

This is provided as an example proposal.  
It is important that you follow the  
current guidelines.

The mentor letter has been removed.

**PURF COVER PAGE**

TITLE OF PROJECT: Creating College Pathways: Exploring College Awareness through Public Scholarship Journalism  
 NAME OF APPLICANT: Sarah Jane Lorenzo  
 CAMPUS/LOCAL ADDRESS: Shively 237, 59 E. Green Dr. Athens, OH 45701  
 E-MAIL ADDRESS: sarah.jane.cecelia@gmail.com  
 DEPARTMENT: Journalism

BUDGET: Total Request \$1,500  
 (May not exceed \$1,500)

CLASS RANK: (circle one) Freshman      Sophomore      Junior      Senior

GPA: 3.998

EXPECTED DATE OF GRADUATION: May, 2017 \*

\* Note: Students must be enrolled and maintain undergraduate student status during the proposed project period.

**FACULTY MENTOR INFORMATION:**

NAME: Dr. Bernhard Debatin  
 E-MAIL ADDRESS: debatin@ohio.edu  
 CAMPUS ADDRESS: Schooner Ctr. 227 A  
 DEPARTMENT: Journalism  
 DEPARTMENT ADMIN/EMAIL: conradj1@ohio.edu

We the undersigned have read the PURF Guidelines and understand the responsibilities we undertake should funding be granted. We certify that the application has been conceived, written and completed by the student.

Student signature: Sarah Jane Lorenzo Date: Sept. 22, 2016  
 Faculty signature: [Signature] Date: 9/22/2016  
 Faculty Advisor's Dept. Chair signature: [Signature] Date: 9/22/16

**IRB AND IACUC APPROVAL:**

To ensure that the University is in compliance with all federal regulations, complete the checklist below. *Note: your proposal can be approved prior to IRB or IACUC approval (put "pending" or "to be submitted" instead of approval number), but funding will be withheld until notification of approval or exemption.*

| Yes | No | Office of Research Compliance  | Policy # |
|-----|----|--|----------|
|     | X  | Human Subjects in Research (including surveys, interviews, educational interventions):<br>Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval #:<br>Expiration Date: | 19.052   |
|     | X  | Animal Species:<br>Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC) Approval #:<br>Expiration Date:   | 19.049   |

**Optional:**  
 If selected for funding, I give permission to the Research Division to use my proposal as an example during training and workshop exercises. (Sign below)  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

This project seeks to present a series of feature articles that exemplify a pioneering brand of journalism known as public scholarship, which aims to translate scholarly research that may otherwise be inaccessible to the public into engaging journalistic content. To this end, on-site interviews, for which this application seeks funding, will be conducted with academics, practitioners, policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders. By supporting the interview data with a rigorous review of education research, the journalistic pieces created in this project will demonstrate how education journalists can utilize research findings to engage audiences and enrich public understanding of education issues.

## Proposal Narrative

Ideally, education researchers and education journalists work with a shared goal of better understanding the status and needs of schools across the country. Both parties perform critical roles in gathering and analyzing information, but the division between their work represents many missed opportunities. Amidst growing fiscal pressures in the media industry, a majority of education writers feel forced to limit the time they devote to in-depth investigations of challenging issues (State of the Education Beat 2016). Yet, academics continue to produce research that takes hard-hitting looks at relevant educational issues, and new, compelling information disclosed within their work may provide useful insight relevant to public interests. Unfortunately, academic modes of research dissemination are not structured to promote broad public use. Academic journals, for instance, are published with an intended audience of fellow researchers in mind, and journal articles often assume advanced knowledge of prior research, key educational theories, and academic jargon. Many academic journals are only accessible to users with expensive subscriptions. While academic journals create a valuable communication venue for researchers, the lack of knowledge transfer from research journals to more public venues creates a missed opportunity: research can be a critical informant of decisions in the education sector, but only if it is known and understood.

As media contributors, journalists have a role in the translation of complex issues. In addition to covering breaking news and ongoing trends, journalists can help readers interpret information they may not have the background knowledge to immediately grasp. In the education field, complex academic publications are a source of pertinent data, and can reveal trends or successful strategies determined through the type of rigorous investigations education writers feel they have waning time to produce (State of the Education Beat 2016). Accordingly, journalists have the potential to help translate informative academic research to engaging articles

designed for a broader public audience. While education journalists consider faculty members and teachers tied as their top sources for comment, academic research ranks low on their list of inspirations for article ideas (State of the Education Beat 2016).

The barrier between journalists and academic publications can be viewed as an obstacle to resource efficiency: many scholars pour significant time, funding, and effort into research that produces information relevant to key education policymakers, practitioners, and parents. However, although some key studies do translate to public conversation and even policy action, many others that could provide useful knowledge to relevant stakeholders are read only by other academics and are never made more accessible to the public.

This creative journalistic project seeks to develop a set of at least four feature articles that exemplify public scholarship journalism through their foundation in analysis and presentation of academic findings. The articles that comprise this venture will seek to build understanding of issues related to student transitions to college, career, and civic success. Key topics explored will include influence of financial knowledge and debt aversion on students' college and career decisions, school and community programs that raise student awareness of post-secondary options, and the nature of student recruitment and retention programs, particularly at large and well-funded research universities. Some of the interview material and main findings will be used for the production of podcasts and infographics for the accompanying website. By combining rigorous review of education research with interviews and insights from parents, teachers, policymakers and community members, the pieces included in this project will work to bridge the gap between research and public understanding of education issues.

Funding will enable site visits at three universities, where interviews will be conducted with campus recruitment program administrators and leading education researchers whose publications have been selected to inform the articles that will be produced through this project.

Partial funding for this project has been awarded by the Education Writers Association, which contributed \$1,143.70 to allow me to travel to their September higher education seminar at Arizona State University, where I conducted initial interviews with researchers, arranged further interviews with scholars at Vanderbilt and the University of Michigan whose research is directly inspiring investigations that comprise this project, and spoke with university recruitment program representatives. I have also applied for a \$1,000 grant from the Honors Tutorial College to aid in the support of site visits. The PURF money would make those visits possible by funding budget items including transportation and two nights in a hotel. Site visits will be key in making the articles relatable and engaging by exposing the human side of research and diving beyond data and formal conclusions. In-person interviews with student recruitment program administrators will also be critical sources of content that could comprise engaging audio or visual elements, and being on-site will allow me to identify students to interview about their own university recruitment experiences by random sample rather than through administrators, who may direct reporters to students who have been screened to ensure they will positively reflect university actions or goals. This project is a component of my undergraduate thesis and is entirely independent. I will personally complete all project work but will seek feedback from my project advisor, Dr. Bernhard Debatin.

### Significance

The relationship between researchers and the public moves in two directions: while current and recent research may reveal meaningful information about the education sector, education stakeholders and policymakers may have research needs that remain unfulfilled. Thus, the articles serialized in this project will aim to exemplify an open conversation between policymakers, practitioners, and the academics who may have research expertise that could better inform critical thought and influential decisions. By doing so, this project will exemplify a

budding brand of journalism known as public scholarship, which seeks to blend research with reporting. Although education outlets that focus on research do exist, they rarely blend research coverage with reporting that seeks comment from education practitioners, school communities, and other crucial stakeholders.

This unique brand of journalism will fill a critical gap in education coverage: although many education news outlets focus on school practitioner perspectives, the articles they publish infrequently investigate the broader scope of relevant research. Such emphasis on experiences of those who work with students heavily contrasts the focus of reports that often circulate in the policy realm. Interviews or classroom examples are rarely components of the briefs published with policymaker audiences in mind. Without the inclusion of deep and personal case studies, research reports not only miss opportunity for nuance but also present a perspective that overlooks school-level experiences with policy in favor of finding direct connections between policy change and statistical trends.

In an age when information is so abundant, the high profile education articles are uniquely positioned to portray perspectives of teachers and school practitioners who ultimately have the greatest impact on student experiences and school success. Only by creating content that combines practitioners' perspectives with academic research will can journalists better meet the needs of key administrators, policymakers, and activists who make decisions that ultimately influence student educational experiences across the country.

#### Progress and Timeline

Key and recent research has been identified and several academics at three different universities have been confirmed that they will be available for interviews during site visits in late December and early January; initial contact has been made with several others. The academics include experts on student debt and debt aversion (Angela Boatman and Miguel Palacios),

student pathways to and through community college (Peter Bahr), and student college awareness programs or initiatives (Mandy Savitz-Romer and Bridget Terry Long). Initial interviews have already been conducted with Miguel Palacios and representatives of a student recruitment program at Arizona State University. Interviews have already been conducted with several researchers who specialize in student debt and with representatives from a university recruitment program at Arizona State University, the second largest public research university in the country.

From mid-September through mid-November preparations for on-site interviews with academics will include developing a thorough understanding of the recent and seminal research in their areas of expertise and speaking with practitioners, policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders to learn about their relevant experiences. If funding permits, transportation and accommodations for all site visits will be booked in mid-November, and background information on the academics' research will continue to be compiled between mid-November and when the interviews take place. Interviews with researchers will be conducted between early December and late January.

Article frameworks will also be developed within that time period in order to provide roadmaps for interview questioning. When the interviews and recruitment program site visits take place recording equipment and a camera will be on hand to allow interviews and moments well suited for multimedia content, such as photographs or podcasts, to be fully advantaged. Articles will be fully drafted, revised, and finalized in the month and a half following interviews and will be published by the National Association of State Boards of Education and pitched to other outlets in early April.

## Bibliography

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### Biographical Information

My background in education research and experience in education journalism have helped me build skills that I hope to further develop as I complete this project. I have been fortunate to learn about education issues throughout my time at Ohio University as well as through independent research, internships and on-the-job experience. Many journalism courses and faculty members have helped me strengthen my writing skills and analytical techniques, and the Education Writers Association has provided me wonderful opportunities to learn from other education journalists and experts at seminars across the country. I have formerly published resources on college awareness and student pathways to postsecondary success, both through scholarly reports published by the National Association of State Boards of Education and as journalistic articles published by Forbes, which have been cited by foundations including Lumina, American Institutes for Research, the National College Access Network, and The Wire. I hope this project will permit me to take a deeper dive into critical college access issues while developing examples of comprehensive and resource-efficient public scholarship journalism.

| <b>Education Writers Association Seminar; Phoenix, AZ, Sept. 15-18 (Funded)</b>   |               |   |   |
|---|---------------|---|---|
| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Source</b>   | <b>Justification</b>  |
| Round-trip - flight to Phoenix  | \$349.70      | Education Writers Association (Funded)  | Cost of least expensive available flight to Phoenix from the Columbus airport.  |
| Hotel (Phoenix)   | \$572         | Education Writers Association (Funded)  | \$163 per night x 3 nights plus tax — lowest rate at the Graduate Tempe Hotel, where a group rate was reserved.                                       |
| Ground Transportation   | \$50          | Self-funded   | (\$24.50 round trip to and from the airport on GoBus + \$25.50 taxi to Phoenix airport at 4 a.m., Sept. 18 to catch a 5:30 a.m. flight                |
| Per Diem (Food and incidentals)   | \$236         | Self-funded (\$115); Education Writers Association (\$122)  | US General Services Administration Per Diem Rate for Phoenix - \$59 per day x four days.  |
| Registration  | \$100         | Education Writers Association (Funded)  | Seminar registration.   |
| Hotel (Columbus)  | \$160.00      | Self-funded   | Cost of stay in Columbus airport hotel following flight delays that resulted in missing that day's final GoBus.                                       |
| <b>Harvard Program and Researcher Interviews; Boston, MA, December/January, 2016 (Interviews confirmed with one faculty member and two administrators.)</b> |               |   |   |
| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Source</b>   | <b>Justification</b>  |
| Round-trip flight to Boston   | \$231         | PURF  | Average price of least expensive flight to Boston as per Google Flights.  |
| Hotel   | \$646         | PURF (\$430.66 for two nights) and Honors Tutorial College (HTC) Research and Travel Funds (\$215.33 for one night) | \$189 x three nights + 14 percent tax at Irving House or least expensive available inn within safe walking distance of the Harvard university campus. |
| Ground Transportation   | \$54.50       | PURF  | \$24.50 round trip transportation to/from Columbus airport on GoBus + \$30 round trip SuperShuttle between Boston Hotel and airport.                  |
| Per Diem (Food and incidentals)   | \$276         | Self-funded (\$217.38); HTC Research and Travel Fund (\$58.62)  | US General Services Administration Per Diem Rate for Boston - \$69 per day x four days.   |

| <b>Vanderbilt Program and Researcher Interviews; Nashville, TN,<br/>December/January 2016 (Interviews confirmed with two faculty members.)</b>                                |                   |  |   |
|---|-------------------|--|---|
| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Amount</b>     | <b>Source</b>  | <b>Justification</b>  |
| Round-trip flight to Nashville  | \$255             | PURF   | Average price of least expensive flight to Nashville as per Google Flights.   |
| Hotel   | \$424             | HTC Research and Travel Funds  | \$212 x two nights including tax at the Hilton Hotel, the least expensive option within one mile safe walking distance of the university  |
| Ground Transportation   | \$90.14           | PURF   | \$24.50 round trip transportation to/from the airport on GoBus + \$64.64 round trip taxi (\$32.82 estimate each way from taxifarefinder.com) due to lack of other transportation options to/from the airport in the area. |
| Per Diem (Food and incidentals)   | \$177             | Self-funded (118.37);<br>PURF (\$18.58);<br>HTC Research and Travel Funds(\$40.05) | US General Service Administration Per Diem Rate for Nashville - \$59/day x three days.  |
| <b>University of Michigan Program and Researcher Interviews; Ann Arbor, MI,<br/>December/January, 2016 (interview confirmed with one program officer and one researcher.)</b> |                   |  |   |
| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Amount</b>     | <b>Source</b>  | <b>Justification</b>  |
| Round-trip flight to Detroit  | \$307             | PURF   | Average price of least expensive flight to Detroit as per Google Flights.   |
| Hotel   | \$262             | HTC Research and Travel Funds  | \$131 x two nights including tax at the Holiday Inn Express, least expensive hotel within one mile safe walking distance of the university.   |
| Ground Transportation   | \$54.50           | PURF   | \$24.50 round trip transportation to/from airport on GoBus + \$30 round trip AirRide shuttle between hotel and airport.   |
| Per Diem (Food and Incidentals)   | \$177             | Self-Funded (\$118.37); PURF (\$58.62)   | US General Services Administration Per Diem Rate for Ann Arbor - \$59 per day x three days.   |
| <b>Self-Funded</b>  | <b>PURF</b>       | <b>HTC Research and Travel Funds</b>   | <b>Education Writers Association</b>  |
| <b>\$778.00</b>   | <b>\$1,500.00</b> | <b>\$1,000.00</b>  | <b>\$1,143.70</b>   |

**Total Expenses: \$4,421.70 | Total PURF Funding Request: \$1,500**