Raveena Devjee

COMM 4350 01

Dr. Garza

5 December, 2024

Final Paper

During the Fall semester of 2024, I interned with the St. Edward’s University newspaper, Hilltop Views as a reporter/staff writer. Throughout this internship, I wrote articles weekly, some of which were published in print as well as online. I was also able to create Instagram reels which helped with me understanding some of the more multimedia aspects that come with journalism. Not only did I create Instagram reels, but I also created Instagram stories and did live coverage of an event I covered with Hailey Womack, news editor for Hilltop Views. I conducted interviews with many different people and this allowed me to get a little better at the interviewing process and being able to come up with follow up questions on the fly as well as making sure I had questions prepared beforehand. Not only was I involved in the actual writing and editing of articles and videos, but I attended budget meetings weekly and this is when the editors pitch their stories and people take them, as well as attending production which is where the actual making of the newspaper takes place and so I was able to learn the process of how our editors make the paper. I have been able to use the Hilltop Views office so I can have a space to work specifically on my work related to the paper. I was able to complete my internship by taking at least one story from each section of the paper and this experience has really helped me open my eyes to the possibilities of journalism jobs for myself. At first, I thought I wanted to be strictly a music journalist, but after this internship, I have found that I would be happy to be any kind of journalist, especially news and life & arts. This is something I never thought would happen and because of this internship it did, and so for that I am grateful. I have also been working on a solutions journalism story about Texas juvenile detention centers with Hailey due to a grant that Hilltop Views got from a solutions journalism company, and have been attending monthly meetings with the man who is the leader of this organization in order to learn more about the process of solutions stories and gain some advice and knowledge on our article. Lastly, I attended a mental health listening session Hilltop Views put on and helped set it up and take it down. This was a really awesome and important session put on by Hilltop Views and I was glad to have been able to be a part of it.

Now that I have discussed the things I did in my internship this semester, I will now go into an analysis of “The ecology of communities in schools, businesses, societies and ecosystems” by Jeffrey W. Bloom.

One of the key topics discussed in Bloom’s article is the idea of community, specifically healthy ones. He states that “Healthy communities with no lasting pathological patterns can continue for long periods of time… But, just like in relationships, such self-maintaining communities need to work at maintaining themselves, including the matrix of relationships.” (Bloom, 17). In regards to how this relates to my internship with Hilltop Views, I found that Hilltop Views has a very tight knit community, full of people who are all working together towards a common goal. As Bloom says, communities need to maintain themselves, we can not just rely on the fact that our work will be enough to sustain our community, and because of that, a lot of people from Hilltop Views, including myself, are all friends, in and outside of the workplace. We hang out outside of the office and go out together, and when we come back to work, we are all still friends, but we know when the work hat needs to come on and when it is acceptable to take it off. Community is always necessary, even outside the workplace, and so making sure that being able to have a community within the workplace is essential to make sure that people feel that they are welcomed and have a role in the work that they do. Now, I would like to touch on a point he made that although having a community that helps one another all the time and does not judge, there is always a hierarchy within the community, and the same is true for the Hilltop Views community. As I stated before, although the Hilltop Views community is a lovely and friendly place, there is still a type of hierarchy. Of course, our Editor In Chief is of the highest rank, followed by the rest of the editors and then copy editors. However, I would like to note that there is a reason as to why these hierarchies are put in place and it is not just for no reason. This is the way a newspaper is run. Once someone turns in an article, it gets sent to the section editor, then onto copy and lastly to the EIC. This is done to ensure that there are little to no mistakes in the article and for that reason, in a place like a newsroom, hierarchies are important. Bloom also not only talks about hierarchy but holarchy. At first, I was unfamiliar with this term but after reading about it, it makes sense as to why it is rare to see within humans, but I would honestly call a newsroom a holarchy. As Bloom states “Such holarchic communities have been characterized by distributed leadership, distributed responsibility and a sense of distributed ownership.” (Bloom, 14-15). As I described earlier, there is a shared amount of leadership when it comes to the way a newsroom is run and for that reason I would say that Hilltop Views is somewhat a holarchy.

The next thing that Bloom talks about that I would like to touch on is the idea of diversity. Diversity within the workplace is highly important in my opinion, and luckily Hilltop Views has a diverse staff and embraces diversity within the workplace as well as in the articles they produce. As Bloom described the importance of diversity, “Too little diversity greatly limits a community’s ability to adjust to changing circumstances. This effect of such lack of diversity is true not only of biological communities but of human social and professional communities of various kinds as well.” (Bloom, 9). Throughout this internship, I was able to take stories that were of importance to me and stories that create a more diverse news publication. Because of this, different voices are able to be heard that may not have been otherwise, and different perspectives are able to be seen from a more wide lens. For example, if the newsroom was full of straight, white people, there would most likely be little to no coverage of issues that regard queer or people of color, but because of the type of newsroom we have here at St. Edward’s we are able to cover stories that involve queer and people of color, because we have those people in the newsroom. There was one part of this section of the essay that I found really interesting and it was when he said “Many people seem to have the mistaken idea that conformity and uniformity are ‘good’. The religious right thinks life will be better if the whole country is white and Christian (whatever ‘Christian’ means). But reaching such a goal would ultimately be the death knell for society.” (Bloom, 9). I really loved this quote because (Especially after the election we just had), there are so many people who truly believe that diversity is a threat to America and American culture, however, it is so much the opposite of that. Diversity is the backbone of a company, society and country. Without diversity, there would be so many different experiences that people would be missing out on and it allows for different conversations to be heard and different perspectives to be seen. I did find it interesting however, that he mentioned the idea that too much diversity is a bad thing and could be harmful. He says “Too much diversity, however, may be too expensive to maintain. Too many of any type of organism in a biological community can be problematic. Having too many types of predators or even too many predators in a community runs the risk of killing off too many prey so that both the prey and predator populations disappear, which then can lead to system collapse.” (Bloom, 9). This is not something I am comfortable with agreeing with, especially as someone who comes from a very diverse background and is someone who would be considered ‘diverse’ as a queer, immigrant, woman of color.

The next topic that I think is worth touching on Bloom’s idea of relationships and interdependence. In his section about this topic he says “​​At a fundamental level, we have trivialized the way we think about relationships. We only think about relationships in terms of our social connections and how we can get something from the other person – or how we are threatened by other people. We are stuck in an egocentric feedback loop in our relationships to relationships. We seem to have lost the ability to think about the way in which we live in a world of relationships.” (Bloom, 10). I felt like this was an interesting point for him to make, especially when later on he spoke about the metaphor about how students learn about cars, saying “Students do not learn about how a car is built on hundreds of relationships between different parts, let alone that these parts are related to various mining and processing practices that are done by people, who may be treated poorly and paid poorly, and that these practices are depleting the very resources we have become dependent upon. Students do not learn how cars have dramatically changed societies and global interrelationships. They do not learn how cars (and other fossil-fuel-using devices) have changed the biosphere’s carbon cycle and what effect this has on climate, health, ecosystems and so forth.” (Bloom, 10). When we think about the way the Hilltop Views newsroom works, it is all dependent on relationships and how they end up working together. Although a lot of these relationships may seem transactional, that does not mean it is a bad thing. Just like how Bloom discusses how a car is made up of parts that all work together in a relationship, the same applies to how a newsroom works.

I will now discuss some of the problems I encountered throughout my internship and how I addressed these issues etc. Overall, my experience with the internship at Hilltop Views was exemplary, and there is not much for me to complain about. However, one of the frustrations I had was the fact that I felt like in some of my articles, after the editing process, they were not mine anymore, meaning I felt like my own voice was being taken away from the article after it was edited. This issue was very quickly resolved through a professional conversation with the editors and with no further issues in the rest of my articles. In regards to a major issue that happened throughout my internship, there was only one. The issue was in regards to a student who felt like their identity had been erased in an article I wrote about the drag show that was put on here on campus. After being accused that this was a deliberate intention of mine to do so, it was taken up with Lola Claire, our EIC, in order for her to set up a meeting with the student and sort things out. As someone who wants to go into journalism and being a journalist as my career, it matters a lot to me about how my work is perceived and what is said about me as a student journalist and I take pride and care in my work, especially when writing about topics that are somewhat a sensitive topic. Not only that but I was then accused of not being an “active ally of marginalized communities” and I had to explain myself (Which I never thought I would have to do) and essentially tell the student that as a queer, immigrant person of color, I know a thing or two about being a part of a marginalized community. I was then told that the meeting between the student and Lola had taken place and that the student was planning on writing an article about how Hilltop Views had erased their identity as an asexual person. I then received an email from the student, where they explained their concerns and I emailed back to explain the situation to them and some of the struggles I was having with understanding where exactly the issue was. They then emailed me back but I felt like there was nothing more for me to say or do and so I spoke with Lola and she agreed. I had also spoken about it with our faculty advisor, Dr. Yowell, and he agreed that I had done everything I could have in the most professional manner possible and that if they felt like they wanted to write the article they could, but essentially it was all up to Lola what they pushed out. Other than that, there was nothing else that I feel was a major issue within my internship or even with the people I was working with at all. I would say that this is an issue that could come up with journalists, depending on what they are writing about or who, and because of that as I said before, there needs to be diversity in the workplace so that people are more understanding of certain issues and topics. This will ensure that journalists are able to be sensitive when it comes to sensitive topics, kind of like how Bloom discusses diversity in his article. This is a perfect example of why diversity is so important in the majority of work places. If this article was taken by someone who had no type of connection with the queer community, this article may have turned out to be something completely different. The situation with the student may have still happened or it may not have, but at the end of the day, it is all about perspective.

One of the important things I learned from this internship is that not everyone is going to enjoy your work, and that is okay. As a journalist, my job is to spread awareness, spread news and make sure that people are able to understand what is happening in the world around them in an easy and digestible way. Although some people are not going to agree with what you say or write as a journalist or some people may not like the way they are being portrayed in an article after I have conducted an interview with them, but in the end, after they have consented to being interviewed and consented that this may be used in the article, it has nothing to do with them. Unfortunately, the journalist is not responsible for how you want to look on paper and I have learned to become unapologetic for my work, especially when I know for a fact that my work comes from a place of love, care and appreciation. The next thing I learned was the importance of friends in the workplace. I know that work and life is not all about friends and fun, but when these are some of the factors in your life, it makes your job so much more worth it. Being able to know that I was going to walk into an office full of faces I know and love, made doing my job so much easier and so much more fun. I have also learned that this is important because it creates a certain level of responsibility. For example, if I take an article of real importance and then I never end up turning in that article, not only am I letting down the newspaper, but I am essentially letting down my own friends, and no one wants to do that.

After interning and writing this paper, there are a few things I would like future interns to know, no matter what field of work they plan on going into. The first thing is that it is okay to change your mind. You may think that you are going to end up doing one thing and then you do the internship and you realise that it may not be for you or maybe you enjoyed something else within that field and you want to do that instead. It is okay to live and to learn and that is exactly what internships are for. They are made to help you figure out whether this is something you are willing to do for the rest of your life. I would also like to mention that as a student, you are still learning, and your employer should be aware of that. It is okay to ask questions and ask how things work if you are unsure because that is what you are there to do, learn.

Overall, this has easily been one of the best and most experiential learning experiences I have had in my college career and I am extremely grateful I was able to do this. This class has also made it easier to actually take a step back and understand and process what I have learned and I think that is important, especially when it comes to new learning experiences.

Appendix

*For the appendix, I will list the title of my works with a link and then where it was published*

**“Jake Paul set to fight Mike Tyson… again?”**

<https://www.hilltopviewsonline.com/29827/viewpoints/jake-paul-set-to-fight-mike-tyson-again/>

This article was published online and in print.

**“Voting polls on campus allows students to be involved in upcoming 2024 presidential election”**

<https://www.hilltopviewsonline.com/29911/featured-stories/voting-polls-on-campus-allows-students-to-be-involved-in-upcoming-2024-presidential-election/>

This article was published online and on the front cover of print.

**“Eastside Kings Festival showcases historical soul, gospel, jazz, blues music of East Austin”**

<https://www.hilltopviewsonline.com/30046/life-and-arts/eastside-kings-festival-showcases-historic-soul-gospel-jazz-blues-music-of-east-austin/>

This article was co-written by myself and news editor Hailey Womack.

This article was published online and in print.

**“St. Edward’s Men's Soccer team left bittersweet after tying 2-2 against Eastern New Mexico University”**

<https://www.hilltopviewsonline.com/30130/sports/st-edwards-mens-soccer-team-left-bittersweet-after-tying-2-2-against-eastern-new-mexico-university/>

This article was published online.

**“St. Edward’s students strut their stuff at the Ballroom Extravaganza”**

<https://www.hilltopviewsonline.com/30208/uncategorized/st-edwards-students-strut-their-stuff-at-the-ballroom-extravaganza/>

This article was published online and in print for the photo spread.

**“Civic lab hosts election night watch party to civically engage students”**

<https://www.hilltopviewsonline.com/30368/news/civics-lab-hosts-election-night-watch-party-to-civically-engage-students/>

This article was published online.

**“Jake Paul ‘beats’ Mike Tyson in highly anticipated boxing match”**

<https://www.hilltopviewsonline.com/30524/life-and-arts/jake-paul-beats-mike-tyson-in-highly-anticipated-boxing-match/>

This article was published online.

**“St. Edward’s women’s soccer beat Texas A&M International University 2-0”**

<https://www.hilltopviewsonline.com/30277/sports/st-edwards-womens-soccer-beat-texas-am-international-university-2-0/>

This article was published online.

**Instagram Reel for the Hilltop Views account.**

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DB7eS0IMs_d/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==>

**Eastside Kings Festival live coverage (Saved in highlights and is still able to be viewed)**

<https://www.instagram.com/hilltopviews?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet&igsh=ZDNlZDc0MzIxNw==>

*Word count (Including appendix) = 3246*

*Word count (Excluding appendix) = 2965*