

Buffett Undergraduate Research Fellowship Opportunity

The World We Don't Know: Fallout from the Decline of Foreign Correspondents

Faculty Mentor: Bob Rowley, Senior Lecturer, Medill School of Journalism

Project Synopsis: This project seeks to research the decline in traditional foreign correspondents and the impact this loss may have had on democracy at home and abroad, a rise in isolationism in America and a decline in knowledge about foreign news and the world for an upcoming book. The book will focus on the importance of foreign correspondents and what the world loses without more of them. The student in this role will assist the project by interviewing foreign editors and correspondents and surveying international news content.

The faculty mentor and his co-author, Stephen Franklin, both former longtime foreign correspondents for the Chicago Tribune, are doing research in the U.S. and abroad and we want the book to contain quantitative and qualitative research to support their thesis.

The book's focus is on the importance of foreign correspondents and what the world loses without more of them. This project seeks to research the declining numbers of foreign correspondents, in costs, data and the business models—as well as on new models that are transforming the business today: how more reporting is done by local reporters working as freelancers, or through social media, or non-profit grants and novel collaborations among news outlets to save money on international investigative projects and cross-border consortiums. During the last two decades, several online publications were born with the hope of filling the gap of news missed by others. The project will examine how well they did and, if they survived, which models worked best and what lessons were learned. The book will conclude with a deep look at these new models of global reporting that are offering promise and proving successful.

Project Term: Summer only

Project Location: Remote

Job Description: Students with good interviewing and research skills are preferred, as their work will fall into two main areas:

- Qualitative interviews with foreign editors and correspondents
- Surveys of international news content generated by:
 - Legacy media (newspapers and magazines)

- Traditional outlets (TV, broadcast cable)
 - Questions could include:
 - Do most people who still access their news in traditional outlets get it directly from their print and broadcast delivery, or their news sites on the web, or as recent surveys suggest, from Social Media?
- Newer online media outlets (Semafor, Pulitzer Center, Foreign Policy sites) nationally and globally
- Will conduct and analyze quantitative surveys of audience interest, participation and access to foreign news at home through audience research surveys
 - Will also work with existing surveys on public opinion from various national and international organizations

Time Commitment: Hours can vary between 10-15 hours per week, likely averaging 12 hours per week. Hours are flexible and work can be done remotely with a weekly meeting to touch base in person or virtually, depending on the student's whereabouts.

Number of Available Positions: One

