

NEWSLETTER

MAC RAISES \$28,285, EXCEEDING \$25,000 GUTIÉRREZ-WILSON TEACHING AWARD ENDOWMENT FUNDRAISING GOAL



By Paula M. Poindexter
Past MAC Head, Past AEJMC
President &
Gutiérrez-Wilson Teaching
Award Committee Chair

Thank you MAC Members and Friends of MAC! We not only reached our endowment goal of \$25,000 after raising \$19,470 as I reported in the July 2025 MAC Newsletter, we raised \$28,285 and secured the financial future of the Félix F. Gutiérrez and Clint C. Wilson II MAC Award for Teaching Excellence and Innovation.

In the AEJMC Executive Director's Aug. 25, 2025 email to me as chair of the Gutiérrez-Wilson Teaching Award and Fundraising committees, Amanda Caldwell not only congratulated the MAC Division for "reaching this historic milestone" of \$28,285, she said "next month," the monies raised will be sent to AEJMC's investment banker who will make the Gutiérrez-Wilson Teaching Award Endowment official.

Note: As part of her August 8 presentation at the MAC Members Meeting during the AEJMC Conference in San Francisco, Paula Poindexter, Chair of the Gutiérrez-Wilson Teaching Award and Fundraising committees, read remarks from Félix Gutiérrez that she invited him to send. The remarks express his heartfelt gratitude to members of the MAC Division as well as the trailblazing history of the Teaching Award's namesakes.

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A NOTE FROM MAC'S HEAD



Danielle Brown, Ph.D.

Head of the MAC Division

1855 University Professor of Community & Urban Journalism

Michigan State University

AEJMC was a success, and it is all thanks to you! We have much to celebrate and look forward to in the days to come with MAC. As my final note as the Head of the MAC division, I offer the same words I offered during our in-person business meeting.

I've heard from many of you that you want leadership to 'say something,' and as I promised, I'm doing that now. I'm speaking today as the head of the Minorities and Communication (MAC) Division, not on behalf of the board or the organization.

The current changes to policies and procedures are having a dramatic and individualized impact on us as scholars, students, and citizens of humanity. These actions threaten to unravel decades of progressive work toward a more inclusive and equitable society. I know our MAC members feel the weight of this in their scholarship, teaching, and service. As a division dedicated to advancing the study of race and ethnicity in mass communication, much of our work is being defunded, de incentivized, and devalued by these policy changes.

The unpredictability of this environment is frustrating, and that's by design. As we navigate these trying times, I want to reaffirm MAC's public commitment to our mission and call on you, our members, to engage with each other in the days to come.

I wish we could create new programs to address these challenges, but declining membership, decreased funding, and a reduced capacity for volunteerism mean we can't offer anything new right now. What we can do is rededicate ourselves to the existing resources we have: our grant to support research, our teaching award, our mentorship program, and our graduate recognition program.

The challenges happening to all of you are also happening to MAC. Our community sustains our division's livelihood. We need new ideas and energy, and this year, we have fundraised while also conserving our resources so that new voices can rise to the occasion in the days to come. That has neither been fun or allowed me to fulfill some of my key goals I hoped to accomplish when I took on this position. But it was necessary.

While it's hard to be anything more than inspirational in this moment, I hope to inspire you to take hold of your own power and agency. I urge you to prioritize re-engaging with MAC and our community.

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A recent example of this is the conversation around Standard 4. The old Standard 4 helped hold powerful institutions accountable. It was a critical component in conversations that surrounded the denied tenure of Nikole Hannah-Jones at UNC. But there are less famous instances the old Standard 4 truly supported a more just and equitable world – I experienced this directly. It helped me personally get a pathway to change when my university failed to offer me the same opportunities and pay as my colleagues.

The new Standard 4 is very different for various reasons. Its usefulness and capacity remains to be seen. We won't know how effective it is unless we speak up – the good and the bad.

Importantly, these changes were already implemented. They already affect you if you're accredited or seeking accreditation. Be on the lookout. Be in conversation with others. Speak up with your concerns, and your experiences. It's the only way.

In general, progress will be difficult if we stay silent, if we close off our resources, and if we choose individual safety over collective care. I remind you though, there is no safety when our existence is threatened.

The amount of regression we face will be decided by how often we don't make time, we don't speak up, and we don't participate. And to be clear, this is a call for *everyone*, not just senior leaders. Silence will not save any of us.

No matter what you're experiencing, I want you to know you're not alone. I challenge every MAC member to make time to join the board, participate in listening sessions, and find other ways to be in community with each other. Group work can be challenging, but it is the best way to understand the power of democratic action. Don't write it off. We are all different, but we are all experiencing the same threat, and we are all better, together.

Gratitude, History, and Insight

Félix F. Gutiérrez, Ph.D.

Muchas Gracias to members and friends of the AEJMC Minorities and Communication Division for your strong support of the Félix F. Gutiérrez and Clint C. Wilson II MAC Award for Teaching Excellence and Innovation. And to Dr. Paula Poindexter, who proposed the award, guided its implementation, and invited you to be part of the endowment providing awardees tangible recognition.

Clint and I appreciate your recognition of the central importance of teaching in preparing and advocating for the next generation of journalists. This brings back memories of Autumn 1963 when we first met in the College Times newsroom of what is now California State University Los Angeles.

Two students. One Black. One Brown. Both with parents active in news media made by and for our respective communities. And both on a journey we hoped would lead us into the nearly all White mainstream media.

Clint compellingly tells of his journey in his latest book “Something’s Amiss in America: A Black Man’s Memoirs of Race and Grace”. As he documents the early 1960s were a time when Black students faced mob violence and public authorities barring them from all-White Southern universities.

In California people of all colors could be admitted to the colleges. We held our own with White students. But we wondered what we would face when we were ready to move from campus accomplishments into the newsroom. As it turned out, we both did well at Cal State LA and in off-campus media. But neither of us found newsroom employment in the late 1960s.

We individually decided that if we could not make impact in the newsroom as journalists we would try to make an impact on the newsroom as journalism professors. Our teaching and research careers fill gaps that reflect what we were taught—and not taught—as undergraduates followed by our respective master’s and doctoral degrees at Northwestern, the University of Southern California and Stanford.

Like all in this room, we took what we learned to advocate for others, to build and share knowledge too long kept hidden, and to teach students of all colors the rich past, present and future of people of color in media. We all are advocacy teachers so our students hopefully will not feel the pain of being ready, willing, but unable, to gain news employment.

For Clint and me this advocacy has had several teaching fronts: In 1980 we confronted newsroom “can’t find anyone qualified” excuses by organizing the multiracial Journalism Opportunities Conference with advice from MAC founder and Howard Communications Conference leader Dr. Lee Barrow. For more than 30 years the JOC brought hundreds of people of color to interview with newsroom recruiters at the University of Southern California.

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In 1982 we launched and taught a course titled Minorities and the Media to integrate and present the experiences and contributions of Asian Americans, Blacks, Latinos and Native Americans in news and entertainment media.

In 1985 we published the book "Minorities and the Media" for that class and adoption by others. Now in its fourth edition as "Racism, Sexism and the Media" with Dr. Lena Chao as co-author, it is thankfully part of a growing array of texts, many by MAC Division members.

Thanks to the Minorities and Communication Division, Clint and I have had companionship, collaboration and productive confrontation for parts of six decades. We all have sought and fought to teach all that everyone deserves front-door access to and full participation in First Amendment freedoms.

Whether going through an open door, knocking at a closed door, or pushing down a locked door, MAC colleagues have provided a resting place for us all to better comprehend what we are doing and a nesting space to hatch ideas to do more. This mutual support and encouragement is especially needed in today's era of book banning, knowledge erasing, and diversity annihilation by those who would be our leaders.

Thank you to MAC for being part of our lives and for endowing the MAC Teaching Excellence and Innovation Award to recognize and reward those who continue teaching how to build a better world for all: one class, one student and one project at a time.

Spanish Language Media Breakfast at AEJMC 2025



Left to Right: Lucinda Holt, María Antonieta Mejía, George Daniels (U. of Alabama), Madeleine Bair, Melissa Santillana, Erika Carlos, Ana Lourdes Cardenas, Bey-Ling Sha, Kent Wilkinson (Harris Institute Director, Texas Tech U.)

The Thomas Jay Harris Institute for Hispanic & International Communication at Texas Tech University was pleased to co-organize and co-sponsor, with AEJMC's Elected Standing Committee on Professional Freedom and Responsibility, a Spanish Language Media Breakfast at AEJMC 2025. The panel of Bay Area Spanish language media professionals included Madeleine Bair (founder of El Tímpano), Erika Carlos (editor-in-chief of El Tecolote), Ana Lourdes Cardenas (Journalism faculty at San Francisco State University), and María Antonieta Mejía (broadcast journalist, Univisión 14). Lucinda Holt presided, and Melissa Santillana moderated the panel discussion; both are faculty in the College of Media & Communication at Texas Tech, the dean of which, Bey-Ling Sha (AEJMC's president), gave opening remarks.

Spanish Language Media Breakfast Continues AEJMC Tradition Started by MAC Division in 2018



George L. Daniels, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of
Journalism, University of
Alabama

SAN FRANCISCO-- Just three weeks shy of the 55th anniversary of *El Tecolote*'s founding in a La Raza Studies class at San Francisco State University (SFSU), the current editor-in-chief of the publication appeared with a current SFSU journalism faculty member and two other Spanish language media journalists at the Spanish Language Media Breakfast, the second such event in the history of AEJMC.

This year's Spanish Language Media Breakfast came seven years after one sponsored by the Minorities and Communication (MAC) Division at 2018 AEJMC Conference in Washington, DC. Once again the Thomas Jay Harris Institute for Hispanic & International Communication at Texas Tech University partnered with AEJMC to put on the event, which this time served as a Cornerstone session of the AEJMC Elected Standing Committee on Professional Freedom and Responsibility. The International Communication Division also was a co-sponsor.

During the breakfast, *El Tecolote* Editor Erika Carlos, shared her story of coming from mainstream media to work at a bilingual newspaper known as the voice of San Francisco's "pueblo" and has been recognized as a leading local news outlet.

"We serve a Spanish Speaking community in San Francisco that's uniquely bilingual and bicultural," Carlos said of the legacy outlet that today publishes in print bi-weekly while also supporting a daily website and a weekly newsletter, WhatsApp and social media. "There are different storylines and narratives that really speak to this community."

Across the San Francisco Bay in Oakland, *El Timpano* has as its mission to inform, engage and amplify the Bay Area's Latino and Mayan immigrant communities. Founder Madeleine Bair explained as community media outlets, Spanish language media have to be much more attuned to the issues and information habits of the communities being served. *El Timpano* is Spanish for "ear drum."

"We started by just asking people what are the issues that are important to you. It was very clear from that listening process that what people wanted was very different from general audience news," said Bair, who participated in the Breakfast panel. "We publish our news and engage with our audiences primarily via text messages because about half of our audience members don't have home computers or home Internet."

Representing the Spanish language broadcast sector, Maria Antonieta Mejia shared her experience working in San Francisco for the national news outlet Univision.

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"We are informing an audience that many many times does not speak English. You have to translate what you see to an audience that trusts you a lot." said Mejia. "Maybe we don't have the super big budgets to do investigative reporting, but we can get to do great reporting."

While the breakfast was primarily focused on experiences of Spanish language media, there was also discussion about mainstream media outlets' efforts to cover Latino communities, especially recent incidents of raids by Immigration Control Enforcement (ICE) agents. Some mainstream outlets have faced political threats and the same risks Spanish language news organizations experience when reporting on, for and about immigrant communities.

In addition to being the birthplace of *El Tecolote* in 1970, San Francisco State in 2022 launched the first undergraduate degree program in bilingual journalism of any public university. Ana Lourdes Cardenas, an assistant professor in the journalism program at San Francisco State, spoke about the challenges of sustaining such an effort.

"We're in a crisis right now. The university is struggling economically, Cardenas said. "We don't get enough support in recruiting to have a diverse faculty"

Cardenas' concerns about Spanish language journalism education were echoed by Jessica Retis, the immediate past director of the School of Journalism at The University of Arizona and an incoming member of the AEJMC Elected Standing Committee on PF&R.

"We're trying to train students bilingually, but it's very hard," Retis said.

Working on conjunction with the Center of Latin American Studies, the Department of Mexican American Studies and Department of Spanish & Portuguese, The Arizona School of Journalism offers an M.A. in Bilingual Journalism, one of the only M.A. programs of its kind in the country.

Cornerstone panels are special sessions that the AEJMC Elected Standing Committees host once every three years. The Spanish Language Media Breakfast was designed to advance the association's professional freedom and responsibility mission.

"In the world that we live in today where polarization is currency, our ability to bridge those divides is what's going to keep our society together," said Bey-Ling Sha, dean of the Texas Tech University's College of Media and Communication. "As AEJMC's President-Elect, I believe so strongly in the value of our industry partners. What we do is enhanced by your participation. I'm so grateful for all of our journalists and our industry friends for making time to be here today."

The AI Teaching Assistant: Promise and Peril in Digital Classrooms



Keonte Coleman, Ph.D.
MAC Teaching Chair,
Assistant Professor,
Broadcast and Digital
Journalism,
Syracuse University

During a recent faculty development workshop, we were introduced to a tool that caught my attention. It allowed instructors to create AI agents trained on their own course materials. These chatbot-style tools could be embedded in a learning management system and used to answer student questions about assignments, readings, or key terms. One example showed how an AI could be trained specifically on a course syllabus to field student questions about policies and requirements.

The tools did not function flawlessly during the demonstration, but the concept was compelling. If students could get accurate answers without waiting for instructor responses, wouldn't that help?

In some cases, yes. For faculty balancing heavy workloads, AI agents could offer timely support, especially in large or asynchronous classes. For first-year students, a chatbot might feel like a low-pressure way to ask basic questions. And for students working evenings or managing jobs, these tools could provide helpful flexibility.

However, there are important concerns. If the chatbot is trained only on your materials, it becomes a virtual extension of those resources. That means it can replicate any blind spots, omissions, or embedded assumptions. If it gives incorrect answers, students may not realize it. When it presents complex topics as neutral fact, it could erase the nuance we intentionally bring into our classrooms.

Consider this scenario: A student asks about media representation in marginalized communities. A well-designed AI might provide helpful context from course readings. But it cannot acknowledge when perspectives are missing, offer encouragement to a struggling student, or recognize when someone needs human connection rather than information.

Many students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, already report feeling invisible in academic spaces. A chatbot cannot sense when someone feels discouraged or disconnected. While the goal may be to increase support, automation may sometimes create more distance instead.

This does not mean we should avoid these tools entirely. Like any teaching practice, the value of AI agents depends on how they are introduced and used. Before implementing these tools, we need to ask ourselves critical questions: What materials will the AI be trained on? Whose voices are represented or left out? Have I tested this from a student's perspective? Does this increase access to support, or merely replace personal interaction?

Used thoughtfully, AI agents could extend clarity and reduce stress. If adopted without consideration, they might deepen existing challenges. These tools reflect the choices we make about how students engage with our courses.

By exploring AI agents with both curiosity and care, faculty can better decide how they might serve the inclusive classroom without replacing the human connection at its core.

AEJMC Members Asked To Weigh In on NABJ Resolution



George L. Daniels, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of
Journalism, University of
Alabama



In our continuing effort to build stronger relationships between AEJMC and The National Association of Black Journalists, a resolution is now being considered that among other things will invite NABJ to formalize its relationship through becoming an affiliate member of AEJMC.

Resolution One "Celebrating 50 Years of the National Association of Black Journalists" is open for online discussion in the AEJMC Community through mid-September.

RESOLUTION ONE

Celebrating 50 Years of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ)

Whereas, on Dec. 12, 1975, at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., 44 Black journalists created a national organization dedicated to increasing their number in the nation's newsrooms, and improving the treatment of those already there and coverage of the Black community; and

Whereas, signing the attendance roster at the meeting was itself an act of courage for those who were told they had to choose between their employment at their news organizations and being active in the new association; and

Whereas, encouraging journalism schools to appoint Black professors and awarding scholarships to journalism programs that support people of color were also among NABJ's original goals; and

Courtesy of George L. Daniels

Members of the Minorities and Communication Division were instrumental in drafting and revising the proposed resolution which also addresses NABJ's participation in the accreditation process. Currently, NABJ is one of the organizations that has a seat on the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

If passed, the resolution will be first such official action AEJMC members will have taken referencing the 50-year-old organization that today with more than 4,000 members is the largest organization of journalists of color.

While this year's NABJ Convention in Cleveland, Ohio was held at the same time as AEJMC's Annual Conference in San Francisco, the two organization's annual gatherings will not conflict in 2026 or 2027.

Mark your calendars for the next two AEJMC conferences. The 2026 NABJ Convention and Career Fair will be held August 12-16, 2026 in Atlanta while the 2027 convention takes place in Houston, Texas August 18-22, 2027.

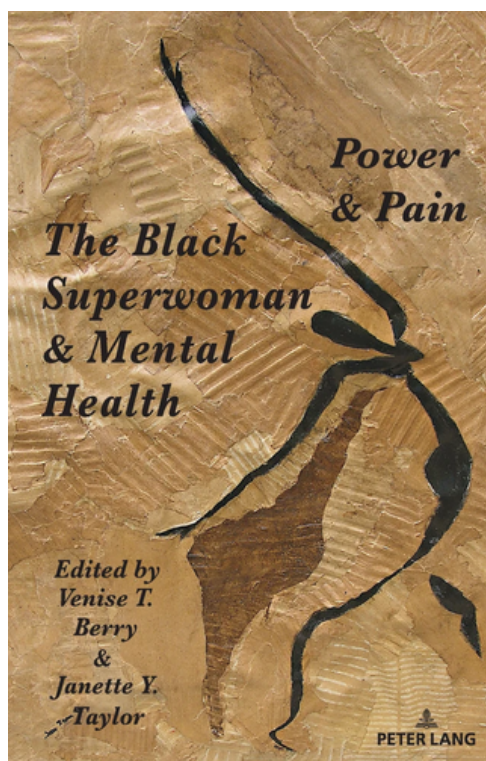
NEW BOOKS



Gen Z, Social Media, and News: Implications for the Future of News Engagement, Journalism, the U.S., and Democracy (Peter Lang, 2025) by Paula M. Poindexter

Poindexter describes Gen Z, Social Media, and News as the third book in a trilogy that captures the intersection of generation change and news landscape transformation. This change began in the early 1980s with the birth of Millennials, continued with Gen Z's arrival beginning in the late 1990s, then intersected with the news landscape's transformation that accelerated in 2004 with Facebook's emergence and Apple's 2007 unveiling of the iPhone.

Born 1997 through 2012, Gen Z is the first generation to grow up when the news engagement socialization process that we took for granted is virtually non-existent. And because Gen Z engages with news on social media where disinformation is pushed, it's unknown how informed Gen Z is and what that means for the future of news engagement, journalism, the U.S., and democracy. A national survey conducted with Gen Z, Millennials, and older generations addresses these issues and more.



***The Black Superwoman & Mental Health* by Venise T. Berry & Janette Y. Taylor**

It is not easy to reveal oneself and to be vulnerable in a public way as the authors in this book have done. This is the act of resisting the voices and social scripts that say we do not air our “dirty laundry”, we should keep “secrets” to remain safe, yet unhealthy. We must find safe spaces to speak our truths, to heal. It is through the process of seeking, doing, and being, sometimes in public like this anthology and sometimes in private (counseling or psychotherapy), that many of us learn to acknowledge, analyze, speak, and eventually write the truth of/about our lives in order to move closer to being whole Black women. Enjoy poetry, short stories, essays, and assessable research in this powerful anthology. For more info contact: venise-berry@uiowa.edu

MEMBER UPDATES



Dr. Nathian Shae Rodriguez

Dr. Nathian Shae Rodriguez has been promoted to full professor in the School of Journalism and Media Studies at San Diego State University. He joined the School in 2016 as an Assistant Professor and currently serves as Associate Director. Dr. Rodriguez's research focuses on identity and media, particularly among historically marginalized populations, with an emphasis on intersectionality and pop culture pedagogy. He is the founding director of the Media, Identity, and Communication Innovative Research Lab. Originally from Balmorhea, Texas, Dr. Rodriguez earned his Ph.D. from Texas Tech University.



Birdland Refracted, the collaborative 3-minute audio piece co-produced by Emiliano Quintanar (Milio Boogie) and Kim Fox, has received notable recognition across international and cultural platforms. The piece was shortlisted for the **Audio Flux Circuit 05 competition**, selected among the top 15 works from 63 global submissions. It was then chosen as one of only **four Circuit Selects**, premiering as part of the **Sound Scene Festival** at the **Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum** in Washington, DC on **June 1, 2025**. Ahead of that debut, *Birdland Refracted* aired on **LRT Radijas**, the main public radio station in **Lithuania**, on **May 31, 2025**, introducing the work to a European audience. The piece's innovative approach and transnational storytelling also drew attention from the media industry, earning a mention in **Nieman Lab** on **June 9, 2025**. Finally, *Birdland Refracted* was featured in the Virtual Audio Flux Happy Hours / Happy Ears Finalists Listening Party on **June 18, 2025**.



Kim Fox's co-produced audio piece, *Birdland Refracted*, was screened at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum as a part of This year's Sound Scene Festival on June 1, 2025.



Kim Fox's support team at the audio screening including several AUC connections in this pic: former professors and JRMCI alumni.

AEJMC MAC LEADERSHIP 2024-2025



Head
Danielle Brown
Michigan State University
dkbrown@msu.edu



Vice-Head
Rafael Matos
Northwestern University
rafael.matos@northwestern.edu



Second Vice-Head
Miya Williams Fayne
University of Wisconsin-Madison
miya.fayne@wisc.edu



Secretary
Denetra Walker
University of Georgia
DenetraWalker@uga.edu



Faculty Research Chair
Chelsea Peterson-Salahuddin
University of Michigan
caaps@umich.edu



Student Research Chair
Lourdes Cueva Chacon
San Diego State University
lcuevachacon@sdsu.edu



Midwinter Research Chair
Monique Luisi
University of Missouri
luisim@missouri.edu



Teaching Chair
Keonte Coleman
Syracuse University
kecolema@syr.edu



PF&R Chair
Angie Chuang
University of Colorado-Boulder
angie.chuang@colorado.edu



Graduate Student Liaison
Linda White
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
lwhite28@unl.edu



Membership Chair
Christina Najera
University of Tennessee-Knoxville
cnajera@utk.edu



Grants Chair
Gheni Platenburg
University of Houston
gnplatenburg@uh.edu



Social Media Coordinator &
Webmaster
Benjamin Tetteh
Syracuse University
bptetteh@syr.edu



Newsletter Co-Editor
Tawfiq Abdullah
University of Southern Mississippi
tawfiq.abdullah@gmail.com



Newsletter Co-Editor
Solyee Kim
Howard University
solyee.kim@howard.edu