



College Media Review

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Benchmark survey provides snapshots of college media

150 members provide information on budgets, locations and operations

Special to College Media Review

A benchmark survey of members of the national College Media Association provides snapshots of how student print, broadcast and web media operate, how they're supported, where they're located, and how many student and professional staff they employ, among other findings.

"Many of our members routinely ask questions on our listserv about school demographics. That prompted the board to recognize the need to compile this sort of information and make it available to our

membership," said Rachel McClelland, vice president for CMA Member Services.



The association conducted the online survey in April and early May 2017. A total of 150 respondents participated, but the goal is to gain a broader response with future surveys, McClelland said.

CMA President Kelley Lash said the survey helps the organization answer questions, track trends and make predictions, but it is not comprehensive.

“The board believes our membership will benefit from the information we are seeking from this survey—and from the surveys to come. The information we obtain informs our discussions with others about our organization. For example, if we have queries from media about who our membership serves and what types of organizations are represented, the survey provides us with the information we need to back up our claims,” Lash said. “I hope we can increase participation in future surveys so our information can be even more reliable and of greater use to our members.”

McClelland said she was surprised by a few of the survey’s findings.

“My sense was that magazines are making a resurgence but few of the respondents advise magazines; and a majority of the respondents are aligned with academic rather than student affairs units,” she said.

The survey found, among several other things;

- 5 percent said their schools have student newspapers and online student media, and 75 percent said student staff are paid.
- 3 percent employ student staffs between 10 and 29, while 40.1 percent employ staffs of 50 or more.
- 3 percent said their schools house a journalism/media or communication program.
- 3 percent are professors with release time, and about 35.3 percent are full-time professional staff.
- 6 percent employ one full-time professional staff member, and 24 percent employ two professional staff.

- 9 percent said ad revenue is flat, while 12.7 said revenue had risen.

“These results will be helpful to members who are asked to gather data from other schools in order to push for changes at their own,” Lash said. “So often we have to rely on anecdotal evidence and educated guesses, but now we will have numbers to back up those stories.”

More than 700 college media advisers belong to CMA. Members advise newspapers, magazines, yearbooks, TV and radio stations, literary journals, and web media.

Nearly 100 percent—97.16 percent—said the mission of student media at their school is “to provide news and information for the campus community.”

Slightly more than 91 percent said the mission is to provide career-related experience, and 69 percent said it is to provide activity for student involvement.

Fifth-three percent of respondents said the mission is to provide a “designated forum.”

Full survey results are available to members at www.collegemedia.org

