Elon University’s Role in Strengthening the Local News Ecosystem

Presentation for ASJMC

Shannan Bowen, executive director
Dec. 2, 2021
Our Foundation

- Launched in 2020 at Elon University’s School of Communications
- Why Elon? Established School of Communications, dedication to state’s news needs, infrastructure support for a permanent home, also home to the Open Government Coalition
- Externally funded by grants, donations, foundation support. NC News Lab Fund is primary funder
Our Mission

**Connecting** people across the ecosystem of local news and information, through the NC Local weekly email newsletter and by facilitating partnerships, networking, and collaboration

**Convening** to support journalistic quality, inclusiveness, problem-solving, innovation, and professional dialogue

**Capacity-building** through resource links and connections, coaching, and assistance for organizations tackling individual or collective needs
Our Vision

We want to achieve an ecosystem with sustainable and community-serving news and information organizations in all 100 counties.

Growing from...

A disconnected news and information landscape that is often competitive and without a shared vision for informing the state’s regions and communities

Developing toward...

Sustainable, equitably operating, community-serving news and information organizations in all 100 counties, operating toward a collaborative, interdependent future
Our Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Vision for North Carolina’s News Ecosystem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We envision <strong>sustainable and community-serving</strong> news and information organizations <strong>in all 100 counties</strong> of North Carolina.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NC Local News Workshop Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td>We <strong>convene, connect and build capacity</strong> through programs, collaborations and initiatives that help news and information organizations operate sustainably, equitably and collaboratively.</td>
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<th>2021-22 Operating Year Focus</th>
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<td>We will convene communities to understand their news and information needs, connect those community needs with news and information organizations who can address them, and build the capacity for news and information organizations to serve those communities equitably.</td>
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### Objectives

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<tr>
<th>Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion</th>
<th>Access to News</th>
<th>Community Needs</th>
<th>Cohesive ecosystem</th>
<th>Professional Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help news orgs advance DEI values</td>
<td>Meet needs in news deserts and underserved communities</td>
<td>Increase community listening and unearth community needs</td>
<td>Foster collaboration and build a network</td>
<td>Enhance and grow skills of individuals</td>
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### Programs & Initiatives

- Media Equity Project (Cohort 1)
- Media Equity Project Expansion
- Disinformation Research and Community Sharing
- Data Reporting Project with Carolina Demography
- Incubate news initiatives in news deserts
- Conduct community needs assessments
- Conduct community research and assessments
- Create repository of insights
- Teach community engagement and listening skills to journalists
- Build a network of journalists through Slack
- Plan 2022 NC News and Information Summit
- Facilitate collaborations and coalitions
- Conduct monthly skills webinars
- Partner with HBCUs on a job fair

### Desired Results and Key Performance Indicators

- Diversity among staff that represents communities
- Inclusion in reporting
- Audience engagement growth
- Increase in news and info sources in areas lacking them
- Increase in coverage of rural and underserved communities
- New projects that meet needs specified by communities
- Increase in feedback loops between journalists and readers
- Increase in collaborations among different news orgs
- Increase in funding allocated to news organizations
- Retention of journalists for NC news orgs
Su Voz, Su Visión
Construyendo historias más inclusivas en Carolina del Norte

Los medios de comunicación locales están cambiando. Tenemos la oportunidad de prestar un mejor servicio a todas las comunidades de nuestro estado y necesitamos su ayuda.

Acompáñenos para una conversación virtual.
ABC11 WTVD-TV
The Charlotte Observer
EducationNC
The News & Observer/The Herald-Sun
PBS North Carolina
WFAE

THURSDAY
Sept. 30
6 p.m.

Your Voice, Your Vision
Building more inclusive stories in North Carolina

Your local media are changing. We have the opportunity to better serve all of the communities in our state and we need your help.

Join us for a virtual conversation
ABC11 WTVD-TV
The Charlotte Observer
EducationNC
The News & Observer/The Herald-Sun
PBS North Carolina
WFAE

Sept. 30
6 p.m.
Programs: NC Local newsletter

- Weekly newsletter to hundreds of journalists, community leaders and others interested in news & info
- Deep reporting on a topic of interest to NC journalists
- Includes job posting links, events, research updates and general industry news
Programs: Regional News Assessments

- Assessing news needs from both the community and journalism industry perspectives
- Hiring regional research and community listening fellows
- Creating programs to fill gaps

Join the NC Local News Workshop & NC Local News Lab Fund for discussions about the Southeastern NC news landscape, funding & networking!
Programs: Collaborating and Problem-Solving

- Shifting narrative from competition to collaboration
- Highlighting collaborative models and benefits
- Helping news and information orgs find the infrastructure and capacity needed to collaborate
Questions? Thoughts?
Stay in touch!

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