

Natalie Cullen, Multimedia Journalist of the Year

1. <https://thedispatchonline.net/15004/multimedia/video/senior-directors-showcase-childrens-shows/>  
One of the first performances theater classes had after a year of online learning was the children's shows. These shows are directed by seniors who each have small casts. This video showcases the director's experiences directing performances targeted toward younger audiences.
2. <https://thedispatchonline.net/15825/multimedia/video/two-years-later/>  
This video is a sequel to a video I made one year prior. In this, students reflect on life after the pandemic two years later. This video was made specifically after many changes were implemented on campus, including the lifting of our mask mandate. I included multiple student interviews with differing opinions on these changes.
3. <https://thedispatchonline.net/16269/multimedia/video/michels-movitates-students-through-musical-performance/>  
On the last week of school, The Dispatch had the opportunity to host the Austin-based singer Mckenna Michels. Michels describes her journey of healing and beginning to make music. This video story details her inspiration for making music and gives advice to those who want to do the same.
4. <https://thedispatchonline.net/16135/sports/lacrosse-senior-captain-competing-in-college/>  
This video-story combo details the process that many student-athletes go through when applying to colleges. This package includes a video, a story, and an interactive graphic listing out the steps of applying to college.
5. <https://thedispatchonline.net/15052/multimedia/video/swantner-shines-on-star-dance-squad/>  
This video-story combo details the challenges junior Luka Swanter faced as the only male dancer on the Bowie drill team. In the video interview, Swanter details his dance career and future plans alongside captured footage during practice and at football games.

Personal Statement:

It all started five years ago.

Whenever I was tasked with a middle school presentation assignment, I would prompt my teachers with my go-to question.

"Can I make a video instead?"

The answer was usually yes, which led to me beginning to produce videos on various topics from vaccines to English novels and documentaries. Ever since I was little I wanted to be a filmmaker and getting to combine that and my schoolwork only fueled that career goal.

My passion for the craft of filmmaking soon led to me joining the staff of my high school's publication, The Dispatch.

I started out as the only freshman on a staff filled with upperclassmen that I admired. In all honesty, I was terrified. However, that fear soon transformed into fascination. Seeing the community that formed inside the classroom and the mass amount of collaboration between everyone inspired me. Every person had a role that contributed to every aspect of our publication. Realizing that my love for filmmaking could also be applied to journalism, I began making videos. Fast forward three years and now I am an incoming senior ready to lead both the online newspaper and the video team.

This past year has been challenging at best. After a year of online learning, many staff members interested in making videos had not made any before, let alone had touched a camera. I took it upon myself to not only make videos myself but to work with staff members and assist them with making their own videos and multimedia projects. Even so, I have enjoyed every opportunity I have had to help others learn to do what I love.

My one favorite thing about journalism is the passion I get to witness. I love getting to hear people talk about what they love. Seeing such passion motivates me to pursue my own. One of the most exciting things this year was being able to conduct in-person videos again. Getting to talk and connect with people directly is the most rewarding part of creating journalistic content.

This year I have been able to continue to make multimedia content while balancing my responsibilities as the only junior Editor-in-Chief. In addition to daily posts on our website and Instagram, I have published and worked on multiple videos and stories. I have also been able to photograph multiple events for both the print and online editions.

As a journalist, I learned that everyone has a story to tell. As a filmmaker, I learned how to tell them. I want to continue telling stories no matter what form of storytelling I use. Looking back, I think middle school me would be proud of where I am now.