

Roadmap for Change The John S. Knight Fellowships for Professional Journalists at Stanford

The John S. Knight Fellowships for Professional Journalists at Stanford will transform itself in order to serve the needs of journalism and journalists as much in the years ahead as it has in the past. The dizzying landscape of layoffs and consolidation, Internet media sites, citizen journalism and bloggers make journalism a chaotic and exciting proposition today. We will make bold changes to meet these new realities.

Key elements will remain. Fellows will spend an academic year at Stanford and take advantage of the university's deep intellectual and educational resources. Fellows will be responsible for setting their own agenda during their year. And rich interaction among the Fellows will continue to be a major element of their experience.

The changes will build on the excellence of the Knight Fellowships program to create an enhanced fellowship experience and to generate benefits that go beyond the individual Fellow. Changes in the program will enable Fellows who embrace the challenges facing journalism to focus on innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership. The bedrock goal remains the same: promoting excellence in journalism.

Key elements of the program's changes

The program will focus on innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership to foster high quality journalism during a time of profound transformation.

The Knight Fellowships is uniquely situated to become a leader in journalism innovation and to develop a stronger voice in directly addressing journalism's challenges. We will guide journalists in acquiring new skills, and we will put our fellows at the forefront of those who are using these tools to inform and engage the public.

Our definition of "innovation" will touch all aspects of modern journalism — from new ways of reporting, investigating and telling stories and delivering the news to the exploration of new financial models and revenue streams to support the business of journalism. Our framework will be specific enough to encourage tangible results.

This will be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- The program will create a mix of public discussions on journalism and innovation.

- It will make sure that Fellows can use the range of tools available to journalists today.
- It will build the entrepreneurial and managerial abilities of fellows so that they are able to be effective either inside traditional news organizations or in new structures.
- It will pair Fellows with individual mentors.
- And it will continue to provide rich opportunities for group learning and sharing among fellows.

Given the emphasis on innovation, the program will expect Fellows to come to Stanford with a coherent proposal that will lead to a tangible result.

This proposal should emphasize journalistic experimentation and innovation, broadly outlined as above to touch on all aspects of modern journalism. Fellows will continue to decide how best to use their year, and the new formulation of the proposal will expand serendipitous learning to areas that have an impact beyond the individual Fellow.

The culmination of the year at Stanford could take many forms: a progress report, a public conference, a specific business proposal, or many variations on these. The results will be widely and publicly available.

Ultimately, we will strive to have Fellows emerge from the program ready to make a difference in journalism immediately, whether they return to their news organization or move on to a new role, and then to continue to be leaders for years to come.

Fellows will embody a broader range of experience, media and skills, both in the U.S. and abroad.

The program will widen its view of potential journalistic leaders. Successful applicants will care deeply about journalism, show a potential for leadership, recognize the need for change and have the energy and the skills to make it happen. Among the categories that we will give increased emphasis are journalistic entrepreneurs, especially in online media; journalists who are younger or older than the program's current mid-career range; candidates from ethnic news media and other news media serving significant segments of society; and people from the business sector of the news media who have a strong commitment to improving journalism.

The program will pay particular attention to selecting International Fellows who can have a direct impact on the development of a free press and flow of information in their countries.

The overall goal for international fellows will be the same as those from the U.S. – an engaged, informed public. We will pay special attention to countries where the obstacles to this goal may be more acute than in the U.S. because of government or other powerful forces opposed to free expression. The program will seek journalists from countries where the news media can work as a significant agent of change, both in

nurturing a free press and fostering innovation. At the same time, we will continue to seek international journalists from countries with a more robust press, especially those who would focus on innovation and entrepreneurship.

The program will rely more on Stanford faculty and regional resources.

The university has strong institutional interest in a substantially informed public, and high-quality journalism is an avenue to that goal. A key strength of the Knight Fellowships program, in turn, is the intellectual and research power of Stanford, of Silicon Valley and of the San Francisco Bay/Northern California region.

The program will deepen this relationship in several ways: using the convening power of Stanford and the fellowship program for significant public discussions; using professors and industry experts as advisors and mentors on fellows proposals; sharpening the weekly seminars and other discussions; and brokering collaboration and connections on campus and in Silicon Valley.

The program will enlist Knight Fellowship alumni more directly in the program and in the improvement of journalism.

The program's most valuable resource is the more than 800 journalists from around the world who have been Knight Fellows. The program will create ways for them to actively help the program in its newer configuration. We will ask alumni to recruit and mentor fellowship candidates, and to share their knowledge about the fellowship experience with current fellows.

Because Knight Fellowship alumni are such valuable and passionate advocates for high quality journalism around the world, we will create a more robust alumni network, one that can organize regional gatherings, especially outside the United States, and use former fellows to help solve journalism's thorniest problems.

A summary vision and mission

The John S. Knight Fellowships for Professional Journalists will enable its Fellows, a diverse group of journalists and journalism entrepreneurs, to recognize and meet technological, economic and audience-driven challenges. Focusing on innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership, Fellows will fully utilize their own skills and the resources of Stanford University and Silicon Valley to explore ideas and refine journalistic models that will serve an informed and engaged public and further press freedom around the world.