

Reporting Begins Here





FROM THE DEAN

I want to extend my gratitude for your unwavering support and generosity. In these transformative times for the media landscape, your commitment to nurturing the next generation of journalists is not just commendable—it is indispensable. It’s also my pleasure to share the 2024 Columbia Journalism School Impact Report with you. The report highlights the past year in the J-School community—from our faculty’s curricular innovations to our students’ truly impressive reportage and the work of our alumni and friends across the globe.

The world of journalism is undergoing rapid change, presenting both unprecedented challenges and exciting opportunities. The evolution of digital platforms, the shifting nature of public discourse and the increasing demand for transparency and ethical reporting all call for a new kind of journalism education — one that is innovative and adaptive while remaining rooted in the core principles of integrity and truth that have always positioned our graduates to lead. These principles guide our students and faculty both as they work on the cutting edge, innovating in data journalism and AI, all while they continue to set the standard in dogged investigative journalism and shoe leather reporting.

Your support enables us to provide greater access to journalism education. In turn, our students, among the most talented and committed in the world, will go on to help lead journalism toward a more representative and vibrant future. Together, we are cultivating a learning environment that champions critical thinking and investigative rigor. We are committed to preparing our students to report with fearlessness and to hold power to account. In the words of Joseph Pulitzer: “The power to mold the future of the Republic will be in the hands of the journalists of future generations.”

Over the past year, I’ve had the pleasure to meet and hear from many of you at events such as the Ida B. Wells Symposium, Alumni Weekend, and regional programming we’ve hosted across the U.S. and abroad. I look forward to continuing our partnership. Your belief in the importance of a robust free press is both inspiring and essential. Together, we are not only advancing journalism education but also fortifying the foundation of journalism that upholds democracy.

Sincerely,

Jelani Cobb
Dean & Henry R. Luce Professor of Journalism



“This has
been, without
exaggeration,
the most fruitful
period of my life.”

Kouros Ziabari Seyedin, '24 M.A. Politics
Simon and June Li Fund for International Students

CJS at a Glance

CLASS OF 2025

224

M.S. Journalism students (including dual degree programs and the M.S. in Data Journalism)

TOP COUNTRIES

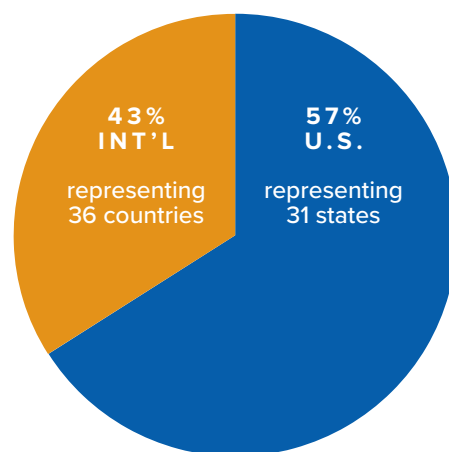
China, India, and the United Kingdom

26

M.A. students

TOP STATES

New York, California, and New Jersey



LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LRAP) CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY

“LRAP allows me to think big.”

— BEN ANGARONE '22 M.A. POLITICS, HONOLULU CIVIL BEAT

One year into our Loan Repayment Assistance Program, the first program of its kind at a graduate journalism school, 34 alumni have each been awarded \$10,000 — allowing them to make proven and positive impacts on local and non-profit newsrooms.



Margaret Sullivan Joined Columbia Journalism School as Executive Director of the Craig Newmark Center for Journalism Ethics and Security Margaret Sullivan, weekly columnist for the Guardian U.S., joined CJS at

the beginning of 2024, bringing her expertise writing on media, politics and culture to lead the Center’s work on ethical reporting practices at a critical time for democracy. Sullivan has written extensively on journalism ethics and press freedom as a columnist for The Washington Post and as the former Public Editor of the New York Times.



Sewell Chan Joined the Columbia Journalism Review as Executive Editor Sewell Chan,

former Editor-in-Chief of the Texas Tribune, joined the Columbia Journalism Review (CJR) as executive editor this fall. With over

two decades in key editorial positions at leading publications across the country, Chan brings to CJR a commitment to integrity and innovative journalism that aligns closely with CJR’s mission. Chan was elected to the board of the Pulitzer Prizes in 2022 and was a 2024 fellow in the Columbia Journalism School Sulzberger Executive Leadership Program.

THE DEAN'S VISION FOR THE NEXT DECADE

CJS2030

Columbia Journalism School has been a preeminent institution for over a century — and continues to invest in the industry by focusing on five major areas over the next decade. The pillars of CJS2030 — AI, Democracy, Local & Nonprofit News, Climate and Access — are integrated across every facet of the school, from curriculum to J-School Centers and career development.

A.I.

Leaders in the AI Initiative are researching and developing tools to be on the cutting edge of the industry while researching the ethical implications of these evolving technologies for platforms and publishers.



LOCAL + NONPROFIT NEWS

The school is dedicated to supporting local and nonprofit news — in the classroom and after graduation.



ACCESS

The Access Initiative opens doors to the profession: journalism relies upon, and is improved by, perspectives and people from a variety of backgrounds.

Scholarships are at the heart of our mission to represent the world that journalism covers. Providing generous scholarship support when students enter the School, and supporting new graduates when they start their careers in journalism, are ways the institution can achieve this.

The Loan Repayment Assistance Program — the first of its kind in the journalism industry — was launched in 2023 to help support recent Columbia Journalism School graduates who bring their talent and skills to nonprofit news media organizations.



DEMOCRACY

The Democracy Initiative focuses on strengthening the fourth estate with rigorous, ethical and compelling journalism.



CLIMATE

The Climate Initiative invests in tools to train the next generation of reporters to cover the most pressing issue of our time.



Hannah Davies, '24 M.A. Arts & Culture
Barbara London Lemann Fund for Arts
and Culture Journalism

“This opportunity has reminded me that there is so much to experience and to experiment within the world of arts journalism, at a time when it can often feel like a fraught business to be in.”

Finding the Backstory



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: ALEXIS CLARK, '02 M.S., ON TEACHING REPORTING AND WRITING

In my new role as a full-time faculty member, I'm deeply moved and encouraged by the tenacious, curious and empathetic students at our school. Reflecting on my classes, from the Fall Reporting and Writing modules to the Master's Project and my inaugural spring seminar, "The Stories That Need to Be Told: Covering Inequality," I'm so proud of the work emanating from our student body. Their stories are enterprising, informative and engaging.

As someone who primarily writes about history with an emphasis on race and culture during World War II and the Civil Rights Movement, I emphasize the importance of incorporating historical context into the reporting process. The CJS Ira A. Lipman Center's

"As a graduate of this program myself, I know what a pivotal role the J-School has played in my career success, and I hope that my students experience the same."

seminal project "Uncovering Inequality" — five reports on housing, criminal justice, education, healthcare and economics — is required reading for my spring course, because there's a backstory to any New York City issue. And my students learn how to be researchers, skilled interviewers and historians when reporting their stories. One of my Master's Project students, Elza Goffaux, embraced this approach with an exceptional feature.

Elza wrote about New York City asylum seekers and their mental health challenges, as they grapple with homelessness, an inability to work and trauma. Elza profiled three West African immigrants with vastly different backgrounds and reasons for escaping their home countries. Immersing herself in her reporting, she brought to life her characters' dangerous treks, and their thoughts and fears, using haunting details and powerful quotes. She also included pertinent data, immigration history from the last two presidential terms and expertise from mental health practitioners.

Bridging the Gap

LOCAL & NONPROFIT NEWS: TEACHING AND REVITALIZING CITY NEWSROOM

City Newsroom is a hands-on multimedia course that equips students with the skills necessary to thrive in modern local journalism. The class acts as a real-world newsroom that elected officials, city agency leaders and experts regularly visit for on-the-record interviews. These interactions not only provide valuable first-hand information, but also help students build a body of journalistic work they publish on the course website.

The new iteration of the course is taught by Philip S. Balboni Professor of Local Journalism Juan Manuel Benítez, Joan Konner Visiting Professor of Journalism Ty Lawson, and Adjunct Professor Juanita Ceballos.

In City Newsroom, students use mobile journalism kits powered by their own smartphones to engage in in-depth local reporting and storytelling through video, audio and written mediums. They become versatile reporters capable of covering various beats, including politics, education, housing, climate and transportation.

“Watching our students cover important stories on campus and across the city was a testament to their dedication and hard work,” Benítez said. “They truly captured the essence of the events with professionalism and depth, embodying the spirit of local journalism.”

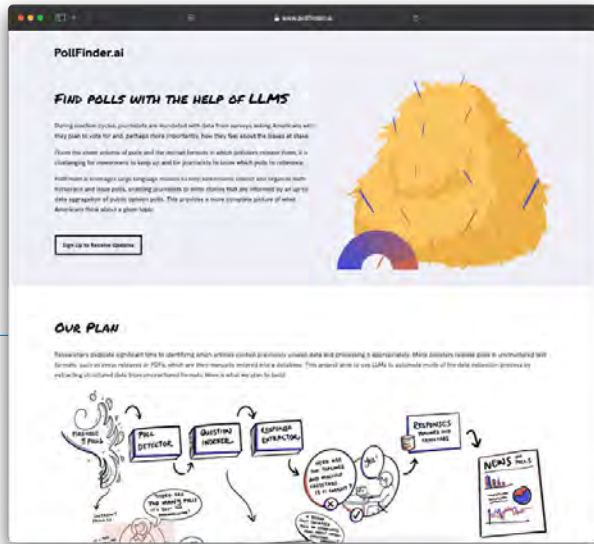
Besides teaching students how to professionally record and edit video, the course also includes practical training in on-camera presence, teleprompter reading and live reporting. These skills are essential for today’s multimedia journalists who need to be as comfortable in front of the camera as they are behind it.



City Newsroom is more than just a class; it’s an immersive experience that bridges the gap between academic learning and professional journalism, preparing the next generation of reporters to serve their communities.

AI and Data Journalism

The Tow Center for Digital Journalism at CJS has been closely following the adoption of AI in journalism, with a critical eye towards the ways these new technologies are shifting the power dynamics in media. Our Platforms and Publishers timeline — originally created to monitor shifts and trends in the social media platform landscape — has been expanded to incorporate developments related to artificial intelligence technologies. The Center has also been publishing detailed looks at the ways in which AI is changing news, including an in-depth report by Tow Center fellow Felix Simon, and various pieces in Columbia Journalism Review.



COMPUTATIONAL NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING (NLP) PROJECTS

Professor Dhruvil Mehta and his team have received a Brown Institute Magic Grant for pollfinder.ai, a new AI-driven tool that uses large language models to help newsrooms aggregate public opinion polling. Aggregate feeds of polling data are a key piece of infrastructure that powers political reporting in an election year. Prior to joining Columbia, Mehta built and maintained the polling database at FiveThirtyEight and is now looking to the promise of large language models to allow newsrooms to poll data more effectively.

The team at the Tow Center is also working on various other projects that leverage large language models for tasks like quote detection in large datasets of news to enable more effective source audits, and a tool using large language models to identify which adjectives are used to refer to various people in the news media to computationally identify and comment on gendered or otherwise biased news coverage.



FRONTIERS OF COMPUTATIONAL JOURNALISM CLASS

Frontiers of Computational Journalism — our class for the small but talented cohort of Computer Science-Journalism Dual M.S. students — is focused on pushing the boundaries of journalistic techniques using data. The class was completely redesigned this year and was co-taught by Professor Dhruvil Mehta and Adjunct Professor Nick Thieme, a statistician and journalist at the Baltimore Banner. The course was centered around Generalized Additive Models (GAMs), an advanced class of statistical models that allow journalists to answer tangled, real-world questions.

Student Voices

I was part of the documentary cohort, and I can see visible change in my cinematography and storytelling skills. It has been my dream to come to Columbia Journalism School since I was 12 — so after almost a decade and a half, and I am so thankful to you for allowing this dream to become a reality!

Nishta Shanti, '24 M.S. Documentary Specialization, duPont Fellow

This opportunity has reminded me that there is so much to experience and to experiment with in the world of arts journalism, at a time when it can often feel like a fraught business to be in. I will be leaving the program energized and with a renewed sense of my purpose and potential. I have also made some wonderful friends here who have made me feel so very welcome in New York, and I feel part of a very special community within the J-School and within Columbia at large. It has been a huge gift, and would not have been possible without your incredible generosity.



Hannah Davies, '24 M.A. Arts & Culture
Barbara London Lemann Fund for Arts and Culture Journalism

Every day at CJS, I am learning new skills — on how to use computation, Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) techniques and methods such as empathetic objectivity to find hidden stories, gaining fresh perspectives and improving my journalism.

In the Fall semester, I got published in Columbia Journalism Review, a publication I have looked up to for years, with a data-driven piece comparing the amount of coverage received by Joe Biden and Donald Trump on America's biggest cable news networks. I worked with my classmate Matthew Danbury and Professor Dhruvil Mehta on the article.



Meghnad Bose
'24 M.S. Data Journalism
David E. and Katherine C. Moore Scholarship Fund

Professor June Cross' Reporting class was really life changing. I didn't know I could learn so much about how to talk to people and how to follow a lead in such a short period of time. Also, Professor Thor Neuriter's guidance has been invaluable throughout the whole program. He has helped me shape and reshape the material I've reported into a proof of concept for a documentary that was greenlit in early January.

I'm looking forward to using the skills I learned here to the world of documentary production and social justice.

Daniel Hernandez-Alonzo, '24 M.S.
The Dean's Fund

This has been, without exaggeration, the most fruitful period of my life.

At the J-School, I was taught by caring and knowledgeable instructors. I've had the privilege of working with the distinguished journalist and academic Professor Nicholas Lemann who supervises my thesis project. His dedication, passion and thoughtfulness are unique. In my thesis, I report on the divisions and infightings of the community of Iranian diaspora in the aftermath of the nationwide uprisings that broke out in September 2022 and came to be known as the Woman, Life, Freedom movement.

Kourosh Ziabari Seyedin, '24 M.A. Politics
Simon and June Li Fund for International Students



Coming to J-School was one of the best decisions I've ever made and your support has been instrumental in helping me to access this opportunity. While at CJS, I got my first byline ever and it's in Rolling Stone.

Lotoya Francis, '24 M.S.
David and Helen Gurley Brown Scholarship Fund

Special Events at CJS



WORD:LIFE – CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF HIP HOP JOURNALISM

FEBRUARY 20–21, 2024

CJS hosted “Word: Life, An Opinionated Mixtape of Hip Hop Journalism” a two-day conference sponsored by Columbia Journalism School, Critical Minded and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to recognize the people, publications and programs that shaped this art form over the past 50 years.



STUDENT COVERAGE OF THE 2024 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

NOVEMBER 5, 2024

This year, students participating in the school’s Election Project delivered in-depth, real-time coverage of the day, combining field reporting with the coordination of a dynamic live desk. J-School students gained hands-on experience in rigorous election coverage by reporting from across New York City and gathering stories nationwide for Columbia News Service. Students published over 32 stories, posted 134 updates to a live blog which received over 10,000 impressions and produced a one-hour election night broadcast from Pulitzer Hall and live on the ground.

Enduring Legacy



IDA B. WELLS SYMPOSIUM

MARCH 25, 2024

We celebrated the remarkable life of Ida B. Wells and her contributions to the field of journalism, the Civil Rights Movement, and American history. A day of engaging panel discussions culminated in the unveiling of a new bust honoring this trailblazing leader and advocate. The Alumni Planning Committee consisted of: Akintunde Ahmad '19 M.S., Dawn Kissi '05 M.S., Cydney Tucker '16 M.S., Brandon Karl Drenon '20 M.S. and Wayne Dawkins '80 M.S. Alumni also participated as panelists during the symposium including: Dorothy Butler Gilliam '61 M.S., Jenisha Watts '14 M.S. and Marquita Pool-Eckert '69 M.S. Columbia Journalism School extends its gratitude to Carolyn Minick Mason and Mark A.L. Mason for their gift of a bust of Ida B. Wells.

“Coming to CJS was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made and your support has been instrumental in helping me access this opportunity.”

Lotoya Francis, '24 M.S.
David and Helen Gurley Brown
Scholarship Fund

Connecting Community



ALUMNI WEEKEND

APRIL 18–20, 2024

Alumni connected with classmates, faculty and friends to celebrate the achievements of our incredible community. Highlights included a moving Alumni Awards ceremony and the Hearst Lecture on The Modern Face of War Reporting with journalist Malachy Browne presenting his work in visual reporting in conflict zones.

JOURNALISM DAY & GRADUATION

MAY 14 AND 15, 2024

The J-School hosted its annual Scholarship Breakfast, bringing together student scholarship recipients and their benefactors ahead of Journalism Day in Miller Theatre. This year featured the Henry F. Pringle Memorial Lecture by Caitlin Dickerson, staff writer at The Atlantic; Sally Jenkins of The Washington Post, winner of the Meyer “Mike” Berger Award; and winners of the Paul Tobenkin Memorial Award, Brandi Kellam and Louis Hansen of the Virginia Center for Investigative Journalism at WHRO and ProPublica.

**CJS LAUNCHES
ALUMNI
MENTORSHIP
PROGRAM**

This fall, the J-School launched a pilot mentorship program designed to connect alumni with current students. Leveraging our worldwide alumni network, this program aims to empower students using a one-on-one mentorship approach.

EMAIL JALUMNI@COLUMBIA.EDU TO LEARN MORE

The Dean's Tour

During the 2023–2024 academic year, Dean Jelani Cobb embarked on a series of programming across the U.S. and internationally, enjoying the opportunity to meet friends and alumni of the J-School and to dialogue with leaders in our community. Over the summer, CJS alumni and friends also connected at major conferences in Austin, Chicago, and Los Angeles.



SAN FRANCISCO

February 6

Featured Dean Cobb and Katherine Rowlands '89 M.S., Independent Business Owner, Bay City News Service, and Co-Founder, Women Do



WASHINGTON, DC

October 23

Dean Cobb and Professor Sam Freedman discussed Freedman's latest book, *Into the Bright Sunshine: Young Hubert Humphrey and the Fight for Civil Rights*



LOS ANGELES

February 8

Featured Dean Cobb in conversation with Kevin Merida, Former Executive Editor, Los Angeles Times



LONDON

May 22

Dean Cobb joined The Guardian's Editor in Chief, Katharine Viner, for a fireside chat on the future of global journalism



PARIS

May 21

The J-School and Sciences Po commemorated their 15-year partnership with a reception featuring Dean Cobb, Sciences Po Dean Marie Mawad, and distinguished alumni Kéthévane Gorjestani '10 M.S., Juliette Jabkhiro '18 M.S., and John Knych '19 M.S.

SUMMER AFFINITY CONFERENCES

JULY AND AUGUST 2024

Columbia Journalism School hosted alumni receptions at three major affinity conventions this summer: the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA) in Austin, TX; the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) in Chicago, IL; and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ) in Hollywood, CA. These events featured discussions with faculty, alumni award presentations, and networking opportunities for alumni, current and prospective students. The receptions provided a platform for the CJS community to connect, share experiences and celebrate their achievements.



“My time at the Journalism School provided me with an amazing opportunity to learn from and collaborate with some of the industry’s top leaders.”

Brianna Benitez, '24 M.S.
Molly Ivins Scholarship

Our Alumni Community

LIZ BOROD WRIGHT '00 M.S. ON GETTING INVOLVED AND JOINING THE ALUMNI BOARD

I was inspired to join the Alumni Board because I remain deeply connected to the mission of the Journalism School and the education I received there, even though I'm no longer a "practicing journalist." In my role as Communications Director, I'm still using the skills daily in any number of tasks, from writing newsletters to producing news-driven videos for social media and international summits. I joined the Board for the purpose of representing the J-School's diverse professional community, but I'm eager to explore how all of us can be more engaged with the school. Our alumni community is only as strong as our collective involvement.

What first brought me back to the J-School was teaching as an adjunct for Sree Sreenivasan's "Smarter Social Media Workshop" in 2010. An early adopter of social media (thanks to a blog I'd launched), I've always approached creating content through a journalist's lens. That perspective — shaped by my J-School training in fact-checking and verifying sources — has been my greatest professional differentiator in a crowded communications and social media landscape. The gravitas instilled by the J-School has guided me throughout my career.

When I graduated from the J-School, people were still starting their mornings with a print newspaper and savoring thick, glossy magazines on the weekends. Needless to say, media consumption habits have profoundly changed. I believe there are still lots of exciting opportunities out there for journalists, and as a Board Member, I really enjoy being on the Curriculum Committee to explore how to best prepare our graduates for the rapidly evolving field.

I encourage everyone to follow CJS on social media to stay updated on the incredible work happening at the school, and also to share their posts to amplify them. If you're in New York City, make time to attend events at Pulitzer Hall. Put Alumni Weekend on your calendar. Consider joining the new Mentor Program. Reach out to your former classmates and professors. There are many ways to stay involved with the J-School community.



“The point of view I gained from the Journalism School has really been my biggest professional differentiator, the gravitas that the J-School instills in all of us.”

Supporting the J-School

**JULIE HUANG '96 M.S.
ON ESTABLISHING THE JACKSON AND
LILY HUANG SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

J-School, as tough as it was, was such a great training ground. There have been so many times throughout the course of my career or my life that I've thought about, wow, this isn't as hard as what I had to go through at J-School.

Some of my closest friends are still from J-School, and the training was just amazing. I got a job offer out of school from NBC, who also gave me a scholarship. Everything that I learned at NBC was critical for the rest of my career. I went on to work at different places and everything that I was trained in journalism at J-School, thinking fast, synthesizing a lot of information, telling a narrative, would all become useful in my PR job. I still think of all the professions that journalism was the best. Every training I got has built me into who I am today. So journalism is something that I really believe in.

This scholarship is as an entry point to supporting the school and personally to support younger journalists who have that fire, the freedom, and the dedication to the profession. That made so much sense to me and it made me frankly very proud that I could do this. I was glad to build a stronger connection back to the school. It's not just an endowed scholarship, it's an endowed scholarship to train a journalist who has to then go out and be a journalist and produce and search. So it really feels like it's active support. It means a lot to me to enable somebody to be a journalist, who has the drive to go out and find stories and continue this essential work.

Where the J-School is today is very exciting, with Dean Cobb so actively building and supporting the profession, as a young journalist it's very dynamic. Now is a great time to support the school — it's very active in making sure journalism stays and thrives as a profession.



“I still think of all the professions that journalism was the best. All the training I received has built me into who I am today. So journalism is something that I really believe in.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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