

## **The World Press at the Sonoran Desert Conference**

Over the past three years, we have been testing a new vision of the World Press. Our objective with this, more robust, world press experience is to provide a more realistic and immersive environment for all conference participants, while simultaneously engaging the students participating as World Press in a way that is as demanding and fulfilling as participating as a country delegate. This parallel simulation allows the Sonoran Desert Conference to incorporate increasingly important lessons regarding media bias, social media influence, and critical media consumption.

### **Program Objectives:**

#### **Goals:**

1. Provide an engaging and educational facsimile of the effect of the 24-hour media cycle/digital media for those students participating as delegates and an in-depth study of the influence of culture, press freedom, and geography on media and media consumption.
2. Create a level of engagement that is as challenging and fulfilling as the experience for country delegates.
3. Encourage research and meta-discussion around biases in global media, its sources and consequences, and encourage skeptical consumption of media.
4. Provide timely press coverage for the events and topics unfolding within the conference that is engaging to delegates, the network of alumni, and the conference community.
5. Provide a forum for the more dynamic release of crisis-simulation information, including siloed or incomplete information, biases in reporting, and misinformation; creating a realistic and engaging crisis scenario and discussion and a more engaging consumption method for delegates not directly impacted by the scenario without unduly increasing the burden of production on the members of the press in-conference
6. Encourage continued engagement by alumni of the conference by retaining followership year-over-year.

## World Press Expectations

### Conference-Wide:

We encourage everyone attending the Sonoran Desert Conference to take advantage of the unique opportunity to enhance their simulation by engaging with the World Press.

- Country Delegates, Secretariat, Coaches, and Guests should endeavor to interact with the various media outlets within their in-conference roles.
- We strongly encourage Program Advisors to prepare students to have access to the conference World Press via Twitter. The feeds are public, no log-in is required to view the posts, but engagement (following, liking, responding, and retweeting) is encouraged and will enhance the experience for delegates and the Sonoran Desert Conference Community.
- Media, propaganda, press freedom, and bias should be included in country discussions during conference preparation.
- Country Teams should identify the media outlets most friendly and most antagonistic as part of their conference preparation and research how their respective governments interact with media and plan ways to incorporate that into their negotiation strategies and role play.

### Outlet Team Expectations:

World Press Outlet Teams at the Sonoran Desert Conference are expected to prepare at the same level of rigor as country teams. World Press Reporters do not represent any specific nation, but rather the biases, style, and requirements of their particular publication. Outlet Teams should come prepared to engage in the conference representing their publication. To that end, teams must submit the following with their school's conference materials.

Individual Pre-Conference Preparation – Each reporter on the team should prepare one full-length article on a topic of their choosing

- 500-700 words
- Basic AP Style principles
- Topics should reflect those covered by the outlet and be relevant to the conference themes

Team Pre-Conference Preparation – Each team should prepare one video-recorded news broadcast and one media bias essay.

- Television News Desk broadcast
  - o No longer than 3 minutes
  - o Production value: simple, scripted, and creative; recorded on a cell phone is fine
  - o Should demonstrate an understanding of the differences between print and TV news
  - o Topics should be chosen from those written by team reporters in the full-length articles
- Media Bias Essay
  - o 3-5 pages
  - o MLA style
  - o Should include:
    - Discussion of media/press freedom in the region
    - Brief history of the press outlet being modeled
    - Identification of the biases of the modeled outlet, its sources, and how it manifests

- Discussion of how the biases and history will inform reporting at the conference

At-Conference Work-Product – Each reporter is expected to

- draft and publish regular tweets from the perspective of their outlet
- work with teammates and the editorial staff to prepare and publish a Live News Desk Broadcast
- draft a full-length article on a subject of their choice
- Grow outlet readership by encouraging peers to follow Outlet handles

## Program Structure

### Organizational Structure:

Editorial Staff (Secretariat):

AP Editor-In-Chief: Head of all publication

- Enforces journalistic integrity and quality publishing
- Leads 1-2 “bull-pen” meetings per day with all Outlet Teams (Bureaus) present
- Coaches News Directors on content, grammar, and style
- Distributes AP Reports and other third-party news to News Directors

AP Deputy Editor/Broadcasting Director

- Coaches Outlet Teams preparing and shooting News Desk reports via Twitter Live
- Approves scripts for News Desk reports
- Serves as Producer to News Desk Productions

Conference Participants: Teams should be between 3 and 5 students, News Directors act as team captains and chairs for their respective outlets. News Directors should expect a small time commitment pre-conference to work with the Editor in Chief and the Deputy Editor.

News Director (Committee Chair):

- Hold regular Outlet Staff Meetings to discuss leads, give assignments, and develop stories.
- Work with Editor and Reporters to publish copy for the publication
- Assist reporters in preparing copy, editing drafts, and maintaining voice
- Draft and broadcast a tv news program with their Reporters and the AP Deputy

Reporters (Delegates):

- Find, draft, and publish news as it occurs during conference
- Report to News Director on prospective stories for the News Desk

### Simulation Structure:

Five outlets are available, representing various biases:

- [MBC](#) – Mesa Broadcasting Company (NBC/BCC)
- [La Prensa Mesa](#) – Latin tabloid (La Prensa, Nicaragua)
- [Al-Mesa](#) – A Lebanese, Pro-Sunni Islamist paper (Aljazeera)
- MesAfrica24 – Sub-Saharan African Media Centered Out of Nigeria (News24)\*

- MCCNA – East Asian Media Outlet Centered out of Singapore (CNA)\*

A school fielding an outlet team should bring between 3 and 5 reporters, including one News Director. Publications must have at minimum 3 reporters, teams bringing fewer than three reporters may be reassigned to bolster other outlets.

**Simulation Systems:**

Twitter – Each Regional Publication has a separate Twitter account owned by the conference and reused perennially. \*Not represented during testing, Twitter accounts forthcoming.

Print Paper – The best articles will be published for the conference as the AP Wire when participants arrive on Friday and at the opening plenary.