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**Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism Aims to Create Journalism Leaders**

*New Grant Establishes Knight Case Studies Initiative  
and Brings Real-World Experience to the Classroom*

New York, June 22, 2006 – Journalism schools do a good job of turning out reporters, but creating journalism leaders is a more difficult challenge. To address this problem, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation has awarded the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism a \$1.25 million grant to establish the Knight Case Studies Initiative to promote journalism leadership. The initiative will integrate a multimedia method of instruction involving real-world case studies into the school's curriculum. Students will observe the process of making the news from inside working newsrooms to learn about the editorial, ethical and economic aspects of the newsroom decision-making process.

“The Knight Case Study Initiative will allow us to focus on the leadership development and critical thinking skills our graduates will need as they go on to lead the profession,” said Nicholas Lemann, dean of the journalism school. “I am confident our efforts will have a lasting impact on journalism, and will help make the world a better place, because I believe good journalism does that.”

The case studies will show the real-time ethical, management and leadership issues a publisher, executive editor or senior correspondent considers in making decisions at the highest levels of the profession.

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Major news organizations will provide raw materials for the case studies, including allowing the journalism educators to capture audio and video footage in their newsrooms. Columbia's Center for New Media Teaching and Learning will help professors shape the cases into interactive modules. These multimedia-based contributions, coupled with classroom discussion, will teach the process of newsroom decision-making in ways that further the creation of fair, accurate, contextual news in the public interest.

Using this model, patterned after the process refined at Harvard Business School, students will be able to see real world situations unfold from inside working newsrooms. As students move through the case studies, teachers will have them make their own decisions before revealing what actually happened.

"Journalists learn by doing," said Eric Newton, director of Knight Foundation's Journalism Initiative program. "The best journalism educators know that they need to offer more than lectures and reading assignments. We hope this grant will help Columbia develop a library of case studies that all journalism schools will want to use."

The grant will provide for the creation and production of a dozen innovative teaching cases over the next four years. The most popular of these will be posted publicly on the school's Web site and at News University, the Poynter Institute's e-learning center for journalists. The long-range goal is to create a new class at the journalism school, and help the school move toward the establishment of a leadership center. By providing powerful new tools for teachers and professionals, the center will seek to change the way decision-making in journalism is taught in this country.

Columbia has already tested three cases. The first follows one day's news cycle at *The Washington Post* from the point of view of Leonard Downie Jr., the paper's executive editor, who decides what to put on the front page. Another looks at the reporting from Knight Ridder's Washington bureau on Iraq's weapons capabilities during the buildup to and aftermath of the 2003 invasion. Knight Ridder was significantly more skeptical about those capabilities than most American news organizations, and the case illustrates

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how to question the official version of the news on national security matters. The third case leads students through an analysis of the data available to reporters covering Hurricane Katrina.

The partnership between Columbia and the Knight Foundation is the latest in an ongoing relationship. Knight also supports the Knight-Bagehot Fellowship Program in Economics and Business Journalism; provides funding for the *Columbia Journalism Review*; trains education reporters through the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media; supports curriculum reform and advanced investigative reporting through the Carnegie-Knight Initiative for the Future of Journalism Education; and endowed a Knight Chair in Business Journalism held by Sylvia Nasar, one of 19 Knight Chairs in Journalism across the country.

### **About the Knight Foundation**

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes journalism excellence worldwide and invests in the communities where the Knight Brothers owned newspapers. Since its creation in 1950, the foundation has invested more than \$275 million to advance journalism quality and freedom of expression. For more information on Knight's work, visit [www.knightfdn.org/annual](http://www.knightfdn.org/annual).

### **About the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University**

For almost a century, the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism has been preparing journalists in a program that stresses academic rigor, ethics, journalistic inquiry and professional practice. Founded by Joseph Pulitzer in 1912, the school offers Master of Science, Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

### **About Columbia University**

Founded in 1754 as King's College, Columbia University in the City of New York is the fifth oldest institution of higher learning in the United States and today is one of the world's leading academic and research institutions. For more information about Columbia University, visit [www.columbia.edu](http://www.columbia.edu).

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