



College of Media

# ADVANCING EXCELLENCE

Fall 2024



*Students in a media and cinema studies course help produce a film special for Illinois Public Media*

## Message from the Dean

Over the past several years, the College of Media has prioritized facility upgrades in venerable Gregory Hall, and our generous donors have been essential partners in these efforts.

Most recently, we celebrated a transformative \$2.5M gift from Richard and Leslie Frank to enable a substantial renovation of the lower level of Greg Hall, including the creation of a high-tech multipurpose classroom and a notable refresh of the main corridor. We are excited for construction to get underway in summer 2025.

This work will complete the overhaul of the College's instructional spaces on the lower level, which also included a \$1M investment from campus capital project funds and the College of Media to renovate a computer lab and create a new iFlex classroom and a production space. All of these opened for business in 2020, and were joined in 2022 by the Media Technology Center for students, supported by a significant contribution from Jim and Amy Schlueter.

But wait, there's more! Thanks to a substantial investment from the Office of the Provost, we are wrapping up several other projects in Greg Hall. The largest is a brand-new office suite on the main floor that will serve as the administrative home for our three academic departments. In addition, we have made technological upgrades to our two conference rooms and have also created a new event space on the second floor, overlooking Wright and Armory, where College of Media units can hold gatherings of up to 30 people for faculty meetings, visiting guest lectures, workshops for students, recruitment events, and more.

We are so thankful to our alumni and friends for all the ways you invest in the future of the College of Media. Together, we are creating initiatives that will have a long-lasting impact.



Tracy Sulkin  
Dean



## Message from Advancement

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we were able to offer many exciting experiential learning opportunities for Media students this year.

In March, scholarships funded five journalism students to travel to Sierra Leone, West Africa, to work on a film documentary over spring break with a small journalism class. Their short film recently won first place in the 2024 Illinois Broadcasters Association Student Silver Dome Awards for the TV Photojournalism category.

Another group of Media students participated in a spring break media tour in Chicago, meeting University of Illinois alumni and visiting various industry sites including advertising agencies, news organizations, and a film studio. Seven of those students were able to attend thanks to our donors helping fund the trip.

In May, 20 students participated in an advertising and culture tour of London, England, to broaden their perspectives on advertising, brands, and media.

Your support of these initiatives is vital in attracting ambitious students who are eager for new learning experiences. Offering these amazing opportunities for our students is one of the ways in which the College of Media offers a world-class program. (Read more about experiential learning opportunities for students on page 2.)

If you are inspired to work with us to continue creating transformative opportunities, it would be my pleasure to speak with you. You can call me at 217-333-0752 or email me at [jhns@illinois.edu](mailto:jhns@illinois.edu).



Deanne Johnson  
Assistant Dean for Advancement



**Advancing Excellence is an annual publication of the College of Media Office of Advancement at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.**

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*Cover: Students in the Fall 2023 Cinematography and Sound Design course, taught by media and cinema studies senior lecturer Victor Font, produced a film special of Cetacean, which aired on Illinois Public Media's Prairie Fire in April 2024. Excerpts were also screened at the MACS Student Showcase in May. (Photos by Victor Font and Nathan Kaey.)*



# DONOR SPOTLIGHT

## Historic gift from Richard and Leslie Frank totals \$10.5M for College of Media

*The couple's latest \$2.5 million donation will fund the renovation of classrooms on the lower level of Gregory Hall, and will create a new hybrid, flexible classroom as the centerpiece.*

The new multipurpose classroom, which will be constructed in the space that currently houses two smaller classrooms and an office, will boast features that all three departments in the College of Media will be able to take advantage of—such as advertising brand consultations, journalism press conferences, and media and cinema studies production—and enable hybrid teaching and conferencing.

The gift will also renovate the lower level, featuring a more modern design such as new flooring, painted walls throughout the entire hallway, including the east and west wings, and digital signage. Substantial work in that part of Gregory Hall has not occurred since the 1990s. The project details are underway; work will begin in the summer of 2025.

“This new gift will create a showpiece in Gregory Hall,” said Dean Tracy Sulkin. “The College of Media is deeply thankful to Richard and Leslie Frank for their generous investments that not only have expanded opportunities for our current students and faculty but will continue to facilitate an enriched experience for those to come.”

The Franks' original gift of \$7.5 million in 2020 is the largest gift ever made to the College of Media. That gift enabled the creation of the Frank Newsroom at Richmond Studio, the college's broadcast teaching facility, and endowed the Richard and Leslie Frank Center for Leadership and Innovation in Media.

Having each experienced professional success in media and entertainment, the Franks are committed to creating a positive impact in media for generations.

Rich Frank, who received his bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Illinois, began his career

at the advertising agency BBDO in New York City before moving to Los Angeles to work as a Sales Manager at KTLA. He then served as President of Chris-Craft



**“Because we believe in the fundamental impact that media has on our society, we want to continue to invest in our future media leaders at the University of Illinois,” said Rich Frank. “We’re excited to establish a new state-of-the-art space that will support the excellence of the College of Media, and we hope to inspire other donors to make gifts that leave a lasting impact on the college.”**

Broadcasting. In 1977 he became President of Paramount Television Group, overseeing the creation and production of such shows as *Taxi*, *Family Ties*, and *Cheers* as well as the creation of the groundbreaking entertainment news show, *Entertainment Tonight*. In 1985 he became President of Disney Studios. Under his leadership, the studio created iconic sitcoms such as *The Golden Girls* and *Home Improvement*, and films including *Good Morning Vietnam*, *Dead Poets Society*, and *The Lion King*. He also oversaw the launch of the Disney Channel. Rich served three terms as President of the Academy of Television

Arts and Sciences. In 2007, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences recognized him with the prestigious Syd Cassyd Founder's Award. In 2011, Rich received an honorary doctorate from the American Film Institute where he is currently a Vice Chairman on the AFI's Board of Directors. Rich previously served on the board of the Motion Picture Association of America.

Born in Hamilton, Ontario, Leslie Frank began her career in Canada before crossing the border to work in some of the largest television markets in the United States. She spent more than 25 years covering many major stories including the 9/11 attacks, where she reported live from ground zero in New York City, as well as from the scene of the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and inside the courtroom at the Michael Jackson trial. Leslie spent the last nine years of her TV news career

reporting and anchoring at the number one rated station, KABC in Los Angeles, where she covered politics, crime, weather calamities, as well as interviewing some of the biggest stars in Hollywood on the red carpet. Prior to Los Angeles, Leslie was the main anchor at KCPQ in Seattle, where she took the 10 pm newscast to number one in

its time slot and clinched an Emmy for outstanding news anchor. In 2024, she joined the board of directors of Treasury Wine Estates Ltd.

Leslie and Richard are former owners of Frank Family Vineyards, a highly acclaimed luxury wine business based in Napa Valley, California, that was acquired by Treasury Wine Estates in 2021.

Under the leadership of its inaugural director, Colleen King, clinical assistant professor of journalism, the Frank Center has hosted media industry leaders, such as Steve Kornacki and Brian Williams, on campus for free and public events.

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN MEDIA



## Students explore media industry in Chicago during inaugural spring break media tour

A group of College of Media students participated in a spring break media tour in Chicago, meeting Illinois alumni and visiting various industry sites including advertising agencies, news organizations, and a film studio.

Led by faculty members Victor Font, lecturer in media and cinema studies, and Margaret Ng, assistant professor in journalism, seven students attended the three-day trip, held March 10-12.

The inaugural trip was an experiential learning opportunity for students to discover more about media-related careers firsthand.

Bekah Douglas, a junior in media and cinema studies, described the trip as a “once-in-a-lifetime journey” and credits her family and College of Media donors for making the trip possible.

“I was so lucky to attend the College of Media’s spring break trip and have the chance to meet with the artists that make Chicago (and the world) a better place. The opportunity to travel outside of the classroom, to network, to explore the possibilities of media is priceless,” Douglas said.



(Photo by Charles “Stretch” Ledford.)

## Journalism students travel to Sierra Leone to film documentary about period poverty

A group of journalism students heard harrowing stories from the local women they interviewed while filming a documentary about period poverty in Sierra Leone, West Africa, over spring break.

“Girls talked of being bullied at school when they got their period. Mothers talked about the struggle to have enough money to feed their children,” said Alison Davis, a lecturer in journalism who co-led the trip with Charles “Stretch” Ledford, associate professor of journalism.

While difficult to hear, students hope sharing these stories will shed light on a widespread global issue known as period poverty, which refers to a substantial negative impact on one’s quality of life due to shame, economic destitution, and/or religious and cultural taboos associated with menstruation.

Their documentary, *From Shame to Celebration: Sierra Leonean Women Reframe the Culture of Menstruation*, focuses on a local woman-led grassroots organization called Uman Tok, which employs 18 women at a living wage to provide sustainable feminine health kits to women and girls around the country.

Their short film won first place in the 2024 Illinois Broadcasters Association Student Silver Dome Awards for the TV Photojournalism category.



## Advertising students devise campaign to help boost tourism in rural southern Illinois counties

Students in the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising devised an ad campaign that launched this spring to help boost tourism for counties in southern Illinois.

The campaign was part of a class project in Advertising 400: Sandage Studios, taught last fall by Shachar Meron, senior lecturer in advertising.

“Our students were excited to research and promote southern Illinois as a great tourist destination, and to use the skills they’ve learned in the classroom to create real work with a real purpose,” Meron said.

The advertising campaign is part of the Create Bridges program, a statewide initiative to promote tourism in five southern Illinois counties and stimulate economic development in the region.

Students Kiara Vega, Joshua Witte, and Abby Kubatzke collaborated to create an ad campaign for Southernmost Illinois tourism bureau, promoting Shawnee National Forest as a top place to visit in Illinois. Following the eight-week course, Vega and Witte (pictured) were hired to work as interns to bring the project to life.

—Kelly Youngblood



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN MEDIA

## College of Media collaborates with University, community partners to offer local children access to new opportunities in education, technology

The College of Media collaborated with University of Illinois and community partners to present educational workshops to local children in Spring 2024 as part of a new public engagement effort.

The collaboration between the College of Media and the Center for Social and Behavioral Science focused on creating hands-on educational content appropriate for 3rd- and 4th-grade students in the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club of Champaign.

“One of the College of Media’s priorities is to enhance our activities in public engagement and access,” said Jason P. Chambers, associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and professor of advertising. “Faculty and staff were eager to sign up to share their expertise in fun, engaging ways with schoolchildren.”

The College of Media faculty-led workshops included:

- **Advertising for Good**, with Steve Hall, senior lecturer in advertising



(Photo by Paige Duncan)

- **Fly Like Harry Potter: How Green Screens Work**, with Victor Font, lecturer in media and cinema studies and Susan Muirhead, advertising staff and adjunct faculty
- **Advertising Literacy**, with Michelle Nelson, professor and head of the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising, and Marisa Peacock, lecturer in advertising
- **Introduction to Journalism and the Role of Reporters**, with Colleen King, director of the Richard and Leslie Frank Center for Leadership and Innovation in Media and clinical assistant professor in journalism, and journalism student Faith Lee, Mark L. Brandt Public Engagement Fellow

—Kelly Youngblood

## Illinois Public Media launches new radio station, Illinois Soul, focused on news and culture authentically reflecting the Black experience

Illinois Public Media is proud to announce the launch of Illinois Soul, a new radio station highlighting Black experiences, celebrating Black culture, elevating Black voices, and showcasing Black music.

“Public media is uniquely positioned in today’s media landscape to meet the needs of its community in ways that commercial media might not, and this new service will not only celebrate Black voices, history, and culture, it will connect listeners to the issues that matter most to those across our region.” said Moss Bresnahan, executive director for Illinois Public Media, a not-for-profit public media service of the College of Media at the University of Illinois. “We are so excited to launch Illinois Soul, bringing the best in jazz, R&B, and gospel to our listeners, with a unique focus on the Black community.”

This new audio service made its on-air debut February 1, 2024, at the start of Black History Month and broadcasts on WILL-FM 101.1 and streams live at [illinoissoul.org](http://illinoissoul.org). Illinois Soul will bring central Illinois and beyond a new 24/7 public media audio service featuring exceptional, Black-hosted NPR news programs—such as *Code Switch* and *It’s Been a Minute*—alongside other popular programs from musicians Will Downing to Robert Glasper, mixed with smooth jazz, neo soul, R&B, and throwback jams.

Most importantly, with the launch of Illinois Soul comes a new local community affairs program, airing each week and highlighting issues important to Black adult audiences in central Illinois.

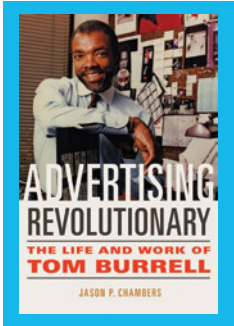


Illinois Public Media’s work in creating Illinois Soul is rooted in the idea of intentionally changing the media landscape with the support and guidance from respected Black community leaders and Black University of Illinois professionals who are advocating for the mission of the station and for its listeners.

Illinois Soul station manager Jill Clements was recently honored by the local NAACP with the Media Trailblazer Award for leading the development of the groundbreaking venture. The station was lauded for amplifying Black voices and culture, along with R&B music throughout central Illinois and online, with the power of public media.

# RESEARCH IN MEDIA

## Jason P. Chambers's new book *Advertising Revolutionary: The Life and Work of Tom Burrell* details ad exec's influence on industry's approach to African Americans



Advertising Professor Jason P. Chambers's new biography about Tom Burrell, a renowned Black visionary who changed the face of the ad industry for African Americans, was published on February 6.

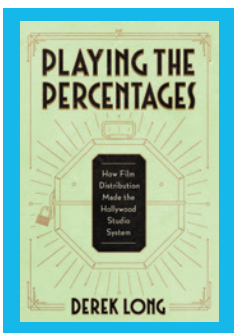
While *Advertising Revolutionary: The Life and Work of Tom Burrell* (University of Illinois Press) will appeal to those interested in advertising and its history, Chambers said it's written for a broad audience to enjoy.

"If you have an interest in biographies, Chicago, Chicago stories, Chicago entrepreneurs, African American entrepreneurs, what goes into the creation of an advertising campaign, and client relationships, I think you'd be interested in this story," Chambers said.

Chambers, who is also the associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion at the College of Media, describes Burrell as his "favorite person in the history of the [advertising] industry."

"He started in advertising at a time in which the number of African Americans operating in a professional capacity could have been measured in the dozens," Chambers said, adding that Burrell was the first Black copywriter at a mainstream agency in Chicago. "He is one of the people who is singularly responsible for helping to get African Americans on TV."

## Derek Long takes on history of Hollywood film distribution in his first book, *Playing the Percentages*



Derek Long, assistant professor of media and cinema studies, sheds light on a rarely covered piece of Hollywood history in his first book, *Playing the Percentages: How Film Distribution Made the Hollywood Studio System*.

Praised as "invaluable to media industry scholars of the past and present," the book is a comprehensive history of film distribution in the U.S. during the silent era that illustrates the importance

of power struggles between distributors and exhibitors over booking, pricing, and playing time (i.e., how long it stays in theaters).

"When people think about Hollywood as an industry, maybe they think about the more glamorous aspects of it like stars, producers, or figures in Hollywood," Long said. "But I was interested in how Hollywood came to be an industrial institution and the history of that, particularly in the silent era."

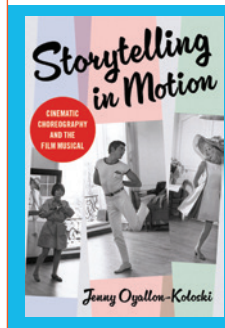
*Playing the Percentages*, released on April 16, considers the economic history of the industry's film distribution

process from 1910 through 1930, including booking, circuiting, and packaging marketing practices.

While many Hollywood histories focus on linear narratives such as industry growth and improvements in technology, Long said there was a "hole in the scholarship" regarding the various ways films were distributed, sold, or marketed.

"That was a story nobody had really told, at least in an American context, and so I wanted to fill that gap," he said.

## Jenny Oyallon-Koloski considers the power of movement in film in her first book, *Storytelling in Motion*



Three vertical mirrors hang on the wall in the office of Jenny Oyallon-Koloski, assistant professor of media and cinema studies, where she keeps an open area that allows her the space to move.

As a certified movement analyst and director of the movement visualization (mv) lab, she wants the space to serve as a research environment where she can use motion-capturing technology to study the manifestations of human movement in

cinematic space.

Her extensive research on how figure movement and dance create meaning in musical cinema is the subject of her first book, *Storytelling in Motion: Cinematic Choreography and the Film Musical* (Oxford University Press), which was released on May 17.

Oyallon-Koloski's idea for the book came out of her dissertation project, which tied her interest in dance and movement into her core work in film and film history.

While her dissertation focused mainly on French filmmaker Jacques Demy, using his films as case studies, her book discusses broader ideas of how people can understand the significance of dance in film.

"That's one of the core questions [in the book]—how do filmmakers use movement to tell stories, and specifically in the musical genre," she said.

Her book also compares French and American film production histories and considers the impact of time, money, and rehearsal space available to filmmakers.

—Kelly Youngblood



The Institute of Communications Research hosted a discussion with ICR faculty on the process of publishing a book, with Professors Derek Long, Jenny Oyallon-Koloski, Jason P. Chambers, and Melita Garza.



# Awards and Recognition

**MICHELLE NELSON**, professor and head of the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising, won the American Academy of Advertising's Career Award, the **Ivan L. Preston Outstanding Contribution to Research on Advertising Award**. As AAA's top research award, this is designed to honor an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the discipline of advertising through a systematic and sustained program of published research. This award is given only to active AAA members for exemplary research on advertising across 20 years or more.



**MARGARET NG**, associate professor of journalism, was selected for the 2023-24 **James W. Carey Faculty Fellowship**. She was also recognized with the **Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Emerging Scholar grant**. The Carey Faculty Fellowship's research support will assist her to explore the social and cultural implications of the platform migration phenomenon. The AEJMC Emerging Scholar grant will enable Ng to study how journalists are grappling with platform migration in the wake of Elon Musk's Twitter takeover in October 2022.



**CHANG-DAE HAM**, associate professor of advertising, was recently elected **vice president of the American Academy of Advertising** for 2024-25. One of his main roles as VP will be to manage AAA's annual conference in March 2025. Ham has been active in AAA since 2009.



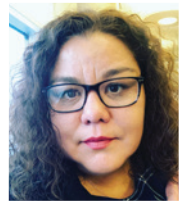
**JULIE TURNOCK**, professor of media and cinema studies, was awarded a **National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship** for a book project titled *Beyond King Kong: Special Effects in the Hollywood Studio Era, 1915-1965*. She will receive \$60,000 in funding to research and write a book about the technical, labor, industrial, and aesthetic history of the special effects industry during the Hollywood studio era. Turnock's book project is a history of the labor performed by unsung "below-the-line" effects workers of the era. Through archival historical research, oral history accounts, interviews, theoretical discourse, and formal visual analyses, this project presents a polemic for considering the "specialness" of effects work not from the point of view of the film but from the position of the specially contracted labor. As a labor history, it centers the workers of the Hollywood studio era who are rarely considered in cinema histories, training attention onto those whose skills make much of "movie magic" possible.



**EWA MASLOWSKA**, associate professor of advertising, was selected as a **Center for Advanced Study Associate** for the 2024-25 academic year. As a CAS Associate, Maslowska will take time off from teaching in Fall 2024 to focus on her research of fake online reviews. Consumer reviews on many e-commerce and travel websites, social media platforms, and entertainment pages have been shown to play a crucial role in consumers' purchase decisions. As a result, companies started motivating consumers to write reviews by providing various incentives. However, there's been little research on the process of review generation or review perception, depending on the different levels of review incentives.



**ANGELA AGUAYO**, associate professor of media and cinema studies, has been selected as a 2024-25 **Humanities Research Institute Faculty Fellow**. As an HRI Faculty Fellow, Aguayo will be provided with research funds and one semester of release time to work on a new book, titled *Collective Matters: Documentary Film Practice and Public Engagement in the US, 1970-Present*. Her book will address the micro-practices of public engagement with documentary production that have led to sustained media culture. When the larger culture is deeply divided, the traditions and strategies of community-centered documentary storytelling build connections between people.



**MELITA GARZA**, associate professor and Tom and June Netzel Sleeman Scholar in Business Journalism, won the **2024 essay contest sponsored by AEJMC's Journalism History**, the academic journal of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication's history division. This year's theme focused on civil rights in light of the 60th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Garza's essay, titled "Ruben Salazar: Beyond Postage Stamp Memory," highlights the work of Salazar at the *Los Angeles Times* and at a Spanish-language station KMEX regarding the Mexican American freedom struggle.



## New Faculty

### New advertising professor Louvins Pierre centers research on social, psychological consumer factors

Louvins Pierre can trace his interest in advertising back to childhood.

“As a kid, I often watched advertisements because I found them funny. In hindsight, it may have been my underlying interest in the advertising and how [it was] effective that caused me not to change the channel,” Pierre said. “One ad that comes to mind is Apple’s original iPod commercial with music and dancing silhouettes, which directly influenced me to ask my parents to buy me one for either my birthday or Christmas. Another includes McDonald’s 2005 ad that used humor to communicate when you work hard for your money, you should spend it wisely on their value menu.”

Pierre will bring his long-time advertising interests and expertise to Illinois this fall as an assistant professor in the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising with an appointment in the Institute of Communications Research.

Pierre said the reputation of the Sandage Department of Advertising, and the many prominent scholars within, helped inform his research and drew him to pursue a position at Illinois.

This fall, Pierre is teaching “Consumer Insight,” a class designed to teach students how to build a brand strategy that puts the desires and needs of the consumers first—a subject with which he’s very familiar.

Pierre’s dissertation examined how consumer evaluations of advertising about two similar, yet different, social issues, “Black Lives Matter” and “Stop AAPI Hate” could vary.



### New advertising professor Guolan Yang focuses on effects of digital persuasive messaging

Guolan Yang has studied and cited works authored by professors in the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising since she was a doctoral student. So when she got the opportunity to meet those esteemed scholars in person at advertising conferences, Yang was further drawn to pursue a career at Illinois.

“Visiting the campus felt like a culmination of those years of study,” she said. “Many faculty members here share research interests similar to mine, which excited me about the prospect of collaboration.”

Yang said she’s eager to contribute to the distinguished and dynamic team at the College of Media this fall as an assistant professor in advertising with an appointment in the Institute of Communications Research.

She is teaching “Introduction to Public Relations,” which covers a variety of topics such as the role of ethics in public relations as well as theories that guide research and practice.

Yang said her research takes a psychological perspective, investigating the effects of digital persuasive messages that do not look like traditional advertising, such as sponsored influencer content and in-feed native ads on people’s perceptions, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors.

Previously, Yang was an assistant professor in the Department of Communication, Journalism, and Public Relations at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, where she taught courses in advertising and public relations.



### New journalism professor Cassandra L.C. Troy examines role of solutions journalism to address environmental issues

Growing up, Cassandra L.C. Troy was encouraged to be environmentally aware, especially by her grandmother and mother who taught her to care for the planet. But it wasn’t until she worked at a university sustainability office that she considered a career in environmental communications.

“In that role, I got a taste of how varied environmental issues are, how complex it is to communicate about different environmental issues,” Troy said. “[What’s] really interesting to me is making that relevant to large portions of the public.”

Troy is teaching “Environmental Journalism” this fall as an assistant professor of journalism with an appointment in the Institute of Communications Research.

She’s excited to continue her research on solutions journalism to raise public awareness and engagement on environmental issues. Troy said solutions journalism takes the approach to reporting that solutions to problems are newsworthy, rather than just the problems themselves.

“In the minds of solutions journalists, in addition to giving the public information on serious complex issues, you also want to talk to them about solutions that are working, or maybe that could work, to address those problems,” she said.

Troy’s position is part of an interdisciplinary faculty “cluster” on climate impacts, risks, and inequality that was approved as part of the Provost Office’s Strategic Hiring Initiative.



—Kelly Youngblood



# 2024 MEDIA ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

## Sarah Min receives Distinguished Alumni Award

When Sarah Min (BS '93, journalism) was appointed to President Joe Biden's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in 2022, she knew her background in journalism would prove useful in government policy and nonprofit advocacy work.



"For people who practice journalism, it's a job requirement to constantly learn new things and talk to a lot of people outside of the known" Min said. "I think that was the heart of my education at the college that has really stayed with me."

Min's curious nature has been a career asset as a magazine journalist and media executive, and now, as Deputy Chief Commissioner of President Biden's AA and NHPI Advisory Commission.

Min's exemplary career accomplishments, along with her engagement with the college, have earned her the 2024 College of Media Distinguished Alumni Award.

"The breadth of Sarah Min's contributions to the media industry, to nonprofits, and to government and advocacy are truly inspiring," said Dean Tracy Sulkin. "Her career path demonstrates to our students that there are many opportunities to pursue your interests and to make a difference."

As a member of the President's Advisory Commission, Min and her colleagues provide recommendations to President Biden on ways the public, private, and nonprofit sectors can work together to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for every Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community.

In 2020, she established the Daily Illini Journalism Scholarship Fund with her husband, Matt Pincus, to help support undergraduates in journalism who are committed to working at least one semester at *The Daily Illini*.

"I'm proud and privileged to be supportive of young people who are willing to commit to continuing that tradition because maintaining journalistic standards is critical in our civil society," she said.

## Eli Murray receives Emerging Leader Award

A multimedia piece about an avalanche in Washington published by the New York Times in 2012, which included video, interactive graphics, and animated simulations, changed the way newsrooms presented storytelling.



It also inspired Media alum and Pulitzer-Prize winning reporter Eli Murray (BS '15, journalism) to think about a career as a data journalist.

"I was in college when the New York Times published 'Snow Fall' and it was ground-breaking. It was the first time I had ever seen a story like that and so I felt really inspired and [felt] that was something I wanted to pursue," Murray said.

Murray would go on to excel at visual storytelling, first at the Tampa Bay Times, where he would earn a Pulitzer Prize in Investigative Reporting in 2022, and now at the New York Times as a graphics editor.

The College of Media is honoring Murray's early career accomplishments and his engagement with the college, selecting him as the recipient of the 2024 College of Media Emerging Leader Award.

"In addition to his outstanding journalistic achievements, Eli Murray has returned to campus to share his expertise with the College of Media, at events for students and for the public," said Dean Tracy Sulkin. "He is wonderfully deserving of this year's Emerging Leader Award."

Murray considers himself lucky to have discovered the potential of data journalism as a student at the University of Illinois and says visual elements allow a journalist to reach a wider audience.

In his current role, Murray uses code to pull data from websites and public records, crunch and analyze numbers, and create visual elements to tell stories.

—Kelly Youngblood



# Photo Highlights



The 2024 Roger Ebert Symposium addressed “Representations and Their Critics.” Panelists included culture commentators and film critics Megan Cruz, Bobbi Miller, Michael Phillips, and Dana Stevens.



Students in a MACS digital media production class try out equipment, such as a light reflector, in a small production studio in Gregory Hall.



Cassie Carlson (BS '17, journalism) shared advice on being a sports anchor at a Frank Center Student Workshop. She was also interviewed for the student broadcast *Illini Sports Night*.



The College of Media held a Well-Being Open House where students received campus resources and met Huff, a UIPD Therapy K9. The event was supported by journalism alum Marilynn Preston.



The Public Relations Student Society of America promoted their organization during Advertising + You's welcome event for new and returning students.



At the Undergraduate Research Symposium last spring, a group of journalism students and an ACES student who presented “Exploring Period Poverty in Sierra Leone” won an award for Outstanding Exhibit from the Office of Undergraduate Research.



Michelle Nelson, professor and head of Advertising, and Kirby Cook (MS '21, advertising), a doctoral student at the Institute of Communications Research, presented a plenary talk at the 2024 College Convention: “Critical Eyes, Deceptive Lies?: Political Advertising and You.”



A packed audience attended the 15th annual Student Film Festival, produced by a media and cinema studies class and sponsored by the Jonathan Laxamana Endowment Fund.

## Plan now for loved ones and the College of Media

Many people want to ensure that their loved ones and organizations they care about will be supported in the future. A gift in your will or trust or by beneficiary designation can accomplish your wishes. The legacy you leave will impact generations and share your values while letting others know what is important to you.

Below are two simple ways to direct a gift to benefit the College of Media:

**1. Include a bequest** in your will or living trust to the University of Illinois Foundation (UIF) Tax ID 37-6006007 for the benefit of the College of Media at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

You retain lifetime control of your assets, and can designate your gift as a specific amount, percentage or what's left in your estate after all other obligations have been met.

**SUGGESTED SAMPLE GIFT LANGUAGE:**  
 “I leave [\$X / X% / # of shares/residue] to the University of Illinois Foundation, a not-for-profit corporation (Tax ID 37-6006007) located in the State of Illinois, to support the College of Media at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.”

**2. Name UIF Tax ID 37-6006007 as beneficiary** of your retirement assets or Individual Retirement Account (IRA) for the benefit of the College of Media.

Whether you are planning a gift, or if you already have put such a gift in place, please let us know. Doing so will help us carry out your intentions as you wish. Thank you for helping make an exceptional education possible through these powerful future gifts.

To learn more and discuss how you can create your own personal legacy, contact Deanne Johnson, assistant dean for advancement, at 217-333-0752 or [jhns@illinois.edu](mailto:jhns@illinois.edu); or Judy Schneider, UIF director of gift planning, at 217-244-3351 or [judiths@uif.uillinois.edu](mailto:judiths@uif.uillinois.edu).

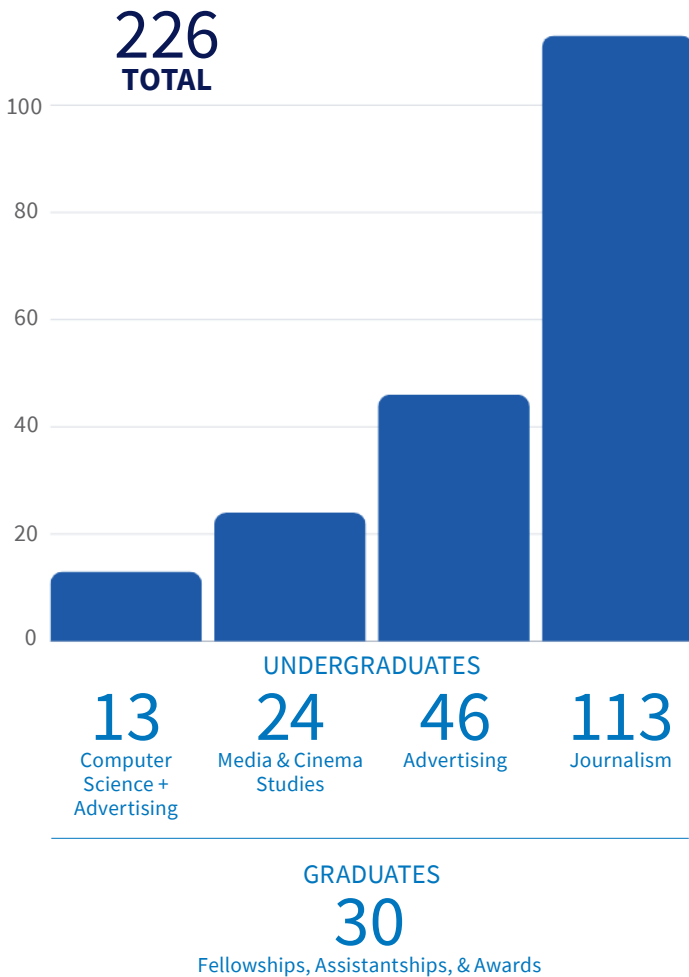
*The University of Illinois Foundation is the official gift-receiving arm of the University of Illinois and is a 501 (c) 3 charitable organization with EIN 37-6006007. UIF does not provide tax, legal, or accounting advice. You should consult your own tax, legal, and accounting advisors before engaging in any transaction.*



# Media by the Numbers

Thank you to those who invested in the College of Media in fiscal year 2024! Our donors championed faculty support; student access and opportunities such as experiential learning trips, industry immersions, and internships; and capital projects. See our FY24 donors at [media.illinois.edu/giving/donors](https://media.illinois.edu/giving/donors).

## SCHOLARSHIPS, INTERNSHIP SUPPORT, FELLOWSHIPS, AND AWARDS FY24



## NEW BUSINESS FY24

Including new gifts, pledges, grants, and bequests

**\$1,483,861**

Amount of gifts

**368**

Number of donors

**542**

Number of gifts



## SCHOLARSHIP STATS FY24

**\$567,550**

Amount of scholarships awarded by the College of Media

**\$3,750**

Average College of Media award package for first-years

**\$2,686**

Average College of Media award package for sophomores, juniors, and seniors



## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AND AWARDS

**671**

First-year and transfer student applicants

**180**

Continuing student applicants

**17%**

First-year students who received scholarships

**21%**

Eligible undergraduate applicants (first-years through seniors) supported through available funding



## STUDENT STATS

**1,183**

Undergraduate and graduate students

**9.2%**

International undergraduate students

**26.8%**

Undergraduate students from underrepresented populations

**\$36,642**

Yearly cost of attendance for a student taking 16 credit hours as an Illinois resident



## MAKE A GIFT

To learn more about giving to the College of Media, please contact the Office of Advancement at 217-244-5466 or [media-giving@illinois.edu](mailto:media-giving@illinois.edu). You can also make a gift online—including by Venmo and PayPal. Please visit [go.media.illinois.edu/give](https://go.media.illinois.edu/give).

**COLLEGE OF MEDIA**  
119 GREGORY HALL  
810 S. WRIGHT ST.  
URBANA, IL 61801

## Thank you from our students



“This scholarship is not just a financial blessing but a vote of confidence in my potential to succeed in the field of advertising. It motivates me to work even harder to achieve my academic and professional goals. It allows me to focus more on my studies and join additional campus groups. I am deeply thankful for the generosity and support of alumni like you.”

—Christopher,  
Advertising



“I have always dreamed of being one of the very few in my family to be able to attend and graduate from a prestigious institution such as the University of Illinois. Your scholarship will help to allow me to graduate without incurring a significant amount of student loan debt and be able to serve as a beacon for my local community.”

—Aaron,  
Computer Science + Advertising



“Being able to interview prominent figures, work with a news editor, and report on developing stories was a valuable learning experience, and I will be continuing my position as a student reporter at the Illinois Student Newsroom at Illinois Public Media. I am extremely fortunate to have all of these amazing opportunities, and this scholarship is one of them.”

—Adelyn,  
Journalism



“I am excited to start this new chapter in my life and find communities where I belong, be more independent, and learn more about the career I plan to pursue. It would be a dream come true for me if I were able to contribute to the wonderful cinematography that goes on behind the scenes. With this scholarship, my goal has become more attainable.”

—Khadijat,  
Media & Cinema Studies