

2023-24 EDITION

NSPA
College
Guide



For high school students interested
in Journalism and Communications

NSPA College Guide

This College Guide not only showcases some of the premier journalism programs in the country, but it also provides some advice, tips and guidance about college student media. It is a guide to help you with your journalism journey.

As for me, I always wanted to be a journalist. I wanted to find a school that had a journalism major. I found that school. I found some great teachers who became my mentors. However, my life changed even further when I got involved in student media.

There's the adrenaline rush of covering a breaking news story. There's the satisfaction of working as a team to provide complete coverage of a story. There are plenty of late nights finishing deadlines. And, there's great satisfaction when you walk through the student union and see students reading your article — that might be the best feeling of all.

College is the time to take some chances. Try something new. Expand your skill set. Challenge yourself. It's a time to learn.

My experience in student media — yearbook editor, newspaper editor — helped me land a good internship. No matter what size of university or journalism program you commit to, take advantage of everything it has to offer.

Good luck as you start your journey. Take a look at these exceptional programs and all of the opportunities that await you. It could change your life.



LAURA WIDMER
Executive Director

*National Scholastic
Press Association
Associated Collegiate Press
Quill and Scroll*



KEVIN FULLERTON
Owner /
Creative Director

*Springboard Creative
Mission, KS*

“Widen your studies. A major part of being a journalist or communications professional is the ability to understand a wide variety of subjects in order to accurately, quickly and succinctly explain almost anything to your audience. So it’s good to lay down a foundation of knowledge beforehand—and then never stop learning.”

Journalism matters.

Graduating with a journalism degree opens a world of opportunities and gives you an edge on the competition because with your degree you gain a host of marketable skills — communication (both oral and written), critical thinking, flexibility and more. **With a journalism degree, you can:**

- **AVOID THE MUNDANE:** Chances are you won’t be sitting in a cubicle for eight hours a day. Chances are you will have a flexible schedule that may take you around the world.
- **BE IN THE KNOW:** You will often be the first to know the latest news and understand how it impacts the world around us.
- **BRING HOME THE BACON:** The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that there will be a 27% increase in the number of journalists employed in the coming decade.
- **CONNECT WITH THE WORLD:** Journalism offers you the opportunity to network with people of all industries and from all walks of life — your network and connections broaden every day.
- **OPEN DOORS:** Getting a degree in journalism opens a world of opportunities for your future career.

Here are just a few employment options you have with a journalism degree:

- Newspapers and magazines — both print and online (for jobs like editing, reporting, photography, content curation, web designing, graphic designing, etc.)
- TV stations (reporting, editing, production, programming, guest relations, camerapersons, software and graphics, etc.)
- Digital media companies for Content Curation — in all formats
- Advertising agencies
- Corporations (communications and marketing divisions)
- Government media departments
- Public relations agencies
- Event management companies
- Media research companies
- Legal firms (documentation and research)
- Think tanks
- Education (both at collegiate and scholastic level)
- Media advisers to politicians
- Freelance opportunities



PRO TIP!



DEREK SIMMONS

Assistant Managing
Editor / Visuals

*Minneapolis Star Tribune
Minneapolis, MN*

“To be 18 again! If I were to do it over now, I’d do some of the same things, like working for local and collegiate media orgs, and being a correspondent for other media outlets. But I’d spend more time experimenting with the many tools required to be a modern journalist, including photography and video, social media, newsletters, audio, analytics, strategy, creative, and innovation. And a few things outside traditional areas like the business of news, marketing, brand, communications, customer experience, and audience strategy. I’d figure out ways to work in all those disciplines and channels in whatever way possible, even on my own. I’d do internships all year every year, but I’d also look for different opportunities, like podcasts, newsletters, and non-traditional media outlets. Be relentless.”



PRO TIP!



TOSLIN TAYLOR
Senior Creative
Operations Specialist

*ALSAC/St. Jude's
Children's Hospital
Memphis, TN*

"If I had anything to do over again, I would refrain from hastily declaring a major. Instead, I would opt to explore the required courses and delve into subjects that genuinely captivate my interest. This approach would have spared me the trouble of switching my major on two separate occasions.

It is crucial to seek out a mentor within your department, someone who can serve as your guiding light. They should not only provide academic advice but also lend a listening ear and assist in navigating the rollercoaster of emotions and difficult decisions that inevitably arise during college. Above all, remain true to yourself. Embrace the inevitable changes and personal growth that each year brings, with the hope of becoming a better version of yourself. Stay authentic to your own values and aspirations."

How to Select The Right School

Start planning early

Do your research on finding the right fit for you. Start to narrow down choices by visiting college websites. Keep an open mind—sometimes a college or university that seems unappealing becomes a favorite during the visit.

Do your homework

Look for colleges that offer majors you are interested in with strong graduation and employment rates.

Arrange a campus visit.

Plan to schedule college visits your junior year. Reach out to the admissions office to schedule a complete tour including campus, residence halls and dining center.

Learn about the local community

Take a look at the city or town. Check out off-campus apartments and housing.

Get student perspectives

The best audience to tell you about college life is the student body. If students are excited about the college, courses, residential hall and student life, it shows. Ask for advice.

Explore the academic curriculum

Check out academic departments that interest you. Tour the facilities, meet with faculty and students. Sit in on a class, if possible.

Ask about campus safety

It's important for you to feel safe on campus. As a prospective student, you should ask about campus safety policies. Check out the Clery Act report for that school.

Get financial aid information

Meet with financial aid officers while on campus. Ask about scholarships you are eligible for and pay attention to the deadlines for application. Check out the student employment opportunities (and work study if you qualify) on campus.

Explore campus communications

Get involved. It's a great opportunity to expand your skill set and build your portfolio.

Document and share your visit

Make sure you document each campus visit. Take photos and include selfies. Take notes on first impressions and your reaction to every facet of your visit.



MARISA ENDICOTT
Investigative Columnist

The Press Democrat
Sonoma County, CA

“Read everything. If there are publications or topics or writers you particularly like, make yourself reading lists or folders or bookmarks of articles and try to dedicate some concerted time per week to devouring them.

Don't be afraid of rejection. It will happen constantly, especially when applying to jobs, and it's not really as much of a reflection on you personally as it feels like it is. I can't tell you how many times I've been rejected and kept pushing and then later those same ideas (as they evolved) became my favorite published work later.”



PRO TIP!



RICK GREEN
Executive Director

*The Lexington
Herald-Leader
Lexington, KY*

“Enjoy the journey, continue to learn and know that even the worst and best days will pass. I started in a Newsroom three days after graduation, and while I love my job, I have failed to let myself breathe and find the work-life balance that truly defines success. Find time for yourself, even as you throw yourself into your job.

Take classes, read everything and seek wisdom from others because it's that constant learning that will make you a better journalist. Finally, there will be highs and lows, changes and challenges, good days and bad ones. Cherish the positive moments and learn from the negative ones. Journalism is a marathon, not a sprint. More than anything, it's a glorious journey of making a difference in the lives of others.”

Why join student media?

As a freshman, students have many choices of new activities and clubs. However, incoming students should know joining student media might just help more than they think.

Obviously, those who create content will grow as in their respective position. Student media personnel continue to practice design, writing, photography, videography, editing, etc. on a larger scale.

There's nothing better than covering a concert, college sport or news event. The access to college press areas and sources is second to none. It's also a great way to get questions answered since college journalists are the ones who report on their campus and community. They are always in the know.

It's obvious college media will help build a portfolio. What's not as obvious is that future employers often seek skills learned in practicing journalism and recognize how these can be advantageous in the workplace. These soft skills range from learning how to talk to those in a

position of power to understanding how to break down complicated matters in ways accessible to others. They learn how to ask questions and clarify unclear information and are able to work under pressure to meet deadlines. Prospective employers also value the leadership skills developed through student media editorial positions.

But it's not all about the work. For those looking to find a community, the college newsroom is often a welcoming place. There's camaraderie in working collaboratively on a common project on a daily or weekly basis. Having a supportive network of people who will help is a great start to any college experience.

Not only is it a supportive environment, it's also fun. Many of the friendships forged in student media may last far longer than the four or so years of the college experience.

So prior to stepping onto campus in the fall, make sure to look at how to apply to student media. You won't regret it.



BECKY BOWERS
Vice President
of Product

Philadelphia Inquirer
Philadelphia, PA

"I'd tell my 18-year-old self getting ready for college that it's not just about what you learn—though that's important—it's about what you do. No matter what you study, look for chances to write, to report, to edit, to record, to post, to create, inside and outside a school setting.

My crucial college experiences were the part-time local newspaper job I held for years after a summer internship, the policy debate team that had me diving deep into research and performing for judges, and the chance to lead a copy-editing team at the school paper. In every case, I got to express what I was learning in the classroom, transforming knowledge into experience. It's experience that gets you the career, my friend. No one cares what you know. They care what you can do with it. Get out and do."

**BUILD YOUR
FUTURE HERE.**



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Communication
& Journalism**

*Be valued! Get hired!
Make a difference!*



sdstate.edu/cojo



PRO TIP!



KATELYN MARY SKAGGS

Digital Marketing
Manager

*Leader Publications
Jefferson County, MO*

"If I had anything to do over again, I would work to gain practical experience in every area of journalism sooner rather than later. Start writing for your college paper and local paper, plus work internships during winter and summer breaks. Get experience writing long form and short pieces, work to feel comfortable in front of a TV camera and behind, do the morning news brief at your local radio station, the styles of reporting are different, but the news is the same. Never give your work away for free or for experience, writing and telling a story is a valuable skill set which you should always be compensated for. Be proactive, well-informed, resilient and adaptable, plus never stop working to build a strong foundation in both traditional and new journalism skills."



PRO TIP!



TREY WILLIAMS
Senior Writer

*Fortune Magazine
New York, NY*

"I'm sure by now you've probably heard about the denigration of journalism—the proliferation of citizen journalists across social media, coupled with a business model built on clicks and engagement spells the fall of media. It's all true, and it's why you're more important now than ever.

No matter what, good stories will prevail. Unrivaled reporting sheds light on gripping detail and gives the world stories and information that can change lives, deconstruct systems and challenge governments. Journalism will change, but what you do with it, the skills you hone, will forever be invaluable."

School Directory

California State University, Northridge

18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330
818-677-1200
[@csunjournalism](mailto:Csun.edu/journalism)

Drake University

School of Journalism and
Mass Communication
2507 University Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50311
515-271-2011
drake.edu

Elon University

School of Communications
100 Campus Drive
Elon, NC 27244
336-278-2000
web@elon.edu

Indiana University

The Media School
Franklin Hall #230
601 East Kirkland Ave.
Bloomington, IN 47406
812-855-0895
hsji.mediaschool.indiana.edu

Kent State University

College of Communication and Information
318 University Library
1125 Risman Dr.
Kent, OH 44242
330-672-2950
www.kent.edu/ccl
ccl@kent.edu

Northwest Missouri State University

School of Communication and Mass Media
800 University Drive
Wells Hall 237
Maryville, MO 64468
660-562-1361
www.nwmissouri.edu/communications
stevenc@nwmissouri.edu

Ohio University

E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Schoonover Center 200
1 Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701-2979
740-593-2590
info@scrippsjschool.org

Pepperdine University

24511 Pacific Coast Hwy.
Malibu, CA 90265
Dr. Elizabeth Smith, associate
professor and PGM director
(310) 506-4211
elizabeth.smith@pepperdine.edu
[seaver.pepperdine.edu/communication/
undergraduate/journalism](http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/communication/undergraduate/journalism)

South Dakota State University

School of Communication and Journalism
Yeager Hall 211 Box 2235
Brookings, SD 57007
605-688-4171
www.sdstate.edu

Southeast Missouri State University

Cape Girardeau, MO
Dr. Tamara Zellars Buck, chairperson
Tbuck@semo.edu
(573) 651-2174
[semo.edu/colleges-departments/
arts-media/mass-media/](http://semo.edu/colleges-departments/arts-media/mass-media/)

Temple University

Klein College of Media and Communication
Annenberg Hall
2020 N. 13th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19122
Klein.temple.edu

University Of Alabama

Department of Journalism
and Creative Media
901 University Blvd. #490
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
205-348-7155
jcm.ua.edu

University of Florida

College of Journalism and Communications
2096 Weimer Hall
1885 Stadium Road
P.O. Box 118400
Gainesville, FL 32611
352-392-0466
www.jou.ufl.edu

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

810 South Wright St.
119 Gregory Hall
Urbana, IL 61801
217-333-1549
[@MediaAtIllinois](http://Media.illinois.edu/journalism)

University of Iowa

School of Journalism and
Mass Communication
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
100 Adler Journalism Building
Iowa City, IA 52242-2004
319-335-3486
sjmc@uiowa.edu

University of Maryland

Philip Merrill College of Journalism
7765 Alumni Drive
College Park, MD 20742
301-405-2399
journalism@umd.edu

University Of Minnesota

Hubbard School of Journalism
and Mass Communications
205 Church St. SE
111 Murphy Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-625-1338
hsjmc.umn.edu
sjmc@umn.edu

University of Montana

School of Journalism
32 Campus Dr.
Don Anderson Hall
Missoula, MT 59812
406-243-4001
umt.edu

University of North Texas

Mayborn School of Journalism
1155 Union Circle
Denton, TX 76205
940-565-4778
journalism.unt.edu
journalism@unt.edu

University of Oregon

School of Journalism and Communication
1275 University of Oregon,
Eugene, OR 97403
541-346-3738
journalism.uoregon.edu
SOJCadvising@uoregon.edu

Western Kentucky University

WKU Student Publications
Chuck Clark, director
270-745-2653
chuck.clark@wku.edu
WKU.edu/smc

Wichita State University

Wichita, KS
Elliott School of Communication
wichita.edu/communication
Amy DeVault, undergraduate
coordinator & Sunflower adviser
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