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100
Years
1921 - 2021



**INNOVATION
UPDATES AND
MORE, FROM:**

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MEDILL

OUR NEXT CENTURY

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medill.school/100-merch



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The Medill Class of 2021 (as freshmen) just after their arrival on campus in 2017.

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Watch for the next issue of the Medill Magazine coming in 2021. We will be publishing a Medill 100th commemorative issue to celebrate our Centennial.



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Letter from the Dean

Medill Dean Charles Whitaker (BSJ80, MSJ81)

MUCH HAS CHANGED in the world since Medill was founded nearly 100 years ago. Our approaching Centennial affords us the opportunity to both celebrate our stunning achievements and address some of the missteps that have cluttered our path. As you will note in this issue, Medill remains a grand and forward-looking institution, one that almost since its inception has been at the forefront of education in journalism, marketing and strategic communications. We were pioneers in sending students out into the field to apply the principles they learned in real-world settings. We upended traditional notions about advertising and consumer engagement with our integrated, data-driven approach to marketing and public relations. Our reach and reputation have grown exponentially as we have dispatched students and faculty across the country and the world, demonstrating how well our charges are prepared to “hit the ground running” and make a difference in whatever profession they choose.

Even in these difficult and disorienting times – as we wrestle with the devastating effects of a global pandemic – our students, faculty and staff have risen to the occasion. With the help of our highly skilled tech team and learning specialists, we swiftly and adroitly reimagined all of our course offerings for remote and hybrid presentation. It was a laborious transition, but the results were incredible. By and large, students applauded the way our faculty nimbly maintained a high level of engaging instruction despite the challenges of teaching across multiple time zones and the occasional faulty internet connection.

Under the direction of our talented faculty, our journalism students produced compelling stories – many of which were published in outlets ranging from The Washington Post to BuzzFeed News



PHOTO: SALLY RYAN

– on the ways in which the pandemic affected vulnerable communities, and our IMC Full-Time students, who were virtually embedded with a wide swath of companies for their Immersion Quarter, creatively tackled a number of marketing and communications challenges that resulted in job offers for several of them. I firmly believe that the efforts of our faculty and staff made us one of the best prepared and most successful journalism and IMC schools in the country in making this transition to remote instruction work.

But even as we were celebrating that accomplishment, we were being forced to reckon with some distressing accounts that surfaced in the wake of the turmoil and civil unrest that followed the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Several of our African American alums (as well as some current students) took to social media to relay painful tales of the indignities they suffered while enrolled. They laid bare their feelings of isolation and disaffection in an institution in which few classmates or instructors looked like them. More distressing were their stories about the ways in

which Medill faculty members had dismissed and discouraged them, largely based on perceptions rooted in flawed notions about who was fit to enter journalism or how marketing to communities of color should be executed. They told of discussions in which faculty failed to respond when classmates professed disparaging racial tropes or, even more troubling, when faculty members themselves offered up negative racial stereotypes. The outpouring of affirming comments that greeted these narratives were an indication that these were not isolated incidents but represented a pattern of institutional racism that must be addressed.

As a member of the Medill faculty for the past 27 years, I have to accept my own complicity in maintaining an atmosphere that at times has contributed to the feelings expressed by these alums. (After all, if you are not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.) Going forward, I am committed to building a more inclusive Medill community, one that better reflects the demography of the country and is more attuned to its glorious cultural, racial and socio-economic diversity. Of course, we will continue to rigorously uphold the principles of balance, fairness and accuracy in storytelling that have been the hallmarks of a Medill education since our founding on Feb. 8, 1921. But we will also interrogate practices that have led to the disaffection and mistrust in media that have contributed to the balkanization that makes the country nearly ungovernable and placed the institutions we prepare students for in jeopardy.

Despite our missteps, ours is indeed an unparalleled past – one that has produced amazing alumni who have used the training they received under our guidance to make a difference in a wide range of fields. I look forward to working with each of you to help chart the course for our next 100 years. ■

Update: Journalism

New genres in media are driving an innovative curriculum that goes far beyond the newsroom.

FOR A CENTURY, MEDILL has set the standard for journalism education and continues to lead the way in preparing the next generation of journalism leaders. With new locations in Washington, D.C., Chicago and San Francisco, Medill continues its tradition of hands-on, experiential education. From the undergraduate quarter-long Journalism Residency program to global curricular trips, the Medill experience remains unparalleled.

Journalism Specializations in the Master’s Program

One of the most pivotal enhancements to the Master of Science in Journalism program was the creation of reporting specializations in 2015 that allow students to go deep into specific topics. These specializations (Health, Environment and Science; Magazine; Media Innovation and Content Strategy; Medill Investigative Lab; Politics, Policy and Foreign Affairs; Social Justice; Sports Media; and Video and Broadcast) give graduates focused reporting experience for when they hit the job market.

Global Experiences

In 2016, Medill launched the Explores program to allow graduate students to travel to various destinations during a week-long suspension of regularly scheduled classes for a week in February. MSJ students choose from a selection of courses that are combined with reporting trips to international and domestic cities that complement their specializations. The 2020 Explores program sent students to Buenos Aires, Frankfurt/Paris, Johannesburg, San Juan, London, Olympia, Wash., Los Angeles, South Carolina and Chicago



Puja Bhattacharjee (MSJ17) inspects a marine specimen as part of an environmental reporting trip to Bodega Bay, Calif.

(where the 2020 NBA All-Star Game was held).

The global experiences programming was expanded in 2017 to give undergraduate students a similar option that includes a winter quarter class combined with a spring break

reporting trip. BSJ students in 2019 traveled to Tokyo, Paris, London, Buenos Aires, Johannesburg, the American Southwest, Bodega Bay, California, San Juan, Charlotte, New York City and Los Angeles. Read more about Medill Global on page 21. ■



“Through specialized reporting and a focus on global project-based work, Medill students gain a deep understanding of how to create important journalism and the influence it can have in promoting change both locally and abroad.”

Beth Bennett (MSJ97),
associate dean and professor

Faculty Highlights 2020

Steven Thrasher



The Ford Foundation awarded Assistant Professor Steven Thrasher, the inaugural Daniel H. Renberg chair of social justice in reporting, a \$75,000 Creativity and Free Expression grant to be spent between now and the end of 2021. The grant will support Thrasher's interdisciplinary research and the study of the ways viruses come into contact with certain

demographics. Furthermore, Thrasher will study how viruses—in collusion with racism, nationalism, homo/transphobia and ableism—affect certain communities. The Ford Creative and Free Expression grants prioritize artist-driven projects and organizations that include deep and meaningful engagement with communities.

Arionne Nettles



Journalism Lecturer Arionne Nettles (MSJ16) received one of six fellowships awarded by Investigative Reporters & Editors (IRE) to educators of color to participate in IRE's first Online Data Bootcamp for Educators July 28-Aug. 1 at the University of Arizona, thanks to the generosity of the Lumina Foundation and the

Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University. At Medill, Nettles' focus is on digital storytelling and she is responsible for Medill's publishing platform, Medill Reports.

Kalyani Chadha



Kalyani Chadha is joining Medill from the University of Maryland as an associate professor of journalism. Kalyani's research focuses on issues of media globalization and the implications of new media technologies with a particular emphasis on the journalism landscape in India. Her work has appeared in

leading journals such as Media, Culture and Society, the Journal of Broadcast and Electronic Media, and Global Media and Communication and Convergence.

Jeremy Gilbert



Jeremy Gilbert (BSJ00, MSJ00), director of strategic initiatives at The Washington Post, is the new Knight Chair in Digital Media Strategy at Medill. At The Post, Gilbert directed a lab dedicated to experimental storytelling that aimed to create unique digital products and stories. In 2016, he built The Post's first artificial intelligence storytelling system, called

Heliograf, which used machine-generated text to expand elections and Olympics coverage.

Former Medill Dean Ken Bode was the first Knight Chair at Medill when it was established as the Knight Chair in Broadcasting in 1999 by the Knight Foundation. The focus of the chair was later changed, and, in 2009, Medill Professor Owen Youngman was named Knight Chair in Digital Media Strategy—a position that he held until his retirement earlier this year.

Danielle Robinson Bell



Danielle Robinson Bell (BSJ99) joined Medill as an assistant professor in IMC. Her career has included senior management roles at several of the world's most respected advertising agencies. In those roles, Robinson Bell worked alongside billion-dollar brands such as Tide, Gillette, Visa and Verizon Wireless to create integrated

marketing campaigns for various consumer segments across general market, multicultural and millennial audiences. In 2015, Robinson Bell launched Pen and Voice, Inc., a writing and messaging practice for businesses, brands, and executives. Bell also holds an MBA from Kellogg.

Patti Wolter



Helen Gurley Brown Magazine Professor Patti Wolter (BSJ89, MSJ90) has been named by the provost as a Charles Deering McCormick Distinguished Professor of Instruction. This honor is awarded annually to a group of faculty members in recognition of their extraordinary teaching and service to the University.

2019 James Foley Medill Medal for Courage Awarded to New York Times Reporter Azam Ahmed for coverage of gang murder across Latin America.

AZAM AHMED, New York Times bureau chief for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, has won the James Foley Medill Medal for Courage in Journalism for his investigation of gang murder across Latin America. In his series "Kill, or Be Killed: Latin America's Homicide Crisis," Ahmed chronicled the rampant and unchecked gang violence in the region.

"No one deserves this recognition more than Azam," said New York Times International Managing Editor Greg Winter. "He has put himself on the frontlines for years, from Afghanistan to Honduras, to document the lives of the world's most vulnerable people. He does so with compassion, exceptional insight and compelling narratives that draw readers in and remind them, in the most intimate ways, of what people around the world confront on a daily basis."

In Mexico and Honduras, Ahmed witnessed shootouts and cartel killings. In Brazil, he tracked down police officers who were members of illegal death squads and persuaded them not just to talk, but also to confess to murders and other crimes. After nine members of a Mormon family were killed in remote Mexican mountains, Ahmed traveled to the scene and discovered evidence that had been overlooked, including spent shell casings and a child's shoe, to create a more accurate picture of what had happened than what the authorities presented.

"Year after year as I read the entries, I think the stories can't get any more harrowing; the world can't get any more dangerous for journalists," said founding judge and Medill Professor



New York Times reporter Azam Ahmed

Emeritus Donna Leff (BSJ70, MSJ71). "But there seems to be no end to the violence for the subjects and peril for the reporters telling their stories. What stood out in Azam's work was the riveting, graceful language and the vivid narrative in a deep portfolio that embraced the whole of his domain—Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean."

Ahmed spent 17 months interviewing one of Mexico's deadliest hired killers who worked for the cartels. Ahmed exposed closely guarded secrets of the underworld, including an assassin training camp. In Honduras, he lived inside gang territory for weeks. In San Pedro Sula, Honduras, one of the deadliest cities in the world, Ahmed chronicled the siege of a neighborhood with vivid descriptions of shootouts, gang incursions and last-minute pleas to stop the killing.

"Much in the spirit of James Foley himself, Azam is a daring, gifted and

skilled journalist," said co-judge Brett Pulley (MSJ87), Bloomberg's Atlanta bureau chief and Medill Board of Advisers member. "In story after story, he demonstrates a willingness to venture into society's heart of darkness to illuminate the places and people who are integral to some of the globe's most vexing issues and confounding and violent occurrences. His body of work stood tall above a field of entries that in their own right were tremendously impressive, important and powerful."

"As I read one arresting story after the next from Azam's impressive portfolio, I could hardly believe this was the work of a single journalist," said co-judge and Medill assistant professor Ceci Rodgers (MSJ81). "Through his detailed reporting and his access to the inner workings of the drug gangs in Latin America, Azam opens a world to readers in a way that contextualizes the horrors driving migrants to the U.S. border to seek asylum. Beautifully crafted narratives and compelling characters draw us in and make us care."

Honorable Mention

This year's honorable mention also won high praise from the judges. In "Outsourcing Migration," Associated Press reporters Maggie Michael, Lori Hinnant and Renata Brito exposed the devastating effects of restrictive European and U.S. immigration policies that have resulted in asylum-seekers being sent back to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador—the very countries many of them are fleeing. The year-long project, funded in part by a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, documented the abuse of people fleeing violence, and the benefits gained by mafia, militia and even the Libyan coast guard, which was paid by the EU to warehouse migrants. ■



Update: Integrated Marketing Communications

Our evolving curriculum helps students learn to blend data and creativity to build strong brands in the digital age.

MEDILL'S INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS (IMC) programs are deeply rooted at Northwestern, dating back as far as 1909 when advertising instruction was first offered through the School of Commerce, before NU president and advertising pioneer Walter Dill Scott established the Medill School of Journalism.

Since Medill's founding in 1921, IMC education at Medill has continued to evolve and expand. The Master of Science in Advertising degree, founded in the late 60s, shifted to a focus on direct marketing in the 80s. In 1991, the study of IMC was firmly established at Medill, and the program has continued to grow from a full-time master's program to include part-time and online study for working professionals and an IMC undergraduate certificate program that enrolls nearly 350 NU students from every school.

IMC Full Time Master's Program

Today's Medill IMC curricula includes one-of-a-kind opportunities that range from immersive courses in Chile and London to a fourth-quarter summer immersion program where student teams work with companies to solve marketing challenges of strategic importance. The popular Global Perspectives class combines coursework with a two-week international experience in Asia. In the past, students have visited leading local and multinational companies in cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, Singapore and Seoul. IMC students in this program can also apply to spend their final quarter in San Francisco to expand



IMC alumni and students at a marketing trends panel event in San Francisco during an immersion course in 2019.

their knowledge about the convergence of marketing, communications and technology in this innovation hub.

IMC Professional Master's Program

In fall 2020, Medill merged its part-time and online IMC graduate programs into a revamped IMC Professional Master's program to provide even more flexibility for working professionals. The program allows students to take classes online or in person at Medill's downtown Chicago campus or combine both methods of study. The program will offer immersive five-day courses specifically tailored for working professionals in San Francisco,

London, Chile and Asia.

"Flexibility is so important for working professionals who want to advance their careers or embark on a new path," says IMC Associate Dean Vijay Viswanathan. "IMC Professional allows students to take classes in a format and at a pace that recognizes their busy and full lives. At the same time, our cutting-edge program helps students learn both the art and science of marketing communications that employers want. We're the only program at a Top 10 university like this." The IMC Professional program welcomed its first students in September 2020.

IMC Thought Leaders

In 2019, the IMC faculty launched an idea-sharing initiative on LinkedIn titled Northwestern Medill IMC – Thought Leaders. This online community featuring IMC faculty, alumni and guest speakers is a place for experts to share their insights into the marketing communications industry and the keys to success in the field. In the spring of 2020, the Medill IMC faculty expanded the IMC Thought Leaders scope with the launch of "IMC in a Changing World," a series of COVID-19-focused LinkedIn articles authored by faculty. Topics ranged from how to create strategic messaging during a time of crisis to thoughts on the future of E-Commerce and brick-and-mortar retail. While the first set of articles focused squarely on marketers adapting to the COVID crisis, subsequent articles focused more on planning for the future.

"We launched the 'IMC in a Changing World' series when we observed that the COVID-19 situation had forced consumers to change the way they make decisions and access brands, products and services," explains Viswanathan. "Since IMC's mantra is customer centricity, we asked faculty to



"Our cutting-edge programs help students learn both the art and science of marketing communications that employers want. We're the only program like this at a top-10 university."

Vijay Viswanathan,
IMC associate dean
and associate professor



IMC students taking the Global Perspectives - Brand Innovation course traveled to Chile for a five-day trip that combines company visits – and sightseeing.

write articles that would help marketers respond in ways that respected the current situation of the customer."

Spiegel Research Center

The Spiegel Research Center (SRC) continues to grow at Medill. The focus of the SRC is to do evidence-based, data-driven analysis to prove the relationship between customer engagement and purchase behavior. Past research has included proving the financial impact of consumer behavior in social media, mobile devices and customer reviews using evidence that shows which types of customer engagement with media and brands results in financial performance.

Currently, researchers at SRC are collaborating with the Local News Initiative (see page 29) to analyze anonymous data about readers and their engagement with news content and media services. The student researchers from SRC are helping to identify which behaviors—reading particular types of articles, purchasing a digital subscription, clicking on an advertisement or calling a

customer service center—lead to certain financial outcomes for the media outlets. They also are studying behavior across different devices and media platforms.

Preparing for the Future

The core principle of customer centricity i.e., understanding the deep underlying motivations for observed behaviors and respecting the differences that exist between customers, has never been more important. The marketing and marketing communication functions are undergoing significant changes in the way they are organized and relevant measures of success are identified. At Medill IMC, students and faculty will work together to create new ways for brands to connect with their customers with empathy, build trust with various stakeholders and deliver longterm value. ■

Medill By the Numbers



Age: 100 Years
1921-2021



Locations: 5
Evanston, Illinois; Chicago;
Washington, D.C.; San Francisco
and Qatar



Alumni: 18,000
260,000 Northwestern alumni



Alumni Clubs: 6
Chicago; Bay Area; New England;
New York; Southern California;
Washington, D.C.

Undergraduate Journalism Class of 2020



Students: 159



States represented: 32
Countries represented: 6



Double major, minor or certificate: 86%



Traveled abroad during their time at
Northwestern: 68%

Graduate Journalism Class of 2020



Students: 126



Average age: 24



States represented: 25
Countries represented: 11

Undergraduate Integrated Marketing Communications Certificate



2020 graduates: 126



Total graduates since program
launched in 2009: 1,290

Graduate Integrated Marketing Communications - Full-Time Class of 2020



Students: 111



Average age: 24



States represented: 15
Countries represented: 9

Graduate Integrated Marketing Communications - Professional 2019-2020 School Year



Students: 103



Average age: 34



States represented: 22
Countries represented: 7



Medill students work in the collaborative space at 303 E. Wacker.

Creative
working space
and a 2020
expansion fuel
innovative
programs and
more events.

STEPS FROM THE MAGNIFICENT MILE
and 13 miles south of Northwestern's
Evanston campus, Medill's Chicago
location at 303 E. Wacker gives
graduate journalism and IMC
Professional students a downtown base
that's close to the action.

Medill Chicago's downtown space was
designed with a tech startup feel in
mind, with large open spaces designed
to promote collaboration and innovation.
Smart classrooms are adaptable using
retractable walls. A state-of-the art
broadcast studio overlooking the
Chicago River and Navy Pier provides

a place for broadcast students to get
trained on the best equipment and
build their portfolios.

Four years after moving to the East
Wacker location, Medill has expanded
across the hall to offer additional
teaching and event space. Known
as the Skyline Suite, this flexible
additional space includes four staff
offices, two conference rooms and
a collaboration space, which can
be transformed into two separate
classrooms or serve as one event
space that can accommodate up to
200 people.

MEDILL IN CHICAGO



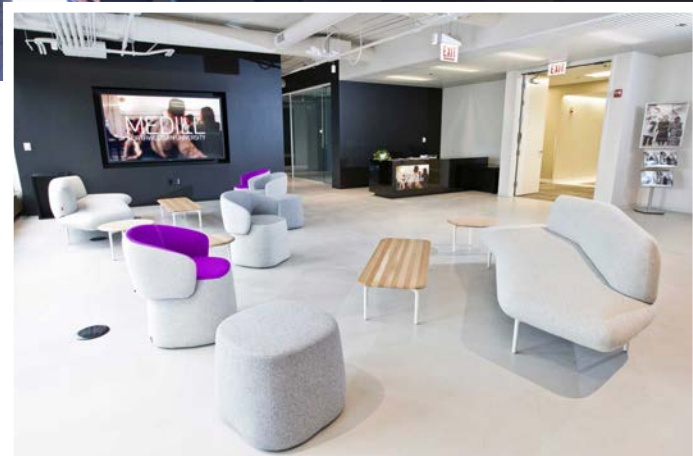
Medill alumnae panelists at a Medill Women in Marketing panel in the Chicago space. From left: Karen Entriiken (IMC19), Tiffani Saxton (IMC14), Elisa All Schmitz (MSJ95), Melissa Ben-Yoseph (IMC00) and Heidi Barker (BSJ91).

Not much is attached to the ground here. The space's modular design transforms depending on the class' needs for the quarter.

"We move things around to make the space tailored-fit for that class, that quarter," says Rafie Fields, director of operations at Medill Chicago. "The space never quite looks the same quarter to quarter."

The IMC Professional program students who are taking in-person classes use the space in the evenings – and Medill even springs for dinner since most of the students come straight from work. Medill IMC also uses the event space regularly for guest lectures and events such as the now-annual Women in Marketing panel that's held in the winter.

The Chicago space is outfitted for multipurpose journalism. Students can whiz from the broadcast studio to work on their reels to a team room, which doubles as a conference room, to work on a group project. Medill's open-



style workspace allows for seamless collaboration.

MSJ students take nearly all of their courses in Chicago, and Northwestern runs a free shuttle from Evanston to downtown with various stops along the route for student commuters.

"The students really benefit from being in their own collective cohort in the beautiful downtown space," says Ceci Rodgers, assistant professor and director of global journalism learning. "You walk in and it feels like its own educational space."

The location puts students in proximity to the events unfolding in downtown as they cover stories for Medill Reports. They're at the center of the action gaining real-world reporting experience covering Chicago's neighborhoods, government agencies, nonprofits and more.

Medill's innovative workspace in Chicago, home to the graduate journalism and IMC Professional programs.



Jaaziah Bethea (MSJ17) doing a standup in Medill's broadcasting studio at 303 E. Wacker.

"It's essential to be near the news when it happens," says Arionne Nettles (MSJ16), lecturer and publisher of Medill Reports. "Medill MSJ reporters are valued as a news source so it's important for us to be in Chicago to promote and support it."

Every quarter students in beat reporting, multimedia, video and magazine can produce work for Medill Reports. They report on beats including business; arts and culture; health, environment and science; public affairs; social justice; sports; and more.

"Medill Chicago gives students the opportunity to produce work that mimics the work they're going to do in a newsroom," Nettles says.

Exclusive to Chicago, students can apply to be a Medill Reports Chicago Fellow. Each cohort has two fellows who assist in the publishing process and specialize in a specific area of interest such as copy editing, social media, visual or digital. Fellows have greater access than their peers to the publishing platform, which has allowed Medill Reports to publish content more frequently.

"It's less of a top down experience and more collaborative for students, which is how some of the newer newsrooms function," Rodgers says. "It allows students the freedom to try a variety of roles."

MSJ students occupy the space during typical office working hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In the evenings, the 16th floor transitions for IMC Professional students. The downtown location near Chicago's Loop makes it accessible for professionals to take evening classes.

It also makes it easy for alumni and industry professionals to come in and speak with students.

"It's the kind of space that brings professionals in the industry together, and that's the environment we think is important for students," Rodgers says. ■

Medill's new home in The Washington Post building puts journalism students even closer to the action.

MEDILL IN WASHINGTON D.C.

FIVE BLOCKS NORTHEAST of the White House, Medill's D.C. bureau has relocated to One Franklin Square, also home to The Washington Post.

Medill designed the space to be responsive to the ever-changing environment of news. Students have the tools to master different storytelling platforms. They can produce everything from live shots to podcasts in the D.C. hub decked out with state-of-the-art technology. Both undergraduate and graduate journalism students have the chance to spend a quarter, or more, in Medill's celebrated D.C. program.

For more than 50 years, Medill students have hit the Hill covering Congress, federal policy and world affairs. They've been at the center of history documenting presidential inaugurations, protests and congressional hearings.

The Washington newsroom aims to ensure students possess a professional-level ability to dig for stories and report accurately, fairly and thoroughly.

"When they leave Washington, students should feel comfortable walking into

any newsroom and knowing what to do," says Professor Ellen Shearer, the Washington, D.C. bureau chief and co-director of the National Security Journalism Initiative.

Outfitted with U.S. Senate Radio & Television Correspondents Gallery passes, graduate students at the D.C. bureau are plunged into an intense reporting immersion program. They have access to interview some of the most powerful policymakers on the Hill, from the White House press secretary to the senate minority leader. Coming in cold to cover a new beat and city, students are challenged to start reporting at full speed in the nation's capital.

The Washington, D.C. experience gives graduate students the opportunity to operate as professional journalists. Covering politics, national security,

Medill students at a 2019 mentors networking session in Washington on the roof of the Washington Post building – the new home of the Washington Program.





Medill third-year students Janea Wilson, left, and Angelina Campanile after their Capitol tour as part of the Medill on the Hill reporting quarter for undergraduates.



“When they leave Washington, students should feel comfortable walking into any newsroom and knowing what to do.”

Ellen Shearer,
William F. Thomas Professor;
Co-Director, National Security
Journalism Initiative;
Washington Bureau Chief

health, education, business and more, students are at the center of the most pressing issues today. Student journalists file original multimedia stories thoroughly and accurately on deadline. Students also use social media and multimedia tools to enhance their storytelling and coverage.

Medill partners with more than 20 national media outlets plus local news stations and trade publications as part of the Medill News Service. This allows students to earn bylined stories in publications including the Texas Tribune, STAT News, USA Today, Military Times and Market Watch. Through reporting for various publications, students learn how to report robust stories to meet the needs of different audiences.

The newsroom is also the home of the politics, policy, and foreign affairs specialization and the national security specialization for graduate students. Students in this specialization start their foundational training at Medill's Chicago campus and the Chicago newsroom before diving into public affairs reporting at the D.C. campus for the remaining three quarters.

Undergraduates go through a competitive application process to participate in the Medill on the Hill program. Students split their time between reporting their beats in the city and attending journalism and political science seminar classes.

During an election year, the undergraduate Washington program takes place in the fall to put students at the center of the action. The fall 2020 and winter 2021 Medill on the Hill programs were canceled due to COVID restrictions.

Journalists for outlets including The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and AP teach classes in D.C. Students can take courses focused on storytelling mediums such as data visualization and audio reporting, as well as subject-area specializations such as national security or cybersecurity.

In addition to the formal guidance of their instructors, students learn from watching the seasoned journalists they share the press table with. Medill in Washington gives students the intimate view of how journalists from CNN, Reuters, AP and the other major outlets report on politics and national policy issues.

“The learning curve is steep, but Medill students never let us down,” Shearer says.

Students also follow the stories they've reported on in D.C., traveling across the country to the areas affected by policy decisions for further coverage. When it's presidential election season, they have the chance to hop on the campaign trail to report on pivotal moments in politics such as the caucuses and campaign events.



Sharon Yuqing Liao (IMC16) displays results of a brainstorming session in the San Francisco space at 44 Montgomery.

Students explore the crossroads of tech, digital media, content strategy and human-centered design in Medill's West Coast hub.

SAN FRANCISCO

MEDILL IN

AT THE EPICENTER OF INNOVATION,

Medill students take on journalism and marketing with a focus on technology in Medill's downtown San Francisco space.

Northwestern's San Francisco campus opened at the beginning of the 2016 school year in collaboration with the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science. The space is located in the middle city's Financial District and occupies the entire 18th floor at 44 Montgomery St.

A natural counterpart to Medill Chicago's 303 E. Wacker St. innovative workspace, the global design and architecture firm Gensler designed both campuses to be modular spaces with state-of-the-art technology to foster collaboration. Northwestern San Francisco features a design lab, team rooms and presentation space.

According to Professor Frank Mulhern, executive director of academic programs in San Francisco, having an immersive experience in downtown San Francisco allows Medill students to encounter the culture, community and nuances of Silicon Valley with its focus on technology and innovation.

"The Silicon Valley culture has to be experienced firsthand to be understood," Mulhern says. "Medill's academic programs in San Francisco offer a blend of classroom work, guest speakers and Bay Area excursions that demonstrate the uniqueness of the part of the world bringing about the most innovation and technological transformation in the world."

Students also live in the Bay Area, giving them the chance to learn the distinct culture, jargon and lifestyle of Silicon Valley. Enterprising students have also leveraged the San Francisco program as an opportunity to build meaningful relationships and connections to expand their personal and professional networks.

Graduate Journalism in San Francisco

After establishing a foundation in journalism principles during their first quarter in Chicago, graduate journalism students in the media innovation and

content strategy specialization shift their studies to San Francisco to explore the crossroads of technology, digital media, content strategy and human-centered design.

During their time in the program, the media innovation MSJ students take classes in three key areas in San Francisco: audience, business and technology. They also participate in an internship at a media or tech company to apply their skills outside the classroom and to gain an inside view of how innovative companies operate.

"Everything about journalism is being touched and driven by technology," says Professor Rich Gordon, director of the media innovation and content strategy specialization for the MSJ program. "Students will come back from San Francisco with a different set of ideas on the role of technology in media and journalism."

The Bay Area creates the ideal backdrop for MSJ students to learn the media product development process and how journalism and technology intertwine. In order to stay relevant in the rapid-paced world of media, the ability to innovate and pivot can be crucial.

MSJ students who complete the specialization don't typically pursue traditional newsroom jobs in reporting. Instead they're usually more interested in careers related to product management, audience development and content strategy.

Harriet White (MSJ18) considers her time in San Francisco as the defining experience of her degree. Studying and interning in the city gave her a deeper understanding of the role of product development in the journalism world. She uses the user research and analytics skills she learned at Medill in her role as a product manager for video news platform Newsy.

"The curriculum gave me firsthand exposure to Silicon Valley and how to build a media product from the ground up, which prepared me for my first job in product management," White says. "I had already lived some of the

Faculty member Josh Grau (IMC04) and guest lecturer Kate Garmey (IMC07) lead part-time IMC master's students through a Shark Tank-like ideas competition called "Lobster Tank" during the San Francisco immersion week.



experiences." Medill undergraduates and Northwestern Segal Design Institute students have the option to take a winter quarter together in San Francisco. The cohort gives students the opportunity to collaborate in hands-on courses in design innovation and technology.

"An educational experience that requires travel and living in a different culture can be transformative and valuable for students," says Gordon. "Only in San Francisco can you put students in an environment where everyone eats, sleeps and breathes tech."

"I feel sometimes people in the Bay Area are caught up by technology. They end up overlooking the focus, which should be the consumer we serve and the value that marketing creates for business, not the different tactical tools."

Sylvia Yu (IMC20), IMC student

IMC in San Francisco

IMC Full-Time students can apply to spend their fifth and final quarter in the Bay Area taking courses that look at how marketing communications, technology and data work together.

Additionally, IMC Professional students who take courses online and part-time may participate in week-long immersion courses in San Francisco.

Jonathan Copulsky, senior lecturer and executive director of Spiegel Research Center, says the Bay area is an ideal setting for students in his five-day long immersion Intro to MarTech (Marketing

Technology) course in San Francisco. This unique opportunity allows IMC Professional students a chance to meet their peers and work together in a dynamic and innovative setting.

Bay Area IMC student Sylvia Yu (IMC20) participated in the MarTech course last year and says she appreciated the diversity of the group and hearing from people outside of Silicon Valley talk about technology. "I feel sometimes people in the Bay Area are caught up by technology. They end up overlooking the focus, which should be the consumer we serve and the value that marketing creates for business, not the different



Medill students conduct a brainstorming session in the San Francisco space at 44 Montgomery.

tactical tools," Yu says.

Copulsky says the San Francisco space provides an advantage, too.

"It's hard to not have the class feel like a lecture in traditional auditoriums, so the opportunity to have a space that allows for reconfiguration and interaction in San Francisco is terrific," he says.

Holding the class in San Francisco has allowed him to host leaders of top-tier marketing technology firms located in the Bay Area.

"We've done the same class in downtown Chicago, and we didn't have the same ecosystem we have in San Francisco," Copulsky says.

Design Thinking is another intensive, immersive course for IMC Professional students that is offered at Northwestern's San Francisco location or in Chicago. In this class, students acquire the design tools and mindsets to help identify latent customer needs, surface valuable insights, develop fresh ideas and continuously test and iterate



"Medill students come to San Francisco to experience academic programs at the intersection of media platforms and digital content. Students learn how innovation in news and marketing communications are remaking the media business."

Frank Mulhern, professor and executive director of academic programs in San Francisco

on those ideas.

Life in San Francisco is packed with extracurricular experiences designed for students to fully immerse themselves in the world of tech. Students have attended some of the largest conferences in Silicon Valley such as TechCrunch Disrupt and Wired25.

Purple pride runs deep in San Francisco. From established Silicon Valley mainstays like Google, Adobe and Twitter to media-focused tech startups such as NerdWallet and SmartNews, students further their connections and studies by visiting alumni at their places of work and going on company site visits.

Finally, Medill's presence is a West Coast gathering point for alumni. The downtown location provides easy access for working alumni to attend panels, workshops and networking events. Silicon Valley's abundant alumni population also allows Medill to tap into a diverse array of talent to teach classes. ■



Basma Amer (MSJ18) filming in the Desert View Watchtower at the Grand Canyon.

PHOTO: JENNA BRAUNSTEIN

Extraordinary experiences take Medill students far beyond the classroom.

**MEDILL
GLOBAL**



Guna-Panamanian governmental worker and environmental activist Diwi Valiente speaks to the Medill environmental reporting BSJ students on one of the Guna Yala islands. PHOTO: EMMA SARAPPO (BSJ19)

MEDILL HAS SIGNIFICANTLY expanded its global opportunities for both undergraduate and master's students by creating unique travel experiences that correspond with specific courses. These global learning experiences are now a centerpiece – and selling point – for academic programs at Medill.

These faculty-led, off-campus global experiences are designed to give both journalism and integrated marketing communications students, many of whom would not have the means to travel during their time at Northwestern,

an opportunity to go beyond the classroom and get out of their comfort zones.

“The goal for these programs is for students to understand there are a myriad of perspectives and cultures to be conscious of as they’re reporting and broaden their worldview,” says Kate Lee, Medill’s associate director of external programs.

On average, about 400 Medill students travel domestically and internationally yearly as part of Medill’s experiences initiative. This is in addition to 60%

of Medill undergraduates overall who choose to embark on a full quarter abroad through external study abroad programs.

“My international experiences at Medill have taught me to respectfully and ethically communicate with people of all backgrounds, which has influenced how I operate as a journalist and a human being,” says Colin Boyle (BSJ20, MSJ20).

Boyle has taken full advantage of Medill’s global program offerings. He’s traveled internationally four times during his time at Medill, reporting in Argentina

“My international experiences at Medill have taught me to respectfully and ethically communicate with people of all backgrounds, which has influenced how I operate as a journalist and a human being.”

Colin Boyle (BSJ20, MSJ20) about the trips



“The goal for these programs is for students to understand there are a myriad of perspectives and cultures to be conscious of as they’re reporting and broaden their worldview.”

Kate Lee, associate director of external programs

and Panama and learning about history and culture in Japan.

Undergraduate Reporting Experiences

Medill second-year undergraduate students have the option to participate in a reporting trip during spring break as part of a winter quarter course called Journalism in Practice. The class is specifically positioned early on in a student’s time at Medill to give a preview of reporting overseas.

Through the Journalism in Practice course, close to 100 Medillians travel with their class and a faculty member to participate in this hands-on immersion reporting experience.

Classes have traveled internationally to cultivate their mastery of storytelling by developing their visual skills in Cuba, expanding their knowledge on arts and entertainment in London, and broadening

their perspectives exploring opposing narratives in Israel.

Students can also complete their Journalism in Practice course in Chicago. Locally, students have covered poverty, immigration, science and the environment, and business and technology.

Boyle traveled to Panama during his second year at Medill to report on the effect of global warming and climate change on local communities for his Journalism in Practice course. In preparation for the trip, his class spent five weeks learning about how American students may be perceived in the country, ethical reporting standards and cultural competency.

“Traveling has very quickly helped me realize I have a lot more growing to do as a journalist when it comes

to understanding the world and why it’s important to take the time to listen and research to become a more compassionate journalist,” Boyle says.

Medill undergraduates also have the option to travel internationally for their Journalism Residency. They can choose to spend an entire quarter working with a professional media outlet in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Doha, Qatar; or Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa.

Graduate Journalism Reporting Experiences

Journalism master’s students travel in conjunction with a class during winter quarter as part of the Medill Explores program. Medill faculty suspend regular classes for a week so students can travel domestically or internationally for an immersion experience.

Courses and locations change yearly. Students typically choose programs related to their specialization or learn about a new topic. Reporting topics have ranged from learning about international business in Tokyo, studying national security and Russian election interference in Paris, and learning new forms of videography documenting vivid aspects of life in Buenos Aires.

Additional Medill Explores locations have included London, Johannesburg, the American Southwest, Bodega Bay, California, Los Angeles and more .

Domestically, the Medill Explores program has taken students interested in media innovation to the center of publishing, New York City, to learn from legacy media outlets such as New York Magazine and content analytics firm,

Interested in the intersection of art and politics, Harris Forbes (BSJ19) reported on student artists who have grappled with identity and dissidence in Beijing and Hong Kong.

PHOTO: COURTNEY ZHU (BSJ19)





Undergraduate student trip to Shanghai walking the Bund.

Chartbeat. Sports Media specialization students have spent Medill Explores covering the NBA All-Star Weekend where they are fully credentialed and have access to players.

MSJ students can participate in the Global Residency program in a newsroom abroad as an entry-level staff member. Yearly, between 15 to 20 MSJ students participate in this optional fifth quarter.

They use the skills they've developed at Medill to produce multimedia stories and cover high-profile international issues. It gives them the chance to build real-world reporting experience for a

global outlet. They work with an on-site editor and have regular check-ins with a Medill faculty member to discuss their progress.

Medill maintains close relationships with newsrooms throughout the world and consistently places students at publications in Argentina, Hong Kong, United Kingdom, South Africa, Israel and Qatar. Students have completed global residencies at BBC.com in London, The Times of Israel in Jerusalem and the Johannesburg Star in South Africa. Students work with Ceci Rodgers (MSJ81), director of the global journalism learning, to find the best fit

residency for their career goals.

IMC Global Opportunities

Medill IMC has been making global trips available for the integrated marketing communications students for nearly 10 years as part of the Global Perspectives course, an elective that includes a 10-day, intensive business and research trip to Asia. Through this experience, IMC Professional and Full-Time students gain deep, contextual knowledge of marketing communications in the emerging and quickly evolving Asian marketplace and apply what they've learned through their coursework in a global context.



"I know that traveling around the world for work and pleasure has made me a better person. On Medill trips, it's been a pleasure to see students' worldviews expand right in front of my eyes."

Craig Duff, Professor and graduate journalism Video and Broadcast specialization leader

"I wanted to further my learning in AI and data analysis to help me find more insights in my future career. The IMC Asia course was unique because it gave me a broader and wiser perspective on the Asian market," says Charlene Lu (IMC19).

On the newer side, the Global Perspectives - Brand Innovation course, now in its third year, sends IMC students to Santiago, Chile, for a five-day immersive experience learning how large, legacy organizations innovate to sustain their industry leadership. Students partner with major international brands and with peers at a local university to complete their projects.

IMC students may also elect to take the Global Perspectives course taught in London in September. This class gives students the chance to learn about leadership and branding in a global context through company visits designed to expand their understanding of how organizations attract international audiences to grow their brands.

Anike Owoye (IMC19) participated in the London course last year. "This experience in London was unique because it was an opportunity to develop an immersive understanding of how consumer behavior and perceptions inform brand strategy," Owoye says. "It



Gustavo Paredes (BSJ18) views an image on Emagin Tanaschuk's (BSJ19) camera on their first visit to Souq Waqif, a traditional market in Doha. The souq became a favorite hangout for the students, many of whom made several return trips during the week. PHOTO: CRAIG DUFF

was amazing to use all of the research skills we learned throughout the IMC program to get into the minds of the consumers."

Finally, IMC students also have the option of spending their final quarter in France studying communications at Sciences Po.

Financial Support

A key initiative for Medill has been to make global and domestic experiences accessible for all students regardless of their ability to pay. Medill supports students by providing funding for global journalism residencies, housing support for quarters studying in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, and travel expenses for reporting projects, study abroad and other international programs.

All students in the Journalism in Practice courses are eligible for support for global travel, and those who demonstrate the highest level of need are fully funded. Subsidies are even available to cover the cost of obtaining a passport for first-time travelers. The funding comes primarily through an

endowment created by Gaye Hill (BSJ77) and Jeff Urbina (WCAS77, KSM81) and is supplemented with other Student Experience Fund contributions. "Jeff and I feel so proud when we hear the reflections of the students who have traveled as part of their Medill studies," Hill says. "We believe in the way travel takes you out of your comfort zone through exposure to different people, environments and issues. These experiences help students develop the informed and balanced perspectives that are essential to good journalism and an engaged citizenry."

MSJ students don't have any out-of-pocket travel costs for participating in Medill Explores. Part of the cost is factored into their student fees and the majority of the funds come from alumni donations. IMC students, too, have access to funding to help offset travel costs and/or housing.

"Thanks to gifts from generous alumni and friends we are able to continue to offer these one-of-a-kind opportunities to students," Lee says. ■



Assistant Professor Christina Paschyn (BSJ07, MSJ07) and students in the Medill program at Northwestern University in Qatar attend class in its newsroom.

NU-Q's second decade brings an expanding curriculum of journalism offerings.

MEDILL IN QATAR

SHEIKHA MOZA bint NASSER AL-MISSNED, the wife of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, former Emir of the State of Qatar, selected Northwestern in 2006 to bring media and communication studies to Doha's Education City, a sprawling cross-cultural academic complex housing branch campuses for six leading American universities.

Medill graduated the first BSJ class in 2012 and has continued to increase enrollment since its launch. Northwestern moved into a permanent space in 2017.

"NU-Q's journalism offerings have grown significantly over the past 10 years under the leadership of my colleague Mary Dedinsky, and next year journalism will have its largest cohort of students, more than 40," says Medill



"Students here develop the kind of resourcefulness that makes you a good reporter anywhere."

Medill Professor Craig LaMay

Professor Craig LaMay, who moved to Doha to join the NUQ faculty in 2017. "Students here develop the kind of resourcefulness that makes you a good reporter anywhere, but especially where records and human sources can be scarce, and legal and cultural restraints make reporting difficult. These students are all in their 20s, and they'll be the next generation of media professionals in a country that isn't yet 50 years old."

Medill's invitation to teach American-style journalism in Doha's Education City demonstrated a step to help Qatar develop its media sector as one of the four core industries of its post fossil-fuel future. Gaining access to information keepers to report stories can still be challenging, but NU-Q students possess a passion for the truth and ethics, says Mary Dedinsky (BSJ69, MSJ70), NU-Q director of the Journalism and Strategic Communication program and associate professor in residence. Professors instruct students to follow the reporting laws of the country they're in.

"Students here are as idealistic as any at Medill," Dedinsky says. "They vigorously pursue stories of worth, whether that's covering domestic abuse or conditions at worker camps."



"The students here are truly global citizens, unlike any students I've taught before." - Mary Dedinsky, NU-Q Director of the Journalism and Strategic Communication Program and associate professor in residence.

Students produce stories in English, but they may be interviewing sources in Arabic, Urdu or Spanish. Nearly all NU-Q students speak at least two languages. They represent approximately 40 different nationalities and 50 languages spoken. About 45% of NU-Q students are Qataris, and the remainder come from all over the globe.

"The students here are truly global citizens, unlike any students I've taught before," Dedinsky says. "They have international topics on their minds and

they're very interested in how issues are affecting their local communities."

NU-Q students have the option to major in communications or journalism and earn the same Bachelor of Science degrees as Evanston undergraduates receive. They take courses from the other universities at Education City to receive a broad-ranging liberal arts education. It's common for many of them to pursue additional degrees in business or law.



NU-Q student Inaara Gangji (BSJ21) during her Journalism Residency.

Maryam Al-Badr (BSJ21) decided to study journalism due to the versatility and cross-disciplinary skills it provides.

"I chose journalism because it'll open a lot of doors for me," Al-Badr says. "It allows me to explore many topics."

The Doha campus has also given students in Evanston the opportunity to experience journalism in the Middle East. Medill students can take a semester in Doha or participate in a Journalism Residency in Qatar.

Whether NU-Q students want to work for legacy media companies or pursue careers in other fields, the goal is to ensure students are excellent communicators who can analyze, research and present information effectively, Dedinsky says.

As a student, Jia Naqvi (BSJ18) interned at The Washington Post headquarters producing health and science stories. She now works as a social media producer for Al Jazeera documentary series "Witness."

"My time at Medill was life-changing," Naqvi says. "When I started looking for jobs it gave me an advantage over other candidates."

Training journalists who understand the value of the free press has kickstarted the campaign for more opportunities to tell the stories of this region. ■

Research conducted by The Spiegel Research Center at Medill fuels solutions for the struggling local news industry.

By Thea Showalter (BSJ22)

AMIDST A NATIONAL CRISIS for local news organizations, Medill is seeking ways to save and strengthen the local news industry through the Medill Local News Initiative (LNI), a groundbreaking project that aims to diagnose the challenges facing news organizations and develop solutions.

For the past two years, Medill has collaborated with three news organizations, receiving hard-to-get data to analyze in exchange for providing the papers with crucial research on how to navigate the changing terrain of news media.

"LNI is developing new insights into reader behavior that are helping local news organizations grow their numbers of digital subscribers," says Tim Franklin, senior associate dean of Medill and leader of the Local News Initiative. "This work is critically important now as

local news organizations pivot from an advertising-supported business model to one focused on reader revenue."

In the fall of 2018, researchers from Medill's Spiegel Research Center received 13 terabytes of subscriber data from its three partners— the Chicago Tribune, San Francisco Chronicle and Indianapolis Star (Indy Star). The data would help the researchers probe questions about local news readership that had never before been answered.

But understanding local news subscriber behavior was far from easy. Researchers at the Spiegel Research Center had to merge two vast sets of data — subscriber data and clickstream data— to map how individual subscribers behaved when reading online.

In February of 2019, LNI came out with initial findings: In order to keep



"This work is critically important now as local news organizations pivot from an advertising-supported business model to one focused on reader revenue."

Tim Franklin, senior associate dean and professor

readers as digital subscribers, news organizations must encourage them to develop a regular reading habit and provide unique local content to make their subscription valuable.

Over the summer and fall of 2019, Franklin, along with Spiegel Research Director and Professor Ed Malthouse, presented LNI findings at the annual conferences for the News Leaders

LOCAL NEWS INITIATIVE



Panelists present at the 2019 Local News Initiative Global Summit in Medill's 303 E. Wacker newsroom.

Association, Online News Association, Local Media Association, America's Newspapers and the North American Newspaper Association Managers.

"We've gotten a whole lot of publicity on this," says Malthouse. "It's been very satisfying to see the work take off like this."

For the Chicago Tribune, partnering with the LNI has provided an "outsider's perspective" on audience data that, alongside the Tribune's internal data analysis, has helped to "paint a broad picture of what content areas are the most valuable" to readers, says Christine Taylor, managing editor of audience at the Tribune.

The findings have shown that Tribune readers are "overwhelmingly" smartphone readers, prompting the news organization to focus on its app in 2020 and explore tools to boost mobile engagement.

"It forces us to think about how we prepare and produce our content to meet those readers," says Taylor. "It just makes us think differently about our deadlines— it makes us think differently about how we construct our stories. It's really forcing the newsroom to just think very differently about how it approaches content."

A year after Spiegel began working with

the subscription data, the LNI won a Google Innovation Award in October 2019 in order to build what is called the "Medill Subscriber Engagement Index," a digital tool that will regularly show local news organizations how they're performing with subscribers across a wide array of categories.

A news outlet that shares its data with the index will be able to see how its subscribers behave compared to its peers. This will give local news organizations invaluable insights to make strategic decisions that bolster audience engagement and grow revenue.

In the next few months, LNI will also examine the "finances of customer retention," says Malthouse. Finding strategies to encourage a reader to subscribe to a newspaper is only the first step.

"If you have a new customer, you have to nurture that relationship," says Malthouse. "Teaching the news organizations how to take this new customer and nurture that relationship, and turn that person into a regular reader who values your content, is the name of the game. So that, I think, is going to be a big part of where we go."

Donor Support

A lead gift from John M. Mutz (BSJ57, MSJ58), former lieutenant governor

of Indiana and past president of PSI Energy, the state's largest utility company, helped launch the initiative.

Ongoing gifts from generous donors have allowed LNI to expand and grow, including support from Myrta J. Pulliam — a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and philanthropist whose gift went toward the development of an Indianapolis Star Learning Laboratory, where LNI researchers and Medill's Knight Lab are helping to build an innovative model for sustainable local news.

Mark Ferguson (BSJ80), a Medill Board of Advisers member and partner at Chicago law firm Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott, also made a gift toward LNI.

Foundation support has been equally critical to help advance the mission of the initiative. The Lilly Endowment in Indianapolis, the Central Indiana Community Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation were early supporters. The McCormick Foundation also awarded \$1 million to Medill in March to establish the Metro Media Lab in Chicago, which complements LNI by providing leadership training for Chicago's community and ethnic media organizations and helping news outlets build sustainable business models. ■

Launched in 2019, the program gives students a chance to cover broader social justice stories including COVID-19.



"Students will walk away from the class understanding the impact of investigative reporting, why accountability journalism matters and what it means to marginalized communities across the country."

Debbie Cenziper,
Director of investigative reporting
and associate professor

STUDENTS WITH A PASSION for holding institutions accountable can pursue investigative reporting through the Medill Investigative Lab.

The Lab launched in September 2019 as a way to broaden the range of investigative reporting opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Previously the program was known as the Medill Justice Project, focusing on investigating the criminal justice system and potentially wrongful convictions. The Lab has pivoted to cover broader social justice stories and has reported stories on the opioid crisis and the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes.

"We try to pick timely topics that haven't been heavily reported — stories that can really make a difference," says Debbie Cenziper, associate professor and director of investigative reporting at Medill.

Cenziper leads the Lab from Medill's Washington, D.C., location. In addition to teaching, Cenziper is a Pulitzer Prize-

winning investigative reporter and nonfiction author who writes for The Washington Post.

Students who participate in the Lab gain hands-on experience on how to dig into social justice issues on a national scale. They become better listeners and stronger interviewers as they learn how to synthesize complicated material into compelling stories. They also develop a deeper awareness of the importance of accountability in journalism.

"Students will walk away from the class understanding the impact of investigative reporting, why accountability journalism matters and what it means to marginalized communities across the country," Cenziper says.

The Lab is a two-quarter program, which gives students more time to develop significant investigative stories. In the first quarter, students work out of Evanston or Chicago, where they do pre-reporting, research, and start

MEDILL INVESTIGATIVE LAB



A team of student journalists from the Medill Investigative Lab interview a family in Indian Country devastated by opioid abuse. Students tracked the use and abuse of pain pills in the Pacific Northwest and efforts by Native American tribes to combat overdose deaths.

to explore the story they'll be working on. Students report from Medill's Washington, D.C., newsroom to do on-the-ground reporting with Cenziper for the second quarter. They also travel to wherever the story takes them.

Students apply through a competitive application process to participate in the Lab.

"I look for students who have a passion for storytelling and believe that good journalism can help give a voice to communities that often aren't recognized," Cenziper says. "Students will learn all kinds of important investigative skills; they need to believe in the mission of investigative journalism."

In the Lab's inaugural quarter in fall 2019, students traveled to the Pacific Northwest to cover the effect of the opioid epidemic on a heavily impacted Native American tribe. The majority of students wrote print stories and one student produced a photo essay. Several students also collaborated directly with Cenziper on a piece that was published in The Washington Post.

In spring 2020, as COVID-19 spread across the country, students pivoted from investigating immigration stories to reporting on the toll of the virus on America's hard-hit nursing homes. Students researched the number of positive cases and deaths by contacting sources in all 50 states, analyzing data and speaking with policymakers, health

care workers and families of the deceased. They contributed reporting and assisted Cenziper and the staff of The Washington Post on multiple stories. Several students received front-page bylines.

The Lab aims for every student to take ownership of at least one piece of accountability journalism, which can be an audio, print, video or photo story. More information can be found online at mil.medill.northwestern.edu. ■

Journalism and computer science are united to allow students to develop new digital tools.

STUDENTS INTERESTED in pushing the boundaries of journalism, storytelling, technology and audience find their home at The Knight Lab.

Established in 2011 in partnership with the McCormick School of Engineering and a four-year, \$4.2 million grant, the Knight Lab brings journalists and computer scientists together to accelerate local media innovation by creating new digital tools, building partnerships with media organizations and expanding the media innovation community.

"It's not about fancy tech," says Joe Germuska, executive director of the Knight Lab. "It's the smart application of resources including tech to meet audience needs."

To accomplish this task, the Knight Lab builds open-source, adaptable tools for journalists around the world. Storytellers can use these tools without in-depth technical knowledge. They're designed to be simple, but powerful, to emphasize quality journalism and help make information easy to comprehend. The most popular tool, TimelineJS, has been used by more than 250,000 people

to tell stories seen hundreds of millions of times and is available in more than 60 languages.

Collaborations and community are at the core of the Knight Lab. The Lab aims to foster community for students in different fields and give them a chance to connect.

Throughout the school year, the Knight Lab runs classes, events and community-focused experiences to give students a collective space for interdisciplinary study. The classes focus on how to achieve the goals of journalism in today's current media state.

As some news organizations pivot to membership models, this presents an opportunity to satisfy and excite audiences in order to receive money directly from readers.

"If you're putting all this energy into reporting, editing and producing quality journalism, you also need to consider how it's received," Germuska says. "We think it's crucial for people in journalism to take into account their audience's needs."



"It's the smart application of resources including tech to meet audience needs."

Joe Germuska,
Knight Lab executive director

The Knight Lab Studio class gives students, faculty and staff the opportunity to use design research to understand audiences and propose solutions. The team-based class focuses on the intersection of storytelling, design and technology.

Students apply to work on specific projects and receive coaching and mentoring from the Lab's staff. When the quarter starts, they can jump right into working with their teams. Projects range from creating new tools to rethinking audience engagement to using emerging technologies.

The course is cross-listed in Journalism and Computer Science, but it's open to undergraduate and graduate students from every Northwestern school and runs every quarter. The class brings together

KNIGHT LAB



In the Knight Lab, Danny Hwang (BSJ19, MSJ19) explains Atlas, a project to help obtain transcribed records of community meetings.

PHOTO: JENNA BRAUNSTEIN

those from other disciplines such as business, design, communications, and arts and sciences.

“A significant part of the class is working on projects with different types of people,” Germuska says.

Sometimes the work of the Studio class has revealed opportunities for products the Lab can develop further for the wider journalism and media community. It has laid foundations for prototypes in reporting, data management, research and storytelling.

Rethinking the relationship between news and audience, Medill’s Local News Initiative (see page 29) offers a two-quarter Design for Local News class for McCormick and Medill graduate students through the Knight Lab. The partnership aspires to develop digital storytelling tools by using human-centered design principles to find the best ways to serve local news audiences. In the first quarter, students focus on audience understanding and concept generation before moving onto user interface and user experience development in the second quarter.

One of the cornerstones of the Knight Lab’s community initiatives is Lab Lunch. With an open invite, students congregate to engage in conversation with a guest speaker over a provided lunch. Speakers range from product managers, reporters, developers and editors from legacy news organizations, nonprofits, startups and more.

The staff invites students who show commitment and passion for the mission of the Lab to grow their skills further as Knight Lab Student Fellows. Student fellows contribute to the Lab’s editorial coverage and educational programs.

Weekly, Knight Lab Student Fellows organize Open Lab. At this gathering, a student presents on a topic of their choice and time is given for students to work on their own projects. Open Lab offers students a place to learn from others with support and community while developing their data and visual journalism skills.

The Lab also offers fellowships for its Device Lab. The Knight Lab’s Device Lab provides access to a diverse catalog

of products in augmented and virtual reality, media production, physical prototyping, mobile devices and more. Device Lab Fellows have the chance to explore and experiment with new technologies and run open houses to share these technologies with other students.

The Knight Lab provides an onramp for students interested in the connection of editorial, tech and audience. After their time in the Lab, many have pursued roles in product management, visual journalism and community engagement in top newsrooms such as The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post and in tech roles such as at Google and YouTube. ■



Ronald Jackson, a sophomore at Gary Comer College Prep, (left) interviews a protester at the 2020 Chicago Women’s March on January 18, 2020. The high school students also covered the 2018 march and produced stories on the city’s aldermanic and mayoral elections.

PHOTO: SAIRA SINGH

MEDIA TEENS

High school students learn to tell the stories of their communities.

ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS during the school year, Chicago high schoolers in the Medill Media Teens program learn the foundations of journalism and the craft of storytelling in Medill’s downtown Chicago newsroom.

Media Teens teaches students from under-resourced Chicago high schools about journalism fundamentals such as interviewing, reporting, writing and producing multimedia stories across platforms. Students learn the importance of balanced, ethical, multi-sourced stories and gain hands-on experience through writing stories as well as shooting and editing audio, video and photo stories.

“We want them to be confident in their reporting and communication skills, but we also hope the program helps them

“We hope the program helps them become more socially and politically aware.”

Michael Deas, Medill Media Teens director



Nakiya'h Longstreet, a sophomore at GCE Lab School, covers the 2020 Women's March in downtown Chicago, where thousands of activists gathered to promote causes such as reproductive rights and gun violence. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and other elected officials participated in the annual rally. PHOTO: MICHELLE KIM

become more socially and politically aware,” says Medill faculty member Michael Deas, director of Medill Media Teens.

Medill and the Gary Comer Youth Center collaborated to establish Media Teens nearly 10 years ago. What started as giving the Chicago South Side center youth a chance to learn about journalism has since expanded to include students from additional Chicago schools. The program plans to include students from more Chicago schools and develop a program to provide training to high school teachers to run media programs at their own schools.

Students in Media Teens have produced stories about the Women's March and the midterm city elections. They also learn from guest speakers and tour major news outlets such as ABC and NBC. In the 2020 Media Teens program, legendary Chicago sports journalists Fred Mitchell and Melissa Isaacson spoke to the high schoolers about working in the industry, college and

lessons for life.

Chicago high schoolers have few opportunities to study journalism and media literacy. Nationwide, 64% of public high schools had student newspapers, according to the 2011 Scholastic Journalism Census. Schools with more minority students were more likely to be without a student media outlet.

“It's incumbent upon us to contribute to the news literacy of everyone, particularly those who are living in under-resourced areas,” Deas says.

Media Teens is one way Medill exposes Chicago high schoolers to careers in journalism and trains the next generation of journalists.

“We want to inspire more young people to become journalists and storytellers so they can chronicle the events of their communities and have a voice to tell their stories,” says Medill Dean Charles Whitaker (BSJ80, MSJ81).

Undergraduate Medill students serve

as mentors. They teach, coach and edit the stories the teens produce. With a 1:1 mentor-student ratio, close connections form in the two-year program.

“They recognize the importance of sharing their knowledge with those who can benefit from their experiences and enjoy the sense of community the program develops,” Deas says.

While some students who complete the Media Teens program continue studying journalism in college, others pursue career paths in engineering, nursing and business. In previous years, students have been accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Missouri, University of Michigan and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

No matter what students decide to study, the program provides graduates with the ability to write clearly and effectively and gives them an understanding of journalism's best practices. ■

JOURNALISM CAREER KICK START



Emma Suttell (left), Sarah Effress and Isabel Funk celebrate the launch of the cherub website with ice cream treats.

PHOTO: JENNA ANDERSON

Institute gives high school journalists practical training through selective summer program.

ON THE FIRST FULL DAY of the Medill “Cherub Program,” 84 rising high school seniors wake up to a breakneck reporting adventure that dates back to the 1930s – the All-Day Story.

Starting promptly at 10 a.m., after a lecture on journalism fundamentals, the students are thrust into a scripted, developing news story. The instructors, many in costume, assume various roles as students report as many as 12 separate stories throughout the day. It’s a lesson on notetaking, accuracy, reporting on deadline and writing a lead for a breaking-news story.

“In high school they might have had to file one story a week, now they’re writing a story in a half hour,” says Roger Boye (MSJ71), program director and long-time Medill professor.

That’s day one of the five-week Cherub experience.

High school journalists from around the world come to the Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute, nicknamed “Medill Cherubs,” to gain hands-on journalism experience in an immersive summer program. Approximately 7,000 students have participated in the program since it began in 1934.

Medill Cherubs started as a way for faculty to earn money in the summer during the Great Depression and has since evolved into the most selective and competitive program of its kind in the country, Boye says.

Students learn about writing on deadline, interviewing techniques, broadcast reporting, web development and news judgment. From full-class lectures on reporting, editing and libel



Larry Ding (left) and Lauren Balser edit a video together.
PHOTO: MARJORIE GERACI

to small-group reporting exercises and discussions on ethics to workshops and field trips, the program gives a broad overview of the fundamentals of journalism.

The Cherubs also are assigned to one of eight instructors and each student’s instructor becomes his or her mentor and editor throughout the program. Each week they meet formally for conferences to discuss their progress and informally on other occasions. Many of the instructors live in the same dormitory as the students but in separate suites called “Cherub Free Zones.”

“The student-teacher ratio is low, so we have the time to give lots of feedback to our students,” says Mary Lou Song, (BSJ91) who participated in Medill Cherubs in 1986 and has taught at the program nearly every year since 2003.

The program gives high school students a chance to understand what life at Medill is like. About 25% of them will end up on campus the following school year. This fall, for example, a little more than 1% of all Northwestern undergraduates were journalism Cherubs.

“There’s no better way to understand what you’re truly getting into when you apply for Medill,” Boye says.

The program brings the next generation of journalists together to develop new skills, gain confidence and grow

their passion for storytelling. It also allows students to geek out on all things media with their peers.

“They might have been the oddball in their high school, but here they’re surrounded by people who have their same passion for journalism,” says Joe Grimm, an 11-year Cherub instructor. “They realize a lot of people care about the same things.”

By the end of the program, the students have fully bonded. Lifelong friendships develop as the students play, eat, study and live together. And many of them go on to be leaders in the journalism profession.

Song still keeps in contact with her fellow Cherubs.

“Cherubs is such an anchoring experience, which is why the program is so strong and has the reputation it does,” Song says. “I wouldn’t be where I am if it hadn’t been for Cherubs.” ■

The Medill Cherubs program was suspended in 2020. Instead, 103 high school students came together virtually for a Medill 2020 Online Workshop, a four-week lecture series that featured various high-profile guest speakers and faculty workshops.

In Memoriam



Les Crystal (BSJ56, MSJ57)

Lester M. Crystal (BSJ56, MSJ57), member of the inaugural class of the Medill Hall of Achievement of 1997 and a longtime Board of Advisers member, died June 24 at the age of 85 after a battle with brain cancer and pneumonia.

Crystal was president of MacNeil/Lehrer Productions from 2005 until his retirement in 2010. Hired in 1983 to lead the transition from the half-hour MacNeil/Lehrer Report to the debut of the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, Crystal created the nation’s first hour-long evening newscast.

“Les Crystal was a great journalist, leader and advocate for the NewsHour and public media. But above all else, he was a warm and generous friend to all,” said PBS NewsHour’s executive producer Sara Just.

Crystal was president of NBC News from 1977 to 1979 and executive producer of “NBC Nightly News” from 1973 to 1976. Crystal joined NBC in 1963 to produce its Chicago affiliate’s nightly news and its Emmy-winning documentary series, “Dateline Chicago.” In 1965, he joined “The Huntley-Brinkley Report” as Chicago regional manager, moving from there to New York in 1967 to serve as the program’s news editor, then as associate producer. He was the program’s producer from 1968 to 1970.

Robert Weiss (BSJ87) had this to say about Crystal, who was Weiss’ mentor:

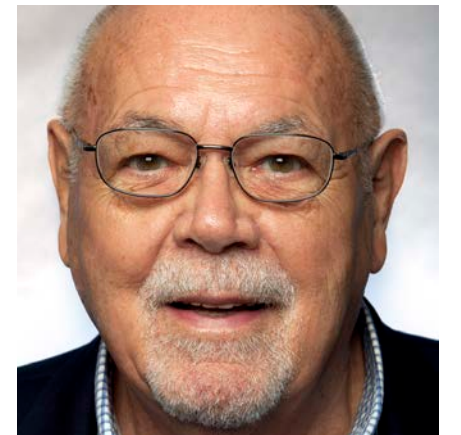
“I was absolutely heartbroken to hear about the passing of Les. He was the definition of a mensch. Outside of my family, no other person has had such a profound influence on me both personally and professionally. Les took a 20-year-old Medill news junkie under his wing and opened up so many opportunities for me and for countless others during his amazing career. Les was such a giving person — giving of his time, his energy, his patience, his wisdom. He had this magical ability to make you feel like you were the center of his universe. Les was such a decent and sweet human being. Ever since graduating from Medill, I have spent my entire career striving to replicate his generosity by mentoring as many people as I can along the way. Les Crystal truly paid it forward, and I will always be grateful.” ■

Don E. Schultz, Professor Emeritus

Don E. Schultz, professor emeritus of Integrated Marketing Communications at Medill, died June 4, 2020. He was 86. Schultz, a longtime faculty member, was a pioneer in the field of integrated marketing communications and had worldwide influence on how businesses approach marketing.

Schultz joined the Medill faculty in 1977. He chaired the Department of Advertising in the mid-1980s. He was one of the faculty members who led the consolidation of the school’s advertising, direct marketing and public relations curricula in the late 1980s. Shortly thereafter, Medill launched the first graduate-level integrated marketing communications program in the United States. Schultz is commonly referred to as the “father of IMC” around the world.

“Don constantly challenged the status quo, including his own work,” said Medill Associate Dean for IMC Vijay Viswanathan. “Very few academics and researchers have the humility to do that. Don had an incredible charisma and an ability to connect with people of different cultures. While IMC had core ideas, he always encouraged marketers to adapt IMC for audiences and brands all over the world. He was deeply committed to innovation in both marketing and teaching.” ■



To make a donation to the Don and Heidi Schultz Fund, please email Julie Frahar, Medill director of development: julie.frahar@northwestern.edu

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