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*This document compiles articles that were previously published online as stand-alone posts on the College Media Review website. During the original release period, content was not produced as bound issues; articles were uploaded individually as they were approved. Volume and issue numbers in this compilation follow the publication cycle used at the time, in which each issue covered a four-month period (for example: Vol. 45, No. 1, Fall).*

# Editor's note: Print still lives; Nordin Award modified

 [cmreview.org/editors-note-print-still-lives-nordin-award-modified/](http://cmreview.org/editors-note-print-still-lives-nordin-award-modified/)

Lisa Lyon Payne

February 24, 2013

## Print is dead. Long live print!

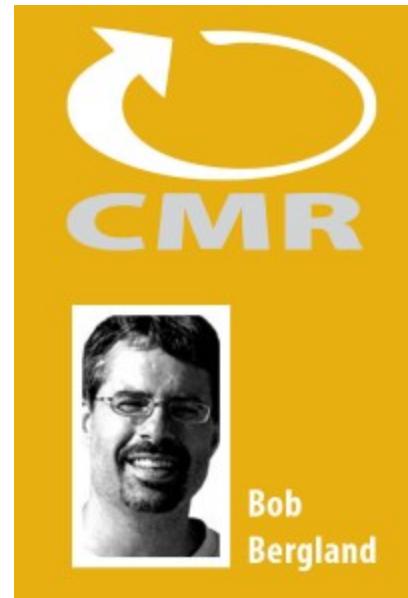
The decision by the CMA Board to move *College Media Review* to an online-only publication in 2011 was a difficult one. As with the publications we advise that are moving to online-first or online-only models, the combination of cost factors and the ability to serve readers with a more timely, converged distribution model weighed into the decision.

Thanks to the efforts of Associate Editor Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver, Managing Editor Debbie Landis and Webmaster Bill Neville, the change in distribution method has not resulted in a drop off in quality. As evidenced by the many fine topical articles and an excellent, Nordin award-winning research article by Holly-Katharine Johnson in this edition, the journal continues to provide very useful and informative pieces.

But, the online-only model does have the potential to have a negative influence on college media research, a concern raised by both readers and contributors. With some administrators and promotion/tenure review committees discounting research published in online journals, it's understandable that some authors—even CMA members—would choose to first submit their college media research to print journals instead of *CMR*.

Thankfully, the Board voted last year to support the print publication of a Research Annual that would include all of the scholarly research published over the course of the volume/school year. The Research Annual is being prepared for printing and will likely be distributed to CMA members in April. We hope the addition of this print volume will both encourage more submissions and result in more of our members reading the research articles.

The move to printing a Research Annual has led to another change, as well. Since its inception following Ken's death in 2005, the Nordin Research Award has been given to the top research paper submitted in June and presented at the Fall College Media Convention. But, sometimes the best college media research of the year has been submitted instead to



the AEJMC/CMA paper competition held a couple months before. Now that we have a Research Annual, it makes the most sense to award the Nordin plaque and prize to the top research article published in each Research Annual.

I encourage you all to conduct research and submit your work to the CMA fall and spring conferences and the CMA slot at the AEJMC convention. And, I look forward to seeing that work in both *CMR* editions and upcoming Research Annuals.

# Sláinte! Learning community journalism in rural Ireland

 [cmreview.org/slainte-learning-community-journalism-in-rural-ireland-2/](http://cmreview.org/slainte-learning-community-journalism-in-rural-ireland-2/)

College Media Review

March 4, 2013

## Getting the story in Ireland

By Andrea Breemer Frantz, Ph.D. and Lindsey Wotanis, Ph.D.

In his book *Community Journalism*:

*Relentlessly Local*, Jock Lauterer notes, “Few institutions of higher education offer classes called ‘Community Journalism.’”

This is especially true for the small journalism programs struggling to offer comprehensive curricula with too few hands and too many demands from an industry in mid-reboot.

Thus, according to Lauterer, journalism school graduates are “largely untrained and totally unprepared” for what they will likely face in their first jobs.

But as he and others have suggested, it comes down to this: *It's the story, stupid*. And in that concept of “story” we also know it's about reporters immersing in community to see its issues and experiences through the lens of those who live them.

The challenge lies in helping students, who are inherently transient, to define themselves as part of a community, even if temporarily. Through a study abroad opportunity in Ireland, American journalism students did just that: immersing themselves in local Irish culture to report for a village’s annual publication.

[\*\*CLICK HERE TO READ MORE\*\*](#)



(Credit: Lindsey Wotanis/Marywood University):  
Elysabette Brown (Marywood University) stays behind to capture a shot at Staigue Fort while Molly Boylan (Marywood University) walks ahead.

# Study Abroad offers journalism students unique opportunities

 [cmreview.org/study-abroad-offers-journalism-students-unique-opportunities/](http://cmreview.org/study-abroad-offers-journalism-students-unique-opportunities/)

Lisa Lyon Payne

March 4, 2013

**As globalization becomes an increasingly important part of modern life, universities are launching study-abroad programs in ever more remote and exotic destinations**



*Editor's Note: The main focus of this issue is study abroad, highlighted by this and another article by CMR Vice President Rachele Kanigel. Kanigel is the executive director of ieiMedia, an organization sponsoring journalism study abroad opportunities this summer in Italy, France, Turkey, Israel and Northern Ireland.*

**By Rachele Kanigel**

In a rural province of Cambodia, a broadcast journalism student from California State University, Fullerton shoots video of a blind man being fitted with a prosthetic hand, a replacement for the appendage that was shot off in the 1970s when he was fleeing the Khmer Rouge.

In Siyalala, South Africa, a University of Southern California student reports on township residents who hook up dangerous, illegal electrical connections because they can't get legal electricity to their humble shacks.

In Rabat, Morocco, a Whitman College student interviews a lesbian couple that risks imprisonment for their hidden relationship in a land where their love is thought to be prohibited by God.

As globalization becomes an increasingly important part of modern life, universities are launching study-abroad programs in ever more remote and exotic destinations. Some of the most daring of these endeavors are sponsored by journalism and mass communication programs with an eye on preparing the next generation of foreign correspondents.

Erna Smith, a professor of professional practice at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, has been taking groups of graduate students to Cape Town for the past five years. Students intern with local newspapers and radio and television stations, reporting on everything from World Cup soccer to protests against the government to the goings-on at the South African Parliament.

“A lot of what makes these international programs great is not the techniques and skills the students learn—that’s a given—but it’s what happens to their character and their outlook on life. When you’re a journalist, you need to understand the world is not just your world; you have to understand the larger world around you.”

In the 2010-11 academic year, 273,996 American students studied abroad for academic credit, an all-time high, according to a [recent report by the Institute of International Education](#), the leading not-for-profit educational and cultural exchange organization in the United States. The United Kingdom remains the leading destination for American students, followed by Italy, Spain, France and China, according to the institute’s annual report.

Study abroad by American students has more than tripled over the past two decades, and journalism schools and departments have expanded the number, variety and scope of their foreign offerings.

At Indiana University, one of the leaders in international education, more than half of all journalism students study abroad.

“We see a global world and believe our students will be able to fully engage that world if they are educated in foreign languages and come to know foreign cultures through classroom study and travel,” said James Kelly, an associate professor of journalism who has taken groups of students to Kenya twice to report on HIV/AIDS. Last summer he took 20 students to London, where they interned for British media outlets.

“Study abroad alters a student’s perspective,” Kelly said in an e-mail interview. “Not only do they come to understand a foreign culture and its media, they forever see their own culture and media system differently.”

While some journalism study-abroad programs focus on touring media outlets and seeing the conventional tourist sites, more and more expect students to actually work as journalists, reporting on the communities they are living in. Students publish their work on websites and in magazines, newspapers and print-on-demand books. Some study-abroad programs include internships where students work at local media outlets.

Many of the large journalism schools offer a smorgasbord of travel-study opportunities with options for students who want to cover business, the arts, sports and politics.

At the Missouri School of Journalism approximately one-third of undergraduate students study abroad, about 350 per year, said Tonya Veltrop, director of study abroad. Students have a dizzying array of choices: semester-long exchange programs in Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Singapore and half a dozen countries in Europe; internship programs in Buenos Aires, Brussels and London; and short-term, faculty-led excursions that enable them to cover the arts in Florence, the China Open in Beijing, environmental stories in Costa Rica or an international media conference in Seoul, South Korea.

“We’re doing interviews with alumni and so many of them are coming back and saying that these experiences have transformed them, that they’ve changed their lives,” Veltrop said.

After 15 years of working in the study-abroad field, Veltrop said she’s seen a lot of changes. “On the one hand, students are considering different kinds of destinations. Asian countries and Middle Eastern countries are more on the map now for students. They’re finding ways to get beyond their comfort zone.”

China, in particular, has become a hotspot for young journalists studying abroad. The University of Texas at Austin, Indiana University, New York University, the University of Missouri, Stony Brook University and Arizona State University are among the schools that have sponsored journalism programs in China in recent years.

Veltrop has also seen an increasing interest in service learning projects abroad, programs that allow students to not merely visit but to have a meaningful impact on the host community. That could mean actually performing service or to report on important, underrepresented issues. “A lot of our students want to assist others worldwide to tell their stories and raise awareness of a particular problem or challenge,” Veltrop said.

Jeffrey Brody, a professor of communications at California State University, Fullerton, has led groups of journalism students on medical missions to Southeast Asia for the past three years. The students spend part of their time helping the medical workers, part producing

promotional materials for the mission and the rest doing journalism (for examples see the [website](#) Brody's students produced in 2012).

"I think it's important for journalists to have compassion," said Brody, who covered Southeast Asian immigrant communities as a reporter for the *Orange County Register* in the 1980s and continued to report on them after he became an academic. "When students go on these humanitarian missions they're taken out of their comfort zone and placed in some of the poorest parts of the world. They share in the suffering of others. That makes them better journalists and better citizens."

Brody's students have to prepare themselves for rugged conditions and potentially serious health threats. Students must get immunizations against exotic diseases and take drugs to ward off malaria. The students sleep in primitive lodging and eat the local food, which can include pigs' snouts, frogs and spiders. One student made a humorous [video about eating fried tarantulas](#).

But encounters with the local cuisine aren't always funny. About a third of the students on the trips typically come down with intestinal illnesses, Brody said.

USC's Cape Town program also has a service component. Students spend three days in Paarl, a poor township, training local youth in media skills. "We ask the youth to come up with story ideas and my students coach them through using the equipment, flip cams and digital audio recorders that we provide," Smith said. "These workshops have been the strongest part of the Cape Town program, the part that gets the highest reviews from my students. My students get so much more out of it than we teach these kids."

The American students find it's easy to bond with the Paarl youth. "The kids are very open," Smith said. "As journalists we're sort of trained to close ourselves off. But when you're working with these kids, you don't have that protection and emotional distance."

In leading the Cape Town program, Smith is careful to show students South Africa from multiple perspectives. Students live in downtown Cape Town, a modern cosmopolitan city that from some angles isn't that different from many cities in the U.S. But she also takes students to poor apartheid-legacy townships outside the city, where families may live in one-room shacks with corrugated tin roofs, mud floors and no electricity. "Students have never seen this kind of poverty, never. They haven't understood their privilege."

Smith also guides the students to churches and ecolodges, community gardens and soccer games, so they can experience the full range of South African life.

"I don't want them to be completely wiped out with guilt so I expose them to the culture through the arts. They delight in the differences they're seeing and also in the natural beauty around them. They've never seen such exquisite beauty."

Smith says the trip to South Africa changes her students. “Anyone I’ve taken there is different when they come back. Many are profoundly changed. They see where they are in this world of haves and have-nots. They really get that by the time they leave.”

The biggest learning occurs when they get back home, Smith said. “They start asking themselves questions. They really begin to think about how they’re consuming things, how much stuff they consume. There is this deflation, this existential ennui when they come back and see the superficiality of this culture. It smacks them in the face.”

As an educator, Smith said the trips to South Africa have been among the most rewarding experiences of her teaching career.

“I find it exciting but it’s also incredibly challenging,” Smith said. “It’s quite emotional. There are moments when you don’t know what to do with your emotions. I’m exhausted when I get through there.”

Indiana University’s Kelly has had similar experiences.

“My greatest thrill as a teacher has been students telling me that their trip to Kenya changed their lives more profoundly than any experience they have every had,” he said. “That’s not just once, that’s nearly every student following each trip. It’s amazingly gratifying.”

# Journalism Study Abroad Programs

 [cmreview.org/journalism-study-abroad-programs/](http://cmreview.org/journalism-study-abroad-programs/)

Lisa Lyon Payne

March 4, 2013

## Providing an international perspective

Many journalism schools offer study-abroad opportunities, which may include year- or semester-long exchange programs or shorter-term faculty-led trips.

These journalism programs are open to students from any school:

***Institute for Education in International Media***  
— <http://ieiMedia.com>



ieiMedia offers four-week summer study-abroad programs that teach a variety of media skills (multimedia storytelling, videojournalism, blogging and photojournalism), as well as international reporting techniques, such as how to conduct an interview using an interpreter and how to find stories in foreign places. ieiMedia partners with different universities, which grant academic credit for the programs, and courses are taught by a team of veteran journalists and journalism professors. Students publish their work on a website, and sometimes in a print magazine or book; this summer students will also develop digital magazines for the iPad. In 2013, ieiMedia will sponsor summer programs in Jerusalem, Israel; Istanbul, Turkey; Perpignan, France; Urbino, Italy; and Armagh, Northern Ireland.

***School for International Training/Round Earth Media Field Studies in Journalism and New Media*** — <http://www.rounearthmedia.org/>

Co-sponsored by SIT and Round Earth Media, this 15-week, 15-credit program set in Rabat, Morocco, offers students an immersion in global reporting. Students study with veteran foreign correspondents and partner with local journalism students. They produce a full-length feature project; the best are published by professional media outlets.

***Europe in the World*** — <http://europeintheworld.com>

This one-year program, co-sponsored by the Utrecht School of Journalism and the Danish School of Media and Journalism, begins in Utrecht with a semester studying European history, politics, environmental policy and economics. Students then move to Aarhus, Denmark, where they focus on international journalism and work on an internet magazine

about Europe. Students travel to different parts of Europe to report for the magazine on a range of foreign policy issues. The culmination of the program is a major independent journalism project. Students from all over the world participate.

***Lexia Journalism and Urbanization program — <http://www.lexiaintl.org/shanghai/58-journalism>***

Lexia offers programs in a variety of disciplines in a dozen cities around the world. The Shanghai Journalism and Urbanization program emphasizes a cross-disciplinary approach and draws on journalistic perspectives to help students grasp the historical, social and cultural context of China. Students can choose whether to study in Shanghai for a five-week summer term, a semester, or the academic year.

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**Rachele Kanigel** is an associate professor of journalism at San Francisco State University, where she advises *Golden Gate Xpress*, the student newspaper. She is also executive director of the Institute for Education in International Media ([ieiMedia](#)), which sponsors summer study-abroad and internship programs for students and young professionals. She has directed study-abroad programs in Urbino, Italy and Perpignan, France and plans to lead [ieiMedia's](#) new program in Israel in the summer of 2013.



# Financing Study Abroad Opportunities

 [cmreview.org/financing-study-abroad-opportunities/](http://cmreview.org/financing-study-abroad-opportunities/)

Lisa Lyon Payne

March 4, 2013

## Finding the dollars...and yen, and kroner, and pesos

*By Rachele Kanigel*

Whether you're staying in dorm rooms, hostels or host homes, whether you're traveling by plane, train or camel, studying in a foreign country is expensive.

But that doesn't mean students have to go into debt to finance their global adventures. Many can find help from scholarships, grants and even their Aunt Agnes.

Some schools, like Indiana University, heavily subsidize international education.

"Because IU Journalism has for so long emphasized the importance of global journalism, our alumni are very generous in their support of our international efforts," said Indiana University journalism professor James Kelly, who has taken groups of students to Kenya and England. "We draw on several endowments to subsidize the travel of every journalism student who enrolls in any of our courses with travel components. The university also provides financial support to our students to travel, both in the form of direct funding to our school and through a number of study-abroad scholarships directly to students."

Students at California State University Fullerton paid only a few hundred dollars for their two-week medical missions to Vietnam in 2010 and 2011 and to Cambodia in 2012. The medical missionary organizations they traveled with picked up some of the tab and associate professor Jeffrey Brody was able to get other support from the university to subsidize the cost to students.

Even when programs aren't subsidized, students can usually find some kind of help.

Students who are interested should check with their campus financial aid office AND their international programs office for funding. Academic departments also sometimes have money squirreled away to help students who want to take advantage of study-abroad



opportunities. And a number of organizations, including Go! Overseas, The Fund for Education Abroad and the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society offer scholarships for students to study abroad.

The Overseas Press Club offers 14 \$2,000 scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students who aspire to become foreign correspondents.

Crowdfunding is another alternative to financing a study-abroad program. Several online donation sites, including [MyTab.co](#), [Go Get Funding](#), and the newly launched [Fund My Travel](#), help students raise funds for study-abroad programs and overseas internships. Participants can create a customized webpage that describes their travel plans and sets a fundraising goal. They can then share the page with friends, family members and other contacts through social networking sites.

# Combining study abroad and undergraduate research

 [cmreview.org/make-it-a-double-combining-study-abroad-and-undergraduate-research/](http://cmreview.org/make-it-a-double-combining-study-abroad-and-undergraduate-research/)

Lisa Lyon Payne

March 4, 2013

## Make it a double

By Robert Bergland

While combining reporting and study abroad is an excellent way to enhance students' skills while increasing their understanding of the world, combining research with study abroad is yet another way to double the educational value of a trip to another country.

Study abroad and undergraduate research are often considered two separate facets of applied learning. However, they can be very compatible, and combining them can enhance the learning experience for both activities. For the students enrolled in Spring 2010 in Global Journalism Research, a special topics class offered for the first time at Missouri Western State University, that combination led to an experience they will not soon forget. The goals were simple:

- to expose students to media systems in other countries
- to teach students about mass communication research methods
- to have students undertake full-fledged, publishable-quality research projects
- to have as many students as possible present their research findings at an international conference



Eight of the students in the class were able to accomplish this last goal by submitting successful abstracts and presenting at two conferences. The students went on a 17-day trip to Europe right after the end of the spring semester, a trip that combined fun, learning and the presentation of their research projects completed in the Global Journalism Research course. Two groups of two students had used the Newseum site for their research, with one group comparing celebrity coverage of U.S. vs world newspapers, while another group compared front page advertisement size, number and placement on U.S. vs European newspapers. They presented at the International Mass Media Conference in Athens, Greece, along with another student with Spanish skills who studied 35 website features of newspapers in Spain. Two other students, conducting similar newspaper website studies of

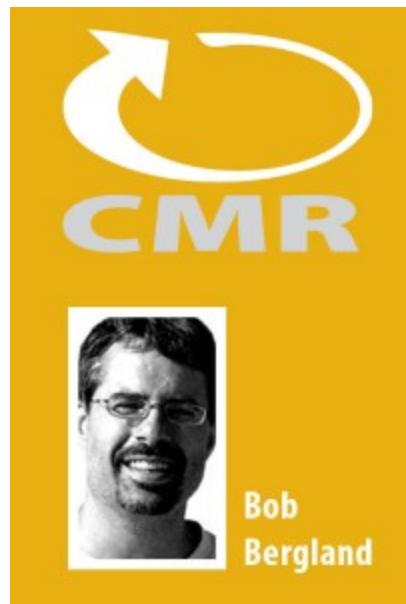
dailies in France and Australia/New Zealand, presented their research at the Information Technology and Journalism conference, held a week later in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The eighth student, also presenting in Dubrovnik, had conducted an ethnographic study at a local newspaper, examining the training and incentives (or lack thereof) for the reporters and photographers to do multimedia work.

The trip had many benefits. As with all study abroad trips, the simple act of seeing other countries and historical sites was a valuable learning experience in and of itself. Students were able to visit sites in not only Greece and Croatia, but also Italy (since there's no direct route from Athens to Dubrovnik, a route through Rome and Venice was met with nary an objection). And, since it was cheapest to fly to London and use discount airlines to get to Athens and from Dubrovnik, it would have been a shame not to stop over in London for a few days to see museums, Stonehenge and Bath and take in a play at the Globe Theatre.

The conferences were triply beneficial in terms of education. For one, presenting at an international conference was a very positive—if sometimes nerve-wracking—experience. The fact that their research and quality of their presentations was on par with most all of the other ones on the program did much to build the students' confidence and self-esteem. Second, the chance to attend many of the other sessions on international mass media and journalism was something they could never replicate in the classroom. Finally, the ability to put presenting at an international conference on a resume and/or graduate school application opened many doors and has been a great conversation starter in their job/graduate school interviews.

Perhaps the most educational experience, though, came in talking with other presenters, journalists and citizens of other countries. Those opportunities taught them more about those countries and other people than any book ever could. And, as many of their post-trip essays revealed, those interactions helped them learn and understand a great deal more about both their own country—and themselves.

One last side benefit: Combining the study abroad experience with the presentation of research had a great financial upside as well. As is likely the case at many schools, the university sets aside money to support students who present at state, national and international conferences. After the students tapped into both those funds and some study abroad scholarships, they were able to reduce the cost of the four-country, 17-day trip to under \$2,000. That figure helped increase the number of students who were able to go on what turned out to be a priceless experience.



# Florida A&M officials announce new adviser for spring semester 2013, say they didn't censor

 [cmreview.org/florida-am-officials-announce-new-adviser-for-spring-semester-2013-say-they-didnt-censor/](http://cmreview.org/florida-am-officials-announce-new-adviser-for-spring-semester-2013-say-they-didnt-censor/)

College Media Review

March 10, 2013



## The Famuan situation

By Debra Chandler Landis

Managing Editor, College Media Review

Student Publications Adviser, University of Illinois Springfield

Florida A&M University officials insist they weren't censoring student journalists when they postponed publication of The Famuan for two weeks the month of January 2013 and required student editors who thought they had jobs for spring semester to reapply.

The decision to take these actions, university officials told the College Media Review and other media and media law organizations, stemmed from a libel suit filed in December 2012 against The Famuan and the university. The suit, brought by Keon Harris, says, in part, that the student newspaper wrongly reported that he had been suspended from Florida A&M because of his involvement with the hazing death of drum major Robert Champion.

Of the decision to delay the first issue of The Famuan until Jan. 30, Valerie White told CMR in an e-mailed statement, “It was made in an effort to preserve The Famuan, but a few students made it about them instead of seeing the big picture.”

White is the director of the Division of Journalism in Florida A&M’s School of Journalism and Graphic Communication. She is also director of the school’s graduate program and chair of the Black College Communication Association, a not-for-profit organization that says its mission is “to identify resources necessary for strengthening communications programs at historically black colleges and universities; provide technical assistance to historically black colleges and universities seeking accreditation; and establish state-of-the-art hardware systems which can be shared by member institutions to promote the understanding and advancement of communication as an academic and professional field.”

Of the issues involving The Famuan, White said she was limited in what she could say because of FERPA, the libel suit and personnel and privacy rules.

White did tell the CMR, however: “Some of the information that has been reported is not true. And the truth will come out, but not right now due to pending litigation.”

## **New adviser**

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Kanya Simon Stewart has been named adviser for the student newspaper for the spring 2013 semester. She follows Andrew Skerritt, who held the job for more than four years.

Ann Kimbrough, dean of the Florida A&M School of Journalism and Graphic Communication, declined to comment on Skerritt’s removal as adviser, citing a personnel issue, but told news media his removal wasn’t related to the libel suit. Skerritt remains an assistant professor of journalism at the university, according to reporting by Sara Gregory, who has been covering the Florida A&M situation for the Student Press Law Center.

Skerritt said he was removed from his position as adviser to The Famuan.

“It was not voluntary,” Skerritt said, adding, “I thought we had a good fall and a good staff and were preparing for a good spring.”

Skerritt, The Famuan adviser for more than four years, declined to comment on reasons given for his removal as adviser. He also declined comment about the libel suit and whether he thought his teaching appointment at Florida A&M could be in jeopardy. Skerritt said his

position as assistant professor of journalism is not a tenure-track appointment.

A former newspaper editor and columnist, Skerritt said he wants to continue to write and teach. He is the author of the non-fiction book, "Ashamed to Die: Silence, Denial, and the AIDS Epidemic in the South," published in 2011 by Lawrence Hill Books in Chicago. In the book, Skerritt writes, in part, "HIV/AIDS remains a significant public health and social justice crisis in the United States, and the South in particular is heavily burdened. Poverty, poor education, and limited community resources conspire against people who live in the rural South."

That book shows the kind of journalistic work I do," he said.

Of Stewart's hiring, Kimbrough said in an e-mail to the College Media Review, "At this time, Ms. Stewart's appointment is for the spring semester. She will work with both news and advertising operations. It is a 100-percent advising appointment that she will share with a faculty member."

A university press release sent to the College Media Review said Stewart is a 2004 FAMU graduate who majored in journalism and magazine production and has worked as associate editor, senior reporter and page designer for the Capitol Outlook newspaper in Tallahassee.

While a student at FAMU, Stewart "served as the managing editor and senior writer for Journey magazine. She also served as a staff editor and writer for the Famuan," according to the press release.

In the release, Kimbrough said of Stewart, "Kanya offers students and the FAMU community a wealth of knowledge as a multi-media communicator. She has proven integrity, leadership, excellent multi-media skills and a strong commitment to ensuring that future journalists and graphic designers receive excellent training in a key student media laboratory."

## **Editor-in-Chief replaced**

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Karl Etters was Famuan editor-in-chief for fall 2012 and was hired as editor-in-chief for spring 2013. He interviewed for the top editor job again but was not re-hired. Asked if Etters would have a position on the Famuan staff this spring, Kimbrough offered CMR a one-word answer: "No."

The number of former Famuan staff rehired for spring "is being determined," Kimbrough said.

Etters told the Student Press Law Center he was disappointed but not surprised to learn he was not rehired as editor-in-chief for spring 2013.

"To me it seems like this was all a ruse to put somebody else as editor," Etters told the SPLC. "That's how it feels. A horse is a horse no matter which way you look at it."

Etters said he asked Stewart for feedback as to why he was not rehired.

“The short answer is I didn’t fit into the vision of the paper,” Etters told the SPLC, noting that Stewart objected to one of the answers he gave in his interview.

“I said something along the lines of ‘we publish the truth whether it’s positive or negative, good or bad,’ he said. “She said that she didn’t like my answer about negative stories. … I would never say that’s a goal, writing negative stories. But holding people accountable doesn’t constitute negative stories.”

Kimbrough, asked by College Media Review if Florida A&M considers The Famaun to be an editorially independent student newspaper, said, “The Famaun is a student-run newspaper that has been in existence since 1909. There is oversight, but students make the decision about the stories and content.”

## **The libel suit**

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Keon Hollis is also suing the Cox Media Group, which owns WFTV in Atlanta, for libel.

A June 12, 2012, issue of the Florida Higher Education Spectator said in part: “The roommate of the Florida marching band member who died from hazing in November claims in court that Cox Media defamed him by calling him one of the perpetrators of the hazing, though he was a victim of it.”

Hollis, who was Champion’s roommate, was also a drum major and a member of the school’s marching band.

Florida A&M’s Office of the General Counsel said the university hired off-campus legal counsel for representation against the libel charges. Atlanta lawyer Audrey Tolson’s office confirmed Tolson is representing Hollis.

### ***Student Press Law Center links:***

- [Former Famaun editor loses job after being forced to reapply by FAMU journalism dean](#)
- [Florida A&M student paper’s publication suspended, adviser removed](#)
- [Former Famaun editors start “underground” online publication, Ink and Fangs](#)

From the June 14, 2012, *Florida Higher Education Spectator*:

[Cox Accused of Defamation in Hazing Story](#)



# Legal Issues: Florida A&M and The Famuan

 [cmreview.org/legal-issues-florida-a-m-and-the-famuan/](http://cmreview.org/legal-issues-florida-a-m-and-the-famuan/)

College Media Review

March 10, 2013



## Q&A with Student Press Law Center

The College Media Review's Debra Landis asked Frank LoMonte, executive director of the Student Press Law Center, to weigh in on censorship and libel in the wake of a series of actions by Florida A&M in January involving the student newspaper, *The Famuan*. Among other things, the university temporarily halted publication, required editors who thought they had jobs for spring 2013 to reapply for their jobs, removed the editor-in-chief who had served in the top position fall semester 2012 and hired another student instead.

Asked how college media can avoid censorship, LoMonte says, "Getting your facts rights is the cheapest censorship insurance you can buy."

Florida A&M officials have said the actions were based in part on a libel suit filed in December 2012 by Keon Hollis against The Famuan and the university. A December 2011 Famuan story incorrectly said Hollis was involved with the hazing death of drum major Robert Champion. The Famuan later published a correction and removed the story from online.

“We always, always emphasize that getting your facts right is the cheapest censorship insurance you can buy. You invite the censor in the door if you do sloppy journalism,” LoMonte said.

Of the libel suit, LoMonte said, “It’s not right to respond to a libelous story with censorship — after all, you can’t punish an entire innocent staff, not to mention the audience, in the anticipation of the possibility of future libel — but you lose the public’s sympathy.”

“We saw in the immediate aftermath of the freeze of The Famuan that the media narrative (to the extent that anyone covered it at all) was that FAMU was acting decisively in response to a lawsuit, not that it was violating individual rights. That was a good job of ‘spin’ on the university’s part, but it also was the understandable first reaction of non-lawyer outsiders,” he added.

Of the removal of The Famuan’s editor-in-chief, LoMonte said, “The main thing that was missing at FAMU that absolutely needs to be in place at every publication is a written, formal governance structure that establishes how editors are to be selected and how they can be removed. There should be a buffer of insulation so that the editor is not working in fear that one false move will mean firing.”

Ideally, LoMonte said, college media should have diverse and balanced governing boards that are not beholden to one single decision-maker and include substantial representation from the student body and from the professional news media.

“Leaving the hiring of editors solely in the hands of the adviser is an invitation to exactly this type of meddling by the adviser’s bosses. There should be very, very limited grounds under which an editor may be removed for cause, such as criminal activity, dropping out of school and so on, making it crystal clear that disagreement over editorial policies is never a good justification,” LoMonte said.

The libel suit names The Famuan, the university and board of trustees as defendants. Respecting the independence of the student press is important for colleges’ and universities’ self-interest, but FAMU may have robbed itself of this defense by “exerting excessive involvement in The Famuan newsroom,” according to LoMonte.

“In the small handful of libel cases against public colleges that have gone to court, the rulings have been uniformly the same — because the First Amendment precludes the college from controlling the editorial content, the college is not financially liable for the decisions of its

students,” LoMonte said. “This is one reason that respecting the independence of the student press is so essential for colleges’ own self-interest.”

An adviser being singled out in a libel suit could happen, but such situations would have to involve negligent hiring or negligent supervision, according to LoMonte.

“The fact that students at a public college have a First Amendment right to make their own decisions should cut in favor of the adviser and the institution. The law generally recognizes that people can’t be held liable for acts they are powerless to stop,” LoMonte said. “I don’t believe that we have ever seen a serious attempt in the courts to hold an adviser liable simply for failure to provide the optimal level of training — and for that matter, we have not seen that arise in the professional media, either.”

In the professional world of news media, LoMonte said, “Anyone who was personally involved in the preparation of the story, or who supervised the preparation, can be held liable, although it would be necessary to show that each person actually fell short in exercising due care.”

“It’s not enough for personal financial liability to say that I’m the managing editor of the paper — you have to prove that I had a personal duty to avoid the mistake and I failed in my duty. You can always hold the “owner” legally responsible as the publisher — which is why people sometimes sue a board of regents or trustees, looking at them as being analogous to the owners of a newspaper, although that analogy is flawed,” he added.

## **Additional Q&A with Frank LoMonte on The Famuan, libel and censorship:**

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**CMR:: *How often in the last five years has the SPLC heard of a university shutting down a student newspaper as Florida A&M did on a permanent and/or temporary basis for “training” or “to move in a different direction”?***

**LoMonte:** This type of shutdown, honestly, is unprecedented in our memory. We’ve certainly seen newspapers de-funded and occasionally seen individual issues confiscated or impounded, but we can’t ever remember an administration at a public university commandeering a newspaper in this manner. It’s something that you might expect to see at a high school — although even a lot of them would have been more circumspect — and not at a four-year public university. Most institutions have legal counsel to keep them from overreaching in such an extreme manner.

It’s become pretty clear, I think, that the training rationale was a complete ruse and that the university’s real agenda was to purge the newsroom of anyone who seemed strong-willed or independent-minded. I am hopeful that the new editor stands up for her rights and the rights

of her staff, but unfortunately the precedent has been established that the journalism college thinks of the newspaper as its property and thinks it can swoop in and assert control at any time, which is a terribly intimidating atmosphere.

**CMR: *How unusual is it for a student newspaper to be sued for libel?***

**LoMonte:** I don't know that precise statistics exist, but we're aware of only four that have been filed in the last five years, and that includes a couple that were immediately dismissed as unfounded. Journalism is in fact not an especially lawsuit-prone profession, stereotypes and myths aside. The law is very protective of the rights of publishers and of the ability to make the occasional honest, good-faith mistake. We are not aware of any recent case that has gone all the way to trial in which a college publication has been found liable and forced to pay damages. It's possible that it has happened in the distant past, but it's extremely rare. Irate people very commonly threaten to sue, but the number who actually show up at the courthouse is minuscule.

**CMR: *If a potentially libelous or slanderous error is made, what steps should a college newspaper, TV or broadcast station take in addition to running/broadcasting a correction? Perhaps allowing the individual who was possibly defamed to write a guest commentary or letter to the editor or have her/his attorney write something?***

**LoMonte::** The first thing to remember if you are fearful of a defamation suit is to say as little as possible to the aggrieved person and have all communications channeled through a responsible and trained editor.

You never want to fall all over yourself acting like you were careless. I'd of course consider inviting the person to write a guest column clearing the air, but ideally you want to reach a written understanding (with the help of counsel, if the threat is serious) that publishing a correction and guest column will result in the satisfaction and release of all legal claims.

It's very important to go back internally over what happened and why. You want to, of course, make sure that anyone involved in the mistake gets retraining if there was a lapse, and it may be advisable if the mistake is egregious or repeated to remove that person from the staff, although you want to do that only after very careful consideration.

The nightmare scenario for a defense lawyer would be to have the fired staff person turn against the publication and agree to testify for the other side, attesting to all of the ways in which the publication was negligent or acted maliciously.

**CMR: *In the Florida A&M case, what will the plaintiff have to prove to win the libel suit?***

**LoMonte:** To prevail on any libel suit, it's the plaintiff's burden to prove a false statement of fact that identifiably referred to him, which was published to some outside audience with some degree of, at the very least, negligence.

It's not 100 percent certain that this plaintiff will be deemed to be a private figure for purposes of this suit, because his name had appeared in a number of prior media accounts about the hazing. It's possible that for purposes of stories about hazing at FAMU, he has attained the status of a limited public figure. As a public figure, his burden would be to prove not merely a negligent misstatement of facts but a reckless disregard for the truth of the story — basically, that the publication had every reason to believe the facts were wrong but proceeded full speed ahead anyway.

**CMR: How could college media found to have committed libel or slander and ordered to pay restitution pay such fines? What are your opinions of libel/slander insurance?**

**LoMonte:** I am not personally a huge advocate of libel insurance, only because the actual incidence of libel suits against college publications is so low, but neither am I strongly opposed if it provides some psychological comfort.

The fact is that most lawsuits either are dismissed entirely or go away with some small token payment that the publication can afford as a nuisance settlement.

To get hit with a crushing judgment that cripples the publication is going to require some “perfect storm” of terrible facts in which you recklessly go out and destroy the reputation of an innocent person. The main argument against libel insurance, which I’m not sure I buy entirely, is that it becomes a magnet for lawyers who know there is a pot of money to go after. I think that’s pretty rare, because either the case is good or it’s not, and I don’t envision a lot of lawyers bringing claims that are otherwise ill-founded just because of the insurance. But that perception definitely exists.

**CMR: In college media libel cases where someone from off-campus is suing the school and the college media, should the college media and the university have the same legal counsel in libel cases? Or should the college media try to find their own legal counsel who would work at vastly reduced or pro bono rates?**

**LoMonte:** As a practical matter, administrators are very often going to want the students to use the lawyer picked by the university’s insurance company, and if the college has control over the publication’s budget, they may not want to pay for separate legal counsel. So, it may be that the publication is given no real choice.

The SPLC has a stable of volunteer media lawyers around the country and we have successfully placed libel cases with media-law firms free of charge, so it’s always worth trying the SPLC for help.

I would definitely advocate using separate counsel unless the students can get totally comfortable that the university’s counsel is a capable media expert and that they will have some say in any settlement. That is the single biggest risk in using the university’s lawyer — the publication may feel strongly that it has a valid defense, but if the university is paying the

lawyer, then the university controls the strategy decisions, including the decision whether to settle. The individual journalist or the publication may not even necessarily be consulted on the settlement decision, and certainly would not be given veto power. So hiring your own lawyer makes you the master of those strategy calls and makes sure that no settlement can take place without your say-so.

We just saw a case resolved against college journalists at St. Michaels in Vermont (<http://www.splc.org/news/newsflash.asp?id=2510>) where the student journalists had separate legal counsel that proved to be extremely valuable. The students got expert media counsel that knew the ins and outs of Vermont's anti-SLAPP law, which provides for the expedited dismissal of frivolous lawsuits, and they were able to use that law successfully to get the case thrown out and their attorney fees awarded.

**CMR:** *The story prompting the libel suit is said to have relied on unnamed sources. What sort of policies should college media have in place regarding use of unnamed sources?*

**LoMonte:** I don't think there should be a rigid, one-size-fits-all rule about unnamed sources. If you have a really sensitive story — let's say, rape victims who say the police wouldn't investigate their cases, or drug dealers who admit they sell drugs to schoolchildren — then you're probably going to be stuck with unnamed sources. That's not always automatically a terrible thing, although certainly you want to do everything possible to get information on the record or find documentable confirmation.

Not all unnamed sources are created equal. There's a difference between relying on a known source — for instance, maybe a prominent student government insider leaks you a confidential memo — as opposed to an unknown source. If it's literally a mysterious voice on the phone or a mysterious author sending you emails, then your confidence in the reliability of the information is necessarily lower and you'll need much more confirmation if the story involves serious wrongdoing.

Where you really get into high-risk area of libel is when you have accused named individuals — not just a college, but named employees personally — of wrongdoing or illegality. That's when you should most skeptically view the word of your anonymous sources, consider any ulterior motives, and bend over backward to give the accused person ample response time. A lot of this can also be dealt with in the writing, by not coming off as more certain than you really are. You don't "convict" someone in a story based on unproven accusations of others.

# Live-blogging: A way to engage students, readers

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 [cmreview.org/live-blogging-a-way-to-engage-students-readers/](http://cmreview.org/live-blogging-a-way-to-engage-students-readers/)

College Media Review

March 11, 2013



## A Case Study From Texas

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**By Sarah Maben and Dan Malone**

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**Editor's Note:** Today's college students probably expect immediacy more than any generation before them. Live-blogging by college media can help meet such expectations. It can also be a means for attracting readers, who enjoy feeling as if they are part of an unfolding story, according to Sarah Maben and Dan Malone, assistant professors in the Department of Communication Studies at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas. Malone is the adviser for Texas News Service, Texan TV News and Cross Timbers Trails magazine. Maben mentors student journalists and serves with Malone on the student

*publication board. Here, they describe Tarleton State student journalists' forays into live-blogging, what occurred, and what might be next for live-blogging by student journalists at Tarleton State.*

Once the Texas News Service began using a live-blogging system, more student journalists volunteered to cover events.

Would someone cover the student government meeting where a university-wide printing fee will be discussed? Done. Could someone cover Fidel Castro's daughter's speech? Done.

Yahoo! reporter Jason Sickles shared a tool that we implemented in the classroom and newsroom to positive reviews from students. Sickles has used CoverItLive for about four years to live-blog news, weather and sports. He and a Yahoo team led a continuous live-blog for 36 hours during Hurricane Irene last August; 680,000 people participated.

"I've not done one chat or live event where readers don't thank us," Sickles said. "It allows personal interaction, immediacy and engagement. People love it."

After a quick test drive, we asked students in a media writing course at Tarleton State to use their smart phones for a live-blog lesson. After a very brief introduction to the tool and a few samples highlighted, students devised a single person-on-the-street question and hit the campus. In a matter of minutes, the responses they secured began to litter the feed. Some attempted photos while others tinkered with video streams. When the reporters returned to the class, we looked at the live feed and they shared thoughts on the process. Most were enthusiastic and wanted similar reporting exercises woven into the rest of the semester. The experiment was even mentioned as a positive in class evaluations.

Live-blogging apps, said student Michael L. Daniels, gives news junkies real-time access to events as they unfold – no more waiting for stories or videos to be edited.

"They can actually get the information immediately," he said.

In a paper for a technical writing class, Daniels' classmate, Aida Delgado, said CoverItLive gives competitive student journalists the tool they need to "be the first to get a story out."

Delgado, who uploaded videos, still photographs and audio, said live-blogging is "a convenient way to be first on what is going on around campus and the community."

Sickles said storytelling through a live-blog system is ideal for breaking news and stories where the public can provide narrative or help break news. Some potential stories on a college campus: student government meetings, local elections, news conferences, presidential addresses, and away games for sporting events. For example, Sickles had students at the University of Dallas capture live campus reactions when the Texas Rangers advanced to the 2012 World Series.

Some students found it difficult to balance note-taking for a traditional inverted pyramid story with snapping photos for a live-blog feed, moderating comments and incorporating video within a short time frame. Our students preferred to work in pairs, so one could take pictures while another was blogging about the occurrences.

Instead of viewing live-blogging and traditional note-taking as two separate functions, Sickles suggested:

- Using the posts you make in the live-blog as your reporting notes
- Cutting, copying and pasting the notes into word-processing software to organize into a news story.

Sports reporter Azia Branson, a sophomore broadcast journalism student from Keller, Texas, used this technique to cover a basketball game and quickly produce content for multiple news platforms.

Working with the students this past spring and fall semesters, we found that live-blogging is about immediacy and engagement. Journalists can break a story and stream facts as they happen. And they can work with readers to build the story.

For audience members, they are able to participate in real-time, not just post a comment at the end of a finished story on the web. Today's students expect immediacy in texts and social media. Live-blogging news is especially attractive because it is so immediate.

The students were so excited the first semester, and have continued their live-blogging efforts. It is up to the Texan News Service editors for future semesters on how they would like to proceed for the news organization. One idea was to have incoming students live-blog from their orientation week activities as a way to cover them from the inside, and get our new students involved with our news organization early in their college careers.

As advisers, we hoped the student journalists would live-blog election coverage. Two-by-two our reporters worked one-hour shifts at the courthouse on Election Day to capture voter reactions, and even scooped the local daily newspaper with local race results by four minutes.

Live-blogging has been incorporated into our media writing courses and the Texan News Service team is on the market for free live-blogging options.

## **Tips for Live-Blogging**

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1. Be search engine friendly. Include a lead in the paragraph on the web page where the feed will be seen, so search engines pick up the content from the intro. Search engines will not “see” the comments from the feed. Yahoo was using CoverItLive for a press conference where Microsoft was going to make an announcement. Sickles updated the page’s headline, intro and time stamp with more details moments after Microsoft made its announcement, so the page would rank higher on search engines. As soon as the announcement was made, he went back to the article’s headline and lead to update it based on what’s going on. He also updated the time stamp, all of which helped the searchability.
2. Don’t over think it. Sickles said, “We are in such a time of experimentation in media. Perhaps you fail one time...see what works.”
3. Watch other outlets for ideas. Yahoo, ESPN and the New York Times are using live-blogging for a variety of stories. FoxSports Southwest has found a way to monetize the feed, by selling sponsorships for the live-blog events.
4. Have a strong wi-fi connection and multiple reporters logged in as backup for downed signals or power outages.
5. Control the narrative. This is part of the editorial duties as a journalist-producer. Not every comment submitted will add to the narrative, and it is your job to vet which comments and questions are used. “You want to have a semblance of order to the narrative. It’s all about pacing,” said Sickles, who has seen 100,000 participants in his live-blog all at one time. CoverItLive has a function where you can opt to approve comments before they appear on the feed.
6. Be transparent. Sickles said even veteran journalists sometimes struggle with this point. With 100,000 people in a chat, not all comments are going to make the cut. Tell your readers this. Sickles shares the number of participants in chats with them, taking as many comments as he can.
7. Promote your live-blog. Use Facebook, Twitter, a news story about the upcoming feed, the news organization’s blog and email alerts days ahead of the event. Set up a spot for your feed on your news organization’s Facebook page.
8. Select hardware wisely. Our mo-jos thought operating on just the phone screen was difficult. A tablet device or laptop might be more comfortable for reporters live-blogging. Students with Android and iPhone systems were able to find the CoverItLive app. Those with Windows had to use their phone’s web browser to access the site.
9. Universal ID or reporter ID. For our in-class exercise, students used the main log in, so all posts were from the news organization’s name. In the system, you can grant access to producers and panelists, which gives student reporters a way to begin to build a brand on their names.
10. Monetize live-blog news. “The beauty of live-blogging — it’s the time spent on the page for the user that could be 10 minutes to 1.5 hours. That’s the sell you can make to advertisers,” Sickles explained. After the event, show advertisers metrics for the number of users and time spent on the blog. CoverItLive has a function where you can drop in display ads when relevant during the feed or it can be automated.

CoverItLive is not the only system out there, but the one we chose to use. Their site has case studies where students can see how publications across the globe are implementing the technology into their news products. In July 2012, CoverItLive began charging for the formerly-free package, but will work with student media outlets at a discounted rate. ScribbleLive and Twitter chats are other ways student media outlets could accomplish similar live-blogging goals. For other live-blogging systems, check out <http://zombiejournalism.com/2012/05/free-alternatives-to-coveritlive/> or the browse the Knight Foundation-funded apps at <http://www.knightfoundation.org/grants/>.

# College media considered variety of ethical questions in 2012

 [cmreview.org/college-media-considered-variety-of-ethical-questions-in-2012/](http://cmreview.org/college-media-considered-variety-of-ethical-questions-in-2012/)

Lisa Lyon Payne

March 12, 2013

**By Daniel Reimold, Ph.D.**

*University of Tampa*

Who owns the content published by campus media: the outlets that publish it or the students who create it? What should you do when sources want to review their quotes? What are the ethics of email interviewing? And how do you determine when content is controversial or graphic enough that readers deserve a warning?

Throughout the past calendar year, the student press faced these ethical questions and a number of others. Some were especially intense. Others were multimedia-specific. And still others played out in real time.

The quandaries, debates and ultimate decisions serve as potential roadmaps for other student staffers and advisers who may deal with similar dilemmas in 2013.

In that spirit, here is a sampling of student press ethical scenarios or decisions in 2012 worth mulling over. The bottom line: In each case, with the facts presented, how would you respond?



## The Bear Photo

Late last spring semester, a student journalist's photo of a tranquilized bear went viral—and almost spurred a lawsuit.

In April, Andrew Duann, a student photographer for *The CU Independent*, snapped an instantly-iconic shot of a brown bear falling from a tree near a University of Colorado residence hall village. The bear had been tranquilized by local wildlife officials and was subsequently taken into custody for its own—and others'—protection. The photo almost immediately became a web sensation.

And then came a post-viral twist: In the wake of the photo's online success and its republishing by other news outlets, Duann temporarily looked into legal action against his own paper. As Poynter's Andrew Beaujon reported, Duann was "upset that the paper's adviser . . . allowed publications around the world to reproduce the photo, asking most outlets only for it to be credited to Duann and the *CU Independent*."

Duann considered the bear shot his personal copyrighted property, even though he is on the paper's staff and apparently supplied it willingly for the story it accompanied. Reporters and photographers are not paid at the *Independent*, and Duann told Beaujon he had not signed a contract outlining his specific rights in cases like this.

**The Decision:** Duann and the *Independent* apparently settled the matter in-house, without a lawsuit.

### The Rape Victim

Also in April, *The Comment* at Bridgewater State University faced “an angry backlash” from its readers and the BSU administration for naming a rape victim in a published piece.

The controversial article was a straightforward recounting of a student’s past sexual assault, a story she shared with 200 participants at a campus “Take Back the Night” rally. It identifies the student by first and last name and provides additional details about her alleged attacker and the timing and location of the assault, all of which she stated publicly at the rally or was uncovered through a basic web search.

Vigorous debate ensued. As one student said at a BSU SGA meeting, “This is ethically and morally unacceptable and it needs to be changed. I do understand and respect the freedom of press, but a victim’s right of privacy and safety needs to be foremost and be protected.”

**The Decision:** *Comment* editors declined requests to apologize or take down the article or the student’s name from its website. As they argued, “The *Comment* doesn’t publish the names of sex crime victims without their consent. But there is implied consent when someone speaks in a public forum, and . . . the whole meaning of the rally was to encourage victims of sexual assault to speak up and not live in shame.”

### The Anti-Muslim Ad

In July, editors at *The Collegiate Times* at Virginia Tech published a controversial advertisement in a summer print edition.

The so-called FLAME ad, created and distributed by the non-profit organization Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME), pushes what many agree is an anti-Muslim agenda. Among other “facts” and perspectives, it purports there is rampant anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial within the Muslim-Arab community. It also chides the news media for failing to properly report upon the “outright ethnic cleansing” of Christians by Islamic radicals.

### Bear tranquilized in tree near Williams Village

by Nora Keating in Print Page, News on Apr 26, 2012 11:26 | comments

A bear spotted wandering around Williams Village this morning has been safely tranquilized by wildlife officials.

Ryan Huff, CU Police Department spokesperson, said that CUPD received a call around 8 a.m. Thursday morning that a bear was wandering around the Will Vill area.

The bear managed to climb up a tree near the dorms where it stayed for about two and a half hours. Wildlife officials were able to safely tranquilize the bear at 10:17 a.m. and the bear fell onto mats provided by the Recreation Center at approximately 10:28 a.m.

“[The bear] was tranquilized by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department and it fell onto some mats that the Rec Center provided,” Huff said. “It is now in a cage and will be relocated at a higher elevation.”

Huff said that it was estimated that the bear is one to



**The Decision:** After the ad's publication, editors felt compelled to reach out to readers, explaining the paper did not support the content. In [an online letter](#), CT editor-in-chief Michelle Sutherland confirmed that while staffers don't agree with the ad's "underlying message of cultural hatred . . . the CT is totally dependent on advertising revenue. We receive no financial support from the university.

It is not as simple as saying, 'We do not support this message, and we will not collect your money.' We exist solely because people pay us to get their message out—especially in these economic times."

Not all readers bought this financial excuse. As one commenter asked Sutherland [beneath her note](#), "So you're saying that you essentially whore out ad space to anyone who wants it? Glad to know you're that desperate."

### The Autopsy Tweet

In August, *The Oklahoma Daily* upset and enraged some readers at the University of Oklahoma for temporarily posting a deceased student's autopsy report online. The report was linked in a *Daily* tweet and later [a story](#) that revealed new details about the student's death.

The trouble began when *Daily* staff learned a female senior student had been legally drunk in June when she fell to her death from an OU administrative building. That potentially significant detail was included in an autopsy report prepared by a state medical examiner. While outlining the specifics of the student's blood alcohol level on the night of her death, the report also included intimate details about her underwear, genitalia and menstrual cycle and a very graphic accounting of her injuries.

A large block of readers described the paper's decision to share the full report as distasteful and unethical—airing private information without enough accompanying news value and causing additional hurt to those who knew and loved the student. As an OU alumnus wrote in [a letter to the editor](#), "Take a moment to consider the [student's] family who is still grieving after the loss of their daughter and the friends who have to read that trash you call journalism. That information does not benefit the public in any way, shape or form."

**The Decision:** While legally within its rights to post the document, the paper subsequently [apologized](#) and pulled the report from its website.

### The Email Interview



The screenshot shows a news article from the Collegiate Times. The title is "COLLEGIATE TIMES". The sub-headline is "Letter from the Editor: Collegiate Times does not support FLAME ad". The text of the letter discusses the paper's financial dependence on advertising and its decision not to support the FLAME ad. It includes a correction note and social sharing buttons for Facebook and Twitter.

Correction: This story has been modified from its original version. — The Educational Media Company at Virginia Tech, *does* receive funding from Virginia Tech. However, the money goes to other student media organizations and not the CT, which generates revenue through advertising. The CT *receives free office space in Squires Student center, like several other student organizations.*

The Collegiate Times does not support the messages presented in the FLAME ad in July 19's print edition. The underlying message of cultural hatred is not one that we condone.

However, the CT is totally dependent on advertising revenue. We receive no financial support from the university. It is not as simple as saying, "We do not support this message, and we will not collect your money." We exist solely because people pay us to get their message out—especially in these economic times.

The money we collect allows us to deliver news, features and sports coverage to Blacksburg and the Virginia Tech community. It also allows us to provide a forum for our readers' voices.

Editors at *The Daily Princetonian* had grown dismayed at the “prevalence of email quotes” appearing in stories. Top staffers at the Princeton University student newspaper felt these e-quotes had become detrimental to the newspaper’s journalistic mission.

As editor-in-chief Henry Rome argued, “Interviews are meant to be genuine, spontaneous conversations that allow a reporter to gain a greater understanding of a source’s perspective. However, the use of the email interview—and its widespread presence in our news articles—has resulted in stories filled with stilted, manicured quotes that often hide any real meaning and make it extremely difficult for reporters to ask follow-up questions or build relationships with sources.”

**The Decision:** In September, after “consultations with major national news organizations’ senior editors and reporters,” Rome announced the paper would no longer publish quotes submitted by email in its news stories.

### **The Quote Review**

For a number of years, *The Harvard Crimson* had allowed Harvard University officials to review and change their quotes prior to publication. The result of this longstanding practice, editors increasingly recognized, was a culture of decreasing candor and availability among Harvard staff sources.

As *Crimson* president Ben Samuels wrote in a memo to staff: “Some of Harvard’s highest officials—including the president of the university, the provost, and the deans of the college and of the faculty of arts and sciences—have agreed to interviews with the *Crimson* only on the condition that their quotes not be printed without their approval. As a result, their quotes have become less candid, less telling, and less meaningful to our coverage. At the same time, sources have more and more frequently agreed to communicate only by email rather than in person or by phone, or have asked that their names not be used along with their comments.”

**The Decision:** At the start of fall semester, *Crimson* editors announced it was no longer allowing quote review. In a letter to readers, Samuels and managing editor Julie Zauzmer confirmed that the new *Crimson* policy restricts “reporters from agreeing to interviews on the condition of quote review without the express prior permission of the president or the managing editor.”

### **The Funny Football Tweets**

In October, athletics officials at New York’s Stony Brook University threatened the press credentials of a student magazine in response to a staffer’s comedic live-tweeting of a football game.

During homecoming weekend, *The Stony Brook Press*, a biweekly magazine at SBU known for its mix of serious and satiric content, covered the SBU football team's one-point win over Colgate University. A pair of photographers captured shots from the sidelines. A reporter worked on a serious recap from the press box. And a separate staffer sat in the stands, live-tweeting the action on the field in humorous fashion.

The staffer sent tweets like "Stony Brook gets stuck in the sand trap and Colgate wins their first power play." As the *Press* explained, "His objective was to live-tweet the game, while making references to any sport but football. . . . If anything, we were poking fun at our lack of knowledge when it comes to sports." SBU officials were apparently not amused, threatening to revoke the magazine's press credentials for the rest of the year unless it started tweeting correctly.

**The Decision:** The *Press* fought back against the threats. In an editorial about the incident —headlined "Don't Censor Me, Bro!"—editors clarified that the tweeting staffer had not attended the game using an SBU-issued press pass. As the editorial stated, "In many ways, the Athletics Department was overstepping their boundaries by doing this. First of all, under the First Amendment, we have the right to publish anything we want, even tweets. . . . Technically, if we don't cover a sporting event in a manner that the Athletics Department deems appropriate, it has the right to take back the press credentials they issued to us. But that doesn't make it right."

### The Road Kill Battle

The University of Kansas football team had a rather dreadful season in 2012. According to the team's head coach Charlie Weis, outside media are allowed to express this opinion with impunity. But the school's student newspaper, *The University Daily Kansan*, is not.

In early October, Weis ranted on Twitter about what he felt was unfairly harsh coverage in the *Kansan* about the football team's many woes. He particularly took issue with preview coverage of the squad's mid-season game against in-state rival Kansas State University. The full-page cover graphic in the *Kansan* kicking off the coverage displayed a tiny, fearful Jayhawk hugging a goalpost, while a large, muscular KSU Wildcat races fearlessly toward the end zone. The accompanying story's headline: "Road Kill Ahead."

In a tweet posted to his personal account @CoachWeisKansas prior to the game, Weis shared, "Team slammed by our own school newspaper. Amazing!"



No problem with opponents paper or local media. You deserve what you get! But, not home!"

The reaction, and the subsequent furor and media attention surrounding it, sparked a debate about how student journalists should approach coverage of their own school's sports teams.

**The Decision:** The *Kansan* continued to cover the team aggressively and objectively. As *Kansan* columnist Mike Vernon wrote, in the wake of the incident, "Kansas is a public university, and it has a damn good journalism school that is here teaching its students to be objective members of the Fourth Estate of the United States of America, to hold its leaders accountable, and to be a free and independent press. . . . [T]he *Kansan* isn't here to rally up student support for the football team. . . . Students at this university deserve better than a pom-pom squad of a newspaper. They deserve to get the truth."

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*Daniel Reimold, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Tampa, where he advises The Minaret student newspaper. He maintains the student journalism industry blog College Media Matters. His book Journalism of Ideas: Brainstorming, Developing, and Selling Stories in the Digital Age is being published in April 2013 by Routledge.*

# Student and professional journalists dealing with restrictions on sports coverage

 [cmreview.org/student-and-professional-journalists-dealing-with-restrictions-on-sports-coverage/](http://cmreview.org/student-and-professional-journalists-dealing-with-restrictions-on-sports-coverage/)

Lisa Lyon Payne

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**By Frank D. LoMonte**  
*Executive Director, Student Press Law Center*

Fueled by billions in television and licensing revenues, college athletic departments are increasingly stiff-arming journalists by restricting access to practices and games. Meanwhile, media industry leaders are looking for ways to respond.

The start of football season in August 2012 brought a wave of new restrictions on journalists—professionals and students alike—who cover college athletics. Threatening to revoke press credentials or close practices, coaches at several schools, including the University of Southern California, Washington State University and the University of North Carolina, ordered journalists to refrain from reporting on player injuries observed during practices.

In recent years, colleges and athletic conferences have become increasingly assertive about controlling how media organizations use the information and images they gather at sporting events.



The Southeastern Conference's standard media credential, for instance, prohibits the sale for profit of any photo that includes recognizable athletes or coaches, and prohibits anyone other than a broadcast news outlet from posting online any game-action video other than video clips provided by the conference. The NCAA maintains—and colleges have occasionally threatened to enforce—limitations on the frequency with which blogs (including Twitter feeds) may be updated with game action in order to prohibit “live blogging” that might draw viewers away from officially-licensed telecasts.

In response to these restrictions, the Student Press Law Center and leading organizations representing the professional news media, including the American Society of News Editors and the Associated Press Sports Editors, have formed an informal working group to exchange information and to advocate for better access policies.

“First, and foremost, sports events are big news,” said attorney Kevin M. Goldberg of Fletcher, Heald & Hildreth, P.L.C., who represents ASNE on these issues. “Not just in terms of reader interest, but in many cities and towns around the country, especially those with a

large university presence, they can often be the biggest business or social issues as well. Second, the restrictions being levied are so outrageous that they simply demand a response.”

“These issues will become more complex and difficult to manage going forward,” Goldberg said. “Sports teams, leagues, venues and events, at the professional, college, high school and local levels are trying to harness technology in ways that make them competitors to the local news outlets, effectively cutting out the local media. They are seeking not only to control the message but commercial aspects of that message as well. They are learning from each other, talking to each other and occasionally working with each other to perfect these restrictions.”

While public universities are governed both by the First Amendment and by open-meetings laws that grant the public a right of access to government activities, there is no clear legal basis on which to demand unfettered access to sporting events.

Public-access laws cover only “meetings” where government policy is deliberated or decided. The fact that an event takes place inside a publicly financed stadium is not, by itself, a basis for claiming a “right” to attend. A government agency can restrict access by issuing credentials, and can impose and enforce reasonable conditions for receiving credentials.

Courts have held that the First Amendment does provide a right of access for journalists to observe important government activities, such as criminal trials and official police activity occurring in public spaces. It is questionable whether a court would recognize a constitutionally-based right to insist on sideline access to a football game.

Once access is granted, it cannot be selectively revoked for retaliatory reasons, such as when a journalist expresses a viewpoint contrary to the government’s. And government agencies cannot selectively discriminate only against journalists. They cannot, for example, enforce a policy that enables fans in the bleachers to shoot and share video freely but restricts journalists from doing the same.

Most sports teams specify that ticketholders may not rebroadcast any game action, though it is questionable how that can be enforced. It’s also not clear whether live-blogging or live-tweeting restrictions will actually hold up in court if they’re challenged legally. However, news organizations should consider whether they are willing to forfeit their credentials while being a “test case.”

There are no known cases of media organizations actually losing credentials for providing live-blogging coverage, but the closer the coverage gets to a literal play-by-play description of events in real time, the more likely it is to draw a reaction. If threatened with the loss of credentials, journalists on the scene would probably be best advised to:

- Immediately involve a sports editor or editor-in-chief.

- Avoid a potentially heated on-the-spot argument that distracts from covering the event.
- Go along with the sports organization's requests—thereby defusing the confrontation—by agreeing to post fewer blog updates or changing their vantage points on the sidelines.
- Carefully document which official made what threats; this documentation would be important for any legal challenges that could arise.

Student journalists have a particularly strong argument for leeway, since they, just like the student athletes they are covering, are in college to receive training and prepare for careers. A college that uses its authority to de-credential and expel student journalists is both harming the college audience and harming the career preparation of the students it hopes to place in professional employment.\

Journalists who have issues with access to sporting events—including restrictions on what they can post online when covering sports—are encouraged to report concerns to the Student Press Law Center at [splc@splc.org](mailto:splc@splc.org) or 703-807-1904. The SPLC is building a database of sports access issues in collaborating with the ASNE and other professional media organizations, to assist in identifying the restrictions that trouble journalists most frequently and that are most in need of reform, whether by regulators or by the courts.