Why journalism?

When a high school junior applied to the Institute, she admitted she “wasn’t sold” on a journalism career – even though she already was the top editor of her school newspaper.

However, she knew she wanted to become “a more organized, more coherent and more forceful writer.” Also, she said she wanted to learn more about digital media as well as to experience college living and dorm life “before I make a [four-year] commitment to any university.”

Most students come to the Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute with similar goals. And most students go home, as she did, wanting a career in journalism and knowing a lot more about life on a college campus.

This summer about 80 high school journalists from around the country and abroad will be immersed in the news media, the world of ideas and college living. The program takes place in a residential college setting – a community of scholars – where students learn by doing and by careful evaluation of their work.

Educational philosophy

The program is designed for students who wish to become better writers and editors for print, online and broadcast. Much of what you learn you can apply to your school newspapers and websites. But the program is broader than a workshop for high school editors. You’ll study journalism from a “professional’s perspective,” learning from top-notch practitioners and distinguished college teachers.

The training you will receive in writing clearly, concisely and accurately will serve you for years to come, no matter what your college major or chosen career. Also, you’ll study with people from around the world. Last year, students came from 21 states and from Brazil, China [six], Indonesia and South Korea [two]. Frequently, students form lasting friendships with classmates and teachers.

Course offerings

- Lab sessions to sharpen journalistic skills (such as reporting, writing and editing for print, broadcast and digital media; writing editorials, columns and blogs; taking news and feature photos; and recording audio and video news).
- Seminars with university professors and outstanding journalists to discuss subjects such as ethical considerations, interviewing techniques and investigative reporting.
- Workshops to teach freelance writing, sports reporting and magazine publishing and to discuss issues concerning high school journalism, among many other subjects.
- Field trips to famous sites in Chicago as well as a Lake Michigan boat ride.
- Discussion sessions to analyze contemporary journalistic issues.
- Special classes to study story-telling forms such as podcasting and video reporting.
- Film showings to review works of and about journalism.
- Weekly one-on-one sessions with teachers to evaluate and analyze writing assignments. (The student-teacher ratio is 10:1.)
What some 2019 students said:

I came into the program expecting to meet interesting people and learn a lot. I came out with a new family and knowledge that will guide me from my senior year of high school to college and my career.

Joe Ramos, Virginia

The staff is what made the program so special. I respect and admire them all. I feel lucky to have learned from them.

Daniela Lubezki, California

When I arrived on campus and read that this would be the best summer of my life, I was skeptical. “Why would they set our expectations so high?” I thought. Now, weeks later, I can’t imagine the summer being anything but the best of my life.

Fangyu Jin, New York

I have learned and grown as both a person and a journalist and I am incredibly grateful for all the opportunities this program has given me.

Gabrielle Khoriaty, Florida

The academic schedule was rigorous but left time for the students to have fun. I liked how the assignments took us out of our comfort zone.

Andrew Katz, Kentucky

This program has been a dream I never wish to wake up from.

Penelope Zhang, China

I benefited the most from the feedback on my papers. I am a much stronger writer now than I was when the program started and I credit my instructor almost entirely.

Talia Abrahamson, California

I am absolutely amazed by the talented, kind and passionate community [of students and staff] this program has given me.

Ruth Ellen Berry, Tennessee

This truly was the best summer of my life. Every night I’d reflect on this opportunity that I was given and just thank my lucky stars. I wouldn’t trade it for the world.

Ava Seccuro, California

This program will always have a special place in my heart.

Ishani Chettri, New Jersey

About the Institute

The Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute is the nation’s most prestigious university-based summer program for high school journalists. It was established in 1934 as the “National Institute for High School Journalists” and for many years was known as the “National High School Institute, Journalism Division.” Over the years, students often have been called “Cherubs,” a tradition that began in the 1930s.

Campus living and fun

While on campus, you will share a Northwestern residence hall with the program’s other participants, as well as with faculty and staff. Your meals will be eaten in a University cafeteria located nearby. Meals offer you a wide selection, including vegetarian options, and University dietitians are happy to accommodate special dietary needs. Living, dining and learning together, you will have ample opportunity to get to know your fellow participants and to make lasting friends.

Just 12 miles north of Chicago, the Evanston campus stretches for a mile along Lake Michigan’s western shore and offers you jogging trails, a beautiful private beach and a state-of-the-art fitness and athletic facility.

Admission requirements

To apply to the Institute, you must:

• Rank academically in the top quarter of your high school class.
• Submit a current high school transcript and letter of recommendation.
• Submit results of the PSAT, SAT, ACT and/or other standardized tests.
• Complete your junior year of high school in May or June of 2020.
• Meet a high standard of character, dependability and intelligence.
• Give specific evidence of background and/or special ability in journalism.

Admission is competitive; decisions are based on ability and merit.
Faculty

Professor Roger Boye is director of the Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute. For nearly 20 years he was assistant dean of Northwestern’s Medill School, one of the nation’s most distinguished journalism programs. He has taught in the program since the 1970s.

The program’s full-time teachers have rich and varied backgrounds in journalism. Lecturers include journalists from the media in Chicago and elsewhere, as well as Northwestern faculty members. Past guest speakers have included television journalists, newspaper editors, columnists and award-winning reporters.

Application deadline

Applications, recommendations and transcripts must be received by 4 p.m. on March 16, 2020. Decision letters will be mailed to applicants on or before April 1, 2020. Students are strongly encouraged to submit three to five samples of their work, such as stories published in high school newspapers (see list of items at bottom of application form). The Institute does not accept applications by fax or email.

Fees

The basic fee for this program is $6,100. The cost includes tuition, room, board, health service, field trips and group events. Any additional expenses are at your discretion.

Scholarships and financial aid

The Institute has about $100,000 available for scholarships and financial aid. If you wish to apply for assistance, you should complete and return the financial aid section of the application form. Grants are made on the basis of financial need and academic achievement.

In addition to grants made directly from the Institute’s budget, these special awards will be available:

Joan Beck and Ruth Moss Buck Journalism Scholarships
Norma Kinsel – Linda Foley Cherub Scholarship
Mary Lou Song Cherub Alumni Scholarship
Diane Granat Yelowitz Memorial Fund Scholarship
Jeffrey Zucker Medill Cherub Scholarship

For more information

If you are admitted to the Institute, you will receive information about housing arrangements, when to arrive on campus, what to bring and transportation to Evanston. To receive additional copies of this folder, contact:

Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute
Northwestern University
Medill School
1845 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60208-2101
Phone: 847-491-2069
Fax: 847-491-3956
Email: r-boye@northwestern.edu
Web: www.medillcherubs.org

Typical daily schedule

9 am
Attend lecture by Northwestern professor

9:45 am
Write editorials

11:45 am
Lunch

1 pm
Discuss reporting with multimedia journalist

2 pm
Conduct interviews for feature articles

4:30 pm
Free time

6 pm
Dinner

7 pm
Write television news scripts to go with video

Note: All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the website prepared by 2019 students at: www.medillcherubs.org.

Ava Thompson Greenwell

Tracy Butler, WLS-TV meteorologist, talks with students before a live newscast at the ABC television station in Chicago.

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Any alleged violations of this policy or questions regarding the law with respect to nondiscrimination should be directed to Director of Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4500, Evanston, IL 60208, phone 847-491-7458; eeo@northwestern.edu.

Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on any of these characteristics is a form of discrimination. This includes harassing conduct affecting tangible job benefits, interfering unreasonably with an individual’s academic or work performance, or creating what a reasonable person would perceive is an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Prohibited sex discrimination includes sexual harassment and sexual violence.

While Northwestern University is committed to the principles of free inquiry and free expression, discrimination and harassment identified in this policy are neither legally protected expression nor the proper exercise of academic freedom.

Northwestern University reserves the right to change without notice any statement in this folder concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, tuition, fees, curricula, and courses.
“Everyone was kind and intelligent. I have never before been surrounded by such an engaged, motivated group of students.”

Caroline Brew, California Institute student