NSPA College Guide

For high school students interested in Journalism and Communications
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.
**You are strategic and creative. You want to bring brand stories to life by crafting messages for companies, products or services.**

**JOURNALISM**
You are curious and driven. You want to discover the truth and tell engaging stories through newspapers, television, websites and other media.

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**
You are strategic and creative. You want to bring brand stories to life by crafting messages for companies, products or services.

**MEDIA & INFORMATION**
You are fascinated by communication and the role it plays in society. You are interested in researching and analyzing the economic, legal, political and social aspects of communication.

3 MAJORS + INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES + HANDS ON TRAINING + SCHOLARSHIPS + SMALL CLASS SIZES + TALENTED FACULTY + STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES

APPLY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
admissions.tc.umn.edu

hsjmc.umn.edu | 612-625-0120 | sjmcugs@umn.edu

**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

"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."

**KEVIN FULLERTON**
Owner / Creative Director
Springboard Creative
Mission, KS

PRO TIP!

"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."
“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.”

DEREK SIMMONS
Assistant Managing Editor / Visuals
Minneapolis Star Tribune
Minneapolis, MN

PRO TIP!
“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.”

TOSLIN TAYLOR
Senior Creative Operations Specialist
ALSAC/St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital
Memphis, TN

PRO TIP!

Northwest Missouri State University is 1 of only 10 schools in Associated Collegiate Press’ All American Hall of Fame for winning Pacemakers between yearbook and newspaper.

Northwest Student Media outlets are 2023 Pinnacle finalists in various award categories. Finalist entries include 13 for Northwest Missourian, 11 for Tower Yearbook, six for KNWT and one for KZLX.

Northwest offers Multimedia Journalism, Sports Media, Broadcast Production, Advertising degrees and more!

FOLLOW OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS!

Join our programs, scan here!

To apply to join our programs, scan here!

Journalism at Pepperdine University
https://seaver.pepperdine.edu/communication/undergraduate/journalism/
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.

“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.”

MARISA ENDICOTT
Investigative Columnist
The Press Democrat
Sonoma County, CA

PRO TIP!
“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.”

RICK GREEN
Executive Director
The Lexington Herald-Leader
Lexington, KY

Located in the top 5 media market in the nation, the Mayborn School of Journalism offers an immersive and unique experience. Tap into a degree that can take you anywhere. Learn more: https://journalism.unt.edu/
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.

“Why join student media?”

BECKY BOWERS
Vice President of Product
Philadelphia Inquirer
Philadelphia, PA

PRO TIP!

“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.”

BECKY BOWERS
Vice President of Product
Philadelphia Inquirer
Philadelphia, PA

“PRO TIP!”

BUILD YOUR FUTURE HERE.

“During my time at Merrill, I remember thinking, ‘This is the first time that coursework applies directly to what I hope to do with my life.’ It wasn’t just about the skills I was learning but the people I was learning with and from.”

MONICA MCNUTT ’13
ESPN BASKETBALL ANALYST

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MONICA MCNUTT ’13
ESPN BASKETBALL ANALYST
“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.”

TREY WILLIAMS
Senior Writer
Fortune Magazine
New York, NY

“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.”

KATELYN MARY SKAGGS
Digital Marketing Manager
Leader Publications
Jefferson County, MO

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“I deserve to be a part of the program that will give me the skills and knowledge I need to succeed.”

THE MEDIA SCHOOL
KANSAS UNIVERSITY

WHAT CAN YOU FIT INTO FOUR YEARS?
THE FUTURE OF MEDIA IS YOU

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PROGRAMS

1 OF 2 ACCREDITED JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS IN MISSOURI
12 ADDY AWARDS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS
233 MEDIA AWARDS IN THE PAST 10 YEARS
LIVE ESPN+ STUDENT-PRODUCED COVERAGE

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SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY 1927
Big Sky Big Stories

Create your own curriculum: Specialize in writing & editing, photography, audio & podcasting, TV, film & video, online & social media - or do it all.

Be part of something big: Join a vibrant, supportive journalism community. First-year standouts can earn up to $5K in scholarships!

Learn by doing: 10+ published student projects help you build a professional portfolio that will jumpstart your career while you’re in college.