CENTER FOR INTEGRATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF JOURNALISM

Founded at San Francisco State University in 1990 by former Department of Journalism Chair Betty Medsger, the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism believes that accurate and responsible journalism reflects the changing demographics of the society it serves. The center develops programs and conducts research aimed at recruiting, retaining, and revitalizing journalists and journalism education. It seeks to make journalism more inclusive from the classroom to the newsroom.

CIIJ does this by connecting youth, University students, and professional journalists in efforts to reach common goals. CIIJ works with local community colleges to increase transfer rates and collaborates with the Journalism Association of Community Colleges to increase interest in journalism careers. In addition to annual summer journalism workshops for Bay Area high school students, school visits, and high school fairs, CIIJ also coordinates a Coaching Program, in which a broad network of professional journalists work with the department’s students on a weekly basis. CIIJ coordinates a job fair and a number of other career services for SF State’s and other college and University journalism students.

CIIJ’s major goals include:

• Increase ethnic diversity in the nation’s newsroom and in journalism education programs by developing innovative recruiting, training, and retention programs in the department.
• Improve students’ journalism skills and multicultural sensitivity so that they will excel in the multicultural newsroom.
• Conduct research about diversity and the news to benefit journalism students, educators, professionals, and the community.
• Create innovative programs that will reinforce existing high school journalism programs or replace those that have been lost; address declining writing skills, meet the special needs of bilingual/bicultural students and other under-served or under-represented groups.

CIIJ is the nation’s most recognized University-level institute that addresses the complex issues confronting the news media in serving, covering, and reflecting an increasingly diverse American society. Expanded research on media coverage of ethnic communities, new efforts to track students’ progress and retention, plans to strengthen the Bay Area’s community and ethnic press, and new training for high school journalism advisers rounds out its sweeping approach to achieving diversity in news media.

CIIJ is funded entirely by SF State and private grants, primarily from the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the McCormick Foundation, the Miranda Lux Foundation and the New York Times Company Foundation. CIIJ plays a critical role at this point in U.S. history. The twenty-first century compels news organizations to understand issues of immigration; demographic and lifestyle trends; and social, political, and economic pressures. These issues have combined to make diversity an overriding concern for the news media in everything from the integration of the staffs of newsrooms to the integration of the content of news pages and broadcasts. CIIJ hopes to help the news media fulfill its important responsibilities as gatekeepers for information, ideas, and voices that help shape public opinion and policy.