

By Maria Zuniga
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Eager print and broadcast journalism students here at William Paterson University have started the Society of Professional Journalist (SPJ). The SPJ is a national organization of journalist that offers scholarships, resume workshops, and networking events. Over the summer the Communications Department strategically selected SPJ's 11 founding members. Since the 2017 fall semester began the SPJ founding members along with Dr. Nick Hirshon, professor of communications and faculty adviser to the SPJ chapter, have been working hard to get the chapter running.

“Forming an SPJ chapter is one of the best ways to strengthen the journalism culture on a campus. By uniting students of all journalistic interest—print, broadcast, online, and social media—the campus chapters cultivate an atmosphere of inclusion,” said Hirshon. “And they encourage journalism students to think about their education more holistically, not just about what happens in the classroom, but about continuing conversations about the news industry in the hallways and the dorms.”

The founding members hope to create an active journalism environment on campus. Using all of their skills and collaborating together

The first step in getting involved is a guest speaker series called the Reality Check: Insight from the Insiders. The chapter also plans to hold movie nights with a journalism theme and a trip to the press box at the Prudential Center. In addition the SPJ chapter looks forward to doing community service work in Wayne. From volunteering in soup kitchens to visiting the local high schools and hold journalism workshops. The chapter is interested for dedicated journalism students who want to work towards achieving all the goals stated above.

The first event the SPJ chapter organized with the support of the Communication Department was the guest speaker series, which has been a success. The speaker series ran the first Wednesday of each month starting September. The first speaker was former *Newsday* reporter Sarah Armaghan and the second speaker was staff writer for *amNewYork* Lisa Colangelo. Students are encouraged to attend these lectures to learn the do's and don't about the field. The SPJ hopes to continue the guest speaker series every semester. They are currently looking into bring professionals from all fields of communications to appeal to all students.

“The Reality Check is really helpful for students because it brings professionals in to show what our future professions are really like,” said Yuliet Ruiz, a print journalism and political science major student at William Paterson University. “It was very informative and I like that we could ask questions.”

The chapter will be holding a bake sale Thursday, October 19 during common hour, to begin fundraising. An upcoming event to attend is SPJ'S screening of the award-winning movie *Spotlight* outdoors, on October 25th at 7 p.m. at Hobart Hall. On Wednesday,

November 1 the SPJ will have the last speaker of the Reality Check, Anthony DelMundo a photographer for the New York *Daily News* at 6 p.m. in the Martin Room, Hobart Hall. Come out to these events and see what SPJ is all about!