Community/Public Service Worksheet

Service Category: Educational Outreach Programs

Title: Multicultural Journalism Workshop

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Program Description: For the last 30 years, the University through the Department of Journalism has sponsored the Multicultural Journalism Workshop, an in-residence two-week intensive training experience for high school students that involves them doing journalism. Not only do these students in the all-expense paid experience attend presentations or seminars, but they get into the Alabama communities (often outside of Tuscaloosa County) for real-life reporting experiences. The workshop culminates in the production of a 24-pate tabloid publication (and web-site) that show cases their work.

Objectives/Outcomes:
• To introduce high school students, especially those from groups underrepresented in media professions, to campus life
• To encourage students to major in journalism in college and consider journalistic careers
• To train student journalists to operate in a multicultural society

Assessment Measures: At the end of each workshop students produce a newspaper and website, effectively putting all fo the skills they learned (and objectives) into practice. Each of our objectives are accomplished through this process. The Dow Jones News Fund - one of our funders and workshop supporters - surveys each student and keeps data on hand from each student.

Results: Each class of MJW travels to a different part of the state each year to produce a newspaper and website on their reporting. When they return, the work one-on-one with industry professionals from around the state to reproduce their stories, photos and video. Last year’s newspaper is available to view here (http://issuu.com/mccummings1/docs/final_mjp_journal) and the website is available to view here (http://uamjw2013.wordpress.com/). That class covered the 50th anniversary of many Civil Rights events in Tusaloosa and Birmingham.

Conclusions: MJW has not only continued to succeed, but is thriving. This upcoming year (2014 summer) we have students from eight states represented, including African-American, Pacific Islander, Asian and Caucasian students. Our MJW students continue on to become great journalists around the world, as well as professionals in other communications fields.
Improvement Actions: Please see attached narrative.
As you know, the Multicultural Journalism Workshop (MJW) is a residential camp lasting 10 days offered at the University of Alabama. It gives high school students – especially those from underserved populations (although all are welcome) – intensive training in journalism and encourages them to consider a career in journalism: Writing, reporting, editing, layout and photography for newspaper, online or broadcast. MJW introduces students to many distinguished Alabama journalists, people who may be in a position to hire them someday. By working with many Alabama professional journalists, students learn the importance of journalism and its public service mission. In addition, the program encourages diversity in the state’s newsrooms by actively recruiting people from groups that have been underrepresented in the media workplace; however, the program welcomes students of all backgrounds with an interest in being journalists in an increasingly multicultural society. The workshop is one of several sponsored by Dow Jones, and as such, it requires that students are provided full fellowships for the program. This allows students of all economic background to participate.

2013 was the 30th MJW summer program offered at UA. Students of the MJW Class of 2013 were from five states. This year, MJW students covered stories in Tuscaloosa and Birmingham, as part of the 50th anniversary of 1963 key Civil Rights events that occurred in those cities. They also meet key people involved in the Civil Rights Movement. For example, they met with Doug Jones, an attorney involved in prosecuting two of the Birmingham 16th Street Church bombers. They also visited the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum, Tuscaloosa’s Foster Auditorium and other civil rights landmarks in preparing their stories. They took part in UA’s “Through the Doors” 50th anniversary celebration and produced a newspaper and website. See their work at http://uamjw2013.wordpress.com/.

Alabama media professionals from many outlets worked with students on their stories and projects, including The Tuscaloosa News, The Birmingham News, al.com, The Huntsville Times, Birmingham Magazine and others. Students learned not only about beat reporting, but also produced original stories of their own, which are in the MJP Journal (with an expanded version that includes video and audio online). On Visiting Professionals Day professionals around the state came to campus to work one-on-one with students to edit their stories for print, and suggest multimedia angles. Students also visited The Birmingham News/al.com/Birmingham magazine and tourist attractions. View out an interactive map of their visits here: http://mapsengine.google.com/map/viewer?mid=zTROZShJbgc.kApeOsfs-AQ4

Students also learned about new online storytelling tools, social media, how to protect their online identity, media law and ethics. Through MJW’s Twitter, Instagram, Tout and Facebook accounts, students learned about reporting through the filter of social media. (The daily schedule for students is attached) MJW participants spent the first three days attending The Long Weekend. This camp is provided to them free as part of their fellowship.