The University of Missouri at Columbia's School of Journalism was once again far and away the No. 1 choice as the top J-school in the country in the annual NewsPro-RTDNA Top Journalism Schools poll of news professionals.

Missouri handily claimed the top spot in the 2014 survey, trailed by second-place University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism and third-place Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

A series of ties followed. Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism tied for fourth place, while the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University and the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication tied for fifth place.

Tied for sixth were Troy University's Hall School of Journalism and Communication and Lyndon State College's Electronic Journalism Arts Department.

Rounding out the top 10 were Indiana University School of Journalism, in seventh place, Boston University College of Communication in eighth, New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute in ninth and, in 10th place, the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications.

The survey was distributed on TVWeek.com and to members of the Radio Television Digital News Association, with 673 respondents participating. A total of 607 of those respondents answered the question about their professional status; of those, 260 (42.8%) said they were news professionals. Additionally, 169 (27.8%) answered non-news professionals, 104 (17.1%) identified as students, and 74 (12.2%) said they were educators.

The 106-year-old Missouri School of Journalism — the oldest J-school in the country, if not the world — is known for its “Missouri Method” that enables students to receive hands-on training in real news media, including the school-owned KOMU-TV, the NBC/CW affiliate for Columbia and nearby Jefferson City, Mo. UM also operates the local National Public Radio station, KBIA, and produces “Radio Adelante,” a Spanish-language radio program.

Some of the approximately 2,250 Missouri School students also get practical experience at the school's Columbia Missourian publications, which include a website, a digital suite of apps, a print publication and e-books, and at Vox Magazine, which publishes a weekly iPad edition and a daily culture and entertainment blog called VoxTalk.

Ask why they selected a certain school as their top choice, responders were quite detailed in their answers. As can be expected, the Missouri School time and again won praise for its real-world approach. “The Missouri Method. You get real world, hands-
NEWSPRO-RTDNA SURVEY 2014
J-SCHOOL RANKINGS

1. UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI AT COLUMBIA
   Missouri School of Journalism

2. UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
   Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication

3. NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
   Medill School of Journalism

4. SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
   S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication

4. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
   Graduate School of Journalism

5. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
   Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communications

5. UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
   Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication

6. TROY UNIVERSITY
   Hall School of Journalism and Communication

6. LYNDON STATE COLLEGE
   Electronic Journalism Arts Department

7. INDIANA UNIVERSITY
   School of Journalism

8. BOSTON UNIVERSITY
   College of Communication

9. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
   Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute

10. UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
    College of Journalism and Communications

11 TO 20 IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
Ithaca College Roy H. Park School of Communications
Ohio University E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Michigan State University School of Journalism
Pennsylvania State University College of Communication
Quinnipiac University School of Communications
Stanford University Graduate Program in Journalism
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
University of Texas at Austin College of Communication
Washington State University Edward R. Murrow School of Communication
on experience (and lots of it) before you even graduate,” wrote one of the many school’s supporters.

A University of Georgia advocate explained, “University of Georgia’s Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication has well-trained professors who truly care about giving students experience in all areas of telecommunications. It shows with the wide range of Grady students involved in the journalism industry around the country.”

Several respondents put it more succinctly: “Columbia’s graduates have a proven track record of success,” and, from a University of Florida fan, “Gators succeed in all aspects of the industry. The hands-on training prepares future professionals.”

Many responders took great pains to boost Troy University in Alabama. “Troy University focuses on many aspects of journalism from print, broadcast, and new media. Troy does a good job of preparing all platform journalists to enter the workforce upon graduation. The curriculum at Troy is the best, with outstanding professors that give hands-on experience.”

A respondent who named University of Oklahoma the No. 1 school explained, “The University of Oklahoma is an often-overlooked leader in journalism education. The faculty set is a balanced mix of researchers and practitioners, giving students a healthy mix of cutting-edge research and on-the-job application. The Gaylord College houses an integrated advertising agency within its halls as well as a state-of-the-art broadcasting facility. It’s a playground for future storytellers that should be commended on its rise in recent years.”

Arizona State was the top choice of a respondent who commented, continued on page 22
The University of Georgia’s Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications turns 100 years old next September, and the venerable school is wasting no time celebrating.

Centennial festivities for the Athens, Ga.-based college launched in October with a Freedom Sings concert honoring the first amendment and a homecoming tailgate party that drew alumni, faculty and staff.

The celebration will culminate the weekend of April 16 to April 19, 2015, with events including a Centennial Symposium at the UGA Special Collections Libraries April 16 and 17, a 100th Birthday Field Party at nearby Smithonia Farm April 17, a Centennial Gala at the Classic Center convention facility in downtown Athens April 18, and a Centennial Brunch April 19 on the school’s Grady Lawn. A series of receptions will also be held in cities around the country.

“It’s all meant to give our alumni base a big opportunity to come together and celebrate this pretty seminal moment in the life of Grady College,” said the school’s Dean, Charles N. Davis. “You only do this once, so we really need to blow it out and give it the respect it deserves.”

Grady consistently ranks near the top of the annual NewsPro/RTDNA Journalism School Survey, and counts among its star alumni retired Knight-Ridder executive Don Carter, Emmy and Peabody award-winning journalist Charlayne Hunter-Gault, former CNN President Tom Johnson, “Inside Edition” anchor Deborah Norville and “Good Morning America” news anchor Amy Robach, plus Delta Airlines Senior VP of Marketing Tim Mapes and Coca-Cola VP of Public Affairs and Communications Scott Williamson.

“I cannot imagine how my career might have played out had I not been a student at the Henry W. Grady College of Journalism,” Norville, a two-time Emmy winner and former “Today” show co-host, commented via e-mail. “The school’s emphasis on internships was critical to my push to make sure I got the best hands-on experience while still a student at UGA.

“That training and emphasis on the need for actual real-world experience pushed me to get internships at Georgia Public Television and then WAGA-TV5 in Atlanta,” Norville explained. “I was employed as a news reporter for WAGA television before I was graduated from UGA. Within four months of graduation, I was the station’s weekend news anchor. My rapid trajectory could not have happened without my Grady School education and guidance.”

The value of Grady’s “hands-on” curriculum was also a frequent refrain among many of the inordinately passionate respondents to the NewsPro/RTDNA survey who listed the school as their top choice.

“One thing that distinguishes the University of Georgia and certainly Grady College is the excellence of the students, which sounds really trite, but the university’s story is one of explosive growth in academic excellence,” Davis said. “These are not typical students by any means. I often feel like I am lucky enough to be the dean of an honors college — the vast majority of our students qualify for the honors program. What that gives you is classrooms that are energized by the intellect of the students involved.”

Despite the technological revolution in journalism that has shaken — and shrunken the staffs of — the mightiest of media titans, students remain willing to pursue the calling, Davis said. “Our applications actually inched upward last year, as did our admissions,” he noted. “I wouldn’t say we are in growth mode, because we have everybody we can deal with, but we are certainly turning away a lot of people. I don’t anticipate that changing anytime soon.”

Davis hopes the centennial festivities will act as a catalyst to bring alumni together — and ramp up their level of annual giving.

“Increasing the percentage of alumni giving to the college is certainly a major goal. Which, in turn, probably hits our goal of changing the look and feel of our facility. Hopefully we can...
accomplish those things,” he said.

The objective is to create a more “digital-forward look” for the 50-year-old school facility, he said. To that end, Grady is starting a renovation of the student common area this month that will imbue it with plasma screens, news tickers and charging stations. “We just want to look much more modern and inviting,” Davis said.

Not that the school is lacking in new technology.

“I marvel when I return to UGA and see what’s going on at Grady,” Norville said. “But I caution the students, ‘Don’t get used to all this great equipment and technology you get to use here: It won’t be nearly as good out in the real world!’”

As for the Grady School’s future, Norville is confident. “I think the school is well positioned to continue to be a place where future professionals can learn the skills they’ll need in the changing media landscape,” she said. “Digitization has changed the way information is gathered, the tools used to do so, and the ways our audience consumes its information. What does not change is the need for accuracy, fairness and thoroughness in the face of crushing deadlines.”

Norville added, “The administration of the Grady School embraces the challenges of constantly upgrading its facilities to train today’s students for tomorrow’s digital landscape — but will always insist that the primary tenets of good journalism will be at the core of every student who comes out of the Grady School.”

More information about the Grady School’s centennial is available at Grady100.uga.edu.