

## ABIGAIL M. FOERSTNER

### NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, MEDILL SCHOOL

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### SUMMARY

After a 30-year career of reporting on health, environment and science and on the visual arts for the Chicago Tribune and other publications, I returned “home” to Medill, my alma mater, with hopes to expand our science journalism program. I developed our elective graduate science reporting class into a reporting pillar (with business and political reporting) of Medill’s downtown Chicago newsroom and later expanded our science journalism classes into a specialization. With a grant award from the Carnegie Corporation, I innovated “embedded reporting” - science journalism partnerships with field researchers and research institutes across the globe. The partnerships embed Medill’s graduate students with NOAA, NASA, scientists finding clues to climate triggers in Mongolia, geologists linking sea level rise to the degradation of the Yucatan’s freshwater caverns, health practitioners bringing neonatal care to remote villages of Nicaragua, and engineers inventing affordable greenhouses for drought-ridden areas of India

**THE RESULTS:** This unique embedded reporting program brings top applicants from the sciences, engineering, medicine and media to the science specialization. It captures the attention of major media to publish the stories produced after weeks in the field. Graduates build influential careers in science communications as a direct result. I explore present and future science communications as a key player in growing media focus and audience demands.

**THE NEED:** I teach graduate students multimedia strategies to bridge the gap between science and general audiences in a world where access to technological understanding is key to sound decisions for our families, communities and our democracy. I launched an immersive undergraduate environmental reporting class to comprehend and report on the science underpinning environmental contamination, climate change and sustainability with storytelling tools to help audiences change the high stakes we face.

## CURRENT TITLE

**Director of the Graduate Science Journalism Specialization**

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE Medill School – 2002-Present**

**Associate Professor, Current position**

**Assistant Professor, 2011-2020**

Organized and engaged students in continually evolving academic, reporting and career-oriented opportunities for the Health, Environment and Science Journalism Specialization at Medill, mobilizing continued growth in this concentration.

- Spearheaded undergraduate environmental journalism with investigative initiatives, global travel and multimedia publishing partnerships.
- Coordinated the Comer Scholars programs with nearly \$1.5 million in grants from the Comer Foundation in Chicago.

**Lecturer, 2007-2011**

- Taught and helped revamp the graduate science reporting program.
- Launched the ongoing Comer Scholars Program for environmental reporting (2010).
- Coordinated News 21, an in-depth look at the stakes for the environment in the 2008 elections, part of the Carnegie-Knight initiative for innovative journalism.

**Adjunct Faculty, 2002-2007**

- Taught, coordinated and helped revamp Journalism Methods, the introductory graduate program classes.
- Taught various graduate and undergraduate courses.

## CLASSES

**Graduate and undergraduate classes** in science journalism, environmental journalism, multimedia news reporting, and foundational news reporting.

### **Health, Environment and Science Journalism Classes**

- **425-1-20 Health, Environment and Science Newsroom Reporting(2005-2015)**  
Students reported and posted at least one story a week to apply learning strategies taught to make the most complicated technical stories accessible to general audiences. First-person stories often crystallized larger issues with anecdotes, examples, compelling writing and scripting, graphics and photography backed solid sourcing, accuracy, fact checking and balance.

- **425-0-20 Health, Environment and Science Journalism Seminar (Ongoing)**  
 Enhance the introduction to reporting on research and innovation through visits to Northwestern laboratories and science teams, visits to Argonne National Laboratory's supercomputer labs and developers, strategies for assessing and reporting on studies, and analytical skills for critically assessing claims of scientific breakthroughs and developments. Students leverage strategies for accessibility, news judgment and accuracy to emphasize impact.
- **425-2-20 Advanced Science Reporting (Ongoing)**  
 Focus on developing in-depth stories through in-person interviews with multiple sources, independent and mentored research, investigative skills, multimedia communications, and data application.
- **416-0-20 Embedded Science Reporting (2016-Present)**  
 Created and continue to innovate this class for immersive field reporting experiences with science research teams and institutions for a deeper dive into grasping science initiatives through four-week stays on site. Sites are vetted for the scientific range of research and access to it. Seminars in field reporting precede travel. The class involves weekly communications and reporting while in the field and working closely with the instructor upon return to produce high-impact journalism. Many in-depth embedded reporting stories publish with major media including National Geographic, The Huffington Post, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Undark, Astronomy magazine, the New Scientist and other media.
- **301-0-23 Journalism in Practice—Global Environmental Reporting (2017-18)**  
 Developed an undergraduate reporting trip to Panama to immerse with the indigenous Guna people on their shrinking islands that soon will be swamped under water due to sea level rise. Students also camped out in the inland rain forest community of Kuna Yala where an experimental build-from-scratch community is incorporating sustainability strategies for construction, water filtration and conservation, alternative energy systems, and farm-to-table cooking.
- **301-0-23 Journalism in Practice – Environmental Reporting (2016-Present)**  
 Developed this class to introduce students to Superfund sites, the industrial Southeast Side and other areas of severe contaminant exposure, environmental issues with lead pipes, flooding and climate change, and environmental solutions, opportunities and research. Alternative energy, recycling programs, urban agricultural and circular economy start-ups are among topics students tackle.

#### **Other Graduate Newsroom Courses**

- **421-4-25 Multimedia News Reporting** – Launched and continue to innovate this graduate newsroom reporting class, incorporating beat development with a focus on creative and skills strategies for data visualization, interactive graphics, storytelling with Knight Lab tools, photojournalism, animation and compelling narrative

structure for diverse media.

- **490 Master's Projects** – Serve as the adviser for students pursuing in-depth stories for the MSJ Quarter 4 master's projects. This involves mentoring students to leverage and enhance the range of skills, strategies and immersive reporting commitments to produce the projects. Individual weekly meetings with students coach strong goals and outcomes for portfolio projects.

## **Foundation Courses**

- **201-1 Lab section of News Reporting and Writing**, the first undergraduate journalism class that Medill freshman take.
- **400-0-23 Journalism Methods News Reporting** – Coach students to learn and apply the fundamentals of reporting, research, balance, statistical literacy and compelling writing as they learn through lectures, discussions, speakers and weekly assignments for this class.
- **499-0-21 Independent Studies** – Mentor students in developing independent studies in special reporting topics such as photography, energy reporting, technology reporting. I sponsor and advise as many as nine independent studies during an academic years.

## CLASS REPORTING PARTNERSHIPS

- Developed graduate reporting partnerships with the Better Government Association of Illinois, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, SpaceICE at Northwestern and the Institute for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern. A reporting partnership is under development with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention after CDC reached out to Medill. The search is on to build more networks and increase outreach to diverse and underserved audiences.
- A reporting partnership with *Planet Forward* provides a website for posting outstanding undergraduate environmental reporting. A continuing emphasis on diverse partnerships looks to a future of integrating learning and experience.

## GRADUATE MEDILL EXPLORES PROGRAMS

- **421-4-24 Arts Reporting for Curtains Up - Medill Explores the Arts**  
A 2016 newsroom arts reporting class backed a Medill Explores odyssey taking students behind the scenes at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Civic Opera and a virtual reality lab. Gypsy jazz brought them to the legendary Green Mill and a searing, contemporary interpretation of King Lear kept them riveted at the Shakespeare Theater.

- **Merging traditional knowledge and environmental science: Medill Explores Native Nations in the Pacific Northwest.**

My Advanced Science Reporting class and Patty Loews' elective "Medill Explores Indigenous Nations of the Pacific Northwest" collaborated on a trip this winter introducing us to elders, scientists and traditions of the Quileute and Quinault reservations as they move to higher ground due as sea level rise and the possibility of a tsunami threaten Native Nations and the ancient heritage of salmon fishing. Here we found courageous resiliency and heart-wrenching reluctance to uproot from communities lining the ocean shorelines. We are invited to stay on these reservations next year.

- **Seminars - Ongoing.** Present guest seminars and facilitate discussion at Medill graduate and undergraduate classes on effective science reporting, how to target science stories to different audiences, and how to use, bolster and scrutinize statistics to bolster stories.

## CLIMATE CHANGE COVERAGE

- **Climate Change website – 2008-Present.** Worked with Medill's tech team to design and launch the Medill Climate Change website in 2008. Continuing production of the website highlights student environmental reporting, energy innovations to avert climate change, research on rising carbon dioxide levels driving, sea level rise and global warming as linked drivers of flooding, drought, extreme weather, food shortages, climate refugees and global security threats.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE**

### MANAGEMENT

#### **Director, Graduate Science Journalism Specialization – On-going**

Coordinated creation and marketing of the Health, Environment and Science Specialization as part of the specialization team appointed by Craig LaMay in 2015. I recruit for the specialization, revitalize the scope of the classes, and teach the three key classes: the science seminar, advanced science reporting and embedded reporting. I organized summer science specialization enrichment seminars and events to build an academic and bonding base for the students during their first quarter through 2019. The science seminar has been moved to the first quarter to cover these needs.

#### **Managing Editor, Chicago Newsroom, 2014-2015**

Created Medill's all-day story posting cycle for the Medill News Service and the Medill Reports website, replacing the old system of posting all stories by 6 p.m. when the updated website would go live for the day.

#### **New Reporting Department Chair, 2014-2016**

Led a team of 10 faculty members to develop a vision, class updates and a social media mindset for reporting and innovating to meet the rapidly changing media landscape of digital journalism.

**Animations Program Coordinator, supported by Next Media, Taiwan, 2012-2018**

Taught quarterly animations seminars in the downtown newsroom to develop student proficiency in producing the combined voiceover scripts, action scripts, and visual content for one-minute news animations produced by Next Media. Next Media asked Medill to explore the news potential of animations. Students produced them for science, business, sports, arts and culture reporting.

**Medill Fridays Coordinator**, Summer 2019. Arranged weekly enrichment programs with speakers such as Texas Tribune founder Evan Smith. Students discovered Chicago and bonded on the Chicago Architecture Foundation cruise and the Medill picnic that bookended this program. Academic opportunities and specialization-oriented networking (the political/national security specialization met with David Axelrod) heightened interest in hitting the streets to report.

**News21 Coordinator**, Spring-Summer 2008. Coordinated News21, an in-depth summer fellowship program where 14 Medill students traveled the country to report on the high stakes for the environment in the 2008 election, part of the Carnegie-Knight initiative for innovative journalism. Worked with students to produce visually powerful interactive graphics that became a hallmark of my teaching in many other classes.

**Journalism Methods Coordinator**, 2003-2007. Methods coordinators managed all the classes and organization for the newswriting, editing and ethics classes within Methods, pulling together the team of more than a dozen instructors and providing all the newswriting curriculum materials plus a morning lecture series. I added a series of multimedia workshops in 2006 to prepare students for media jobs that called on reporters to provide photos and video.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

**Accelerated Master's Program Committee Member, 2019-2020** – This committee revamped the AMP program to offer a three-quarter MSJ after Medill undergraduates receive their degree, allowing them to complete their full BSJ experience. BSJs completing the AMP program during their senior year often forego study abroad or a second major to complete all requirements before senior year. The Medill faculty approved the recommended revamp.

**Curriculum Committee Chair, 2015-2019**

**Curriculum Committee Member, 2014-2015, 2019-2020**

I worked with a committee representing all facets of our journalism program to revamp and update the curriculum, incorporating sports, social justice, national security, science, interactive, entrepreneurial, magazine, broadcast and other specializations throughout the graduate programs. We upgraded the requirements and pre-requisites for the undergraduate journalism residency program.

**Curriculum Planning Committees – Intermittently from 2007-2013**

These committees enhanced multimedia training and reporting for our classes and Chicago newsroom.

## **CREATIVE WORK**

### BOOKS

#### ***Mirror at Cahokia - Cosmos, Conflict and Climate***

(Contracted for publication by the University of Iowa Press, which published two of my previous books. The manuscript is near completion.)

I once again spent time this past summer on the trail of archeological digs, monumental earthen pyramids and climate change at Cahokia, the greatest Ancient American metropolis in North America. The research is for my book – already under contract - to bring the story of climate change home to our own backyard. Cahokia mushroomed near the Mississippi River in Illinois starting at about 700 A.D. and eventually influenced a cultural empire that extended from Oklahoma to Florida. You can still visit the ruins of the city, climb the 10-story temple pyramid and imagine the thousands of thatched-roof homes spread out around the cruciform of grand plazas carpeted now with prairie grass.

Social unrest, the threat of warfare and drought assaulted this society. (Sound familiar?) A population of more than 20,000 people simply vanished from there by about 1350 A.D. Cahokia offers dramatic evidence of what can happen in the Midwest in a period of complex cultural and climate shifts. And the Cahokians didn't have greenhouse gases from cars, factories or power plants to add to the mess.

The book intertwines the social and climate crisis mirrored in a past great culture with the present-day impacts of climate change already apparent in the Midwest. I am continuing to visit farmlands, forests and river towns along unruly tributaries of the Mississippi where floods now routinely wash away soil, destroy young crops and pollute river water supplies with pesticides. Two 500-year floods, occurring within the space of 15 years, caused billions of dollars in urban and agricultural damage in 1993 and 2008 alone. Then drought added to the damage. The scars remain devastatingly obvious and farmers can no longer plant thousands of acres of fields in the floodplains while heat waves threaten crops in other areas. Both extremes reflect the costs of global warming.

The ancient Native American pilgrims of many tribes joined what one Ho-Chunk historian described as the "gold rush" of new ideas and exotic goods at Cahokia and the tribes returned home, offering an eventual haven as the great city unraveled. The people of Cahokia followed the bison to tribes farther West or rejoined clan and kin in smaller tribal communities. We don't have those options. As an alternative, I am following the frontiers of clean energy innovation (NU is in the vanguard), start-ups, some renegade inventors, and space scientists following possible clues to fusion energy in revisiting the Earth's radiation belts. Associated field research trips made for the book: 2010-Present

- Research and work on the archaeological digs at Cahokia, Illinois. Key sources: archaeologist John Kelly (Washington University, St. Louis), Jim Brown (NU archaeology professor emeritus), Lori Belknap, superintendent of the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site.
- Research trips to numerous mounds sites and reservations in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri.
- December 2017 trip with Patty Loew to the Ho-Chunk communities in southern Wisconsin to interview elders and tribal historians about relationships with Cahokia in tribal oral traditions that go back to the last ice age.

**James Van Allen: *The First Eight Billion Miles***, a biography of the astrophysicist and pioneer who made the first discoveries of the space age. Published by the University of Iowa Press, 2007; paperback published in 2009.

***Building a Masterpiece: Legacy of the University of Iowa Museum of Art***. When Yale turned down Peggy Guggenheim's gift of Jackson Pollack's wall-size mural he painted for her, she gave it to a curator she respected at the University of Iowa, adding a revolutionary and pivotal work to the masterpiece art collection the university was amassing. The book follows the dramas of building this collection and preserving it through the 2008 floods that swamped the campus and the museum. Published in 2009.

**Barbara Crane – *Changing Vision***, biographical essay for the book published in 2008 in conjunction with a 2009 retrospective exhibit that opened at the Chicago Cultural Center and traveled to the Amon Carter Museum in Texas and to China.

***Picturing Utopia***, a rare look at a 19th century religious utopia as seen through the eyes of photographers living in the Amana Colonies, Iowa. Research for the book recovered thousands of glass plate and film negatives in family collections, most since donated to the Amana Museum Society. University of Iowa Press, 2000; paperback released in 2005.

**Stephen Deutch, *Photographer***, biographical essay for the book and exhibition at the Chicago Cultural Center, published by Tri-Quarterly Books and the Chicago Historical Society, 1989.

## WEBSITES

***Explorer's Legacy***. The original analog data tapes from Explorer I, America's first satellite, and my biography of James Van Allen provided the foundations for a website where the newly digitized tapes and their songs of data can be played or downloaded. I wrote 24 episodes of content from the early space age for this multimedia website produced by the University of Iowa and launched in 2015. A 2016 exhibit based on the website created an immersive environment of sights and sounds from the opening dramas of



the space race.

## ARTICLES

- 1981-Present Freelance journalist of hundreds of articles on the arts, history and science published in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Science* magazine, *North Shore* magazine, *Chicago* magazine, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the *Detroit News*, *City Talk* (former PBS publication), *Camera Arts*, *Fotographie* (Czech magazine) and other publications.
- 1997-2010 Monthly arts and history columns for *North Shore* magazine
- 1998-2003 Contributing to *Camera Arts* magazine.
- 1984-2003 Inaugurated conversational, weekly photography reviews for the Friday sections of the *Chicago Tribune*; reported on the visual arts and science
- 1973-1981 Initiated science and environmental coverage for 13 zoned suburban sections of the *Chicago Tribune*. Reported on the national laboratories, energy shortages and alternative energy. Developed award-winning investigative stories on the environment

## DOCUMENTARY

- 2015 Co-produced the Midcontinent Rift documentary developed with Northwestern physicist Seth Stein for the National Science Foundation. MSJ students Lizz Giordano and Jia You received \$4,000 fellowships to script and produce the documentary with us. We traveled to the Lake Superior side of the Upper Peninsula to conduct the interviews and video footage documenting a billion-year-old volcanic rift that nearly tore North America in two. The rift extends underground to Texas but scars of it – such as scooping out the crater that is now of Lake Superior – are most evident in the UP.

## **RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS**

**Comer Family Foundation for the Comer Scholars Program. Grant coordinator and principle investigator, 2010-Present.** Comer climate research funding provided fellowships to insure a new generation of climate change researchers. Medill proposed a grant for scholarships and reporting trips to inspire and train a new generation of environmental reporters. Nearly \$1.4 million has been committed to Medill since 2010 to support MSJ scholarships and global reporting opportunities for students committed to environmental journalism. Our five current Comer Scholars and most of the 34 Comer Scholar alums are pursuing careers in science and environmental media and communications. See the addendum listing these alums and their jobs at the close of this CV. The track record of the grant convinced the Comer Foundation to continue funding with grant renewals approved in 2015 and 2018.

**Undergraduate Research Grant, 2019.** Provided \$2,000 in funding for me to hire an undergraduate research assistant to developing research expertise while working with me on my Cahokia book.

**Center for Native American and Indigenous Research, 2018.** Grant to cover a summer of travel costs for annual work on the excavations at Cahokia where I also conduct interviews each summer.

**UnitedHealth Group Grants, 2015-2018.** Co-coordinator of \$55,000 annual grant programs. Ellen Shearer, Donna Leff and I brought 30 Medill students to Washington, D.C., for three-day health journalism conferences with experts and alum reporters.

**NASA SpaceICE Grant, 2016.** The NASA grant awarded for SpaceICE included funding for Medill internships and outreach. Named as a faculty mentor for the project in the grant.

**Lounsbery Foundation Grant, 2012.** Principle investigators of a \$45,000 grant: Abigail Foerstner, Ellen Shearer and Ashlee Humphreys. Funding enabled nationwide reporting projects on ocean wave energy, ocean-based wind farms, the Keystone Pipeline and fracking in the Dakotas to produce stories in three formats: hard news text stories, human interest text stories. We compiled a white paper on our testing and findings that compared impact and content retention associated with different forms of reporting. We released our results at a National Press Club press conference in 2013.

**Medill Research Grant, 2010.** \$5,000 grant for research for the Cahokia book.

## **SERVICE TO MEDILL**

### RECRUITING AND ADVISING

**Recruiting – 2007-Present.** Includes one-on-one meetings in newsroom, phone calls with prospects and accepted students, and presentations at Accepted Student Weekends. I meet and talk with approximately 15-20 prospective students a year.

**Journalism Residency Adviser - 2007-Present.** Advised from 7-10 Journalism Residencies each academic year. I focus on encouraging students to pitch stories, to be the “go to” staffers and to identify assignments on which they would like to work.

**Academic Adviser – 2007-Present.** Advised MSJs, including all the Comer Scholars, on classes and program schedules to maximize their career goals. I advised freshman in my 201 lab during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years.

**Undergraduate Research Grant adviser for Medill, 2016-Present.** Advised three undergraduates on summer research and reporting programs sponsored by undergraduate grants.

### COMMITTEE SERVICE

**Medill Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, 2018-Present.** Contribute to

developing action strategies for empowering diverse students to come to Medill and bring diversity to the faculty, curriculum and enrichment activities.

**Faculty Search Committees.** Serving on the current committee to hire a science journalism faculty member who will start teaching in fall 2020. Served on the search committee to hire a data journalist, 2009. (Darnell Little of the Chicago Tribune was hired.)

## PROGRAMS

**Sarah Kliff of Vox on Healthcare, Nov. 14, 2018.** Moderated a talk and Q and A with Vox healthcare reporter Sarah Kliff on the future of health programs and the Affordable Care Act under the Trump Administration.

**The Need for Nuclear, April, 2016** Brought former NASA climate researcher Jim Hansen and a panel of other experts to Medill for a presentation and debate with the audience on the need for nuclear to achieve green energy and overcome fossil fuel dependency.

**Hot Copy! Journalism in the Greenhouse, Oct. 16, 2012.** Co-arranged a program to bring NYT climate change reporter journalist Justin Gillis to Medill to speak.

**High School Journalism Day –** Coordinated this day of seminars, speakers and lunch for nearly 200 high school students in 2006 and 2007. Students participated from across the region, raising their interest in journalism and Northwestern. I shifted the program to fall from spring, enabling more accessible scheduling for CPS schools.

## **SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY**

**Faculty Senate – 2016-2019.** Helped revamp faculty handbook sections on harassment, bullying, and diversity and sections of the handbook relating to other Title IX issues.

### **Faculty Associate with These Multidisciplinary Programs:**

#### **Initiative for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern (ISEN), 2008-Present.**

Served on the original faculty advisory board to launch ISEN's research, outreach and education programs as a five-year initiative that developed into a multidisciplinary research institute in 2013.

Contribute to ISEN executive meetings, programming, student and alumni events, and development proposals.

Moderated ISEN's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary Earth Day panel in 2010 that gathered a reunion of the 1970 NU PhD students who organized Project Survival, an all-night teach-in on a "sick environment" that drew thousands of participants even before the first Earth Day.

Coach students as they developed action plans for the Clinton Global Initiative competitions.

### **SHyNE 2015-Present.**

Contribute to workshops and provide outreach content thought internships. Developed and taught a communications workshop in 2017.

### **Center for Native American and Indigenous Research – 2018-Present.**

Contribute to meetings and initiatives.

### **Northwestern/University of Hamburg Partnership – 2019-Present.**

Multidisciplinary faculty partnership to share research and initiatives that promote sustainability through innovation, collaboration and climate change mitigation.

### **Science in Society - 2006-2015.**

Generated stories and content for the SiS website through the newsroom. Helped launch and co-teach pilot workshops and events that led in 2015 to the 10-week science communications class for STEM PhD students.

**Faculty outreach coordinator** and mentor for our annual one-day per week MSJ internship with CHiMAD.

### **SpacelCE faculty mentor, 2016-Present.**

Mentor internships, outreach programs and embeds with Spacelce

### **Conference and Seminar presentations for the University**

**Health Care Reporting Conference in D.C., 2015-2018.** Ellen Shearer, Donna Leff and I proposed and received grants from UnitedHealth Group to hold a health care reporting conference in Washington D.C. in September or October. Panels covered drug costs and shortages, addiction, health insurance programs, health impacts of climate change and other timely topics. We dined with health care reporters in D.C. and made field trips to the National Institutes of Health and Army Medical research facilities.

**NU Climate Change Conference, 2017.** Coordinated and moderated the kick-off panel for NU's Climate Change Conference with a neuroscientist, psychologist and activist discussing how to change minds on climate change.

**Science Communications Workshop for STEM Ph.D. Students, Oct. 24, 2017, 6-9 p.m.** Developed a three-hour science communications workshop to teach graduate students at SHyNE, one of Northwestern's nanotechnology research centers, fundamentals for making their work accessible to general audiences, policy-makers and funders. I coached individual research project descriptions with students during the workshop and during the following week when students modified their drafts.

### **Feinberg School of Medicine ER Program on communicating with the public and the press, 2015.**

Following my presentation, my graduate students met with medical students to stage and discuss mock interviews and press conferences.

### **SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

**Kappa Tau Alpha – 2009-Present.** Northwestern chapter coordinator for Kappa Tau Alpha, the national journalism honor society that inducts our top students at a pre-commencement honors ceremony and reception each year. Participate in other KTA activities such as routinely judging the book contest.

**Chicago Science Writers, partner of the National Association of Science Writers.** Board member and outreach coordinator of the Chicago organization. 2010-Present The board organized the press parties in 2009 and 2014, hosting 600 members of the international press, during these two years when the American Association for the Advancement of Science held their annual conference in town.

**AltWeekly Journalism Competition judge, 2008-2012.** Judge of photography and graphic design for the annual AltWeekly journalism competition for weekly publications in large and small circulation categories.

### **SERVICE TO THE ACADEMY**

#### **Comer Conference – 2008-Present.**

Cover the Comer Abrupt Climate Change Conferences with the Comer Scholars each October. Medill is the only press routinely invited to this private conference that draws together leading climate researchers from across the country. Former New York Times climate reporter Justin Gillis and I gave a session during the 2017 conference on what the press needs to know from climate scientists to mobilize urgency, understanding and a call to action in bridging the gap between scientists and general audiences.

**University of Hamburg Climate Collaboration, March 25-27, 2019.** I and three NU faculty members from other disciplines met with faculty counterparts in Hamburg to brainstorm on collaborative initiatives and share research. I am leveraging shared research and sources from the trip to provide students with international perspectives and contacts.

**Framing Action and Attitudes: Nanotechnology, Media and Neuromarketing. Presentation for the 2017 National Science Foundation Nanoscale Science and Engineering Conference, Arlington, Va., Dec. 12-13, 2017.** Represented the NU nanotechnology research center SHyNE at this conference and offered a cross-section of media coverage and polls showing widespread public acceptance of nanotechnology as a tool for advancing personalized medicines, cosmetics, robotics, metals and materials. My theme stressed the challenges of explaining and understanding the science of nanotechnology where acceptance is much higher than for the human forcing of climate change, a science arena that is much easier to demonstrate and comprehend.

**Stanford University Linear Accelerator Lab, February 2011.** Presentation on James Van Allen's life and times.

**University of Iowa Physics Department, February 2010.** Presentation on space pioneer James Van Allen and inventing the space program on a shoestring budget.

**Grinnell Public Library, February 2010.** Presentation for adults and a separate one for children on James Van Allen, in conjunction with a NASA exhibit in Grinnell Iowa,

**North American Prairie Conference, August 2010.** Panelist on science writing at the University of Northern Iowa conference, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

**Alternative Journalism Careers program, Women in Science and Engineering, December 2010.** Panelist on communications careers for women in STEM programs, University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Iowa Public Television presentation on James Van Allen, January 2009.** Engaged a live audience for storytelling with photos before a live audience at the University of Iowa.

**Presentation on James Van Allen at the Herbert Hoover Museum and Library, North Branch, Iowa, February 2009.** In conjunction with the opening of a Van Allen exhibit.

**NASA Colloquium, Goddard Space Flight Center, Maryland, March 2009. Keynote speaker** for this monthly event at Goddard where the large staff community of University of Iowa space physicists is fondly called the “Iowa Mafia.”

**Book signing at the National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C., May 2009.** The signing table stood in clear view of models hanging from the ceiling of Explorer I and Pioneer 10, Van Allen’s most momentous space missions. Telling his story with these models hanging from the main foyer was an extraordinary experience.

**Presentation on James Van Allen’s life and times, Adler Planetarium, Chicago, September 2009.** Space fans from 9 to 90 joined me as we neared the 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of showed launch of Sputnik on Oct. 4, 1957.

**University of Iowa, November 2009.** Inside Iowa weekend presentation on the life and times of James Van Allen.

## **AWARDS**

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 2016 | University of Iowa Distinguished Alumni of the Year (in the “Friend of the University” category), honoring my books published by the University of Iowa Press.   |
| 2008 | Honorable mention in the 2008 edition of Best American Science and Nature Writing (Houghton-Mifflin) for “What Van Allen Found in Space,” July/August 2007 issue of the <i>Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists</i> . |
| 2008 | Benjamin F. Shambaugh Award for the Van Allen biography as the most significant book published on Iowa history in 2007.  |
| 2007 | Author of the year, University of Iowa Press   |

- 1981                    *Chicago Tribune* regional award for outstanding reporting  
Chicago Suburban Press Club Award for investigative reporting
- 1976                    Reporting Award from Women in Communications  
for an investigation of Chicago area flooding caused by  
unscrupulous developers building in floodplains.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

### **Board member and President – Saint Francis Xavier School Board, 1992-1996.**

During my tenure we doubled enrollment with active recruitment and demonstration of our highly successful learning environment, our inclusive diversity, eminent faculty and community of engaged parents and parishioners.

**Chairman – Saint Francis Xavier Finance Committee, 1999-2003.** Successfully reached the target for a multimillion dollar capital campaign to upgrade school and parish facilities.

**Endowment adviser – Saints Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish.**

**2003-Present – Volunteer – St. Thomas of Canterbury Soup Kitchen in Uptown.**

**EDUCATION – Northwestern University: BSJ, 1971; MSJ, 1971**

## SELECTIONS OF PUBLISHED STUDENT WORK

### GRADUATE WORK - EMBEDDED REPORTING

How boulders in Mongolian mountains reveal clues to climate change

By Stephanie Fox

<https://thebulletin.org/2020/02/how-boulders-in-mongolian-mountains-reveal-the-pace-of-climate-change/>

Puerto Rico's clean energy and grid restoration efforts still in doubt

By Jillian Melero

<https://thebulletin.org/2019/10/puerto-ricos-clean-energy-and-grid-restoration-efforts-still-in-doubt/#>

Innovative greenhouses help farmer adapt to climate change – By Janice Cantieri

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/future-of-food/telangana-india-agriculture-greenhouses/>

Chasing tornadoes: A wild ride on NOAA's P3 storm hunter plane

By Morgan Levey

<https://undark.org/?s=morgan+levey>

Alaska refuge can't protect the wildlife from climate change

By Samantha Yadron

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/09/plastics-birds-climate-change-alaska-news/>

Taking a tip from the plants: Mimicking photosynthesis to produce solar fuels

By Lakshmi Chandrasekaran

<https://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/taking-a-tip-from-the-plants-mimicking-photosynthesis-to-produce-fuels/>



Understanding sharks one tag at a time – By Mollie McNeel

<https://sercblog.si.edu/understanding-sharks-one-tag-at-a-time/>

A Trek to the Giant Mongolian Glacier That Holds the Secrets to Global Warming

By Kevin Stark

<https://psmag.com/news/a-trek-to-the-giant-mongolian-glacier-that-holds-the-secrets-to-global-warming>

A Healer's Last Journey: Documenting Endangered Knowledge in the Colombian Andes – By Monika Knuk

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/megan-taylor-morrison/a-healers-last-journey-do\\_b\\_5652047.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/megan-taylor-morrison/a-healers-last-journey-do_b_5652047.html)

Here's Mud in Your Ice: A Toast to Greenland's Buried Treasure -- By Bryce

Gray <https://blog.nationalgeographic.org/2016/08/31/heres-mud-in-your-ice-a-toast-to-greenlands-buried-treasure/>

Northwestern and UIUC undergrads race to finish satellite for orbit – By Lily Williams

<http://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/northwestern-and-uiuc-undergrads-race-to-finish-satellite-for-orbit/>

Chasing nighttime thunder storms with NOAA and NASA – By Lizz Giordano

<https://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/chasing-nighttime-thunderstorms/>

#### BETTER GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION/MEDILL COLLABORATION

Under Mayor Rahm Emanuel, city has sharply scaled back environmental enforcement – By Brett Chase, Ashley Hackett, AnnMarie Hilton, and Madison Hopkins (Partnership with the MSJ Multimedia Reporting class)

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2019/2/22/18362156/under-mayor-rahm-emanuel-city-has-sharply-scaled-back-environmental-enforcement>

#### UNDERGRADUATE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

[Sea level rise threatens the Florida Keys \(3-part series\)](#) – By Avery Van Etten

Grand Prize winner of the Planet Forward Storyfest competition in the Multimedia/Podcast Category – Winners announced April 3

Bare feet and machetes: When the jungle is your laboratory – By Maddie Berakoff  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/jungle-kalu-yala-institute>

After Vice series, staff reimagining Kalu Yala – By Colin Boyle  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/after-vice-series-staff-are-reimagining-kalu-yala>

Designing for privacy and sustainability in the Panama jungle  
By Daniel Fernandez and AnnMarie Hilton  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/how-to-design-for-privacy-and-sustainability-%E2%80%94-even-in-the-panamanian-jungle>

The mental landscape of a sustainable city – By Ashley Hackett  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/the-mental-landscape-for-a-sustainable-city>

Guna people confront climate change with faith and culture  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/guna-yala-community-grasps-at-faith-culture-while-facing-climate-change>

Pelican Island: A story of sand and water – By Alex Schwartz/Text & Animation  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/sand-water-pelican-island>

Panama's balancing act: Environmentalism vs. tourism – By Jessica Mordacq  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/getting-10-people-to-do-10-better-%E2%80%93-an-environmentalist%E2%80%99s-path-to-sustainability>

Diwigdi Valiente: Climate Warrior – By Laura Zornosa  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/diwigdi-valiente-climate-warrior>

An Illinois town paved with toxic wastes – By Stephanie Fox and Zoe Johnson  
<https://www.planetforward.org/idea/an-illinois-village-paved-with-toxic-waste%E2%80%94and-the-long-road-to-cleaning-it-up>

## **ADDENDUM: COMER SCHOLAR ALUMS**

**Chris Bentley (MSJ '12)** is an associate producer for NPR's national news magazine **Here & Now**. His work as an environmental blogger has been featured online by **The New York Times**.

**Lauren Biron (MSJ '11)** works with scientists, experts and media to produce science videos, **Symmetry** magazine, press releases and public events at the **Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory** in Batavia. She previously worked with the World Science Festival in California.

**Kelly Calagna (MSJ '17)** is a contributing editor for the **Texas Climate News** and a former **Knight Lab Fellow** at Northwestern University where she worked on the SensorGrid project, an autonomous network of environmental sensors.

**Janice Cantieri (MSJ '17)** is a freelance environmental journalist who publishes with **National Geographic** and other publications.

**Lakshmi Chadrasekaran (MSJ '17)**, helps direct communications for the **Alzheimer's Association** in Chicago.

**Tiffany Chen (MSJ '18)** is the assistant editor at the **Kindling Group**, a documentary film studio in Chicago.

**Adam Cohen (MSJ '18)** works in the communications office of the **American Association for the Advancement of Science**.

**Jennifer Draper (MSJ '14)** is a Chicago-based writer and editor for the **HuffPost Partner Studio**, **American Writers Museum**, and **Guerrero Media**.

**Bryce Gray (MSJ Dec. '15)** published [Here's Mud in Your Ice](#) with NationalGeographic.com in 2017 on tracking climate clues in Greenland sediment cores, fieldwork he participated in while a Comer Scholar at Medill. He reports on the environment for the **St. Louis Post-Dispatch**.

**Rachel Gross (MSJ '13)** is the science web editor for **Smithsonian** magazine. She has freelanced for **National Geographic**, **Wired** and the **New York Times**.

**Kris Husted (MSJ '11)** completed an extended NPR internship, reporting for the science desk, and is now with **NPR affiliate KBIA** in Missouri where he hosts the weekly science program "Under the Microscope."

**Austin Keating (MSJ '18)** is the field editor for **Farm Progress** media in Illinois. He reports for growers.

**Sarah Kramer (MSJ '15)** is in communications at the **American Museum of Natural History** in Manhattan and helped design a new exhibit on climate change for the Hall of Planet Earth — as she says, “a perfect fit for a Comer Scholar!” She is also freelancing for Vice Media.

**Morgan Levey (MSJ '18)** is an independent radio producer in the Missoula, Montana, region.

**Rosa Lin (MSJ '12)** is an associate with the Climate Technology Program at the **World Bank Group** in Washington D.C. where she previously reported for ***Energy Intelligence***.

**Elizabeth McCarthy Lukehart (MSJ '14)** graduated from Northwestern’s Law School with a specialization in environmental law and later earned her MSJ. She is a faculty member with NU’s School of Engineering to teach science communications to engineering majors.

**Megan Morrison (MSJ '11)** holds her own content creation retreats in India, Greece, the Dominican Republic, Peru and elsewhere. Her soon-to-be-published book, ***Life Beyond Should***, combines interviews with science and spiritual leaders

**Neil Murthy (MSJ '16)** is in the medical corps focusing on preventive medicine with the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** at headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Stephanie Novak (MSJ '13)** is a researcher and video editor for the **NorthShore University Health System** hospitals in the Chicago area.

**Danielle Prieur (MSJ '16)** is a reporter for WFME 90.7 and WDET 101.9 FM, **Detroit Public Radio**.

**Harika Rayala (MSJ '18)** is completing medical school at the **University of Michigan, Ann Arbor**.

**Gretchen Roecker (MSJ '12)** is the communications and social media manager for the **Yosemite Conservancy** in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**Melissa Schenkman (MSJ '15)** is a writer and editor at the **Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute** in Washington, D.C.

**Kevin Stark (MSJ '16)** is an investigative environmental journalist formerly based in Chicago and now working in the San Francisco area.

**Lindsey Valich (MSJ '11)** is a communication officer specializing in science and

engineering at the **University of Rochester**. She has volunteered to teach English in Costa Rica as well and rescued sea turtles in her spare time.

**Maia Welbel (MSJ '18)** is a freelance science reporter in the Chicago area.

**Monika Wnuk (MSJ '14)**, as former communications director at the **Institute for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern (ISEN)**, helped launch ***Empower*** magazine, and now works in university-wide global communications and marketing.

**Jia You (MSJ '15)** visualizes data for stories in **Science** magazine, published by the American Assn. for the Advancement of Science.

## **CONCLUSION**

Medill thanks the Comer Foundation for its generous support of a unique program to train young journalists who are committed to innovative science, environmental and climate reporting designed to engage widespread audiences. Medill believes science communications will engender a culture of science citizenship where an informed public can compel policy decisions necessary to address critical climate, health and environmental issues.