



## COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL 2020 IMPACT REPORT

“We believe a graduate school of journalism should draw on the talents of faculty and students to create journalism that ignites change in the world.”

—Dean Steve Coll

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# Letter From the Dean



Photo by Jeffrey Schiffman

In May 1904, Joseph Pulitzer published “The College of Journalism,” a seminal essay in *The North American Review*, where he made the case for creating a specialized school that would “raise journalism to its real rank as a learned profession.”

He predicted that “before the century closes schools of journalism will be generally accepted as a feature of specialized higher education, like schools of law or of medicine.” More than a century later, Pulitzer’s vision has been realized at Columbia and many other leading American universities.

Our School has long drawn from Columbia University’s research and scholarship to educate our graduate students and to inform and influence our profession. Yet we aspire today to greater public service and impact beyond the borders of the University. Columbia University President Lee Bollinger encouraged us recently to aspire to seek solutions to pressing crises, an aspiration he refers to as the Fourth Purpose of universities, after research, education and public service. At Columbia Journalism, we have been

drawn to such purpose in recent years.

It is perhaps more straightforward for political scientists and engineers to conceive of projects that might directly solve or ameliorate crises such as climate change, public health epidemics or mass incarceration. Journalists are not solution-seeking engineers or public policy innovators. Yet we can see as clearly today as ever that professional

journalists working without fear or favor continually ignite remarkable and positive change.

Without investigative journalism, for example, there may not have been a #MeToo movement. Police, prosecutors and employers had failed scores of women who finally turned to reporters as a figurative court of last resort. The same might be said about the journalistic exposures of decades of child abuse in the Catholic Church. And despite the present atmosphere of incitement and attacks against the press in the United States and abroad, hardly a week goes by without professional reporters exposing fresh corruption and abuses of power across government, business and civil society, leading directly to resignations, official investigations and reforms.

We believe a graduate school of journalism can and should seek to create such journalism, by drawing on the talents of our faculty and graduate students, and by working in an interdisciplinary way with scholars, scientists and researchers across the University.

A decade ago, under Dean Nicholas Lemann, Columbia Journalism School began to fill gaps emerging in commercial journalism, by creating nonprofit investigative reporting projects, and by establishing new centers that would publish critical research about Silicon Valley and other disruptive forces in our field. In recent years, we have expanded this strategy, building out new postgraduate investigative reporting programs on migration, civil rights, climate change, sexual assault and inequality in education. We partner and publish major investigative work with news organizations that have large and influential audiences, including *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New Yorker* and others.

We also seek to make an impact by influencing and strengthening journalism through accountability reporting about the media itself at *Columbia Journalism Review*; by publishing original, headline-making research about crises such as the rise of propaganda and hate speech on social media platforms; and by training journalists to improve their coverage of gun violence and natural disasters.

We hope this inaugural impact report will document some of this work and make clear our aspirations for University partners, newsrooms, alumni, students and other collaborators. By publishing this report regularly, we also hope to challenge ourselves to aim high and to explore continuously how a graduate school like ours can draw on the resources and talents of one of the world’s great research universities to produce journalism that fosters change.

Steve Coll  
Dean, Henry R. Luce  
Professor of Journalism

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black top, is holding a large, dark-framed portrait of a young woman with dark hair. The portrait is the central focus of the image. The woman holding the frame is looking down at it with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

# ADVANCING INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Through the Toni Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism, a teaching and investigative reporting program, and Columbia Journalism Investigations, the School's postgraduate fellowship program devoted to public interest reporting, the School seeks to draw distinctively on the resources of Columbia University to publish journalism that creates positive change.

Some of this work is carried out by graduate students; some by professional investigative journalists who serve as project directors, mentoring students and postgraduate fellows; and some by faculty. The Stabile Center, led by the Dean of Academic Affairs Sheila Coronel, trains select students for careers in investigative reporting and provides grants to publish these and other projects through major news organizations. Columbia Journalism Investigations, led by longtime investigative reporter Kristen Lombardi, is collaborating with the School of Public Health, The Earth Institute and other parts of the University to apply social science methods to investigative journalism projects and to leverage insights from academic research to create credible and impactful stories that reach large and influential audiences.

# Tracking and Documenting Asylum Seekers Deported to Their Deaths

Columbia Journalism Investigations' global migration project, led by Sarah Stillman, MacArthur Fellow, New Yorker staff writer and adjunct faculty member, reports on U.S. immigration law, border politics and international refugee policy.

In 2018, the project published [“No Refuge”](#) in The New Yorker magazine, which documented cases of immigrants who were deported and then faced death or danger in the countries to which they were sent, particularly women and girls who fled gender-based violence in Central America's Northern Triangle.

In addition to impactful magazine journalism, the project included an original database of post-deportation violence against deportees that has since been featured in The Washington Post, PBS NewsHour, John Oliver's Last Week Tonight and other outlets. The work won a national award from the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

In Boston, a federal judge cited the Columbia Journalism Investigations project while halting the deportation of 50 Indonesian Christians who faced potential persecution, and dozens of immigration attorneys referenced the findings to help secure asylum for women fleeing Central America.

At a Senate committee hearing, Senator Dick Durbin (D-Illinois) asked Kirstjen Nielsen, former secretary of Homeland Security, to review the findings of the No Refuge project and respond — to the Senate and public — about the deaths that resulted from deportations documented by the project. The data described more than 60 cases of deaths following U.S. deportations.

After the No Refuge project, Stillman won a Magic Grant from the School's

Brown Institute for Media Innovation to advance the impact of the project's deportation data. Stillman partnered with an award-winning data visualization and design team to construct a depor-

tation-to-harm portal to be published by The New Yorker. They expanded their reporting to countries such as Somalia, Cambodia, Egypt and Mauritania.

Carolyn Drake / Magnum for The New Yorker





Brian Stauffer, special to ProPublica

## Exposing Abusive Practices by For-Profit Companies Under Contract with Public Schools

Columbia Journalism Investigations' Teacher Project, led by veteran education reporter and editor Sarah Carr, explored issues of equity and access in American education. The team partnered with ProPublica on an [investigative series](#) that revealed prison-like conditions in public schools managed by Camelot Education, a for-profit company operating alternative schools.

The postgraduate fellows working with Carr documented violence and patterns of abuse inside Camelot's alternative schools over ten years across several states. After the publication of their reporting, several school districts cancelled or declined to award multi-million-dollar contracts with Camelot.



Dondi Tawatao / Getty

## Counting the Homicides Missing from Official Police Records in The Philippines



Photo by Jeffrey Schifman

In the Philippines, the casualties caused by President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs have been grossly underestimated, according to a groundbreaking investigation in *The Atlantic* led by Professor Sheila Coronel, director of the Toni Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism, aided by postgraduate fellows David Mora 18JRN and Mariel Padilla 18JRN.

[“The Uncounted Dead of President Duterte's Drug War”](#) was a collaboration

between the School's Stabile Center and the Security Force Monitor, a project by Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute, and the Human Rights Data Analysis Group. To build a database of documented cases, the team collected reports, maps and data from police, human rights groups, parishes, media outlets and funeral parlors. The total number of homicides during Duterte's campaign is almost 2.5 times higher than the official police counts, according to the investigation.

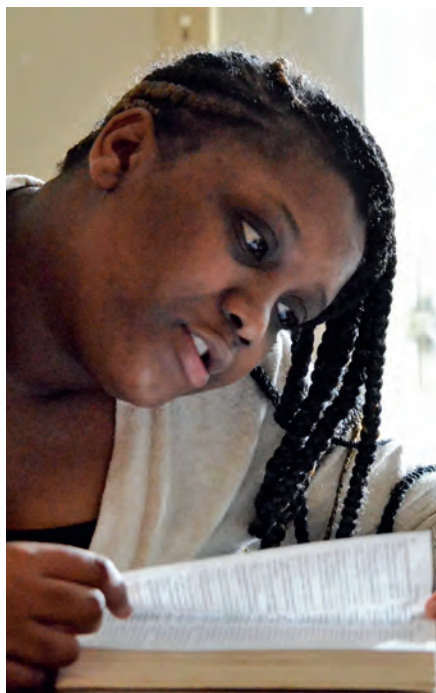
Mora and Padilla — graduates of the School who specialized in investigative and data journalism — published the team's analysis in a database of 2,320 drug-related killings. With the help of human-rights statistician Patrick Ball, the team used machine learning to estimate, based on available data, that a significant number of drug-related killings have not been documented by the police or any other group.

# Reporting on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and the Challenges of Reinstating Voting Rights for Ex-Felons in Florida



Photo by Jeffrey Schiffman

The Ira A. Lipman Center for Journalism and Civil and Human Rights, created in 2018, funds public interest reporting by graduates and mid-career journalists to uncover rights abuses and to advance public understanding. Directed by Professor Jelani Cobb, a historian, journalist and staff writer at



Monica Rhor / USA Today

The New Yorker, the center recently supported work by 2018 Lipman fellows Monica Rhor and Kira Lerner.

Kira Lerner wrote a [series of articles](#) that ran in The Appeal and Think Progress on the controversial ballot initiative to restore voting rights to ex-felons in Florida, which was ultimately enacted. For USA Today, Rhor [investigated](#) the troubling and emblematic case of C'alra Bradley, a black woman entangled in the criminal justice system in Houston.

Bradley experienced repeated high school suspensions, family instability and failing grades that eventually led to a two-year prison sentence and a subsequent struggle for housing and employment. The story highlighted the need locally to reform school discipline proceedings to break the well-documented "school-to-prison pipeline" that disproportionately affects minorities and contributes to mass incarceration.



Kira Lerner / The Appeal

A woman wearing a teal hijab and a dark blue garment with colorful embroidery is speaking into a microphone. She is looking slightly to the right. In the background, other people are seated at a table, blurred. The scene appears to be a conference or a panel discussion.

# STRENGTHENING JOURNALISM

The School is deeply connected with leaders in major newsrooms in the U.S. and worldwide. It regularly publishes original research and media criticism, and it convenes experts and journalists to discuss ethics, civil and human rights, security, trauma, new technologies and the First Amendment. As a leader in original research and innovation projects, and as a critical forum for public discussion about the field, the Columbia Journalism School seeks to strengthen and influence journalism through its publishing, research and professional partnerships. Much of this work is carried out by the school's centers and institutes.





Photos on this page by Jeffrey Schifman

## Holding Big Tech Accountable and Analyzing the Convergence Between Journalism and Platform Companies



Led by founding director Emily Bell, the [Tow Center for Digital Journalism](#) produces original research on the intersection of news, data, algorithms and social platforms to analyze how new technologies impact the industry and policy. This work reaches influential audiences through a special channel on the growing digital platforms of Columbia Journalism Review. Tow's

team of computational journalists have produced research on WhatsApp and the Indian elections; collecting over 1 million messages from closed groups. The center's Digital Forensics hub has collaborated with Columbia's Data Science Institute to create the Political Visual Literacy Project, a groundbreaking app for newsrooms to identify political symbols.

In 2018, Jonathan Albright, the director of the center's digital forensics initiative, published an array of headline-making original research, including "The Micro-Propaganda Machine," a three-part series that examined the connection between platforms, propaganda and politics. Using the Facebook tool CrowdTangle, Albright and the Tow staff identified memes, links, and stories that were shared across platforms, revealing and mapping how misinformation spread during the 2016 election. The center's research was the subject of page-one stories in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*; informed congressional investigations; and contributed to a government-commissioned report on misinformation during the election.

Since 2016, the center has published more than 40 reports and hosted 14 conferences to inform news organizations about technologies that are reshaping journalism, not always for the better. Platform and Publishers, Tow's multiyear research and publishing initiative, educates journalists, tech companies and lawmakers on the nuances of the fraught relationships between platform companies and publishers, an increasingly politicized issue.



## Improving Strategies for Reporting on Violence and Disasters



Photo by Jeffrey Schiffman

The [Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma](#) fosters innovative reporting on violence, crisis and tragedy, from street crime and gender violence to war and disaster. The Dart Center connects reporters worldwide with the contextual knowledge from a wide range of disciplines, specialized journalism skills and continuing support for ethical, effective trauma reporting.

Led by director Bruce Shapiro, the Dart Center develops evidence-informed training and online resources, and is a pioneer in mitigating the impact of trauma exposure on news professionals. The Center's flagship programs include the Dart Awards and the week-long Ochberg Fellowship, and workshops on freelance safety, gun violence and other issues. In 2019, the

Dart Center sponsored two workshops on covering child refugees, including Dart's first program in Jordan, bringing together local reporters, international journalists and wide-ranging experts.

Some of Dart's impact is measured story by story: for instance Thomas Brennan, a former U.S. Marine, is one of nearly 200 Dart Center Ochberg Fellows. Following his 2017 fellowship Brennan broke the Marines United nude photo scandal for *The War Horse* and *Reveal*, exposing revenge porn on Facebook posted by members of the U.S. armed forces. Brennan's work was featured on page one of *The New York Times*, inspiring Congressional hearings and forcing Facebook to remove offending sites.

The Dart Center is widely recognized as the global authority on journalist resilience and professional duty of care. In 2019, the Dart Center provided trauma training to more than 30 news organizations worldwide.



CJR's first-of-its-kind newsstand in Manhattan to educate voters on how to identify disinformation.

## A Watchdog for Watchdogs: Columbia Journalism Review



Photo by Jeffrey Schiffman

**The Columbia Journalism Review**, “the voice of journalism,” has undergone a renaissance during the last several years, dramatically increasing its readership across digital platforms and publishing themed print issues on subjects such as journalism and President Trump, diversity in American newsrooms and the crisis in local news. The Review has been a finalist for a National Magazine Award two years in a row. Its digital channels carry daily influential reporting on media performance, unpacking failures and successes, and offering new ideas about journalism ethics and excellences.

In 2019, the Columbia Journalism Review launched *Covering Climate Now*, in partnership with *The Nation*, a project that aims to challenge the media’s complacency about the climate crisis, while advancing strategies for improvement. More than 350 media outlets joined CJR and *The Nation* to commit to a full week of climate coverage between September 16 and 23 — the week before the international Climate Action Summit at the United Nations. The audience reached by the initiative totaled more than 1 billion people worldwide. “We’re not advocating for a particular point of view. All we’re saying is the immensity of the climate crisis isn’t being matched by the amount of coverage it’s receiving,” said Kyle Pope, editor and publisher of CJR.

In 2019, CJR also hired four public editors to cover *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, MSNBC and CNN. The public editor, an ombudsman for readers dissatisfied by an outlet’s reporting, was once a vital part of most newsrooms but has all but disappeared. Pope decided to fill that gap between journalists and their audiences, hoping that this will help “repair some of these trust problems,” as Pope put it.

### CJR By the Numbers



**140,000**  
Total Twitter followers



**515,000**  
(average 2015-2018)  
Monthly unique page views\* to CJR.org



**27,000**  
Subscribers to *The Media Today* daily email



**14,000**  
Monthly downloads of *The Kicker*, CJR’s weekly podcast

\*(2015-2018 Average monthly unique page views)

# DEFENSORES DE LA DEMOCRACIA

El nacimiento de la libertad de expresión y la muerte que viene con ella.



Digital archive that preserves the work of journalists killed in Mexico.

## Funding New Media Experiments

[The Brown Institute](#) for Media Innovation, a collaboration, between Columbia Journalism School and Stanford's Graduate School of Engineering, helps to modernize journalism by designing and implementing both new approaches and tools for investigative work, as well as experimenting with novel storytelling vehicles.

The institute's "Magic Grant" program distributes roughly \$1M per year in competitive grants and fellowships for projects and prototypes that advance data and computation as a subfield of journalism. In its seven-year history, the Brown Institute has awarded 54 Magic Grants and two follow-on projects, supporting 175 journalists, designers, computer scientists and scholars as they create new forms of journalism using frontier technologies.

Its projects have included the creation

of Panama's first public government database, El Tabulario, which was founded by Ana Mendez, a 2015 graduate of Columbia Journalism School, and her colleagues, Alfonso Grimaldo and Gaspar Garcia de Paredes. El Tabulario collects, organizes and publishes government information that otherwise would not be accessible.

The Brown Institute also funded Democracy Fighters, a digital archive that preserves the work of murdered journalists in Mexico. The archive, created by Alejandra Ibarra Chaoul, a graduate of the School's class of 2018, has more than 12,000 clips from 40 journalists killed in the last 30 years.

Another recent Magic Grant integrated the work of Jeremy Bailen-

son, founding director of Stanford's Virtual Human Interaction Lab, with that of, Courtney Cogburn, assistant professor at the Columbia School of Social Work, whose research examines the role of racism in producing racial disparities in health. Cogburn and Bailenson produced a three-part virtual reality experience in which the viewer becomes an African American man encountering racism as a young child, adolescent and young adult. The piece debuted at the Tribeca Film Festival and has since been sought out by businesses to incorporate into diversity training.

**The Brown Institute awards roughly \$1 million per year in grants and fellowships for projects that advance data and computation as a subfield of journalism.**

# Inspiring Excellence in Journalism

Columbia University houses the Pulitzer Prizes and partners with the National Magazine Awards to present each year two of the most influential prizes in journalism. Stewardship of professional prizes — including the integrity of judging and efforts to attract diverse and robust entries — constitutes an important responsibility of Columbia Journalism toward the profession. Each year, the prizes overseen by the school honor new forms of storytelling and move the profession forward.

## From breaking news to literary nonfiction

### The Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards

Since 1968, the awards have honored the best in broadcast, documentary and online journalism in the public service.

### Maria Moors Cabot Prizes

Founded in 1938, the Cabot Prizes are the oldest international awards in journalism.

### The Columbia Journalism Award

The Columbia Journalism Award, the school's highest honor, is voted by the faculty, and given in recognition of exceptional journalistic performance in the public interest.

### The John B. Oakes Award

The John B. Oakes Award is given annually for news reporting that makes an exceptional contribution to the public's understanding of environmental issues.

### The John Chancellor Award

The Chancellor Award is presented to a reporter with courage and integrity for cumulative professional accomplishments.

### The J. Anthony Lukas Prize

The Lukas Prize celebrates nonfiction that exemplifies literary grace and commitment to serious research and social concern.

### The Paul Tobenkin Memorial Award

The Tobenkin Award recognizes outstanding achievements in reporting on racial, or religious hatred, intolerance or discrimination in the United States.

### The Meyer "Mike" Berger Award

The Berger Award recognizes outstanding examples of in-depth, human interest reporting.

### The WERT Prize

The WERT Prize, funded in 2018 by a bequest made by the Women's Economic Roundtable to the Knight-Bagehot Fellowship, honors excellence in business reporting by a woman.



# Centers at a Glance

## The Ira A. Lipman Center for Journalism and Civil and Human Rights

The Lipman Center provides leadership for journalists who shape and inform the community about civil and human rights issues. Since its founding in 2017, the Lipman Center has held significant panel discussions and supported reporters who cover race, diversity and social justice.

## Tow Center for Digital Journalism

The Tow Center consistently produces groundbreaking research that serves news organizations as they look for new revenue streams and adapt to the challenges posed by emerging technologies.

## The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma

The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma comprises a global network of journalists, educators and health professionals dedicated to improving media coverage of trauma, violence and tragedy. The center provides a professional forum for journalists in all media to analyze issues, share ideas and advance strategies related to the craft of trauma reporting.

## Columbia Journalism Review

The Columbia Journalism Review is the world's most-read source of press criticism, as well as a leading advocate for press freedom. With its deep reporting and sharp analysis, CJR shapes the ideas that make newsrooms and journalists smarter about their work.

## Brown Institute for Media Innovation

The Brown Institute for Media Innovation is a collaboration between Columbia Journalism School and Stanford University's School of Engineering, designed to encourage and support new endeavors in media innovation.

## Craig Newmark Center for Journalism Ethics and Security

The Newmark Center equips journalists with tools to address the ethical and security challenges of the profession. The new resources will enable advanced instruction in digital and physical security, algorithmic bias, image manipulation and source protection in an era of high surveillance.

## George Delacorte Center for Magazine Journalism

The George Delacorte Center for Magazine Journalism is devoted to thinking through the changing role of magazines in both journalism and American life. It hosts the Delacorte Lectures, featuring leading practitioners from the world of magazines, including editors, writers, general counsels and publishers.





# FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE WORLD

Columbia Journalism School's vision for journalism education remains rooted in the fundamentals of fair, independent and fact-based reporting in the public interest. Our curriculum synthesizes core training in reporting, investigative techniques and storytelling with newer or specialized practices, including data and computational journalism, long-form audio and documentary filmmaking.

In 2012, the School launched a dual degree in computer science and journalism with Columbia's Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science. In 2015, the School offered a data concentration in its M.S. degree as part of an effort to advance data instruction in the curriculum. With a grant from the Knight Foundation, it conducted a study on the state of data and computational instruction in the U.S. and used the study's findings to inform the creation of the School's first Master of Science program in Data Journalism, a three-semester, STEM-coded degree that more formally integrates core journalism education with computational techniques and data science, serving as a template for other graduate-level programs.

The School accepted its first class of data journalism students in 2018 and foresees that in the years ahead, it will continue to advance its instruction in this emerging field, and that the instruction offered to specializing data journalists will increasingly influence the School's more traditional degree programs.

# Analyzing Twitter Bots and Disrupting Black Market Sales of Fake Social Media Followers



Photo by Jeffrey Schifman

Social media has profoundly disrupted journalism during the past decade, but it is only recently that journalists have recognized that these platforms require investigative scrutiny. To penetrate and document fraud or other disturbing activity on social media is challenging; the companies operating the largest platforms rarely share data or code. Yet by combining advanced

computational methods with traditional shoe-leather reporting, it is possible to break important stories.

In 2018, The New York Times published [“The Follower Factory,”](#) a months-long investigation into the strange business of selling fake social media followers and engagement. The front-page story detailed how one company, Devumi, sold social

media engagement such as likes and comments, as well as fake followers, exploiting the identities of real people.

The story, partially conceived in Professor Mark Hansen's computational journalism class, was the result of a partnership between The Times and Columbia Journalism School students, who examined how messages are amplified on Twitter. As

part of their assignment, they created a Twitter account, @RosieTuring, and purchased 2,000 followers, in order to better understand how the market of fake followers worked.

The front-page story caught the attention of the New York Attorney General's office, which opened an investigation that led to the first instance where a law enforcement agency deemed selling fake followers and social media engagements to be illegal. The state of California also referenced The Follower Factory report in their Bots Bill. Twitter also began removing tens of millions of fake accounts from its platform, and Twitter executives attributed their decision to The New York Times story. The story was part of a package of New York Times stories that received the 2019 Polk Award for National Reporting and was a finalist for the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting.



Photo illustration by Adam Ferriss / New York Times





## Developing Books That Influence Nonfiction Publishing



Photo by Jeffrey Schiffman

Narrative nonfiction that synthesizes literary techniques and journalistic accuracy and truth-seeking has long been the focus of Professor Sam Freedman's Book Writing seminar. One of the most

popular courses at the School, the class is known for both its rigorous syllabus and for the award-winning books it has launched. To date, there have been 92 book contracts and 71 books

published by students who developed their projects in the seminar.

Students learn to write extensive narratives, and each produces a book proposal and a sample chapter of at least 4,000 words. The library Professor Freedman's seminar has created is impressively diverse and excellent. A recent example is the award-winning work by former student Dan Egan, whose book, "The Death and Life of the Great Lakes," a 2018 National Book Critics Circle finalist, told engaging and alarming stories about the complex threats, such as invasive species, that are damaging some of the country's most important freshwater resources.



## Investigating Toxic Water, Sexual Harassment and Undocumented Immigration Through Documentary Film



Photo by Jeffrey Schiffman

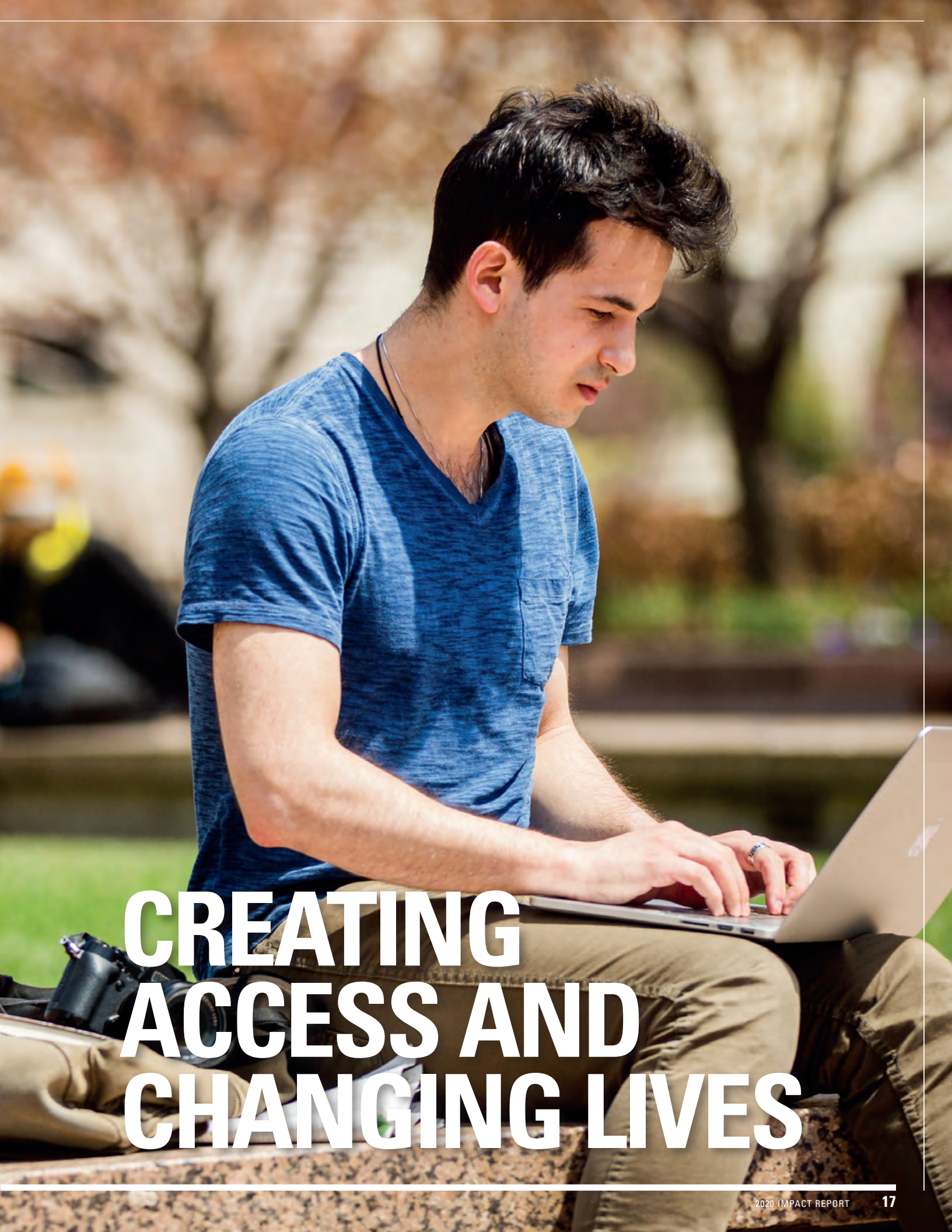
Columbia Journalism School is committed to training students to produce deeply reported visual stories. Under the leadership of Professor June Cross, founder of the documentary program, a faculty of working filmmakers

trains students to report and produce short and long documentaries. In 10 years, there have been 75 films made by students in the program, including 10 festival winners, 6 films featured on PBS and 3 in *The New York Times*.

In 2019, four recent graduates of the program were selected for prestigious student awards. Ingrid Holmquist and Sana Malik directed and produced the documentary “Guanajuato Norte,” a film about a man from Guanajuato, Mexico, who crosses the border and finds work on a Connecticut farm while grappling with long absences from his family; it won the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Student Film Award for Documentaries. Abby Lieberman’s and Joshua Lucas’s film “Something to Say,” about a boy’s struggle with language and a public school system

that doesn’t suit his needs, was selected as one of the winners of the 46th Student Academy Awards.

Films from the documentary program have also made an impact on public policy. Frank Runyeon’s 2014 film on contaminated rooftop water tanks, which supply drinking water to millions of New York City residents, led to a health code requiring building owners to submit annual tank inspections to the city. And in their 2016 film, documentary students George Steptoe and Scilla Alecci revealed rampant sexual harassment of female correctional officers by fellow guards and superiors.



# CREATING ACCESS AND CHANGING LIVES

# Awarding more than \$5 Million annually in Scholarship Aid for Graduate Students

The Journalism School is increasing scholarship aid through its Access Matters fundraising campaign. The initiative aims to increase financial support for exceptional applicants with demonstrated need. The campaign is close to reaching its goal of raising \$120 million by 2021 to bring new resources to the School, including a robust and generous scholarship program for the next generation of journalism students. The scholarship drive has lifted up the careers of extraordinary young journalists who would not otherwise have been able to attend graduate school at Columbia.

**“Be confident and uncompromising in your pursuit of the truth, but never forget that all facts require context, and history, and rigorous interrogation.”**

– Ben Taub, '15 M.A.,  
New Yorker Staff Writer



## SCILLA ALECCI, '15 M.S.

Alecci, in collaboration with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, became part of the Pulitzer-Prize winning Panama Papers team that built databases exposing businesses around the world that hid money. Her project focused on companies in Asia and helped governments to recoup about \$1.3 billion in unpaid taxes. Alecci credits her time as a student in the documentary and investigative program for preparing her for highly ambitious work. “The investigative program is very hands-on,” she said. “The best part was how they teach a method that you can apply to any investigation.”



## MUKHTAR IBRAHIM, '17 M.S.

While covering City Hall for the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Ibrahim noticed council members who regularly missed committee or full council meetings. By analyzing attendance records, he found that one member had missed nearly one-third of all meetings since the beginning of the council's new term. After Ibrahim's story came out, the council member blocked him from Twitter. Now the City of Minneapolis is proposing a new policy that would place more restrictions on how elected officials use social media. “I would not have done this story if it were not for the solid investigative and data skills I gained while at the Journalism School,” Ibrahim said. He recently founded a Minneapolis-based publication, the Sahan Journal.



## BEN TAUB, '15 M.A.

While studying international reporting at the J-school, Taub completed his master's thesis on the rise of jihadism, which later was published in The New Yorker, where Taub is currently a staff writer. He writes regularly for the magazine on international affairs, human rights and the environment. His recent feature on Lake Chad chronicled a humanitarian disaster in an African region grappling with climate change, poverty and violent extremism.



## SHREYA VAIDYANATHAN, '19 M.S. DUAL DEGREE JRN/CS

During her time as a dual degree student in computer science and data journalism, Vaidyanathan worked on an instrumental piece about Twitter that was published in WIRED magazine. With fellow journalism student Erin Roglin, Vaidyanathan determined that Twitter, using algorithms, suspended without warning the accounts of several Americans who were incorrectly identified as Russian bots. After graduating as the winner, with Roglin, of the Brown/Tow Award for Computational Journalism, Vaidyanathan now works on the news and data science team at Bloomberg.

# Investing in the School's mission of modernizing journalism education



Craig Newmark is a web pioneer, philanthropist and leading advocate. Most commonly known for founding the online classified ads service craigslist, Newmark works to support and connect people and drive broad civic engagement. In 2019, Columbia announced a \$10 million gift from Craig Newmark Philanthropies that established a new center and faculty chair to advance journalism ethics and security. The goal is to establish the School as a leader in modernizing ethics for an age of disruptive technology and pervasive propaganda.

**Philanthropy has played a big part of your personal mission over the last few years. What are your top philanthropic priorities now, and why did you select these areas of focus?**

Through my philanthropy, I work to advance people and grassroots organizations that are getting stuff done, providing them with support and then getting out of the way to let them do their jobs. I focus on four main areas: trustworthy journalism, voter protection, women in technology, and veterans and military families. Through my support of these causes, I aim to strengthen American democracy and the values this country aspires to – fairness, opportunity, and respect.

**You often say that a trustworthy press is the immune system of a healthy democracy. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges the profession faces today that could prevent it from achieving its role?**

Some news outlets give a lot of airtime and print space to people who they know are lying, and in that way, they amplify disinformation. To be clear, we're not talking half-truths or gray areas but the "pants on fire" stuff. The biggest issue is that the repetition of a lie creates an 'illusion of truth,' where the more a lie is said, the more it seems true. However, I believe that news organizations and social plat-

forms will put in place new methods to avoid complicity, and will firmly denounce disinformation as unethical and a violation of their terms of service.

**Why is journalism education such a core part of your philanthropic goals?**

With disinformation flowing through social media and the news, it's critical to modernize journalism ethics so that the industry keeps pace with the always changing digital landscape. By funding journalism education, my hope is to support those who teach future journalists the fundamentals and ethical requirements of reporting in a trustworthy way, helping to strengthen the caliber of the news around the country. Additionally, helping to provide students from various backgrounds with a top-notch journalism education helps to ensure that newsrooms are representative of the communities they serve, contributing to higher quality reporting.

**What do you hope the the Craig Newmark Center for Journalism Ethics and Security at Columbia will contribute to the next generation of journalists?**

The Columbia Journalism School's new Center for Journalism Ethics and Security will act as an accelerator. It will provide students and journalists with important resources for how to go about reporting in a safe and trustworthy manner. In this way, the new generation of journalists will have a working knowledge of digital and physical security, algorithmic bias, image manipulation, and other ethical issues that threaten the news industry today.

**Why should other philanthropists in positions similar to yours support the journalism profession?**

We're in the middle of an online information war, and the stakes are a free press, an informed public, and a strong democracy. Disinformation flows through social media and the news, pushed by bad actors and amplified by unaware consumers. Hence, supporting honest journalism and fighting disinformation are all-hands-on-deck issues, and we need to get support from all folks who have the capacity to bolster a trustworthy press.

**"We're in the middle of an online information war, and the stakes are a free press, an informed public, and a strong democracy."**

**—Craig Newmark**

## By the Numbers



**12,316**

alumni living in 97 countries around the world



**1,500**

alumni attended 24 events in 2019 fiscal year



In 2019, approximately

**1,400**

alumni contributed to the Annual Fund raising more than

**\$1M**

to support scholarships.

# Connecting Newsrooms to Diverse Talent

The School's Career Expo is the largest journalism job fair in the U.S., connecting a wide range of news organizations every year with the graduating class. In 2019, more than 350 recruiters from 158 news operations attended the Expo to interview students for jobs, internships, fellowships and freelance assignments.



**“As a recruiter you come here with sort of a clear idea in mind of what you’re looking for, and it’s fantastic to talk to students from all over the world and try to envision them in these roles.”**

– Jackie Bischof, '09 M.S.  
Deputy Global News Editor, Quartz

# Looking Ahead



Photo by Jeffrey Schifman

Columbia Journalism School goals 2020 and beyond:

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are the biggest fundraising priority in making the School accessible to the very best, most diverse candidates, regardless of economic need. The School's goal is to keep increasing the amount of scholarships offered as a percentage of the cost of attendance so that the funding can go much further on a per person basis.

To support Columbia Journalism School visit: <https://journalism.columbia.edu/support-school>

## COLUMBIA JOURNALISM INVESTIGATIONS

The goals for CJI include growing the program's reach by building relationships with specialists at Columbia University—scientists, statisticians and lawyers—to advise and collaborate with the fellows on CJI projects. Additionally, the CJI team aims to build a network of national, regional and local professional partners that will help produce original, public-interest reporting, and contribute to the School's Local News Initiative.

## LOCAL NEWS INITIATIVE

The lack of local news around the country has become an epidemic threatening the health of American democracy. The School seeks to strengthen local newsrooms and fill the gaps left by local news deserts. Specifically, the School is exploring a two-pronged approach that would include providing national data sets to local partners to inform local stories, and having the Brown Institute facilitate open source products that could advance local news business subscription models.

## INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

The School intends on expanding its international journalism capabilities to support press freedom and safety in some of the world's most dangerous places. It will also continue expanding educational opportunities throughout Latin America for professionals and students through skills workshops focusing on investigative journalism, public symposia to explore and debate the critical issues, and attract talented students from the region who will then strengthen journalism on the continent.

## Degree Programs

### M.A.

The Master of Arts program trains experienced journalists to go deeper and equips them with subject-area expertise, so they can explain complicated issues to the public. Students develop an intellectual grounding in their concentration that enables them to ask more informed questions, evaluate evidence for competing theories and produce sophisticated and nuanced stories.

### M.S.

The Master of Science degree is the foundational program of the Journalism School. M.S. students are on the street reporting from day one; learning to think critically and work ethically. M.S. students take courses on doing journalism on multiple platforms (audio, video or multimedia, broadcast, print and online). The program does not offer specializations by medium, but it has special tracks for those who want to focus on investigative reporting and documentary.

### M.S. In Data Journalism

M.S. In Data Journalism students begin their program in the summer, taking foundational computational and data courses as well as a course on the fundamentals of reporting. Unlike the general M.S. and M.A. tracks, data journalism students spend an extra semester at the school.

### Dual Degrees

The Journalism School offers dual degree opportunities with other Columbia departments and with two international programs. Students can apply for dual degrees in computer science, international and public affairs, business, religion and law.

### Ph.D.

The Doctor of Philosophy in Communications prepares students to teach in colleges and universities, to conduct original research in communications or to carry out policy or research work. Ph.D. students study the relationships between people and media in their cultural, social, political, historical, economic and technological contexts.

[journalism.columbia.edu](http://journalism.columbia.edu)