedagogical practices.

The RHCJC will participate in the University's diversity recruitment programs and commit to identifying and cultivating relationships with diverse educators and industry professionals and to making competitive offers to diverse candidates. This includes mentoring and connecting diverse/underrepresented faculty, staff and students with supportive groups and others on campus through formal college/university mentoring plans, programs and activities. The RHCJC will work with the college to target high school visits in the most diverse markets in West Virginia, Appalachia and surrounding states and will participate in college fairs where diverse students are likely to attend.

The RHCJC will work with the college's communications teams to include diverse students and constituents in our marketing materials, social media posts, student ambassador team and in outreach, and recruitment efforts for student participation in RHCJC programming will ensure the communications are conscious, collaborative and authentic with target audiences.

The Center will use RHCJC-affiliated scholarships to enhance the diversity of the student body for RHCJC curriculum.

The RHCJC will engage with WVU and College of Media student organizations that promote diverse students' exposure and access to professional media contacts and opportunities and will facilitate access for underrepresented and minority students to upper-class and alumni mentors, including the minority/first generation student mentorship program. The Center will also match diverse/underrepresented students within the college's Professional Mentor program.

All RHCJC-affiliated curriculum will center diverse representation as part of its community-reporting and will emphasize experiential and community-engaged learning that organically exposes students and faculty to the diversity of cultures and experiences in the region and across the country.

The RHCJC's assessment activities will include documentation of perspectives, critiques and recommendations of all participants.

## Partners and Community Media Network

In addition to the formal partners for this program, including the members of the West Virginia Press Association and networks of the Morgan State University School of Global Journalism and Communications, 100 Days in Appalachia brings a rich network of collaborating organizations, media and publishing partners offering opportunities to students and extending the impact and work of the Center. This regional and national network includes:

- Allegheny Front
- Appalachian Places (ETSU Magazine)
- Appalachian Advisors Network (AAN)
- Apodlachia
- Belt Magazine
- Bookimist
- Black By God WV
- California Healthline
- Carolina Public Press
- CNN – national
- Coalition Against Online Violence
- The Conversation
- The Diversity Pledge Institute
- Daily Yonder
- Elections SOS
- Energy News Network
- Environmental Health News
- Expatalachians
- Eye on Ohio
- The Guardian
- Grist
- GroundTruth
- Hearken
- The Intercept
- Jacobin Magazine
- Kaiser Health News (now KFF Health News)
- Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting
- Lexington-Herald Leader
- Louisville Public Media
- Microsoft News
- Modern Farmer
- Mountain Association
- Mountain State Spotlight
- NewStart
- Next City
- The Ohio Newsroom
- Ohio Valley ReSource
- Ordinary Times
- PolitiFact
- ProPublica
- PublicSource
- Report for America
- Resolve Magazine
- Rewire.News
- Reveal Center for Investigative Reporting
- Rural News Network
- Scalawag
- Spotlight PA
- Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity
- Stateline
- Tarbell
- Undark Magazine
- University of Kentucky Press
- Video Consortium
- West Virginia University Press
- WOUB
- WKSU
- Washington Post Magazine
- West Virginia Public Broadcasting
- YES! Magazine

# The Design Grant

In order to guide the programming detailed in the full report, faculty member and 100 Days in Appalachia Executive Editor Ashton Marra, with the assistance of current Reed College of Media graduate student Kaeli Ricotteli, conducted more than a dozen interviews with current and potentially future journalism students, alumni and 100 Days' and the Reed College of Media's professional media partners throughout the Appalachian region. Conversations included:

- Eight partner news organization leaders
- Three recent alumni in news leadership positions
- One national trust in news expert
- One West Virginia-based news support service
- One bilingual journalist working in Appalachia
- One academic partner not from WVU
- Three college students studying journalism
- One high school student who intends to study journalism

While conversations were tailored to the individual stakeholder's experience and expertise, conversations generally focused on a number of topics currently relevant to both the journalism industry and education systems at large:

- Trust in news, specifically in rural communities
- Mis/disinformation, and the skills/tools necessary for journalists to address it
- The rural news climate
- Growing young audiences
- Coverage for bilingual communities
- Opportunities for learning, partnership or assistance

**Goal 1: Trust Building – Actively experiment with trust-building, establishing best practices that can be shared across educational institutions and media organizations.**

Professional media partners consistently identified a lack of trust in news as one of the biggest challenges their newsrooms face – especially those serving rural populations. That decline in trust, according to them, likely comes from a lack of capacity of local newsrooms who are declining in size, which means they have fewer reporters to connect with the community members in crucial one-on-one interactions, and from increased access to alternative sources of information, including social media feeds and outlets that position themselves as places of community news but do not follow the ethical guidelines of news operations. At the same time, most of the stakeholders did not have tried and tested measures for tackling this problem.

“Other than continuing to do our job and fact checking the false accusations [of politicians], I don't really have a great answer of [how to improve trust]. I'm kind of at as much of a loss as just about everybody else, I think,” one news director told us.

“We have some conversations about trust, and I think that we could be better at having conversations about trust. We talk a lot about information needs, and if we are meeting people's information needs, then we think that we're going to be building trust. But it's maybe not as quite as explicit,” said an alumni working in a leadership role in a West Virginia newsroom said.

“In marginalized communities, people feel like you only show up when there's trouble, somebody gets shot, there's a major fire, a big accident, something crazy happens, you show up the rest of the time, you don't know we exist,” one academic partner said.

All, however, were interested in methods they could use to help build trust with their audiences and recognized this role as needing to be situated at an academic institution that can invest in establishing best practices based on research and experimentation without the pressure of declining funding rural newsrooms are facing.

A national organization focused on assisting journalists and news outlets in building trust with their audiences and communities at large is particularly invested in the opportunity to work with rural communities through a partnership with an already established newsroom like 100 Days in Appalachia:

“We have had quite a few rural news outlets in our trainings, but we have not had a lot of programming specifically targeted to [rural newsrooms]. It's a whole different set of challenges.”

Those challenges, according to this national expert, include the capacity of small newsrooms that you often find serving rural places, audiences who feel disenfranchised by news that is often centralized in the nearest urban center, the intersection of politics and socio-economic status shaping views on news, and how the language that is adopted by news outlets can polarize an audience. Many of these challenges, according to this constituent, come back to who is working in our newsrooms and their experiences:

“Newsrooms often don't have very many people with deep knowledge of or experience in small communities or in communities that are really driven by faith, which is more common in small communities, or political leanings, like military law enforcement background or immigration background. There are just so many things that newsrooms miss or get wrong because of who tends to be staffing the journalism,” this constituent shared.

But conducting research and experimenting with trust building best practices in a rural place with an already established, trusted news source and journalism program offers an opportunity to address those challenges thoroughly, according to the stakeholder.

One editor told us:

" I would not be qualified to direct programming specifically to people in small communities because none of my team grew up in one. None of us have that experience personally...You should be recognized as the experts, you are on that. So let me just say super clearly that if you guys are working on something you think might be a good fit, or if you get a grant...I'm definitely interested in talking about that."

## Goal 2: Experiential Learning – Teach students fact-checking/debunking and local/community reporting skills in a hands-on way.

Experiential learning and the skills that can be gained from such learning practices was a topic of conversation for both current students attempting to build a career in the journalism field and for partners and alumni who are looking to employ the next generation of career journalists. From the employer perspective, recruiting students with the talent and understanding of the job is a challenge.

"I think right now, the biggest challenge is in finding good people who are interested, curious and want to understand that the role they have as a reporter or as an editor is a sacred role. It's a very important role for our society. And that means that you do have to give of yourself. The other part is just, for markets such as ours, the people who have that skill set when they come out of a school like WVU or Marshall, are getting picked up really quick at bigger outlets so that leaves those of us in West Virginia with a shrinking pool of potential. That, to me, is the biggest challenge is just continuing to find that next generation, and the generation after that," one editor told us.

But students who have access to hands-on experiences are more prepared for these roles and have a better understanding of how to do them in rural places, according to several newsroom leaders.

An academic partner who has worked in collaborative efforts leading students from the Reed College of Media and her institution in experiential reporting projects noted that the faculty at WVU has extensive experience in leading students through immersive reporting experiences that have benefited her students as well. "I mean, probably the best partnerships, and projects we've done have been the things we've done with you guys. So that's a no brainer for me," she said.

"[Immersive experiences teach students] the point of reporting because you're putting yourself in somebody else's shoes, you're going somewhere where you're not comfortable. You're finding out what it's like to be that person, how to stand up for people, how to tell their story in a new way," she added.

Current students say they value the ability to go out into the community and gain real world experience, but also want those experiences to be embedded in their classwork because so many of them are facing personal challenges that can prevent them from taking on additional work to gain experience on their own time.

“A lot of the first classes in journalism are hypothetical stories ... but once you get into the real world, or like student media, or we have an upper-level reporting class, you have to actually go out and get your own stories. That's completely different, but it's already really hard as students to just do extra stuff because we've got a lot going on, we've got classes, we've got homework, we've got jobs,” one student noted. “So it would be nice if it was more incorporated within the curriculum.”

“I love this state. So it's really important to me to be able to connect what's happening here to like some of the trends that are happening in the country. I was so excited that I got to cover when they overturned Roe v. Wade, which was not only a state issue, but a national issue, and I could localize it [to Morgantown] and show people what young people were feeling during this time, and what's important to us,” a current student said. But her experience came from working for a student-led campus publication, not necessarily in the classroom, and she acknowledged the need for more opportunities to serve her community while still in school.

“Getting in touch with where you are, that's something you can't really teach in the classroom, that's something like it has to be [experienced]. It's more of a social skill than anything else,” another student shared. “There has to be a mentorship, in a sense, when it comes to the more social touches of journalism, especially in rural Appalachia. I think having professors in journalism school that have actually worked in the area as journalists is very fundamental to helping kids in the area want to stay and be journalists in the area.”

### Goal 3: Local Reporting – Provide valuable journalism for an underserved community.

A lack of capacity and funding for reporting – especially in depth and multimedia reporting – was also a throughline of the conversations with professional news outlets in the region, no matter their platform. Media partners need assistance and additional support in covering the Appalachian region more fully.

“One of the things that's tough that we run into a lot is that people are distrustful of journalists in general, oftentimes, we're the first journalists that they've met or been interviewed by, or maybe they were on the news a while ago, but sitting down to the reporter and talking for 30 to 45 minutes, we're probably the first time they've done that,” an alum in a newsroom leadership position in West Virginia said. “I think we know that for both trust and brand recognition, we need to be showing up in people's communities on a regular basis. But it's pretty hard to go. We have six reporters, and we can only go so many places in a given month or a year.”

Partner organizations expressed immense interest in working with students in a variety of ways to both give them hands-on experience while also helping the organizations tell stories in communities that otherwise go uncovered.

“I have ideas for TikTok content that I would like to do. I just don't have the capacity to do it. Instagram is the same way,” an alumna who established her own nonprofit newsroom said.

“[I love working with] students that can write, edit, proof, create, do all the things because you don't realize how much work you do until you try to pass it off to other people. I said, you know, you are getting a grassroots experience ... writing stories, editing, the building of a newspaper process, here's our funders, here's how much we need to raise, and then also the distribution list,” another newsroom founder shared. She is willing to open her newsroom and all of its processes up to students to learn about more than just news collection, but the entire publication process.

Time and time again, professional journalists working in Appalachia identified the need for a central place of learning, sharing and cooperation to lead both learning about the changing news industry and operational best practices and a neutral third party who could help newsrooms collaborate to serve both their audiences and improve the overall news climate in West Virginia.

“It would be really beneficial for us [if the Reed College could serve as] a convener of the fairly fractured media scene in West Virginia. I think that the Reed College has a unique ability to get [big personalities] all in the same room in a way that I don't think anybody else in the state can do. It is the premier journalism school in West Virginia and can bring those people together in a way that like, for instance, the Press Association, cannot,” an alumna serving in a leadership role in a West Virginia newsroom said. “There's some new energy in the West Virginia journalism scene that feels much more interested in that collaboration. We end up with a closed door at other places,” an alumna shared.

Several news operations in the region are grappling with how to appropriately serve a bilingual community in the region. For some in urban areas that have Spanish language publications, they are partnering to share stories for translation and co-publication on their platforms, but other news outlets see value in translation but don't believe it's enough.

“Taking a news report and translating into Spanish doesn't work. You take your newspaper, and you translate it all so it's an English newspaper written in Spanish that does not get read by the Latino community because it's not always news that is pertinent to them,” the leader of one West Virginia newsroom said. “You almost have to shift your thinking totally. It's kind of like a community inside of a community.”

A partner journalism support service organization has established a news service for Spanish speakers in West Virginia, but capacity is, again, an issue with growing the service. One journalist working with the organization acknowledged an interest in working with students to create content for their audience, specifically video. “I would love to. We are open to all the help we can get. This is a project for the community. I mean, this is a project for everyone. We want everyone that wants to help, that everyone that wants to feel part of a change.”

## Additional Highlights from Interviews

“If you’ve never had a news product that really centers Black West Virginians or whatever segmented group... the trust is in building the audience. I have to work for that, [where other publications] started because they just pulled an audience. I am curating an audience that hasn’t existed, and that can only be built on trust and respect. [But] that trust isn’t going to be built by me just putting articles on a website. I have to show up in communities, be accessible...It’s hard, but trust is built by showing up in real life with people,” the founder of a nonprofit newsroom said.

“When I have tuned into [100 Days in Appalachia’s] coverage, I’ve found it to offer exactly the kind of nuance and complexity and resistance to lazy narratives that are why I would turn to it in the first place. I have sometimes been like, ‘well, this topic is complicated. I wonder what 100 Days is saying about it’ and gone to look and see if there’s something there... A lot of times I feel like when I work with startups there’s this blend of place based and subject matter expertise in terms of what makes a startup stand out. And you guys are a really interesting blend of those two things, because it’s broad geography, but with the geography and the culture being sort of the subject matter expert as well. And I think that’s really inspiring.”

“I’m a big fan of Dana. I’ve learned a lot every time she’s on a panel or something, I tried to tune in. I was at Radically Rural last year, and my team was asked to present something at Radically Rural and again, I’m like, I can bring in some newsroom partners, but most of the people we’ve worked with a lot are still like, like city level, not rural. I’m not an expert in rural. And also I didn’t want a white panel, Lynne and I were doing it together and my team is three quarters white. So the introduction came through Dana. I definitely see you guys as like the network hub.”

“I love working with [faculty in the Reed College]. I mean, probably the best partnerships, and projects we’ve done have been the things we’ve done with you guys. So that’s a no brainer for me,” an academic partner said.

“I think it’s really important that journalism school teaches you as many things as possible and gives you a really good foundation for reporting. Because there’s a lot of crazy scenarios you’re going to run into as a journalist in either the professional realm or as a student, that I think it’s always good to have a really solid foundation of your kind of blanket right and wrongs. You can’t do this. You can’t do that, that you can kind of apply when these crazy confusing situations happen.”

“I think there can be 55 news organizations in West Virginia, but in 10 years, they won’t be print newspapers owned by the people around them. They’re gonna be small community journalists who live in that community and do the work as a 100 Days type thing. There may be some structure, maybe some that’s big enough to grow, but they’ll be small and they’ll be new. I think you are anchoring yourself in that community.”



Funding for the design grant was used in accordance with the submitted budget to compensate the people tasked with organizing and conducting and synthesizing the individual interviews of stakeholders, as well as a summer stipend for the program director to research, write and design the full proposal. Funding was also used to compensate the interview subjects.

Activites	Value
Program Director- Summer Stipend for Research and Grant writing	\$6,000
Research Coordinator- Summer Stipend for Constituent Engagement, Data Collection	\$4,000
Project Assistance/Student Stipend	\$2,250
Fringe Benefits	\$1,800
Honoraria for constituents who participated in 90-minute interviews	\$950
TOTAL	\$15,000



Dear Colleagues,

West Virginia University's outstanding Reed College of Media is the ideal choice as the site for the Scripps Foundation Roy Howard Community Journalism Center. Now, more than ever, we need to invest in and train a new generation of community journalists in our state and Appalachian region to re-establish trust among our citizens and combat the spread of mis/disinformation.

West Virginia University is a land-grant university, and, as such, service—to our state, region, and professions—is a priority of the University's mission. We have a strong history of impactful service. In fact, the Carnegie Foundation has named WVU as one of 75 institutions receiving its highest recognition in community engagement.

Further, our university leadership is deeply committed to the role and responsibilities of a free press in a democratic society. The current university provost, Maryanne Reed, is the former dean of the WVU College of Media, an AEJMC/Scripps Howard administrator of the year winner, former Online News Association board member, and founder of the NewStart local news sustainability program. Her leadership has demonstrated the university's commitment to addressing the unique challenges confronting local news.

The College of Media has both the current leadership and capacity to host this new center, access to a national network of innovators in community media, and a record of deep community engagement and collaborative work. The College's prior incubation of the award-winning media outlet *100 Days in Appalachia* has established a regional network of committed, invested collaborators, news organizations and partners with whom this center will engage as it serves communities across the state and region. Further, key journalism faculty Joel Beeson and Dana Coester are pioneering new work in trauma-informed digital resilience to mis/disinformation and training local reporters in how to better report on political violence and extremism.

In addition, leadership from both the university and college encourages and supports interdisciplinary activities that further democratic ideals and inform society. The College of Media operates a premiere Media Innovation facility that serves as a key connector between the university's two major campuses and is a central hub for convening trans-disciplinary curricula, applied research, media production, and community- and practitioner-engaged events, workshops, and training. College and university leadership support the use of this innovative facility as a natural site for a vibrant Community Journalism Center that can support students, faculty, community members and regional journalists in reporting that builds trust and research that serves the state and region. Lessons learned from this vital work can be shared nationally and provide a new model for engaged and impactful journalism in rural communities.

Please accept this letter as our commitment to this work. We urge you to consider WVU as the future site of the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center.

Sincerely,



E. Gordon Gee

PO Box 6201 | Stewart Hall  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6201  
☎ 304.293.5531 📠 304.293.5880

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## **100 Days in Appalachia**

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July 15, 2023

This letter is in support of the College of Media's application to serve as the site for the Roy Howard Community Journalism Center at West Virginia University. 100 Days in Appalachia, as an independent, nonprofit media outlet serving the state of West Virginia and the Appalachian region, is enthusiastically committed to collaborating with the WVU Reed College of Media and agrees to serve as an immersive, experiential laboratory publication for the proposed Center. In this role, 100 Days will provide educational support, curriculum intersections and development, and serve as a hands-on regional newsroom for the Center's community reporting and engagement projects. In this role, 100 Days in Appalachia will provide student mentorship, editing, coaching as well as internship and fellowship opportunities for WVU Reed College of Media and Roy Howard Community Journalism Center students. 100 Days will also bring its full network of collaborating media partners to support the publishing, mentoring, coaching and learning opportunities for participating students.

Please let us know how we can be of further support for the proposed Community Journalism Center. We look forward to supporting the students of WVU and the Center in service to the communities of West Virginia and Appalachia.

Kristen Unnarcus / Deputy Editor

Officers of the Board:  
Ashton Marra / Jesse Wright / Dana Coastar  
Appalachia Free Press



Department of Multimedia Journalism  
School of Global Journalism & Communication

July 20, 2023

Dear Joel,

It was great having a chance to catch up with you and all the updates on the 100 Days in Appalachia project and your plans for the future. It sounds as though this is a busy and exciting time for the Reed College.

I also was delighted to know that you would like to work with SGJC again. Like you, I think our best work (Selma, Broken Plate, Opioids) was done with the small, independent groups, rather than course-related projects. Having our students work together directly and also learning more about using developing technology to improve our storytelling. I am eager to see what we can come up with.

SGJC is all-in on this effort and I am curious to see how we connect the dots with the Appalachia story. Let's meet up soon to discuss details.

Cordially,

jj

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Jackie Jones  
Dean and Professor of Journalism  
School of Global Journalism & Communication  
Morgan State University  
443-885-3502 (office)  
202-271-6890 (cell)  
jacqueline.jones@morgan.edu



Date: 7/21/23

Attn: Dana Coester, WVU Reed College of Media

Topic: Letter of Endorsement and Support

Hello, Dana,

Please consider this the West Virginia Press Association's official letter of endorsement and support for the WVU Reed College of Media's Scripps Howard Community Journalism project grant application.

WV Press commits to supporting the effort in the following manner:

- serving as a mentor/coach to participants.
- disseminating the reporting generated by the participants.
- fact-checking participants' articles through the WVPA newswire when appropriate.
- hosting a program-funded student fellowship/intern during the legislative session.

Additionally, WV Press agrees to participate in the convening event addressing challenges and opportunities in community and local journalism.

We Press serves as the voice of the state's 69 newspapers, supporting the industry with legislative, legal, and training programs, among other initiatives. In addition to a news sharing service, educational programs, and website and social media support, WV Press hosts an annual convention, legislative preview, and regional meetings around the state.

Thanks for your work on this project and the opportunity for WV Press and the state's newspaper industry to participate.

*Don Smith*

Don Smith  
Executive Director

3422 Pennsylvania Avenue, Charleston, WV 25302  
Don Smith, [donsmith@wvpress.org](mailto:donsmith@wvpress.org) - 304-342-1011 – Betsy Miles, [bmiles@wvpress.org](mailto:bmiles@wvpress.org)

# Monitoring and Evaluation

Goal 1 Trust Building – Actively experiment with trust-building, establishing best practices that can be shared across educational institutions and media organizations.

## Measure 1.1

Create community-engaged reporting projects which forefront community trust building as a key activity/learning for students.

**Metrics:** # of community-engaged reporting projects as part of the collaboration between West Virginia University and Morgan State University; quantitative and qualitative assessment of community experiences/perceptions of trust

## Measure 1.2

Production and dissemination of graduate student field work focused on trust-building and community reporting/engagement activities with regional newsrooms

**Metrics:** # of activities conducted by graduate students in their community field work; presentation and distribution of research products to community members and relevant academic and industry conferences and/or industry publications

## Measure 1.3

Disseminating of learnings, field-facing resources and skills training across the journalism industry and journalism educational institutions addressing topics impacting local news in rural communities

**Metrics:** # of virtual/in-person workshops; # of participants in virtual/in-person workshops; post-workshop survey results; # of resources produced and published on site; website and social media analytics for access and engagement with resources

## Measure 1.4

Pilot new audience development and engagement strategies with lab publication that integrate industry best practices in building trust and experiment with new tactics

**Metrics:** # of and quantitative and qualitative assessment of engagement strategies; website and social media analytics; dissemination of learnings from pilot experiment to local, regional and national network

## Goal 2 Experiential Learning – Teach students fact-checking/debunking and local/community reporting skills in a hands-on way

### Measure 2.1

Produce video content addressing local and regional topics of concern, from culture to regional topics of concern, fact-checking and topical explainer videos, in the Advanced Video Production elective course

**Metrics:** # of videos published by lab publication across platforms; website and social analytics for videos produced; quantitative and qualitative assessment of student learnings in the course

### Measure 2.2

Training, production and dissemination of student-produced fact-checks each semester and distributed as open-source content through regional publishing partners, local news outlets, and the WV Press Association newswire serving the region

**Metrics:** # of fact- checks published by regional publishing partners; audiences served with fact- checking content; website and social analytics for fact- checking content; quantitative and qualitative assessment of student learnings in the course

### Measure 2.3

Analyze data-centric trends in journalism, understand how analytical data is collected, and analyze and evaluate different metric types in collaborating newsrooms

**Metrics:** Changes in audience data in response to community-engaged reporting and activities; quantitative and qualitative assessment of student learnings in the course

### Measure 2.4

Practice new methods for news product development and services within small, local news organizations that focus on underserved communities

**Metrics:** Adoption by collaborating newsrooms of community-engaged news products developed by students; quantitative and qualitative assessment of community engagement with news products; quantitative and qualitative assessment of student learnings in the course

## Measure 2.5

Cover the West Virginia legislative session and publish articles on local civic news, including piloting content for Spanish language audiences in partnership with WV Press Association newswire serving the state

**Metrics:** # of local civic articles published in the WVPA newswire and with publishing partners; # of articles translated and/or initiated and reported for Spanish speaking audiences; news analytics for engagement; policy and other civic impacts as a result of student reporting; quantitative and qualitative assessment of student learnings in the course

## Measure 2.6

Review the traditional roles local journalism has played, and focus on critical new roles for local journalism such as hosting and moderating community dialogue, increasing news literacy, building trust and engagement with underserved communities, and civic engagement.

**Metrics:** # of community-engaged activities completed, including surveys, focus groups, community conversations, and other virtual activities; Assessment of student knowledge on these topics at the end of the semester

## Measure 2.7

Provide two undergraduate Roy Howard Community Journalism Center Scholarships scholarships, one RHCJC MSJ scholarship and five MESO scholarships

**Metrics:** # of diverse candidate applications for scholarship; # of scholarships provided; quantitative and qualitative experience of scholarship recipients as part of RHCJC programming; community impact of student work



## Goal 3 Local Reporting – Provide valuable journalism for an underserved community

### Measure 3.1

Placement of up to three competitive community journalism fellows in regional newsrooms to support experimentation in community engagement and/or integration of community-based reporting techniques

**Metrics:** # of journalism fellows placed in regional newsrooms; # of community engagement activities completed with accompanying metrics; # of community-based news stories published with accompanying metrics

### Measure 3.2

Create programmatic activities, training and reporting projects that emphasize trauma-informed community engagement as a central tenet

**Metrics:** # of reporting projects produced; # of professional journalists and newsrooms trained; assessment of community engagement with projects

### Measure 3.3

Produce a major Community Journalism event that will convene innovators in community media, practitioners, local reporters, educators, and students from collaborating institutions and publishing partners to support newsroom training

**Metrics:** # of events held; # of participants; # of breakout sessions/workshops; quantitative and qualitative assessment of event activities and learnings shared

### Measure 3.4

Integrate collaboration with local, state and regional newsroom partners into advanced level and capstone courses to provide news coverage for underserved communities

**Metrics:** # of pieces of student-produced reporting published by Appalachian-based newsroom partners; associated analytics for engagement with content across platforms and newsrooms

### Measure 3.5

Convene partnering local, state and regional newsrooms in conversations (in-person and virtual) that encourage and help develop collaborations and collaborative reporting projects

**Metrics:** # of partnership/collaborations of professional newsrooms established; # of collaboratively reported pieces published across platforms; associated analytics for engagement with content across platforms and newsrooms

# Cost Narrative

*(Budget file uploaded separately)*

## **Personnel – \$1,724,464**

The Program Director will be supported at 50% FTE plus a 1 month summer pay at 75% FTE

The Program Associate Director will be supported at 50% FTE plus 2 months summer pay at 100% FTE

Two new full-time hires will be made to include a RHCJC Community Manager and a Community Editor/Producer, each at 11-month 100% FTE positions, which will be recruited and hired in Phase 1 of the program

The Center will also support 6 Faculty associates between 15-30% FTE, including summer and semester-based stipends for leading community reporting and community engagement work in fact checking and trust building, as well as two adjunct positions to provide specialized subject matter expertise for curriculum and reporting projects.

Other Personnel costs will include between 5-15%FTE of staff to support IT to dedicated lab site for the Center programming, Grant and Budget Administration, Events Coordination, Website development and marketing/comms for the Center's activities.

The Center will support 2-3 student workers working 10-20 hours per week in the Center lab and hands-on in the lab publication. The budget allocated can support One Graduate Student Stipend of \$7,000 per year and 2 Undergraduate Student Stipends totaling \$15,000 at 10 hours per week for 9 months with funding for optional summer positions.

Employee Benefits are distributed as a cost-share with the Reed College of Media.

## **Community Partners – \$320,000**

Community partner funding will help support and offset costs for the community partners' commitment of their personnel, primary resources, training, workshops, mentoring, editing, production and other services to the Center's curriculum, experiential capstones, reporting, events and other activities.

MSU will receive \$25,000 / year for their role as a key community partner, and 100 Days in Appalachia will receive \$60,000 / year for their role in service as a hands-on laboratory publication. Other publication partners, such as Politifact and other regional publishing partners, will receive a range of contracted support for their role in providing hands-on, real-world experience for students, subject matter expertise, training, publication and other services to the Center's activities.

This work will be outlined and contracted within MOUs that will be developed in Phase 1 of the program for the primary community partners (MSU and 100 Days in Appalachia) and dispersed in semester-based payments in accordance with meeting MOU deliverables. Other partner work will be contracted per semester or on a project-by-project basis.

## **Student Support - \$379,884**

This Center will support 2 competitive undergraduate scholarships per year @ \$5000/student per year, which are eligible for renewal for a second year if students maintain progress in the program and meet other criteria of the scholarship.

The Center will also support a competitive scholarship for 1 full or 2 partial traditional Master of Science in Journalism (MSJ) graduate students whose research/professional projects will be focused on the Center's programming at \$11,628 total support per year.

The Center will also support a specially recruited cohort of 5 Master's in Media Innovation and Solutions (MESO) graduate students, whose entire program of study and community field research will focus on community journalism and the projects and activities of the Center. These students work in an accelerated fashion and complete their degree in 1 years' time. These students will be recruited for either a Year 2 or Year 3 cohort affiliated with the Center.

The Center will also support up to 3 one-year paid fellowship placements in Year 3 of the program for eligible undergraduates or graduates who have completed Center programming and graduated. These competitive fellowships will work full time in a regional newsroom and bring specialized community media learnings and new practices into a regional newsroom.

The Center will also support a range of reporting and community engagement travel for students within select courses, experiential capstones, community field research and in community engagement activities, workshops and trainings for Center programming.

## **Operations - \$680,000**

This category includes \$120,000 Phase One renovation and outfitting of a specialized space for the Center's activities with an initial equipment investment of \$25,000 for a lab (and \$12,000/yr thereafter), to support computers, laptops, multimedia community field kits and other key equipment needs for a specialized lab space in service to the Center's courses, reporting projects and workshops/trainings and events. This category will also cover dedicated premium event and classroom space for Center at \$50,000 per year (in a cost-share with the Reed College of Media).

This category also includes \$34,000 over the 3 years to provide software and other digital resources for news product development, translation and transcription services, software for all Center-based student work and specialized software and database needs for reporting and publishing products.

This category covers all nonstudent travel that includes \$5000 in the Startup Phase for travel related to recruiting and interviewing for positions, followed by \$15,000/year for faculty and staff travel for community engagement activities and to provide community-based training/workshops, as well as travel for faculty and key personnel to present in field-facing panels, presentations at academic conferences and industry events at the regional and national level.

The operations category allocates \$60,000/year in years 2 and 3 of the program to host the Center's signature, major convening events in a "social hackathon" style. These events are 2-day immersive events providing a wide variety of programming, workshops, speakers and hands-on breakout sessions. The event accommodates up to 100 participants and includes travel support for students and faculty from other programs across the country, honoraria for diverse community media innovators and speakers/trainers at the event, and refreshment, event supplies and special takeaways from the event reflecting diverse Appalachian culture.

This category provides \$20,000 (total over 3 years) in support (in a cost-share with the Reed College of Media) for Marketing, Promotion and Recruitment for the Center, which includes outreach for new positions, partners, undergraduate and graduate recruitment online, through networks and social media and in ad placements, as well as for creating a robust brand and online presence and outreach for the Center and all of its programming and activities.

The operations category provides \$35,000 (total over 3 years) in support for documentation of Center activities and high-quality production, publication and dissemination of all high-profile Multimedia reporting and community engagement projects/products from the Center. Synthesizing of data and comprehensive assessment of outputs and outcomes for all program activities is a key component of potential transferability of results, products and models to other institutions and communities, as well as for programmatic sustainability. In addition to supporting production and publication of reporting projects, this allocation will cover multimedia/multi-platform documentation of events and engagement with all participants; resources and documentation of activities and community engagement; survey and interview administration; other forms of participant, program and event analytics; data analysis; and production of final reports, outcomes and transferable resources for community partners, community members and the field.

This category provides \$15,000/year over 3 years (\$45,000 total) for bringing in innovators, subject matter experts for specific reporting projects and other consultants for training students within a reporting or community engagement activity.

### **Indirect Costs - \$86,073**

Indirect costs are calculated at ~2.77% and will be allocated for indirect costs related to general overhead, facility and administrative costs of the College in support of the Center.

Roy Howard Community Journalism Center  
 Reed College of Media  
 Three-Year Budget

Expenditures	Start-Up January-June 2024			Year 1 July 2024-June 2025			Year 2 July 2025-June 2026			Year 3 July 2026-June 2027			Total		
	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing Reed College of Media	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing Reed College of Media	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing Reed College of Media	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing Reed College of Media	Total	Grant-Funded Scripps Howard Foundation	Cost Sharing Reed College of Media	Total
	<b>Personnel*</b>														
Program Director 50 FTE + 1 month 75 FTE summer stipend	33,000		33,000	86,750		86,750	86,750		86,750	86,750		86,750	293,250	0	293,250
Program Associate Director 50 FTE +2 months summer stipend	25,000		25,000	35,000		35,000	35,000		35,000	35,000		35,000	130,000	0	130,000
Community Manager 11 month	0		0	56,000		56,000	56,000		56,000	56,000		56,000	168,000	0	168,000
Community Editor/Producer 11 month	0		0	50,000		50,000	50,000		50,000	50,000		50,000	150,000	0	150,000
Faculty Associate 1 30 FTE + 1 month summer stipend	21,741		21,741	28,050		28,050	28,050		28,050	28,050		28,050	105,891	0	105,891
Faculty Associate 2 30 FTE + 1 month summer stipend	0		0	21,466		21,466	21,466		21,466	21,466		21,466	64,398	0	64,398
Faculty Associate 3 15 FTE + \$3000/semester stipend	0		0	16,808		16,808	16,808		16,808	16,808		16,808	49,424	0	49,424
Faculty Associate 4 25 FTE + 1 month summer stipend	0		0	23,370		23,370	23,370		23,370	23,370		23,370	70,110	0	70,110
Faculty Associate 5 15 FTE + \$3000/semester stipend	0		0	16,808		16,808	16,808		16,808	16,808		16,808	50,424	0	50,424
Faculty Associate 6 15 FTE \$3000/semester stipend	0		0	16,808		16,808	16,808		16,808	16,808		16,808	50,424	0	50,424
Curriculum revisions/development; 6 x \$4000	12,000		12,000	12,000		12,000	0		0	0		0	24,000	0	24,000
MIC Events/Programming Coordinator 15 FTE	4,300		4,300	9,778		9,778	9,778		9,778	9,778		9,778	33,634	0	33,634
MIC Events/Prof Tech 5 FTE	0		0	5,070	2,000	7,070	5,070	2,000	7,070	5,070	2,000	7,070	15,210	6,000	21,210
Budget Coordination/Grants Administration 25 FTE	10,000	2,000	12,000	20,000	3,500	23,500	20,000	3,500	24,000	20,000	3,500	23,500	70,500	12,500	83,000
Web Developer/Designer 15 FTE	0		0	10,375	5,000	15,375	10,375	5,000	15,375	10,375	5,000	15,375	31,125	15,000	46,125
Administrative Assistant 15 FTE	0	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	4,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	8,000	16,000
Adjuncts 2 per semester	0		0	7,000		7,000	7,000		7,000	7,000		7,000	21,000	0	21,000
Student Workers	0		0	22,200		22,200	22,200		22,200	22,200		22,200	66,600	0	66,600
Employee Related Expenses (Benefits)	16,778	6,021	22,799	63,425	25,300	88,725	63,425	25,300	88,725	63,425	25,300	88,725	207,053	81,921	288,974
Community Partner - MSU	0		0	25,000		25,000	25,000		25,000	25,000		25,000	75,000	0	75,000
Lab Publication - 100 Days in Appalachia	20,000		20,000	60,000		60,000	60,000		60,000	60,000		60,000	200,000	0	200,000
Publication Partners	0		0	15,000		15,000	15,000		15,000	15,000		15,000	45,000	0	45,000
<b>Student Support</b>															
Scholarships (undergrad @5000/student per year x 2 students = 10,000; 1 MSI grad @11,628 / student per year)	0		0	21,628		21,628	21,628		21,628	156,628		156,628	199,884	0	199,884
Student travel and other reporting costs	0		0	20,000		20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000		20,000	60,000	0	60,000
Year 3 fellowships - 3 competitive one- year full-time positions placements w local publishing partners	0		0	0		0	0		0	120,000		120,000	120,000	0	120,000
<b>Operations**</b>															
Supplies	0		0	5,000		5,000	0		5,000	0		5,000	10,000	0	10,000
Software, Subscriptions (mailchimp, databases, translation, transcription, etc)	0		0	12,000		12,000	0		12,000	0		12,000	24,000	0	24,000
Equipment purchases, replacements and repairs (cameras, etc.)	25,000		25,000	12,000		12,000	12,000		12,000	12,000		12,000	61,000	0	61,000
Marketing, promotion and recruitment	3,000		3,000	5,000	2,500	7,500	0		5,000	7,500		13,000	7,000	20,000	20,000
Facilities Use MIC w/dedicated lab	0	2,000	2,000	50,000	20,000	70,000	50,000	20,000	70,000	50,000	20,000	70,000	150,000	60,000	210,000
Facilities Year 1 renovation for dedicated lab	120,000		120,000	0		0			0			0	120,000	0	120,000
Non-student travel	5,000		5,000	15,000		15,000	0		15,000	0		15,000	35,000	0	35,000
Year 2 and Year 3 Convening Events (workshops, community journalism summit)	0		0	0		0	60,000		60,000	60,000		60,000	120,000	0	120,000
Multimedia Documentation/Dissemination/Publication of reporting projects	0		0	10,000		10,000	10,000		10,000	15,000		15,000	35,000	0	35,000
Reporting Subject Matter Experts / consultants	0		0	15,000		15,000	15,000		15,000	15,000		15,000	45,000	0	45,000
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>295,819</b>	<b>12,021</b>	<b>307,840</b>	<b>766,536</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>826,836</b>	<b>778,036</b>	<b>57,800</b>	<b>835,836</b>	<b>1,073,536</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>1,133,836</b>	<b>2,913,927</b>	<b>190,421</b>	<b>3,104,348</b>
<b>Indirect Costs (capped at 3% of Direct Costs)</b>	<b>9,000</b>		<b>9,000</b>	<b>24,000</b>		<b>24,000</b>	<b>22,691</b>		<b>22,691</b>	<b>30,382</b>		<b>30,382</b>	<b>86,073</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>86,073</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>304,819</b>	<b>12,021</b>	<b>316,840</b>	<b>790,536</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>850,836</b>	<b>800,727</b>	<b>57,800</b>	<b>858,527</b>	<b>1,103,918</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>1,164,218</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>190,421</b>	<b>3,190,421</b>
<b>Revenue Sources</b>															
Scripps Howard Foundation			0			0			0			0	0		0
Reed College of Media		12,021	12,021		60,300	60,300		57,800	57,800		60,300	60,300		190,421	190,421
<b>Total Revenue Sources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12,021</b>	<b>12,021</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>57,800</b>	<b>57,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>190,421</b>	<b>190,421</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>(304,819)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(304,819)</b>	<b>(790,536)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(790,536)</b>	<b>(800,727)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(800,727)</b>	<b>(1,103,918)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,103,918)</b>	<b>(3,000,000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,000,000)</b>