



The Newsletter of the Electronic News Division of AEJMC

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Name Change Vote Passes

Division will be known as “Broadcast and Mobile Journalism” starting in October.

by Lee Hood, Name Change Sub-Committee Chair

After a decade as the Electronic News division, we will officially change our name this year. The name *Broadcast & Mobile Journalism* won the run-off vote that took place in October and November 2020. Of the 117 eligible members, 67 voted in the run-off, with 64% (43 members) voting to change the name and 36% (24 members) voting to keep the current name. No option won a majority in the first vote in July 2020, necessitating the run-off between the top two options. The name change received formal approval from the AEJMC executive board at their mid-winter meeting in December.

The change will take effect when the new AEJMC fiscal year begins in October. In the meantime, we have a few months to strategize about any related changes in branding and to hold discussions with our publisher about renaming our journal. These discussions will be led by our publications committee (Bill Davie, Bill Silcock and Lee Hood) and founding editor Bob Papper, along with the new co-editor when that person is chosen (see separate call on next page).

Thanks to everyone who voted and especially those who contributed to the discussion via our social media platforms and list serv.

Division Officers 2020-21

Division Head:

Ken Fischer, University of Oklahoma

Vice-Head and Program Chair

Harrison Hove, University of Florida

Vice-Head-Elect

Dylan McLemore, University of Central
Arkansas

Secretary/News Editor

Justin Blankenship, Auburn University

Research Chair and Southeast Colloquium Co-Chair

Aphrodite Salas, Concordia University

Professional Freedom and Responsibility Chair

Kaitlin Miller, University of Alabama

Teaching Chair

Gina Baleria, Sonoma State University

Membership Chair

Danielle Deavours, University of Alabama

Graduate Student Liaison

Heidi Makady, University of Florida

Bliss Award Chair

Bill Silcock, Arizona State University

Burkum Award Chair

Nancy Dupont, University of Mississippi

RTDNA Liason

Tony DeMars, Texas A&M University-
Commerce

Bylaws and Journal Oversight Committees Chair

Bill Davie, University of Louisiana

Southeast Colloquium Co-chairs

Lindsey Conlin Maxwell, University of
Southern Mississippi

Gregory Perault, Appalachian State
University

CALL FOR NEW EDITOR OF “ELECTRONIC NEWS” JOURNAL

The Electronic News Division (soon to be the Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Division) seeks an individual to serve as the next editor of the Electronic News journal, who will continue to maintain the highest standards of scholarship and writing for a journal to the benefit of both professors and practitioners in our field.

Electronic News is a quarterly journal published by Sage Publications devoted to advancing knowledge and understanding of news disseminated through electronic media channels. It is the official journal of the Electronic News Division (soon to be the Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Division) of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), and is dedicated to publishing readily accessible research and ideas with clear relevance to the content, practice, and dissemination of electronic news including radio, television, and online journalism websites.

The editor will work collaboratively with founding editor Robert Papper (Syracuse) to ensure the journal meets the overarching mission of both the division and AEJMC.

Successful applicants will hold positions as either a faculty member or researcher at a university and/or prove relevant expertise. The next journal editor should have published articles relevant to online and electronic journalism with discernment of the goals of scholarly writing and theoretical relevance.

Interested individuals should submit an application no later than **Feb 28, 2021**, to include the following:

- A curriculum vitae
- A letter of interest with qualifications

Applications and/or questions for the Search Committee should be submitted by email to William R. Davie (wrdavie@louisiana.edu).

AEJMC 2021 Electronic News Paper Call

The Electronic News Division invites faculty and students to submit original research on any aspect of electronic news content or production. This may include many topics related to broadcast journalism or electronic communication with a journalism emphasis, including television, radio or audio (including news podcasting), reporting for the internet, online journalism, journalism for new and changing media like mobile or social media, or the role of new and changing media in journalism. Research papers for the 2021 AEJMC annual conference in New Orleans must be submitted by April 1 at 11:59 p.m. CT.

We welcome research articles that employ qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodologies. Some possible topics that may be relevant to the Electronic News Division are:

- The role of mobile technologies in electronic news production
- Global perspectives on electronic news
- •The impact of social media and broadcast news on politics
- •Diversity in the newsroom
- •The impact of mobile technologies on traditional broadcast news
- Digital news production
- The impact of social media on consumers' news consumption habits
- Video news produced directly for social media or online sites
- The role of the broadcast journalist in the evolving media landscape



Papers submitted to the Electronic News Division competition should be no longer than 25 pages of manuscript, excluding tables, figures, references and appendices, and should be submitted in one of the generally approved academic bibliographic styles. Papers should be in 12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced and with one-inch margins. Additionally, a separate page containing an abstract of no more than 75 words is required. Documents must be uploaded as Word, WordPerfect, or PDF files. PDF format is strongly encouraged.

Please be sure to submit a clean paper without author identifying information; otherwise the paper will be disqualified. In addition to removing author-identifying information from the paper and file properties, the uniform paper call has added suggestions for avoiding identification through self-citation. Please refer to AEJMC's uniform paper call on how to upload clean papers, including guidance on self-citation.

Editor's Note: The call above was slightly edited for space. For the complete paper call: visit aejmc.org/home/2021/01/call-for-papers and search for the Electronic News Division call.

Division Announces Slate of Panels for 2021 Conference

Below are the eight panels that will be sponsored or co-sponsored by the Electronic News division at the AEJMC 2021 conference. Thanks to everyone who submitted a panel proposal and everyone who assisted in reviewing. Final panelist lineups will be announced at a later date.

Professional Freedom and Responsibility Panels:

The Sinclair Effect: Issues of media ownership and framing of protests in local television news (with Political Communication)

This panel will offer insights into the role of local news in a media landscape that is increasingly fragmented, polarized, and consolidated. In particular, panelists will discuss the influence of ownership, including the Sinclair Broadcast Group, on major news events in 2020 such as police brutality and the resulting social justice protests.

Dealing with bad political actors: Implications for ethics, law and policy (with Media Ethics)

Journalists have historically dealt with "bad actors" through investigative reporting. The 21 century has provided a new sort of "bad actor"; Presidents who lie and pardon those who do, laws that promote corruption of the sort that undergirds systemic racism, social media which appears both unwilling and unable to police everything from QAnon-type theories to political ads that deliberately distort, obfuscate, misdirect, and fabricate.

Hurricane Katrina: How the storm changed the media landscape in New Orleans and the Gulf South*

Hurricane Katrina forever changed New Orleans and the Gulf South. This panel will be a chance to look back and what it was like to cover the region at that time, from the perspective of professional and student journalists who were there, and researchers who studied Katrina's effects on newsrooms. Special attention will be given to Katrina's lasting impact on the region's media ecosystem, which saw multiple acquisitions and reorganizations in the years following the storm.

The Black Effect: How podcasting could help diversify our students' storytelling and prepare them for the podcasting marketplace (with Minorities and Communication)

In September, 2020, iHeart Media and syndicated radio host Charlamagne Tha God jointly launched The Black Effect Podcast Network. According to RadioInk, shows on the network, curated by Charlamagne, will focus on diverse perspectives in audio storytelling. Not only does this present high-quality content options for audience members, the expansion of podcasting in college programs could lead to more diversity in student storytelling and a potential job pipeline for our students.

*Teaching Panels:***'LETTING THE OUTSIDE WORLD IN': Zooming the Outside World into the Virtual Classroom: Pedagogical Approaches to Online Teaching (with Mass Communication and Society)**

COVID-19 forced all faculty to find new ways of teaching workshops or lab courses. It is very difficult to take a class that is bound by a facility, such as studio or news gathering lab courses, and transform the pedagogy in a way that replicates the same experience. Instead of trying to replicate an experience, faculty are using the opportunity to help students explore the outside world.

Integrating product management into a media curriculum (with Media Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship)

The current media environment demands a continuous stream of products ready to meet audience needs, and the emergent role of product manager serves to prioritize them by providing a holistic perspective on a media company's goals. Product managers bring new skillsets into the firm and help bridge the divide and align the priorities among editorial, business, and technology departments. How do we prepare students for "non-traditional" media roles focused on a mix of disciplines such as product management?

Raising Awareness: Teaching cultural competencies, diversity and inclusion in the J-School Classroom (with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Interest Group)*

Journalism educators must teach students compassion and empathy to help them best cover all communities fairly and adequately. In order to do this, educators can creatively utilize lessons and activities to help students grow these necessary journalism skills. This panel will feature a collection of diverse voices and highlight how they have successfully enhanced diversity, inclusion, and cultural competencies through lessons in their journalism classrooms.

It's all fun and games: The blending of news, advertising, and entertainment in the new media environment (with Entertainment Studies Interest Group)*

The rise of infotainment programs such as The Daily Show and John Oliver Tonight have blurred the line between entertainment and news, with recent research suggesting many look to entertainment programming as their primary source of information. The newsroom is not the only place to see this disruption; the rise of branded content through digital channels such as YouTube has blurred the line between entertainment and traditional advertising. This panel will discuss the new media blend of entertainment, news, and advertising, including ethical questions, potential pitfalls, and potential opportunities.

**Indicates that Electronic News is the lead or solo sponsoring division*

How New Reforms Impacted Panel Selection

By Harrison Hove, Division Vice-Head and Program Chair

The national conference's panel proposal process is as clear as the murky Mississippi River at times. In an effort to make this process more transparent and equitable, AEJMC's Council of Divisions has instituted new reforms. These reforms are paired with division-level protocols that decisions are made fairly and strong ideas are amplified.

As our division's vice chair, I am tasked with organizing the panel proposal process for our division, from beginning to end. As such, I want to pull the curtain back on the process so our membership better understands how conference panels are chosen and assembled.

The call for panels is published in late August or September. I bundled all panel proposals together and asked our executive board to kindly evaluate each proposal using a 10-point scale. Twelve board members submitted scores, which were averaged for each panel. This allowed me to rank our panels and determine an order of preference. It is important to note that some panels might get combined. Others might get put on the back burner if there was a similar panel within the last three years. The balance of research, PF&R, and teaching themed panels is also an important factor.

New Council of Divisions reforms forbid discussion between other divisions or interest groups before match day. Instead, each division or interest group uploads 4-5 preferred panels

with a list of preferred partners into an online platform. Ultimately, I had the ability to see all panels in advance and understand potential partnering opportunities. This helps one devise a plan of attack for "match day."

"Match day" started shortly after midnight. I continue the process early the next morning. This process dragged out over three days, but was much longer for other divisions or interest groups who struggled to match.

When describing this matching process, the word 'hectic' cannot be left out. This process moves extremely fast and one has to make fairly quick decisions about partnerships and matches or risk being left behind. I want as many of our panel proposals to match as possible, but every division and interest group displays similarly selfish interests. Balancing all of these interests and weighing all considerations at a rather quick clip is still challenging in this new, reformed system.

I hope you find our array of panels for the 2021 conference to contain satisfactory depth and breadth across the topic of Electronic News. Moving forward we must continue to encourage membership, both new and old to submit panel proposals. We must heavily lean on our diverse set of ideas and voices to ensure the most compelling programming possible. Conference programming is like assembling a giant puzzle that must come together one piece at a time.

Nominees Sought for Division Awards

Bliss Award Call

By Bill Silcock, Bliss Award Committee Chair

Who do you know that with distinction who has impacted and inspired students, collaborated with fellow faculty and served the profession of broadcast and mobile journalism? Nominations are due March 1st, for AEJMC's Edward L. Bliss Award for Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Education. The award is presented annually by AEJMC's Electronic News Division and recognizes an electronic journalism educator who has made significant and lasting contributions to the field. Nominations are solicited from faculty, professional organizations and associations, and other communication educators or students.

Criteria for nomination and selection:

Teaching: Evidence of long-standing excellent and innovative teaching and student engagement.

Service: Evidence of leadership in professional or educational organizations such as AEJMC, RTDNA, SPJ, BEA, state broadcast news organizations, and at the candidate's college or university.

Research: Evidence of enhanced teaching and service through professional and/or academic writing and research including journal articles, articles in professional trade publications, and creative work for broadcast and online formats.

Letters of nomination should contain specific examples of each of the categories listed above.

The successful Bliss nomination packet will include:

- A robust and detailed, thorough cover letter of nomination no longer than three pages.
- A fresh curriculum vitae of the nominee.
- A diverse arrange of supporting letters from students/former students. These letters should be concise and limited to no more than three letters.
- Letters from colleagues, collaborators, or co-authors, professionals or administrators. These should also be concise and limited to no more than three
- Supporting materials can be included of news coverage of awards, activities, and service. These materials should be VERY limited in number and be no more than three pages.

What Not to Include:

Examples of writing or research articles or other professional or creative work by the nominee

Do not include a statement by the nominee in support of your nomination.

Nomination packets should be compressed into one file folder with each file clearly labeled. Nominations will be reviewed by a judging committee selected by the Electronic News Division officers lead by a past division head Bill Silcock recently retired as an Assistant Dean of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State.

Where to send the submission:

Nominations should be sent to (electronic submissions strongly preferred) by March 1st, 2021 at midnight to Dr. Bill Silcock. Email your submission as one compressed file to bsilcock@asu.edu, 480-938-7883. DO NOT submit by mail without contacting Bill. He is also available to answer any questions. There are no dumb questions – do not hesitate to call.

Each nomination file will remain active with the Bliss selection committee for three years.

The award will be presented at a special ceremony held by the division at AEJMC's August 2021 in New Orleans. The recipient will receive a recognition plaque and a waiver of conference registration fees. Besides, the recipient's name will be added to the permanent plaque housed at American University in Washington, D.C, Ed Bliss' university during her or his teaching career.

Burkham Award Call

By Nancy Dupont, Burkham Award Committee Chair

Nominations are due **March 1, 2021**, for AEJMC's Larry Burkum Service Award from the Electronic News Division. This award recognizes an electronic journalist or journalism educator who has demonstrated extraordinary service to journalism and to journalism education.

Honorees may be selected in one of two ways – either through nomination presented to the selection committee (comprised of past EN Division Heads and Burkum Award Winners), or directly by the committee itself. The committee is chaired by Nancy Dupont of the University of Mississippi (contact info below).

Criteria for nomination and selection include strong evidence of significant service contributions to journalism education and to the electronic news industry. Examples of service may include, but are not limited to the following exemplars:

- Heading a national organization dedicated to advancing journalism and journalism education.
- Publishing journalism focused work (e.g., articles for news industry related websites, textbooks, videos).
- Developing and administering foundations that assist journalism students and educators in their growth and development (e.g., scholarship, foundations, etc.).
- Leading educational initiatives within the nominee's industry (e.g., head of internship development for station group; running a student focused apprenticeship program, etc.).

- Research designed to help students and young journalists advance their career performance in journalism, and extraordinary service to the mission of the Electronic News Division.

The successful Burkum nomination packet (<http://aejmc.us/end/about/awards-guidelines/>) will include a detailed, thorough letter of nomination; a complete resume/cv of the nominee; up to three supporting letters from educators/and/or colleagues; however, a statement by the nominee in support of his or her nomination should not be included. Nominations will remain active for three years.

The award will be presented at a special ceremony held by the division at AEJMC's 2021 conference, either virtually or in-person depending on the conference format.

Electronic nominations should be sent to: Nancy Dupont, Professor of Journalism, University of Mississippi at ndupont@olemiss.edu. Please feel free to contact Dr. Dupont if you have any questions about the nomination process, either via email or phone (504) 460-6381.

Things to Know for This Year's Virtual Southeast Colloquium

By Lindsey Conlin Maxwell and Gregory Perreault, Southeast Colloquium Division Co-Chairs

The 46th annual AEJMC 2021 Southeast Colloquium is coming up March 18-20. While the colloquium is "hosted" by Elon University, it will still be a virtual event. Below are some things that will be different this year, and some things that will stay the same:

What is going to be different at this year's Southeast Colloquium?

- The entire conference will be virtual rather than in-person
- You don't have to travel
- Conference fees will be low—\$50 for faculty and \$25 for students

What is going to be the same?

- Full research papers will still be presented
- There will still be work-in-progress roundtable sessions
- You can still submit anything from SE Colloquium to the main AEJMC Conference

If you submitted a research paper, you will be notified of acceptance by **February 8th**.

A Look Back at the Virtual AEJMC 2020 Conference

by Kenneth Fischer, Division Head

I was looking forward to another ride on a San Francisco cable car, a walk on Fisherman's Wharf and a Bart ride across the bay to an Oakland A's game. But it wasn't to be. A once-in-a-century virus kept us at home communicating by Zoom. But a hard-working AEJMC staff did their best to make the 2020 conference work.



How most experienced last year's virtual conference. Photo courtesy of Lindsey Conlin Maxwell.

Thanks to the work of members Don Heider and Thor Wasbotten of the Markkula Center at Santa Clara University the conference got off a great start. Their pre-conference workshop shed light on battling fake news and covering the crucial topics of COVID, Black Lives Matter and the Presidential Election during the pandemic.

Thor is the first person I have actually seen make Zoom breakout rooms work!

Just like an in-person conference I picked and chose what I was going to attend. But I needed to make sure I was at certain sessions to get headcounts, etc. We did all right. Some sessions were highly attended, others had just a handful of people beyond the moderator, staff and panelists. But a lot of you know what those 7am sessions in-person can be like. Harrison Hove (Florida) and I did duty in the chat room to take questions about the division. We had only a couple of visitors. That was interesting. I felt like I was hiding out in cyberspace in plain sight.

A highlight had to be our Business Meeting at 7am Pacific (sorry Californians). We honored Dr. Max Utsler of the University of Kansas with the Edward L. Bliss award. A long-time educator at Kansas and Missouri, Max is a legend among his colleagues in broadcast education. Of course, we all would have preferred to honor him in-person in San Francisco and follow-up with a couple of rounds at O'Doul's. As time was expiring on the business meeting Dr. Lee Hood of Loyola-Chicago lost her connection as she was giving her report on the name change. This led to a motion by past Bliss winner Mark Harmon of Tennessee that led to calling for a run-off election on the name change. It was a wild few minutes as Division Head Karen McIntyre (Virginia Commonwealth) wrapped up the meeting with elegance and grace.

Let us all hope we are In-Person at a future AEJMC Conference sooner than later. Be Safe!

Stay Up to Date with the Division

by Justin Blankenship, Secretary/News Editor

Here at the Electronic News Division, one of our main goals is to serve and advocate for our members. Our success depends on hearing from you! Apart from the newsletter you are reading now, there are several other avenues for connecting with the division and we encourage you to utilize all of them.

- Visit our website: aejmc.us/end
- Join our Facebook group: [ENewsDivision](#)
- Follow us on Twitter: [@AEJMC_END](#)
- Follow us on Instagram: [@aejmcelectronic](#)
- Subscribe to our listserv:
 - Send an email with no subject line and a single line in the body: "SUBSCRIBE AEJMC-END {your name}" to listserv@lists.vcu.edu
 - To email the listserv, send an email to AEJMC-END@lists.vcu.edu

We especially want to encourage all members to subscribe to the listserv. It's the fastest and most effect way for the members to communicate with division officers and each other.

Reflections on a Head-spinning Year for Journalists

By Dylan McLemore, Vice-head Elect

Editor's Note: This article was written and submitted before the events of January 6th, 2021 and the aftermath.

"The speed of the news cycle was a new kind of dizzying. If you missed a day (or even a few hours) of news, you felt like a stranger in a foreign land. If it's tough for those of us whose job it is to keep up, imagine the person who reads a couple headlines during their lunch break, or catches a few televised newscasts a week."

I wrote that for CNN's Reliable Sources newsletter looking back at the year that was... 2017.

If I had only known what 2020 would bring.

It's easy to forget that the year was started off on a ferocious pace. In January alone, wildfires still raged in Australia, a U.S. drone strike killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani, NBA superstar Kobe Bryant and his daughter died in a helicopter crash, and the House held the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump.

Journalists faced new obstacles and rose to new heights in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic placed pressures on newsrooms that shifted to remote work as broadcast anchors setup makeshift studios in spare bedrooms while reporters joined frontline responders to tell their stories. When it was clear we were entering a generation defining moment, the public service instinct of journalism overrode its profit motive. Electronic news sources lowered their paywalls making essential coronavirus information free to all.

But this service comes at a cost. Ad revenue vanished almost entirely in the spring and summer, and recovery has been slow. Bloomberg perhaps had the media biz headline of the year declaring [“The Biggest News Story in the World Costs Journalists Their Jobs.”](#)

(A friendly reminder at year’s end to do our part as journalism educators and support public broadcasters, nonprofit journalism projects, and the newsrooms doing the sort of excellent reporting we want our students to take part in.)



Depending on your beat, the torrents of misinformation regarding the pandemic were either shocking or totally expected. The polarization of our times took no exception to a public health crisis. If anything, our isolation and desperation [led to an environment where conspiracy thrived](#). Journalists suddenly found themselves taking a political side by communicating recommendations from health experts to wear a mask and social distance.

As we knew we needed to stay home, reporters constantly found themselves masked up and in tense situations. Journalists trying to cover racial injustice demonstrations sparked by the death of George Floyd were arrested by police and attacked by protesters. As campaign season kicked into gear, broadcasters had to decide whether to place crews at indoor Trump rallies where basic health precautions were ignored and the president [celebrated violence against journalists](#).

News coverage of elections has always been criticized, but the 2020 presidential election was one like no other, and challenged media to rewrite the playbook. Candidate Joe Biden kept an unprecedentedly low profile to avoid spreading COVID-19 at traditional campaign events. Meanwhile President Trump contracted the virus. Party nominating conventions were primetime Zoom meetings. One of the presidential debates was canceled.

Nothing was ordinary, and that would carry over into Election Night. Broadcast networks and cable news channels prepared viewers weeks in advance for a drawn out decision, due to a record-setting number of mail-in and absentee ballots. Despite [a brief period of betting market calamity](#), anchors

and analysts kept calm and reminded us of the process that played out exactly as experts had forecast.

Since then, media have been in an almost constant battle against disinformation about the result of the election. After four years of the Trump presidency, 2020 has ended with a dramatic shift – media have stopped giving oxygen to the fire.



Twitter and Facebook have cracked down on posts from Trump and his allies that baselessly undermine election integrity. When the president used an address during the national evening newscasts to claim the election was rigged, they all immediately cut the feed and fact-checked in real time.

Even Fox News – at least its news side – has poured cold water on deep state conspiracies and ill-fated legal challenges, making a lane for even farther-right media to cut into the longtime cable news king’s market share.

So what’s ahead for news media in 2021? A more normal world, one can hope. But how that’s handled leaves many possibilities.

Just as journalism served the public interest in covering the depths of the pandemic, it will begin 2021 with the hope of recovery. They’ll continue to ask real questions – a sizable portion of the country is skeptical of the vaccine, and making sure oft-neglected poor, transient populations aren’t overlooked again will be a challenge.

What will the news be like without Donald Trump? Has four years of Trump hardened political reporters to remain highly skeptical and adversarial, as the role requires? Or will the return to normalcy lead to softer coverage of a Biden administration?

What of the economics? Trump was undeniably a boon to the media business, especially nationally. How does cable keep those ratings? How do the *Times* and *Post* keep those subscribers? With an outgoing adversary-in-chief, the impacts of a COVID-19 economy are already being felt in left-wing media, with the late-year exodus at Vox and sale of HuffPost.

What happens to right-wing media is tougher to predict – does the splintering continue, or do conservatives reunite against the common enemy of a Democratic administration?

Two things are certain. As media researchers, we’ll study it all. As journalism educators, we’ll prepare students to face these challenges head on.

Here’s to a healthy, hell-raising 2021.

Students Speak Up About What's Working and What They Need While Learning Remotely

by *Gina Balleria, Teaching Chair*

Journalism and communications programs around the world have been grappling with how to create an effective content creation experience as the COVID-19 pandemic persists.

Many schools have moved to remote learning, either fully or in part, prompting students and professors to come up with alternate ways to interview sources, cover events, and create content.

At the same time, students are grappling with isolation, mental health challenges, and their own learning curves for adapting to remote learning; and Professors have been working to balance student needs and student learning, often as they ramp up their own remote teaching skills.

In a recent episode of my podcast *News in Context*, I interviewed four college students about their experiences with online learning, including what they want from their professors and schools during this time.

The panelists all expressed that they have appreciated direct connection with their professors, in particular one-on-one opportunities, whether socially distanced face-to-face or real-time online.

Emma Molloy, who writes for the *Oak Leaf* newspaper at Santa Rosa Junior College in Northern California said her journalism professor made time for an in-class mental health check in. She was able to hear that her classmates also felt a little depressed and were having trouble staying focused.

“Later on, I actually reached out to my professor, and we had an hour-long Zoom, and we just talked,” Molloy said. “It just made me feel so much better, because I’ve been feeling like it’s hard to connect. It’s hard to get things done right now.”



Nick Vides, who also attends Santa Rosa Junior College and serves as Editor in Chief of the *Oak Leaf*, said challenging events have also led to positive moments.

“The best week I’ve had so far was when I actually did meet my professor in person, and it was for the worst reason – I had to cover a fire,” Vides said. “It was weird but just so relieving to see my professor and see my classmates and cover something together. That was the most rewarding week I’ve had, for the worst reason. It’s those little tidbits that keep you going.”

Sarah Glasser, a junior at Santa Clara University, said she is appreciative that many of her professors are going out of their way to make

things work. In particular, she discussed a project for a photography course.

don't know, I think it makes people a lot more hesitant to engage with the academic side."

"I feel like when I'm actually in a classroom, I have to get in my car, I have to drive to Santa Rosa, I have to sit down – I can forget about everything else and just learn. When I'm doing this – even right now, I'm thinking of like 20 other things in my mind that have to get done today, and it's really, really hard," Vides said.

"I told my professor that I was going on an RV, and she said, 'no worries, you can develop your film when you get back.... don't stress yourself out. I know this is a tough time in life.' So, that's been great," Glasser said. Her photography professor also put together film developing kits for each student and met them outside for a socially distanced hand-out.

Molloy agreed. "This one girl in one of my classes, she's been texting me for help, and we'll both be confused, and she's like, 'I feel like I can't reach out to my professor, because it's so different.' You have to set up a meeting. They do have office hours, and that is helpful, but there are other people from other classes here on the computer screen, and it's just such a different world now."

Every student on the panel agreed that some of their professors have had technological challenges, but students were understanding, given the context.

Glenn also pointed out that the workload feels more demanding online, as all of her professors seem to be assigning more projects, tests, and assignments.

"In terms of professors, one thing that I've been noticing a lot is there's this really steep learning curve with technology," said Aisha Glenn, a junior at McGill University in Canada. "A lot of my professors just have a lot of trouble with Zoom and things like that, which makes sense, because most people really haven't had to use it before, and they have all these classes to do and all these things to grade."

"That's definitely overwhelming, because they're all doing it," Glenn said. "If one of them was doing it, then what are you going to do about it, but when they all do it, it's kind of intense."

Many of the panelists said, while technology enables classes to happen it can also be a barrier to connecting with their professors.

Vides said the online experience in general has made it hard to focus.

"It definitely makes things a little more challenging, and people don't really reach out as much," Glenn said. "My professor just emailed me that his office hours (link) doesn't work, and I

"I feel like when I'm actually in a classroom, I have to get in my car, I have to drive to Santa Rosa, I have to sit down – I can forget about everything else and just learn. When I'm doing this – even right now, I'm thinking of like 20 other things in my mind that have to get done today, and it's really, really hard," Vides said.

In addition, Molloy found that fully asynchronous courses, which she thought would be easier, have

actually been harder to engage with. “One of my classes, I don’t get to see anyone. I don’t even know who’s in my class, and I’ve never really met my professor.”

“Me too,” said Glenn. “Most of my classes, I just don’t go to. I watch them later.... It doesn’t make me want to do the work for the classes, which is bad, because obviously I want to do well and I want to engage with that. And, I know that they’re trying to be more flexible and not less. So, it should be encouraging me to engage more, because I can do it whenever I want, but that almost kind of makes it harder for me, because lectures pile up, and I just don’t get to them.”

But, Sarah said there have been silver linings. “With online school, you’re able to create a schedule that better fits your needs.”

Glenn said clubs have also been a big help.

“The club engagement I thought would be a lot lower this year, and I thought people would be a lot less willing, less able, or less inspired to join clubs and be in student orgs,” Glenn said. “But the opposite has definitely been happening at McGill, I think because people are stuck at home.”

Molloy said remote learning has also put the spotlight on the importance of mental health.

“People should be taking that into consideration and professors should be talking about it,” Molloy said..”I know it’s kind of taboo or whatever, but we’re all struggling, and I think it’s important that people know they can talk about it and reach out to each other.”

Through it all, the panelists said, even though online learning has been a challenge, they want to stay with it until they feel safe returning to brick-and-mortar classrooms.

“I would full-heartedly do this all of next year, if I had to,” said Vides. “I would suck it up and do it, because I don’t feel comfortable going back to school - period - if there’s no vaccine (distribution).... I’d much rather learn on Zoom than get that.”

And Molloy had a reminder for all of us: “We’re all in this together. Any students that are struggling, we’re all struggling. I just feel like we should be reaching out to each other and understanding.”

Here is a list of what students say they want:

- The option to keep their cameras off during class. Zoom fatigue is real! And, cutting the video helps them focus on the content
- Meaningful engagement with professors. They want to connect, they just don’t know how.
- Explicit discussion of mental health and direct access to resources.
- They like the balance between synchronous and asynchronous
- They appreciate the flexibility and understanding many of their professors have offered, and they hope it continues!

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