

The task force behind this project has worked for over a year to assess student experiences within the School of Media and Journalism's visual communication program and proposes the following goals:

- 1 Develop and implement a mandatory anti-racism and anti-oppression training for faculty members and administrators. We have reached out to Barb Lee, a documentary filmmaker and donor to the School who has offered her anti-racism workshop and materials for free.
- 2 Intentionally center anti-racist and anti-oppressive voices when selecting guest speakers for the Roy H. Park Lecture Series, Photo Nights and other events.
- 3 Establish a "Decolonize Journalism & Documentary" event, akin to First Amendment Day, with speakers and panels related to ethical representation of minorities and marginalized people, impact strategies and tools for media justice and media-based organizing.
- 4 Create an ethics curriculum specific to visual communication to engage students in conversations about power dynamics, impact and representation to better equip them to cover sensitive breaking news events.

- 5 Implement social impact strategies into the curriculum of each course.
- 6 Build an archive of international projects and CPJW projects within the Park Library and Wilson Library so that they remain accessible to the subjects of the documentaries and future students.
- 7 Recruit a more diverse, specifically a more racially diverse, student body so that students of color do not feel singled out in class. Maintain a supportive learning environment that encourages these students to stay in the program.
- 8 Recruit and retain professors of color, with experience in anti-racism and anti-oppression work. Create an environment where they feel supported rather than scrutinized.

The School of Media and Journalism's commitment to diversity :

“The school is committed to diversity in fulfilling its teaching, research and service missions to students and to the citizens of North Carolina. Diversity enhances the educational experience for students, helping to build their skills on a stronger foundation of accuracy, clarity, fairness and ethics.

The school's faculty is constantly engaged in identifying opportunities to expand the school's diversity initiatives. This is true in the courses taught, guest speakers invited or the professional development offered. Alumni and friends play an important role by supporting programs and scholarships that encourage diverse perspectives in the school.

Minority students constitute about 16 percent of the school's enrollment, and the school has eight full-time faculty members of racial or ethnic minorities and two international faculty members. The school's efforts to increase minority student enrollment and to retain minority faculty members lead to increased diversity in professional communication.

Professionally, the school has forged strong ties to national and state diversity organizations, the National Association of Black Journalists, the N.C. Press Association and the Triangle Association of Black Journalists, among others. The school supports the Carolina Association of Black Journalists (CABJ), an active student chapter affiliated with the National Association of Black Journalists, that was named the best student chapter in the country in 2001, 2002 and 2007.”

For information on diversity awards and scholarships, plus education and training workshops and program initiatives, visit the Diversity And Multicultural Affairs website at diversity.unc.edu.

Read the University's [current Diversity Plan Report.](#)”

Source: <http://mj.unc.edu/about-jomc/diversity>

Notes:

The website should be up to date and honestly reflect the current values of the School of Media and Journalism. The “current Diversity Plan Report” is a broken link that goes to diversity.unc.edu/files/2013/06/UNC_2011-2012_DiversityPlanReport.pdf

The most recent report for the School of Media and Journalism we could find was from the [2015 Standard 3 report](#) for accreditation

The featured list of diversity-focused courses on the About page could include MEJO 442 and perhaps the graduate level diversity seminars MEJO 846 and 847 that are listed on at www.mj.unc.edu/diversity_courses

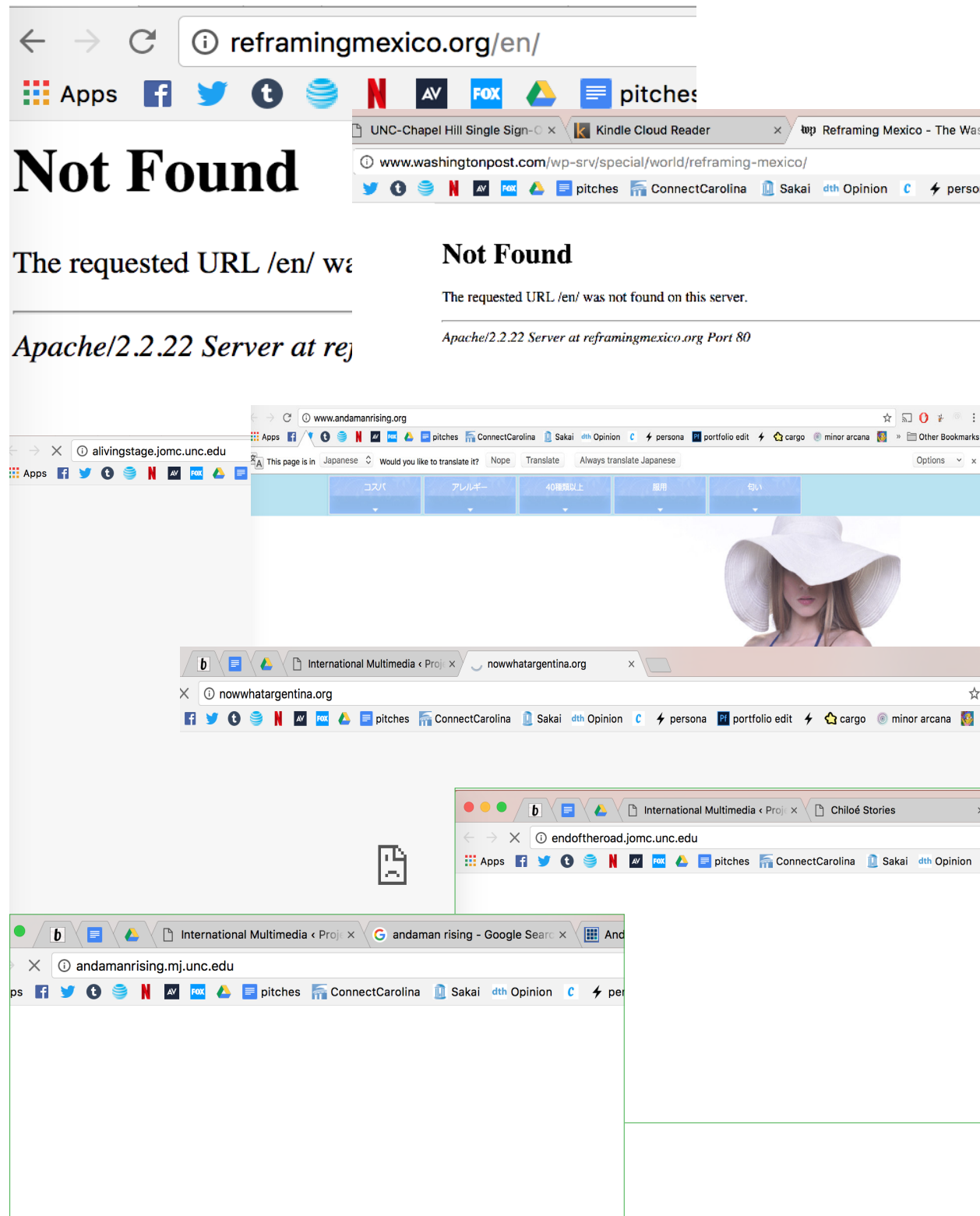
Diversity-focused courses

Beyond its core classes, the school offers courses that focus on diversity's role within media and on minorities and minority issues.

- **MEJO 342: "The Black Press and U.S. History"** A chronological survey of the African-American press in the United States since 1827. Emphasis is on key people and issues during critical areas in the African-American experience.
- **MEJO 441: "Diversity and Communication"** An examination of racial stereotypes and minority portrayals in United States culture and communication. Emphasis is on the portrayal of Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans in the mass media.
- **MEJO 443: "Latino Media Studies"** An introductory course to the study of United States Latina/os and the media. It analyzes the media portrayal of Latina/os in United States mainstream media. The course also examines media that cater to Latina/os and explores the way in which Latina/o audiences use the multiple media offerings available to them.
- **MEJO 446: "International Communication and Comparative Journalism"** Development of international communication; the flow of news and international propaganda; the role of communication in international relations; communication in developing nations; comparison of press systems.
- **MEJO 447: "International Media Studies"** The study of media system operations in a particular country, such as Mexico, including how news and information are disseminated and used by audiences. Taught in the spring semester and includes a trip to that country during spring break.
- **MEJO 490: "Special Topics in Mass Communication"** Small classes on various aspects of journalism-mass communication with subjects and instructors varying each semester. Descriptions for each section available on the school's Web site under Course Details.

Source: <http://mj.unc.edu/about-jomc/diversity>

Broken links to former, award-winning MEJO 584 international projects



Notes

Parachute journalism describes the practice of dispatching journalists into a foreign or unfamiliar area to report on a story in which the reporter has little experience or expertise.

The UNC MEJO school should be able to pride itself in promoting best practices when it comes to reporting in all communities.

We recommend

- archiving international projects with Park Library
- archiving CPJW stories with Wilson Library
- maintaining positive relationships with the “fixers” and the communities we visit
- looking into impact partners/accountability strategies

Selected readings for context:

“With Times in Person” by Laura Hazard Owen

<http://www.niemanlab.org/2018/01/with-times-in-person-the-new-york-times-puts-its-national-journalists-in-front-of-local-crowds>

“Whose Story? Five Doc-Makers on (Avoiding) Extractive Filmmaking” by Lauren Wissot

<https://www.documentary.org/feature/whose-story-five-doc-makers-avoiding-extractive-filmmaking>

“J-school is a necessary evil for many minorities” by Rachele Hampton

<https://slate.com/human-interest/2018/03/j-school-is-a-necessary-evil-for-many-minorities.html>

“Editor Lewis Erskine’s Call to Action: Examine your privilege, question it constantly.”

<https://www.sundance.org/blogs/editor-lewis-erskine-examine-your-privilege-question-it-constantly#/>

“Is journalism a form of activism?” by Danielle Tcholakian

<https://longreads.com/2018/03/29/is-journalism-a-form-of-activism/>

International Projects (MEJO 584) Accolades

Living Galapagos, 2012, www.livinggalapagos.org

Winner, SXSW Interactive, Student
Best in Category, School/University, Horizon Interactive Awards
Gold, Video/Short Film, Horizon Interactive Awards
First Place, Digital Storytelling, MSU Society of News Design Competition
Bronze, Large Group Multimedia, College Photographer of the Year
Third Place, Multimedia Interactive, Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar

Reframing Mexico, 2011, www.reframingmexico.org

Gold, Short Film, Horizon Interactive Awards
Silver, School/University, Horizon Interactive Awards
Third Place, Multimedia Package, NPPA Best of Photojournalism
Finalist, Online News Association, Multimedia Feature, Student
Second Place: Online Feature Reporting, SPJ Region 2

Now What Argentina, 2010, www.nowwhatargentina.org

Finalist, Documentary Project of the Year, Pictures of the Year International
First Place, Online Feature Reporting, Society of Professional Journalists
Finalist, Online News Association, Multimedia Feature, Student
Finalist, Best Independent Online Student Publication, SPJ
Silver, School/University, Horizon Interactive Awards
Finalist, SXSW Interactive

Living Galapagos, 2009, livinggalapagos.web2.jomc.unc.edu/2009

Best in Category, School/University, Horizon Interactive Awards
Award of Excellence, Multimedia Project, NPPA's Best of Photojournalism
Finalist, Multimedia Feature Presentation, Student, Online Journalism Awards
Finalist, Best Independent Online Student Publication, SPJ
Finalist, SXSW Interactive
Award of Excellence, Large Team Multimedia Project, CPOY
First Place, Team Journalism, AEJMC Best of the Web
Best Student Project, Group, KobreGuide
First Place, NPPA Monthly Multimedia competition

Andaman Rising, 2008, www.andamanrising.org

Gold, Online Journalism Association, Student Journalism, ONA
Gold, College and University, Horizon Interactive Awards
Silver, SNDies Best of Multimedia Design, Society for News Design (SND)
AEJMC Best of the Web

Source: http://patrickdavison.com/promotion/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/1_a_Davison_CV_13_2.pdf

Notes

Living Galapagos, 2012 is still online.
The Living Galapagos, 2009 is no longer online.

Reframing Mexico was republished by the Washington Post. Both links are no longer online.

Now What Argentina, 2010 is no longer online.

Adaman Rising, 2008, is no longer online.
The domain was bought by a third party.

Carolina Photojournalism Workshop Accolades

Heart of the High Country, 2013, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/cpjw/2013

- Award of Excellence, Large Group Multimedia, College Photographer of the Year

Port City Stories, 2012, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/cpjw/2012

- Best in Category, Video/Short Film, Horizon Interactive Awards
- Gold, School/University, Horizon Interactive Awards
- First Place, Multimedia Interactive, Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar
- Finalist, SXSW Interactive

Finding the Uwharries, 2011, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/cpjw

- Best in Category, Short Film, Horizon Interactive Awards
- Gold, School/ University, Horizon Interactive Awards
- Finalist, SXSW Interactive
- Official Honoree, Documentary:Series, Webby Awards
- Society of News Design, Student, First Place, Mini Site/Special Section

Little Switzerland Stories, 2010, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/cpjw/2010

- Gold, School/University, Horizon Interactive Awards
- Bronze, Large Group Multimedia, CPOY
- Official Selection, Websites, PDN Photo Annual 2011

Being Asheville, 2009, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/cpjw/2009

- Bronze, Large Group Multimedia Project, CPOY
- Bronze, School/University, Horizon Interactive Awards

Hardship and Hope, 2009, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/economy

- Silver, Large Group Multimedia Project, CPOY

Cape Fear to Down Here, 2008, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/cpjw/2008

- Best in Category, Horizon Interactive Awards
- First Place, News or Feature Multimedia Package, Best of Photojournalism
- Second Place, Multimedia Interactive, Atlanta Photojournalism Contest
- Award of Excellence, SNDies Best of Multimedia Design, SND
- Finalist, School/University, The Webby Awards
- AEJMC Best of the Web

Nuevas Fronteras, 2008, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/nuevasfronteras

- Silver, School/University, Horizon Interactive Awards
- Award of Excellence, SNDies, SND
- AEJMC Best of the Web

Smoky Mountain Stories, 2007, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/cpjw/2007

- Silver Medal, SNDies Best of New Media Competition, SND
- Silver Medal, Multimedia Package, CPOY

On the Line-Hardship in North Carolina, 2007, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/ontheline

- Honorable Mention, Best Multimedia package, NPPA Best of Photojournalism contest
- Award of Excellence, SNDies Best of New Media Competition, SND
- Award of Excellence, Multimedia Package, CPOY

Stories from the Crystal Coast, 2006, www.carolinaphotojournalism.org/cpjw/2006

- Award of Excellence, SNDies Best of New Media Competition, SND
- Award of Excellence, CPOY

Notes

All of the links that use the "carolinaphotojournalism.org" domain are broken.

The new, working domain for CPJW 2017, *River Stories*, is "carolinaphotojournalism.unc.edu"

However, projects prior to 2016 do not seem to be archived on the new domain.

For example, www.carolinaphotojournalism.unc.edu/cpjw/2010 is a broken link, as is www.carolinaphotojournalism.unc.edu/2010

The State of Charlotte

On September 20th, Keith Lamont Scott was shot to death by Charlotte Police. With the details of the shooting uncertain, protests and riots erupted across the city. Stay tuned for updates and information.

Editors Note: Updated Oct 21, 2016

This site provided breaking news coverage of the events in Charlotte on Sept 20-23, 2016. It is not being updated and is archived to reflect the evening of Sept. 23, 2016.

Causes for concern: Coverage of the Charlotte Uprising

The website stateofcharlotte.org is riddled with copy and fact errors.

There is no Charlotte Police, there is the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD). “Editors Note” should have an apostrophe. The style for dates should be consistent throughout the site.

The rushed, haphazard quality of editing and reportage reflects the care that was put into creating this site as a resource for information on a very sensitive issue.

A “Facts vs. Disputed” interactive table puzzlingly compares “What We Know,” “What Was Said” and “What We Don’t Know” without any sources.

Facts vs. Disputed

Circumstances of the Keith Scott Shooting
The Officer
Bodycam
Lyrics's Facebook Live Video
Protests
Protest Injuries
State of Emergency

Circumstances of the Keith Scott Shooting

What We Know

The police were there with an arrest warrant for another man (verified in Charlotte Observer article)

Keith Scott, 43, shot 4 times outside of The Village at College Downs apartments; he was in a vehicle and told to exit the car

What Was Said

The police stated that Scott exited vehicle with firearm, got back in vehicle when they approached, and exited vehicle again with firearm, posing immediate deadly threat

POLICE: Said they told Keitch Scott to exit the car without the weapon and he didn't do so

FAMILY: Scott was carrying a book while waiting for his son to be dropped off by a school bus

FAMILY: Scott was disabled

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS: Scott was unarmed when he was shot.

What We Don't Know

Did Scott have a book or a gun?

If there was a gun, was it in a pocket or at the ready posing an immediate deadly threat

How Scott was disabled (mentally, physically, etc.)

A fact under “What We Know” is “verified in Charlotte Observer article” but there is no mention or link of which article on the site.

“How Scott was disabled (mentally, physically, etc.)” is both incorrectly spelled and insensitively worded. “Keitch Scott” is also misspelled.

Protest Injuries

What We Know

Wed 9:10 PM Injured person reported with gun-shot wound and life threatening injuries

What Was Said

The City of Charlotte retracts statement on Twitter that man with gun wound had died; says later that he was on "life-support."

What We Don't Know

The “Facts vs. Disputed” interactive table contains multiple copy errors and shows sign of careless editing. The header at the top of the site claims: “It is not being updated and is archived to reflect the evening of Sept. 23, 2016.”

Rayquan Borum was charged with murder in the shooting death of Justin Carr on Sept. 21, 2016 around 8:30 p.m. The “Protest Injuries” section of the chart fails to name Borum or report Carr’s death, despite its last update on Sept. 23.

Causes for concern: Coverage of the Charlotte Uprising (continued)

Photojournalism students were encouraged to go to the protests to bolster their personal portfolios. Photographs and videos from the protests were then sold and submitted for awards. Students of color (including Serena Ajbani and Emily Yue) were waiting for professors to initiate a conversation on how to ethically go about covering racialized protests and were uncomfortable with starting said conversation.

In Pat Davison's MEJO 181 class, a student was congratulated for selling footage of the protests to the [Washington Post](#). The congratulatory tone of the class made it difficult for minority students to voice concerns because they did not want to come across as antagonizing. A much-needed conversation centering the issue of profiting from the coverage of collective trauma never arose.

The terminology of “riots” versus “protests” was never clarified in class. The example set by [stateofcharlotte.org](#) was a poorly edited container for students' photos & videos to exist online for viewing and sharing. The website is difficult to find — it is the fourth result from a Google search for “unc media and journalism charlotte riot” and does not show up in the results for “unc media and journalism charlotte uprising.”

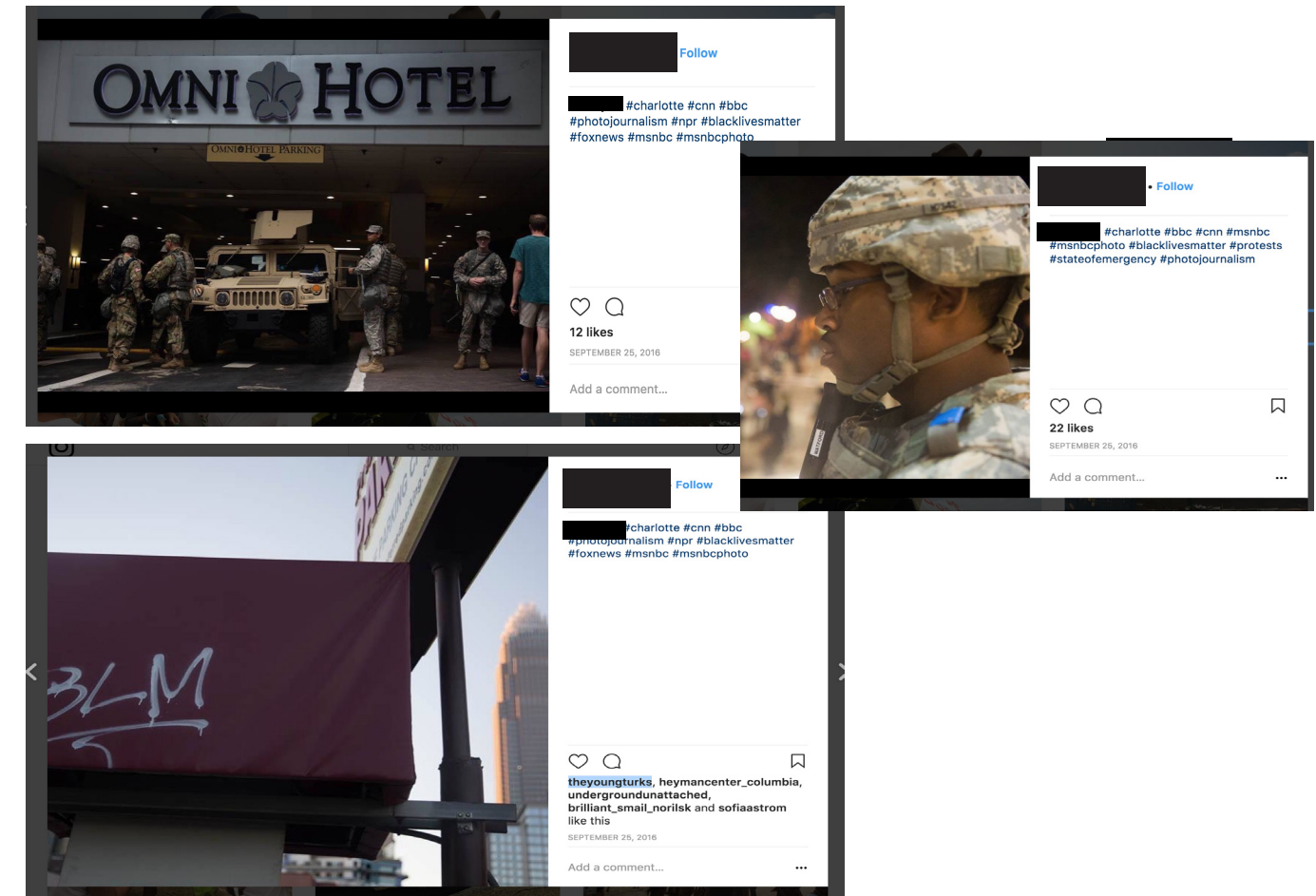
Students were unequipped to cover sensitive breaking news

Graduate photojournalism student Adam Lao asked an undergraduate photojournalism student how they were doing at the protest. The student responded “Oh yeah, I'm doing great, this is fun.” A protestor heard the exchange and started chanting “f-ck the media” in response.

Two undergraduate students walked toward the interstate to get a better vantage point for photographing the crowd. According to one of those students, the crowd mistook them for fellow protestors leading the way and marched onto the highway.

The department's handling of the protests as “breaking news” made it difficult for minority students to address the issues they had with the coverage — as everyone had moved on from the subject within the next week. To students of color from Charlotte, to the protestors of Charlotte Uprising, to the family of Keith Lamont Scott, Justin Carr and Rayquan Borum — the week of protests was more than “breaking” news and the repercussions of that week linger to this day.

These screenshots are pulled from one undergraduate student's Instagram coverage of the protests. None of the posts include captions or names of subjects, but hashtag media outlets like #bbc, #cnn and #msnbc and #msnbcphoto for publicity. We need to improve media literacy for students who report and cover breaking news.



Positives from the Coverage of the Charlotte Uprising

We would like to commend the students who lent their videography, photography and editing to Prof. Trevy McDonald's project “Eyewitnesses to History: Civil Rights and Social Justice” which can be found at <http://eyewitnessestohistory.org>.

We look forward to the project's completion and hope that our classmates, past and future, can look to it as an example of well-reported coverage on “breaking” events.

Timeline of the student-led diversity and inclusion task-force

3/3/2017 — Serena Ajbani, Jun Chou and Emily Yue began meeting to discuss issues regarding diversity and inclusion in the visual communication department. They divided up the tasks of:

- Researching how other photojournalism schools were handling similar issues
- Reaching out to fellow minority students for their experiences
- Researching the diversity initiatives of UNC and of the MEJO school
- Brainstorming solutions before setting up a meeting with administration

4/17/2017 — Serena Ajbani and Emily Yue met with Lois Boynton. The meeting consisted of:

- Outlining issues with the coverage of Charlotte Uprising, MEJO 580 prompts, how anonymous course evaluations weren't feasible as outlets for the few minority students in the program who would still have to take classes with the same professors
- Agreeing that the ethics curriculum was lacking for photojournalism students, that the equipment check-out process should be less intimidating to low-income students, that the faculty, student body and MEJO lecture series speakers could be more diverse and that something akin to First Amendment Day along the lines of "Diversity Day" could be a way to start valuable dialogues with the help of experts
- Agreeing to continue working independently as a task force, and perhaps collaboratively with the school's diversity committee

11/29/2018 — Emily Yue met with Prof. Pat Davison to discuss personal concerns within the department.

- They discussed issues of safety with the international trip to Cuba the year prior.
- They discussed issues of accessibility within the department.
- They discussed the issues of coverage re: the Charlotte Uprising
- They discussed how faculty could lead by example through their personal portfolios and online platforms
- They discussed the power balance between professors and students, in particular, white professors and students of color

2/5/2018 — Sophia Allison and Emily Yue meet with Dean Susan King and Dr. Charlie Tuggle to discuss issues with the visual communication ethics curriculum. It was decided that Emily would continue working on this report, that Sophia would look into trainings and ethics curriculums and that the administration would continue to listen and support this work.

3/8/2018 — Sophia Allison met with Dr. Tom Linden to discuss issues with inclusion and the ongoing conversations around diversity in the undergraduate and graduate levels of the department.

- Dr. Linden informed us that it was the job of students to let faculty and administration know of their issues, but that he was supportive of our efforts as "curriculum development is an ongoing process."

4/17/18 — Emily Yue met with Lois Boynton to prepare for an April 20 listening session scheduled with Dean King, Dr. Tuggle and Academic Dean Francesca Carpentier.

- They discussed the differences between structural and procedural problems
- Emily emailed Kyle York, director of communications, to begin the process of investigating broken links to former MJ-School projects.

Inclusion questionnaire

A questionnaire was sent to current undergraduate and graduate students in the photo and video journalism department with the following prompt:

“These responses are being collected for the Viscomm Diversity & Inclusion task force. Identifying yourself is optional – if you choose to, your name will only be kept for verification purposes by the task force.

Responses will be anonymously compiled at the end of a report titled “Diversity, Ethics & Inclusion: Concerns of the UNC School of Media and Journalism, Visual Communication Department and Photojournalism Practices” that will be presented to the viscomm faculty and MJ school administration.

This questionnaire itself is not a private document, feel free to share it with any of your current classmates who you think may have concerns with the department specifically regarding racism, sexism, ableism, inaccessibility, microaggressions or inclusivity in general.

If you have any questions, or if you are interested in attending the meeting (that will likely be on a Friday), please text Emily Yue at 980-253-1197. Thank you for sharing your experiences with us – we do not want them to go unheard.”

The following answers are excerpts from eight anonymous student responses.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable, unsafe or unsupported in a photojournalism class or environment at UNC? Please list instances separately and identify the class/environment in which they took place.

I often felt pressured in my classes to cover people of color from communities that weren't mine. My professor and peers seemed to be drawn to stories of people of color because they were “interesting” (othering/ exoticizing effect), and it was only after taking mejo 681 that I realized that my own perspectives and experiences with my communities equipped me with the understanding and knowledge needed to tell stories from my own community with more sensitivity, subtlety, nuance, and depth.

Insensitivity by faculty and staff on this issue is a significant barrier to students who are not as financially advantaged as others.

We were made to go into communities we had little to no stake in and document it well in our zipcode essays, which made me feel super anxious and discouraged, especially after multiple uncomfortable encounters with people in my assigned community.

It's also hard to be a woman/non-male photographer. You can't go places alone or alone at night, you feel uncomfortable around male subjects alone, and you're constantly fraught with worry and are sometimes put in uncomfortable situations and subjects and members of the community don't take you as seriously. Most professors made little to no effort to understand this.

There was just not enough conversation about how to represent minorities in the photography.

Were you able to voice your concerns? Were they adequately addressed? If not, what prevented you from doing so?

I usually kept quiet about my concerns because I thought I was the only one having those concerns back then (plus I was too shy to speak up). After I got closer to some of my peers and talking to them I realized that the discomfort I had felt in some classes was shared and valid.

I feel like I'm only half-able to. The photo department is very anti-excuse, but sometimes you and your safety and comfort should be an adequate excuse.

How do you think the department could improve in diversity and inclusivity?

Our classes need some sort of sensitivity training so that the responsibility of educating students about diversity and inclusion does not fall on the students of color themselves. There are courses in the MEJO school that seek to do this, but they are not required and are not fully tailored to visual communications work.

- Have more professors of color from different beliefs, backgrounds, and walks of life
- Have more journalists of color and journalists with solution based journalism speak at Photo Night
- Provide a mandatory viscom ethics class
- Add a power dynamic and impact strategy component to the international projects (Mejo 584) class
- Provide an orientation session for incoming viscom students so they know what to expect before jumping into this field in terms of needing gear, intense work load, needing a car, planning for internships, etc...
- Have professors emphasize the self-care aspects of being a visual journalist because coping in the field with mental health problems is challenging
- Provide a business-oriented class (like the one Chad teaches in the summer) during spring/fall because though I think UNC has a strong viscom program, it doesn't do a good job of equipping students with the more practical business skills (taxes, freelancing, managing money for projects, etc...) that are needed to survive in the field.
- More financial assistant to students for gear, workshops, etc...

Openness to listening, first of all. It's hard to improve anything if the school is not actively engaged in (not just passively hearing out) student concerns. A few faculty outright deny, or react negatively to criticism. But most are just "too busy". Granted school funding is being cut, everyone has more work on their plates. But these are exactly the factors that squeeze out diversity and inclusivity concerns. Systemic negligence (rather than active opposition) is usually what squeezes us off the bottom of the priority list.

Stop advocating for pursuing potentially exploitative projects. Teach students how to navigate power dynamics. Teach students to be mindful of their story ideas — maybe it's not a great idea to force students to complete a photo project in one week without directing them on what stories they are and aren't qualified to tell! Stop touting being in class as like a job or the "real world" without acknowledging that the work students produce DOES have an impact!

LISTEN TO STUDENTS. Prioritize including A LOT of female/nb/non-male voices, especially students of color. Listen to how the program affects our mental health. Make room for us. Make more of an effort to help nontraditional, non-journalism-centric folks get jobs and opportunities outside of newspapers/news outlets. Prioritize those who don't get prioritized ever.