

### **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:** Senior lecturer at Medill School of Journalism and adjunct faculty at the School of Communication, Bob Rowley, is doing research for a book about the decline in traditional foreign correspondents and the impact this loss may have had on democracy, a rise in isolationism at home & abroad, and a decline in Americans' knowledge about foreign news and the world. With co-author, Stephen Franklin, both former longtime foreign correspondents for the Chicago Tribune, they are doing research in the U.S. and abroad and hope to complete the research and writing in late 2026 or 2027. They have strong interest from the Association of Foreign Press Correspondents in NY, of which Rowley is Vice President, to publish this book in 2027. Research and interviews started in late 2023, and they want the book to contain quantitative and qualitative research to support the thesis.

The focus is on the importance of foreign correspondents and what the world loses without more of them. Currently, the research revolves around the declining numbers of foreign correspondents, in costs, data and the business models—as well as new models that are offering hope and transforming the business today—how more reporting is done by local reporters working as freelancers, or through social media, or novel collaborations among news outlets to save money on international investigative projects and cross-border consortiums. During the last two decades, several online publications covering foreign news were born with the hope of filling the gap of news missed by others. Student researchers will examine how well these sources did and, if they survived, what lessons were learned.

**Project Term:** Summer and Academic Year 2026

**Project Location:** Hybrid

**Job Description:** Rowley is looking for innovative and skilled student interviewers and researchers who can:

1. Conduct and research qualitative interviews with foreign editors and correspondents, and surveys of international news content generated by legacy media (newspapers and magazines), traditional outlets (TV, broadcast cable) and by newer online media outlets (Semafor, Pulitzer Center, Foreign Policy sites) nationally and globally.

2. Conduct and research quantitative surveys (and existing data and surveys where we can find them) of audience interest, participation and accessing of foreign news at home through audience research surveys, specifically those relating to public opinion by the Chicago Council of Global Affairs

3. Mine data from some existing surveys by PEW, Nieman and others nationally, and to a lesser extent abroad through interviews with foreign editors and correspondents, at home and overseas, through Social Media news consumption surveys by the Reuters Institute at Oxford and the annual Arab Media survey of social media by NU-Q, for example and through existing research, where possible, through centers like the Reuters Institute, Poynter, AP, AFP, and more.

**Time Commitment:** 10-15 flexible hours a week. This work can largely be done remotely with a weekly meeting to touch base in person or on Zoom as needed, depending on the student's location.

**Number of available positions:** Two, both preselected