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USC Launches Fellowship and Degree Program for Top Journalists Determined to Lead Profession

LOS ANGELES, December 10, 2007 – In response to a rapidly evolving industry, USC Annenberg’s School of Journalism will offer a unique 9-month M.A. program in specialized journalism beginning in August 2008. Top students will be nominated for the university’s prestigious new **USC Annenberg Graduate Fellowships**. These fellowships provide full tuition and stipends to 100 world-class scholars and practitioners in the fields of communications and digital media each year.

The new M.A. program will provide highly individualized courses of study in fields as diverse as science, religion, immigration and education. In addition to journalism classes taught at USC Annenberg, students will take courses with faculty from USC’s other highly regarded academic units, including the Rossier School of Education, School of Policy, Planning and Development, and College of Letters, Arts and Sciences.

“Now more than ever, quality journalism requires subject-matter expertise, advanced reporting skills and knowledge of how new communication technologies are changing the ways that people learn, think and behave,” says **Roberto Suro**, the veteran journalist and researcher who directs the Specialized Journalism M.A. degree program. “This program offers students a chance to move forward on all three fronts by putting the resources of a great university at their disposal.”

Outstanding applicants to the M.A. in Specialized Journalism will be nominated by the Annenberg School to receive significant financial assistance and be awarded particular distinction as **USC Annenberg Fellows** by the USC Annenberg Graduate Fellowship Program.

“The USC Annenberg Fellows will conduct communications and digital media research, advance bold new ideas in the communication arena and produce innovative creative works,” said USC vice provost **Jean Morrison**. “They will be drawn from a variety of academic programs in the Annenberg School for Communication, the School of Cinematic Arts and the Viterbi School of Engineering. The USC Annenberg Fellows will constitute an internationally recognized and highly regarded group of communications research scholars and creative practitioners. We are delighted to launch this program and to accelerate the university’s leadership role in cross-disciplinary communications-related graduate research and education.”

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A report sponsored by the Knight Foundation revealed that the lack of training opportunities is a top professional concern of U.S. journalists, outranking even pay and benefits. In addition to basic skills, journalists and their managers desire training and education in specific topic areas to enhance their coverage of beats such as health and business.

“Leaders of American journalism believe that there is a strong and increasing need for expertise in substantive areas covered by the U.S. news media and of great importance to the society that they serve – expertise that is lacking in the newsrooms of most newspapers, magazines, broadcast outlets and news Web sites,” says **Michael Parks**, the Pulitzer Prize-winning former editor of the *Los Angeles Times* who directs USC Annenberg’s School of Journalism.

In addition to Professors Suro and Parks, other faculty in the program include award-winning science author and reporter **K.C. Cole**; author, journalist and holder of the Knight Chair in Media and Religion **Diane Winston**; **Larry Pryor**, a former environmental affairs reporter and editor with the *Los Angeles Times*, *Louisville Courier-Journal* and former editor of USC Annenberg’s Online Journalism Review; and **Bill Celis**, the award-winning author and former *New York Times* education correspondent.

The program is designed for professionals with demonstrated abilities in journalism as well as recent undergraduate journalism students with strong academic records and internship experience. Individuals working in all forms of media and journalistic platforms are invited to apply. Students will be encouraged to produce journalism that can be published, broadcast or otherwise disseminated as part of their work in the program.

Applications will be accepted from **February 1 to April 2, 2008**, and candidates will be notified of an admission decision within 4 to 6 weeks of submitting a completed application. For details about the application process, visit <http://annenberg.usc.edu/prospectivestudents>.

“Almost more than any other profession, journalism depends on intellectually versatile practitioners – people skilled in the immediate tasks of the craft, to be sure, but also fluent in the purposes and function of civil society. Such nimbleness of mind and technique can only be achieved – with quality journalism as its result – through a process of continuous learning,” said **Carroll D. Stevens**, former director of the Knight Foundation Fellowships for Journalists in Law at Yale Law School.

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the USC Annenberg School for Communication is among the nation's leading institutions devoted to the study of journalism and communication, and their impact on politics, culture and society. With an enrollment of more than 1,900 graduate and undergraduate students, USC Annenberg offers degree programs in journalism, communication, public diplomacy and public relations. For more information, visit annenberg.usc.edu.

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