

UNM-Talk Radio News Service Residency Program (Spring or Fall Semesters in Washington, D.C.)

This residency program provides students with an opportunity to study and work as political journalists in Washington, D.C. The students function as residential journalists in training at the Talk Radio News Service (TRNS) Bureau near the Capitol. Student residents have access to Congress and the White House covering events and newsmakers for hundreds of talk radio stations across the United States, as well as New Mexico broadcast outlets.



UNM student Coffee Brown conducting an interview at Fox News studio in New York.

Prior UNM-TRNS residents in Washington, D.C., have learned a great deal about journalism and politics, working in a busy news service bureau that enjoys access to Congressional and Obama Administration news makers. The students also traveled to New York to visit the United Nations and Fox Studios.

UNM-TRNS residents rotate through a variety of positions that require them to develop “next generation” journalism skills by producing audio, video, and print reports and becoming more “Web savvy.” The rotations enable students to serve as “general assignment” political reporters, assignment editors, and operations personnel, as well as participating in a weekly show on Washington politics. This gives interns an opportunity to expand their understanding of various aspects of government and news work and how a news service acquires information and distributes it to the public. It also helps TRNS with scheduling predictability and enables the TRNS professional staff to work closely with students bringing them “up to speed” on the various aspects of Washington news work. Residents also participate in weekly seminars with seasoned media professionals.

The UNM-TRNS undergrads work 40-plus hour weeks to provide a significant part of the reporting power that TRNS enjoys, which becomes obvious if one visits the TRNS Website <http://talkradionews.com/>. The student reports contain bylines listing the reporters as members of the “University of New Mexico/Talk Radio News Service.”

During the spring and fall semesters, students receive stipends to help fund the approximately \$4,700 housing costs in having a shared, furnished apartment on Capitol Hill within walking distance of the TRNS Bureau and Congress. Students should expect to provide a \$200 refundable housing deposit and buy and prepare their own food .

Student feedback regarding the program and the support from the TRNS staff has been extremely positive. One Spring 2009 resident, Chistina Lovato, offered the following assessment:

. . . we were present at the 2009 State of the Union Address and that was incredible! We were probably the only students in the Capitol that night who were able to work it. . . . we interviewed over 28 Representatives and Senators, making us the winners in the “Who could get the most

interviews” contest. I also had the opportunity to interview Congressmen Heinrich and Lujan that night. My interview with Rep. Lujan aired on many TRNS stations and on YouTube. I will never forget that night.

[TRNS Bureau Chief] Ellen Ratner and former Congressmen Bob Ney also arranged for us to have dinner at the Capitol restaurant where we ate with many other Congressmen and Senators before President Obama’s address. We listened to his speech that night in the Senate Media Gallery where we were given the speech ahead of time, making us some of the first people with his speech in our hands. We didn’t leave the Capitol until 3 a.m. and I felt so accomplished with all of the hard work I had done.

While in Washington, I have become a stronger writer and more confident journalist. I have learned that to succeed in this business you must develop a hard shell and be able to multi-task. Now that newspapers are struggling, it is important to know how to work with new technology. If you know how to use a camera, edit your recordings and then publish them on the Internet, you can do anything. TRNS has helped me a great deal. I can work with equipment and publish my own work, whether it be a Marantz audio recorder or a Flip video camera.

The faculty program coordinator, Dr. Richard Schaefer, is particularly pleased that students have had an opportunity to become Web journalists. Selected students should expect to start interning in Washington, D.C. by August 20 for fall semesters or January 15 for spring semesters. Residents should expect to continue working in Washington through the end of the academic semesters.



TRNS residents pose with TRNS staffer Geoff Holtzman (far left), Broadcast Board of Governors’ Blanca Cullum (with check) and faculty coordinator Richard Schaefer (center) after receiving a contribution from the Young American Broadcasters

The program is funded by the New Mexico Broadcasters Association, the University of New Mexico, Young American Broadcasters and Talk Radio News Service.

University of New Mexico journalism professor Richard Schaefer is the UNM-TRNS faculty coordinator. For current program details contact him at:

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