

Survey: The Top 25 Journalism Schools

NewsPro's Survey of J-Schools Reveals the Best in the U.S.

By Tom Gilbert

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.

Asked 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-

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Sooner Sports Pad is the only student-produced sports program to be broadcast live on FOX Sports Southwest each week.

Best SportsCast 2014 – College Broadcasters, Inc.
Grand Prize, Best Program or Series 2013 – College Sports Media
Grand Prize, TV Sports Program 2014 – South Central Broadcasting Society
Grand Prize, TV Sports Program 2013 – National Broadcasting Society
Two first-place awards in 2013 – South Central Broadcasting Society
Finalist for Best Program or Series 2014 – College Sports Media
Honorable Mention TV Sports/Story/Feature 2014 – BEA Festival of Media Arts

www.ou.edu/gaylordports

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

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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 journalist to enter the workforce upon graduation. The curriculum at Troy is the best, with outstanding professors that give hands-on experience.”

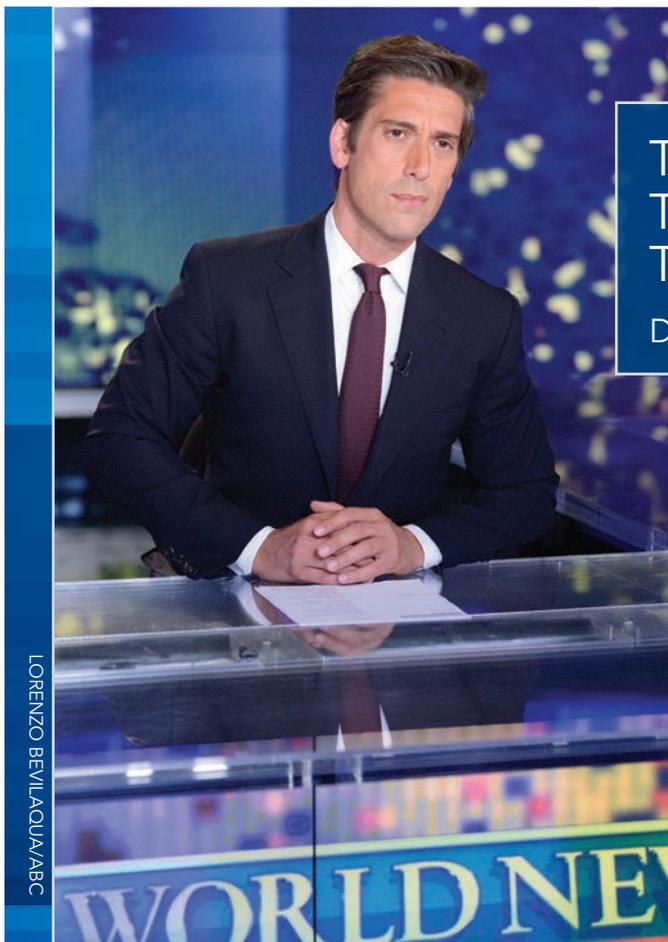
A respondent who named University of Oklahoma the No. 1 school explained, “The University of Oklahoma is an often-overlooked leader in journalism education. The faculty set is a balanced mix of researchers and practitioners, giving students a healthy mix of cutting-edge research and on-the-job application. The Gaylord College



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

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*



LORENZO BEVILAQUA/ABC

TIME TO
TAKE ON
THE WORLD.

David Muir, Class of '95

The Ithaca College
Roy H. Park School of Communications
congratulates David Muir on his new
role as anchor of *ABC World News*.



ITHACA COLLEGE

Roy H. Park School of Communications

ithaca.edu/rhp

Grady Turns 100 With An Eye to the Future

More Alumni Contributions and Facility Renovation the Goal of Centennial

By Tom Gilbert

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.



CHARLES N. DAVIS

"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



DEBORAH NORVILLE

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

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“Their program is comprehensive, interactive and ever-evolving to keep up with a continually changing field. From cutting-edge technologies, top-tier professors and opportunity for student innovation, the Cronkite school leads the nation in developing the communications professionals of the future.”

The Electronic Journalism Arts department at 1,400-student Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, Vt., had a strong showing for the second straight year — and, like the Missouri School, was favored for its in-the-trenches approach to teaching. One news professional explained, “Lyndon State College is a small school made up of a very few students in the Broadcast Journalism Department. The students turn out a nightly, live broadcast of local news in the Northeast Kingdom and surrounding towns of Vermont (and New Hampshire). Not only has this journalism program taken home Emmy awards, they consistently turn out an amazing 5:30 broadcast on the backs of only the students!”

Those in the midst of the learning process chimed in as well. An Indiana University student sang these praises: “I am a student at Indiana University Southeast, and I feel that the skills I have already gained there give me an edge on the competition. I stepped into this program having a strong grasp on writing, but knew little to nothing about journalistic writing or the myriad of storytelling tools available in the digital age. I now feel equipped to go cover any kind of story, with many, many tools in my arsenal, and I haven’t even graduated yet.”

Asked what the single most important course a J-school can offer, a great many respondents replied “ethics” and “social/digital media.” Other responses varied from “experience is by far the most important thing for a journalism student to gain in school” to “law and regulation,” “investigative reporting” and “how to straddle multiple delivery platforms in the Internet age.”

One respondent just called for a return to the fundamentals: “Basics of reporting, which would include writing and truly understanding developing sources and interviewing people.” Another advocated a focus on local journalism, offering, “Story development on a local level. So many news outlets go with the major, AP news and that’s it. Students need to understand how to connect BIG stories with local interests.”

The remaining J-schools in the top 20 choices of news professionals were, Ithaca College’s Roy H. Park School of Communications, Ohio University’s E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Michigan State University’s School of Journalism, Pennsylvania State University’s College of Communication, Quinnipiac University’s School of Communications, Stanford University’s Graduate Program in Journalism, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Texas at Austin’s College of Communication and Washington State University’s Edward R. Murrow School of Communication. ■

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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



HENRY W. GRADY COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

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.