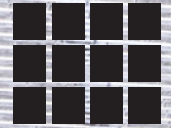


the CONTACT SHEET

JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

2022 ANNUAL



TOGETHER AGAIN

In Georgia! In Person!



PRESIDENT'S PEN

We got the band back together, and oh, what show UGA and UPAA played!

From a record number of corporate partners in attendance to incorporating video producers we set many records in 2022. But perhaps the greatest accomplishment was getting our family back together for the reunion we had been missing for three years.

The team at UGA exceeded expectations by providing inspiring speakers, excellent opportunities for professional development, and an environment that fostered inclusion, creativity, and renewal. UPAA finds itself at a good and unique place that is full of opportunity.

As we look at our membership and the symposium, trends emerge. These trends reveal a healthy organization, one that is evolving, and most importantly growing.

1. Half of the attendees had never been to an in-person symposium.
2. Seventy percent of our members have been in their current position for 10 years or less.
3. Several universities sent 3 or more staff to the symposium.
4. Just under half of the membership have some video responsibilities.

Looking to the future, one decision the board will tackle is how we support and/or incorporate video producers into UPAA. Do we fully integrate? Do we help video producers form their own organization with their own symposium? Or do we hold simultaneous events where members can choose the programming that best matches their needs?

I only wish the band could have played an encore this year and stayed just a little bit longer. But, with one down and one to go, see you all in South Bend.

Glenn Carpenter, President UPAA
Moraine Valley Community College



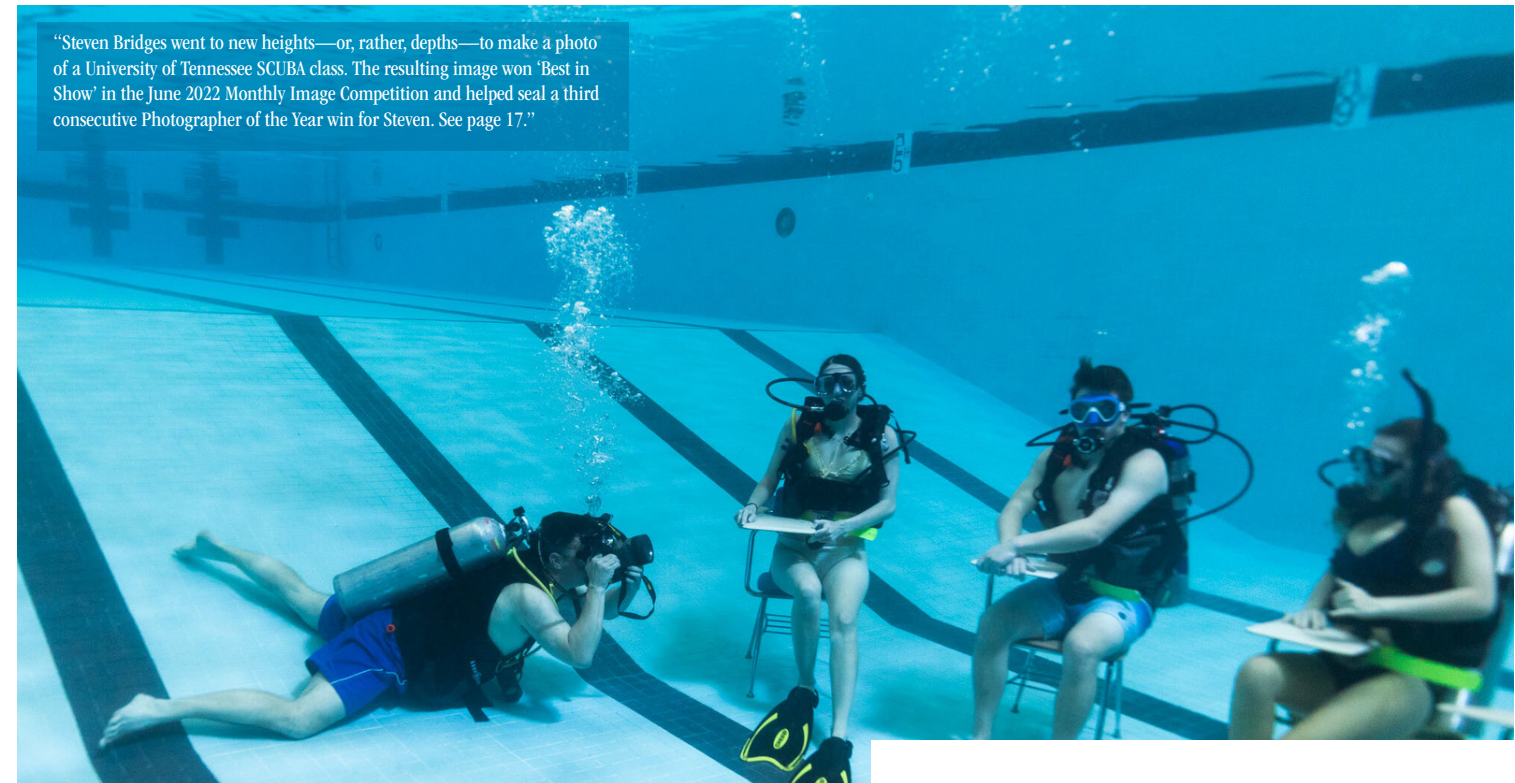
the CONTACT SHEET 
JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Contact Sheet is the annual journal of the University Photographers' Association of America. Founded in 1961, UPAA has sought to advance the profession of university photographer through networking and continuing education.

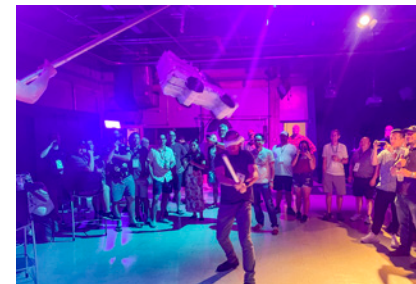
Editor: Matt Cashore, University of Notre Dame
Design: Lotta Barnes

For more information on UPAA or The Contact Sheet, visit www.upaa.org.

University of Georgia
Assistant Director
of Photography
Andrew Davis Tucker
photographed the 2022
Symposium attendees
in Sanford Stadium.
UPAA was together
again for the first time
since 2019.



Jeff Fitlow of Rice University won the 2022 Photoshelter Grant to help him with a personal project to help preserve the history of Blues music in Houston, Page 8.



A piñata in the shape of a campus delivery truck? In the words of one first-time Symposium attendee, "That's normal here." Read more about the fun and fellowship of the first in-person Symposium since 2019, Page 9.



Sure, we climb ladders on the job, but what about climbing the career ladder? Read about successful strategies for advancement in—or in some cases out of—your university role, Page 20.



The UPAA blog has tips, reviews and inspiration available 24/7/365 on the UPAA website. Preview some stories in the coming year, such as the University of Kentucky's Mark Cornelison and how he uses large format film photography on the job, Page 27.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 The Week that Was
- 6 Board Announcements & Sponsor News
- 8 Membership Report
- 9 Re-Compose Symposium
- 14 2022 Annual Awards
- 17 Photographer of the Year
- 20 Career Advancement
- 25 Salary Transparency in Higher Education

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THE WEEK THAT WAS



[RE-COMPOSE]

After two years on Zoom, UPAAgathered in-person in Athens, Georgia for a week of fellowship and learning. See the video “The Week That Was” by scanning the QR code:



A LOT OF HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

By Amanda Pitts, Grand Valley State University,
UPAA Board Corporate Relations Chair

Did you borrow a cool piece of gear or get a hands-on demo at the 2022 Symposium? Or maybe you had a free sensor cleaning from an expert tech?

UPAA's Corporate Partners are a big part of making the Symposium a wonderful,

informative, and rewarding event. 12 different companies presented in the vendor room this year and provided prizes for the award winners and raffle. In addition, our excellent presenter lineup is made possible with their support.

Corporate Partners support UPAA beyond the Symposium as well. Throughout the year, they're available in the Facebook group or by direct contact. They can answer questions, assist with repairs, and may be able to point you in the direction of any educational discounts or special promotions they are currently running, so don't forget to check in with our partners prior to making purchases!

They support us, we support them, and it is a beautiful thing. If you need contact information for any of our partner, please feel free to contact me at any time.

The vendor showcase room in the Georgia Center.
(photo by Matt Cashore)



Hail and Farewell

UPAA President Glenn Carpenter presents the President's Award to outgoing UPAA Board member Susan McSpadden of Johnson County Community College. (photo by Jay Ferchaud)

Susan McSpadden of Johnson Community College ended her tenure on the UPAA board, and Derek Eckenroth of Bob Jones University was newly elected. Derek has been at Bob Jones in Greenville, SC (his Alma Mater) for 9 years.

"I ran for the board because I saw an opportunity to grow and push myself in the craft I'm so passionate about and more importantly give back to the association that has been such a big blessing and influence to me," Derek said.



Eckenroth



BILL AND AMY FELLOWSHIP



Bill Bitzinger stands with some of the recipients of the Bill and Amy Fellowship. From left to right: Bill Bitzinger, Molly Bartels (2018), Brett Roseman (2017), and Chelsea Purgahn (2022). (photo by Matt Yeoman)

Retired Ferris State photographer Bill Bitzinger and his wife Amy Packard established the Bill and Amy Fellowship to cover the Symposium fee for one first time attendee.

Chelsea Purgahn of St. Edward's University in Austin, TX was the 2022 recipient.

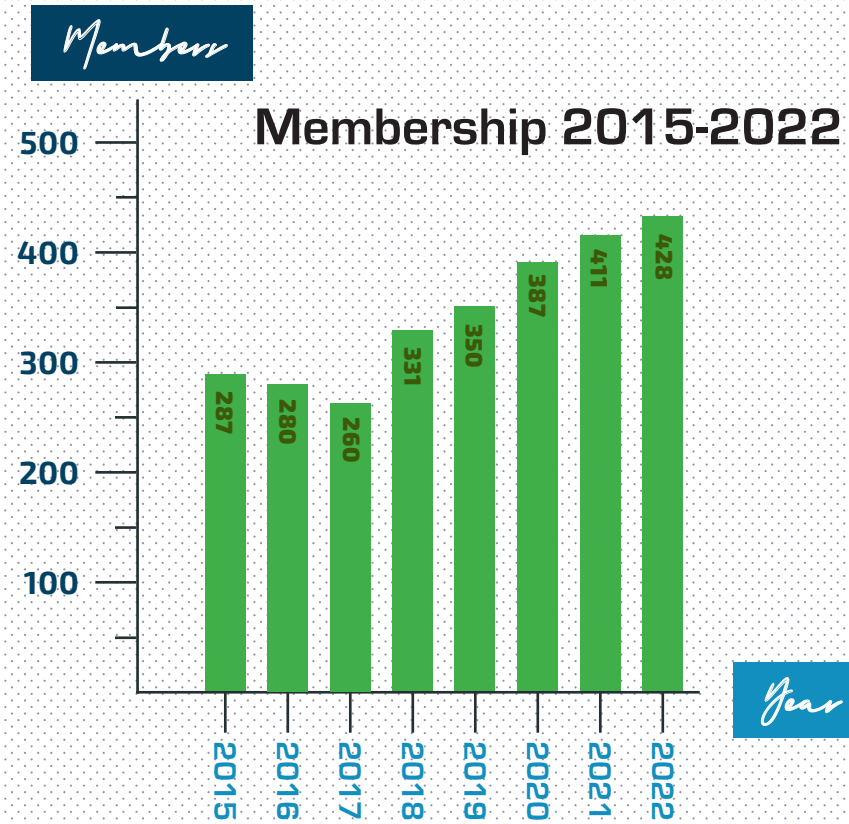
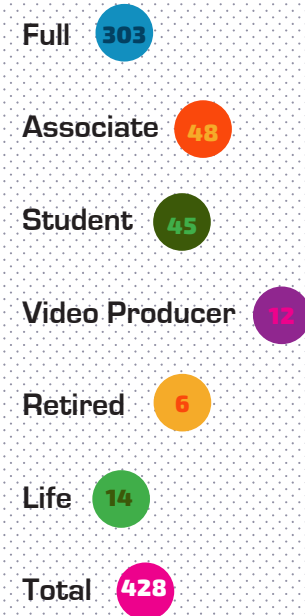
"I've enjoyed being a part of the UPAA community since joining in August 2021. Susan McSpadden let me know about the Bill and Amy Fellowship and encouraged me to apply. I am the lone photographer/videographer at St. Edward's University, a small liberal arts university, so this fellowship would be invaluable in helping my team send me to Athens. I was so surprised and excited to find out from Bill himself that I had received the fellowship! My experience at the symposium was everything I hoped it would be and more. I gained inspiration for my own photo and video work from speakers and peers, and appreciated the thoughtful panel on diversity, equity and inclusion. It was interesting to learn how folks might do things similarly or differently at their schools, and astonishing to see the vast array of work that could be produced in a university setting. I now have a nationwide network of colleagues and friends to learn from and be inspired by!"

Thanks to Bill and Amy's fellowship, I was able to experience all of this valuable programming and networking. I am so grateful for their generosity and am already looking forward to learning and seeing everyone at the next symposium!"

Look for an email from the UPAA board in spring of 2023 with information on applying for the 2023 Bill and Amy Fellowship.

Membership report

Current Members



Jeff Fitlow Awarded Photoshelter Grant

By Jeff Fitlow, Rice University

I've always wanted to re-visit and edit some of my old black and white negatives. These are mostly blues musicians in and around Houston in the late 2000's. Many of these musicians have passed on and I would love to keep their memory alive. I am working on a project to digitize selected negatives for print and show. My dream is to ultimately make a book. I will eventually donate all my negatives to the Houston Blues Archive located in the Rice University library.

As we all know personal projects are costly. This grant will really jumpstart my work. Maybe even get it to a place where I can apply for more grants. Photoshelter is such an amazing company. The fact that they always come to our events and offer these grants tells me how much they care about university photographers. I am extremely grateful for this award and hope to pay it forward someday.

As part of his Photoshelter Grant application, Jeff Fitlow submitted this photo of Houston blues singer Jewel Brown, which he made in 1997 with a Mamiya 645.



Re-Compose Symposium provided an opportunity for friendship, development, and growth

By Lyndsie Schlink, Wake Forest University

From the smiling faces, and countless hugs, to the passionate and heartfelt keynote speakers, to the praising of our accomplished peers at the awards dinner.

I've been blessed to attend eight symposiums. This year I reached out to other members who had also been to several in-person symposiums to put together our collective experiences from this year's conference.

This year's Re-Compose Technical Symposium, our first in-person symposium in three years, offered the first-ever video track.

Brett Roseman of Des Moines University of Medicine & Health Sciences, a six-time symposium attendee, was happy that this year's symposium offered a mix of photo and video sessions. "Since my experience and education leans more towards photography, I don't have

extensive knowledge of advanced post-production skills like a full-time videographer/video editor," he said. "I decided to attend both advanced post-production sessions— audio and color, as well as Aquinas College photographer/videographer Matt Yeoman's video viewing/Q & A session. I was pleased to learn about some new stock audio/sound effect options, software plugins, and was inspired by other videographer's projects that gave me new ideas on how to approach my own video projects when I return to campus."

We were fortunate again this year to have an extensive list of corporate sponsors (thanks to our corporate relations chair Amanda Pitts). They helped us connect with award winning, inspirational photographers/videographers from a variety of specialties, who presented keynotes, hands-on workshops, and live demonstrations.



The University of Georgia TV/photo studio became the hospitality room for the 2022 Symposium. (photo by David Caselli)

The highlight of this year's symposium for University of Florida photographer, Jesse Jones, a six-time symposium attendee, was Sony sponsored Eli Reed's talk. "His emphasis on making the work and not letting any preconceived ideas or errant thoughts get in the way of making images was an important thing. It can be easy to fall into patterns of making the same images at events/functions that happen annually. So, the reminder to go into each shoot really looking at what is happening in that moment was especially timely and relevant to me," he said.

Reed also mentioned that "It's not just looking for a picture it's looking at life," Jones

continued, "It might just be one photo, but it's like an essay, because you're trying to tell the unspoken through your image."

The Nikon Shootout, and the new B&H and Roberts Camera co-sponsored Video Shootout took us all to downtown Athens for an evening of exploring the theme of 'light and shadow.' This year's photo shootout winner was Mark DiOrio from Colgate University, and our inaugural video shootout winner was Alfred Greenbaum from Lafayette College (see sidebar).

The highlight of the week for myself and many other attendees, was Nikon Ambassador Kristi Odom's presentation. On more than one occasion I caught myself wiping away tears as I was overcome with emotions from viewing

her amazing work and hearing the heartfelt stories behind her imagery. "Photography has taught me to not overlook the little things, there could be something so magnificent right at our feet," Odom said.

Sarah Ritter, Western Illinois University photo lab manager and four-time symposium attendee said, "My favorite session this year was without a doubt the presentation from Kristi Odom. I loved getting to hear about the events she's photographed, and the emotions that drive her to create, as well as her scientific use of shapes in her compositions. Odom's passion was so contagious, and I found her presentation to be energizing and motivating."



Alfred Greenbaum in his Lafayette College office with his prizes courtesy of B&H Photo and Roberts Camera.

Video Track Draws New Attendees

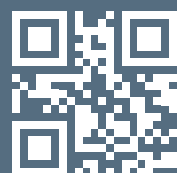
By Alfred Greenbaum, Lafayette College

My perception of University Photographers' Association of America was only what I had seen on the Facebook page: A supportive community of members around the country posting on a regular basis about ideas, struggles, and industry-related news that I would not otherwise see on my social media feeds. I got the sense that this was a close-knit group, but I was still incredibly fascinated by what I saw on the first day of the symposium. Each person I met was incredibly friendly, welcoming, and willing to talk about anything and everything related to our industry. It

was like a big family reunion that I had just walked into, and I very soon found myself to be one of the family.

As a first-time attendee of UPAA and full-time videographer at Lafayette, I came into the week expecting to meet some great people and learn more about how to be an effective media professional in higher education, both in video and photo. My expectations were met even more than I could have predicted, having made friends along the way and adding some awesome prizes to my gear collection.

Read an expanded version of Alfred Greenbaum's Symposium experience on the UPAA Blog:



Five-time symposium attendee, Derrick Turner, Michigan State university photographer, also loved Odom's presentation. "Odom stressed again and again her passion for what she loves to shoot. She also mentioned her ability to quickly see and react to the environment to capture great images. I was especially pleased to know we share that ability. Watching her short films

only confirmed my belief that we are all storytellers."

Whether it's checking out cameras, lenses, or lighting from our vendors, or attending one of the workshop sessions, members are always excited by the opportunity to get their hands on new gear to explore.

Board member and California State-Chico photographer, Jason Halley, a four-time

symposium attendee said, "The opportunity to test out the Westcott gear in addition to asking questions to an expert in-person answered the questions that I could not have determined online. Being able to hold the gear in-person, get a sense of scale, and test it on my camera gives me a deeper understanding of the real benefits of implementing the system into our workflow."



Top photo: The University of Georgia staff celebrate after long wait to host the first in-person Symposium since 2019. (photo by Jay Ferchaud) Middle: Kevin Liles does a live demonstration in Sanford Stadium. (photo by Judith Pishnery) Bottom: Nikon-sponsored speaker Kristi Odom gave an inspiring presentation. (photo by Derek Eckenroth)

Fujifilm-sponsored speaker Bobbie Lane's workshop, 'Portraits: Natural and Flash' gave us a chance to play around in groups with external lighting and modifiers as we explored dramatic, flattering, and unique angle portraiture. She reminded us that "Perseverance furthers," and "You don't have to show everything, just focus on the essence of what is going on."

The hospitality room was held in the UGA photo/video studio with members overflowing into the hotel lobby and outdoor patio areas. Many nights the hospitality extended into the early hours of the next morning.

One-night, Central Washington University photographer David Dick, arrived at the hospitality room with a white truck piñata he had constructed over the course of 2 ½ hours in his hotel room. "You know when you get asked to photograph a location on campus, and

when you show up there's a facilities truck parked in front of it? This is our opportunity to get back at those trucks," he said. The piñata was a big hit (pun intended), and lots of laughs were shared, as members stepped up to take a swing.

Retired Ferris State University photographer Bill Bitzinger took studio portraits of members, and DiOrio and University of Kentucky photographer Mark Cornelison taught members about their 4x5 cameras with DiOrio making a handful of portraits of members in the hotel courtyard one afternoon.

MSU's Derrick Turner summed up the Symposium this way: "I'm fortunate to belong to an organization with members who are passionate, kind and so willing to share what they know with others." It's refreshing to be around people who know the difference between being friendly and being a friend."

First Symposium Was Unexpected -And That's Good!

By AJ Lopez III, Midwestern State University

AJ Lopez is Assistant Director of Digital Marketing and Social Media at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. The 2022 Symposium was his first opportunity to attend an in-person Symposium.

In our current photography world, it's normal to run into a spirit of competition: Every person for themselves. Photographers are not willing to share secrets of how they took that shot and how they composed that photo. That is what I expected during the week of the symposium. What I experienced was the complete opposite.

I heard random shutter sounds during a lecture or workshop. That was normal.

A room was full of photography equipment with bodies and lenses that were almost all checked out because everyone wanted to try the newest gear they've thought about buying for the last year. This was normal here.

Taking a road trip during the symposium with Jeff Fitlow and Mike Schmidt to a random barbecue place over an hour away from Athens felt normal. Even as we continued to randomly make stops to take photos of things we saw on the side of the road. Generally, if I drive alone, this will make my commute longer because I have to take one more shot of something I saw on the side of the road. That will only sound normal to a photographer.



The Symposium was everything a photographer thinks about when they're the lone shooter on an assignment, late at night, just waiting for the event to finish because the speaker has gone over their allotted time. They haven't eaten or sat down for the last three hours.

It wasn't about settings, but how this photo made you feel. Did that photo make the impact you were seeking?

We all go through the funk of being on the same campus every day, trying to reinvent new images of the same columns we pass by every day. The Symposium organizers could not have picked a better campus, being so close to downtown with real nightlife a step away from the University of Georgia, allowing us to practice our campus and city photography in an intimate environment.

I made some good friends during the symposium and now know where to see their work on Instagram. If they're like me, they'll post once or twice a month because we're all critical of our photographs and know we can do better.

As a first-timer I felt comfortable at the symposium. Maybe it's because we're educators first, and we thrive from working in an environment that prepares young adults to take the future in a better direction. Or maybe, we're all a bunch of good people who are photographers, too.



The landmark Arch at the entrance to the campus of the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. (photo by Brett Roseman)

To summarize, I would like to share a quote from Odom, "I want to push you all to live your life with gratitude for today, gratitude for this crazy world we're all given. We have such a short period of time on this earth, and we have the tools to capture and share what we love, to

celebrate life, to celebrate the world with everyone. I want to push you guys to all get out there and share what you love."

Can't wait to see you all next year at Notre Dame.



Host one for the Gipper! (photo by Matt Cashore)

NOTRE DAME IN 2023

Céad Míle Fáilte!

That's Irish for "A hundred thousand welcomes." Come to Notre Dame for the 2023 UPAU Symposium and find out how a university founded by French religious came to be known as The Fighting Irish.

2022 Annual Awards

Lifetime Membership

Chuck Barry
Nancy Evelyn

Master of the Profession

Phyllis Graber Jensen - Bates College

Chris Hughes Distinguished Service Award

Jay Drowns - Utah Valley University

Board Appreciation Award

Toya Webb - Elgin Community College
Scott Piner - Elgin Community College

Nikon Shoot Out

Mark DiOrio - Colgate University

Video Shoot Out-Sponsored by Roberts and B&H

Alfred Greenbaum - Lafayette College

Photoshelter Grant

Jeff Fitlow - Rice University

Monthly Image Competition

Overall winner - Steven Bridges

Publications Competition

General Publication

1st Place - Grand Valley State University
2nd Place - George Fox University
3rd Place - Coastal Carolina University
Honorable Mention - Towson University

Poster

1st Place - Towson University
2nd Place - Southern Virginia University
3rd Place - Elgin Community College

Viewbook

1st Place - University of Iowa
2nd Place - Bucknell University
3rd Place - Towson University

Publication Cover

1st Place - Illinois State University
2nd Place - Towson University
3rd Place - California State University Chico
Honorable Mention - Utah Valley University

Printed Advertisement

1st Place - Utah Valley University
2nd Place - Des Moines University
3rd Place - Towson University

Specialty Book

1st Place - Utah Valley State University

Narrative Series Competition

Online Photo Essay

1st Place - Kendra Stanley-Mills
2nd Place - Kendra Stanley-Mills
3rd Place - Kendra Stanley-Mills
Honorable Mention - Scott Kissell
Honorable Mention - Scott Kissell

Social Media

1st Place - Eric Bronson
2nd Place - Ryan Young
3rd Place - Ryan Young
Honorable Mention - Darren Van Dyke
Honorable Mention - Chelsea Purgahn

Video/Cine

1st Place - Ryan Young
2nd Place - Brett Roseman
3rd Place - Matt Grotto
Honorable Mention - Darren Van Dyke
Honorable Mention - Brett Roseman

Annual Photo Competition

BEST IN SHOW

Steven Bridges

News and College Life

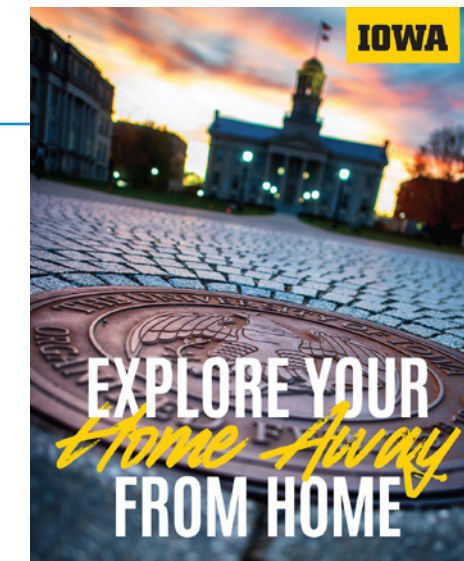
1st Place - Ryan Young
2nd Place - Jaren Wilkey
3rd Place - Chris Gannon
Honorable Mention - Matt Cashore
Honorable Mention - Derek Eckenroth

Student and Associate

1st place - Brooklynn Jarvis
2nd place - Brooklynn Jarvis
3rd place - Matthew Norton
Honorable Mention - Matthew Norton
Honorable Mention - Luke Hales

Sport Features & Illustrations

1st place - Matt Stamey
2nd place - Steven Bridges
3rd place - Jay Drowns
Honorable Mention - Jaren Wilkey
Honorable Mention - Eric Bronson
Honorable Mention - Jay Drowns
Honorable Mention - JUSTIN TORNER
Honorable Mention - Nate Edwards



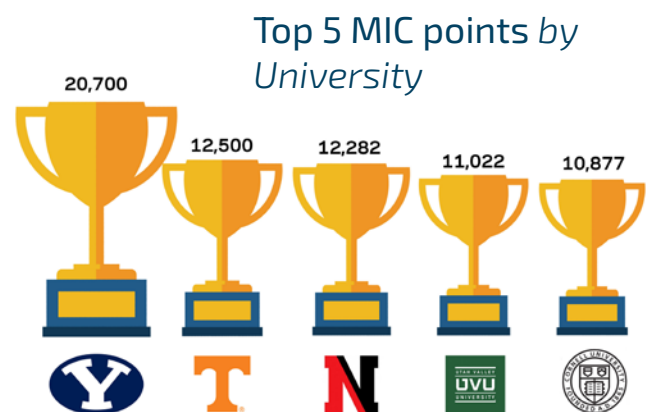
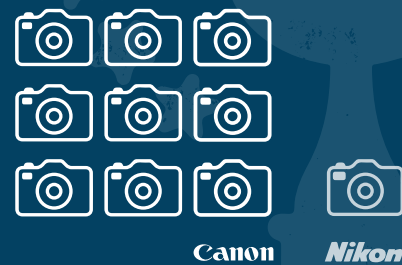
2021-2022

MIC

Monthly Image Competition

by the numbers:

"Best In Show" winners
by camera brand



- Brigham Young University
- University of Tennessee
- Northeastern University
- Utah Valley University
- Cornell University

People and portraits

- 1st Place - Craig Chandler
- 2nd Place - Jaren Wilkey
- 3rd Place - Jay Drowns
- Honorable Mention - Mr. Matthew B. MODOONO
- Honorable Mention - Steven Bridges

Science and Research

- 1st place - Steven Bridges
- 2nd place - Nate Edwards
- 3rd place - Mark Carriveau
- Honorable Mention - Kristen Grace
- Honorable Mention - Mr. Matthew B. MODOONO

Sports Action

- 1st place - Steven Bridges
- 2nd place - Nate Edwards
- 3rd place - Jay Drowns
- Honorable Mention - Ryan Young
- Honorable Mention - Eric Bronson

Campus Environment

- 1st place - Amanda Pitts
- 2nd place - Ryan Young
- 3rd place - Steven Bridges
- Honorable Mention - Matt Cashore
- Honorable Mention - Ryan Young

Features and Illustrations

- 1st place - Ryan Young
- 2nd place - Ryan Young
- 3rd place - Amanda Pitts
- Honorable Mention - Nate Edwards
- Honorable Mention - Jaren Wilkey
- Honorable Mention - Jaren Wilkey

Photo Essay

- 1st place - Mr. Matthew B. MODOONO
- 2nd place - Kendra Stanley-Mills
- 3rd place - Eric Bronson
- Honorable Mention - Cydney Scott
- Honorable Mention - Brett Roseman

Personal Vision

- 1st place - Brett Roseman
- 2nd place - Kristen Grace
- 3rd place - Scott Kissell
- Honorable Mention - Brett Roseman
- Honorable Mention - Cydney Scott

Annual Photo Competition Overall Winner

Steven Bridges

Mark A. Philbrick Photographer of the Year

Steven Bridges



Mark A. Philbrick

Photographer of the Year

STEVEN BRIDGES MAKES IT A THREE-PEAT

By Matt Cashore, University of Notre Dame



Steven Bridges won a Canon R5 kit, which was timely as he was in the process of switching from DSLR to mirrorless gear. (photo by Matt Cashore)

“Semper Gumby’ is a Marine Corps term,”

says Steven Bridges, the University of Tennessee staff photographer and Marine Corps veteran who is now a 3-time Mark A. Philbrick UPAA Photographer of the Year. “If you’re around me long enough, you’ll hear it.”

“Semper Gumby” is also a good term to describe the flexible mentality any university photographer needs to be successful. This is a job which requires specializing in everything and anything. A single day might require photographing sports action, event work, studio portraits and landscapes. Some have used the metaphor of a ‘Swiss Army Knife’ of photography—which hopefully isn’t insulting to a Marine!

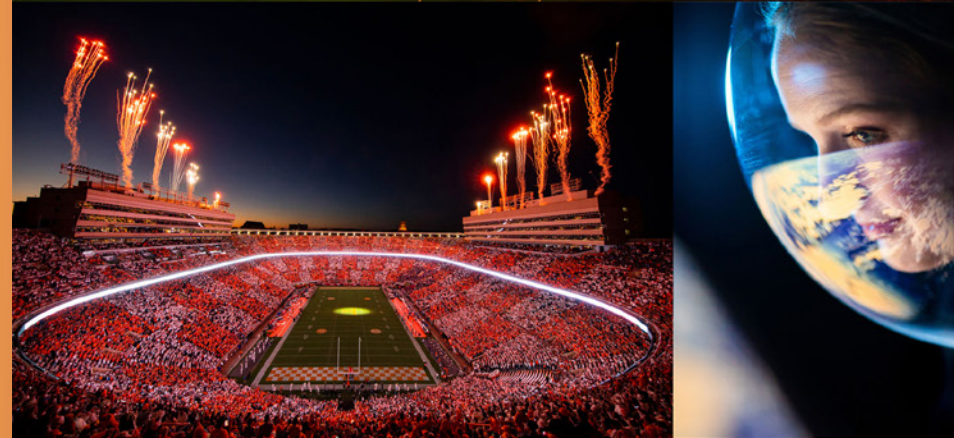
“My parents talk about how, as a kid, I wanted to try everything but rarely stuck with any of it,” Steven says. “I would get so bored. I need variety and that is part of the reason I love working as a university photographer at UT.”

A three-timer congratulates a three-timer: BYU's Nate Edwards helps Steven celebrate his third POY. (photo by Chris Gannon)

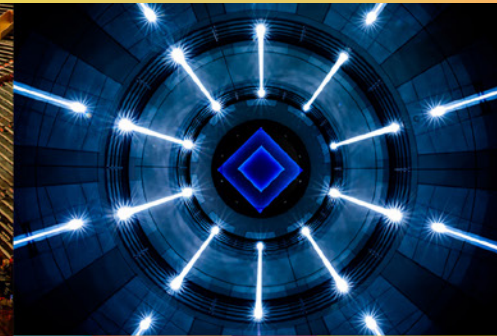


Variety and flexibility were the theme of Steven's third consecutive POY win. He had six Annual Photo Competition (APC) entries in six different categories and placed every one of them, including an APC Best in Show. He also won the overall Monthly Image Competition (MIC) with at least one first place winner in each points category in 2021-22--and three MIC Best in Show winners, one of which was a shoot that required Steven to SCUBA dive. So, yeah... Semper Gumby!

2011 Photographer of the Year Jaren Wilkey said, "This year Steven proved that he is the ultimate generalist. The fact that he placed images in 6 different categories is unheard of. He truly can take any assignment or situation and create an amazing image from it."



A collage of the six winning images in six categories that made Steven the overall winner of the 2022 APC.



3-time Photographer of the Year Nate Edwards added, "Not only is he great at finding amazing photos, he is also great at creating amazing photos. I think it is a hard thing to master both, and to do it consistently year after year-- that is quite an accomplishment. Steven winning POY three years in a row is well deserved and it couldn't have gone to a better human being. It genuinely makes me happy to see him continually succeed, and it pushes me to be a better photographer. It's hard to keep up with him!"

Steven frequently mentions the collaborative and supportive culture he has at work as a contributor to his success. "My department is one that breeds creativity," Steven said. "Our writers and editors help look for stories that have good visual components. I constantly go back and forth with our graphic designer about styles and trends in the design world (both photo and graphics) that we could apply to our work. I have discussions with my boss and coworkers about the tone and feel of my work, as if I was in an art class review. On top of that, my leadership trusts me and allows me to try different ideas."

University of Tennessee designer Marcus Williamson often partners with Steven and notes that the creative buzz goes both ways. "In the time Steven has been at UT he has elevated how we do photography on all levels. Before he got here it felt like a standard photo place. There was no hype or excitement around it. But when he arrived, business picked up. From taking initiative and going out and getting feature images for social media, to being willing to try anything and everything, it's been fun. He's both excited and willing but also adds his thoughts on what can be done and what can't be done. And honestly if it can't be done it seems to motivate him to figure out how to do it."

After dominating UPAA contests for three straight years, what's next for Steven? "I am looking to improve some of my skills other than photography," he says. "I want to work on being more efficient in my processes. I also enjoy helping people, so working on my teaching and mentor skills is an area I would like to grow."

He also added as a P.S.: "After celebrating my 3-peat, my wife, who has been very supportive of me, said "You're not allowed to talk about the contest for 365 days.""



Steven and University of Tennessee designer Marcus Williamson confer during a photo shoot.



Foreshadowing

"I made this photo on October 29, 2018, just 14 days after my first day at UT. I was nervous as a cat and was really trying to knock everything out of the park. When I brought this photo back to my creative director, I was expecting a response that I received when I was working in newspapers: "Do you have any with the people's faces?" or "That's nice but too artsy fartsy." Instead, she gushed about loving it and my use of light and shadows. With her response, I knew I was in the right place creatively."

—Steven Bridges

The big question: What is your path for career advancement in higher education photography?

By Meredith Forrest Kulwicki,
University of Buffalo

Unfortunately, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. It's going to be uniquely your path. It will likely require time, compromise, tenacity, a bit of soul searching and perhaps reinvention.

Defining career advancement is also personal. It can be more responsibilities, a more important job title, and more money, absolutely please! Less obviously, it can also mean enjoying the benefits that are most important to you, like having an appropriate work life balance, and doing work that excites you.

Career development in higher ed photography has two main prongs. The first you can influence - your skills. The second less so - the ability of the organization to create positions with the appropriate pay and benefits.

"The hardest thing to remember when you're talking about something like this is it doesn't have anything to do with your skills in a lot of ways. And it's not emotional. This is strictly business," said



Jamie Rose

Jamie Rose, co-Founder and COO of Momenta Group, LLC, a non-profit that helps photographers improve their skills. "Can the university afford to pay you more money? Are you making a good financial case for increasing your salary?"

Rose has more than 20 years of experience working in communications--first as a photographer--before transitioning to education, training, and mentoring.

"If the position doesn't exist within the university structure that you work in, approach it like a

business plan," said Rose. "You are making a small business within a university, that would show them the value of what you're doing."



Many university photographers climb ladders in the literal sense, but the metaphorical career ladder is more of a challenge. (photo by Matt Cashore)

"Can the university afford to pay you more money? Are you making a good financial case for increasing your salary?"



The Power of Self Promotion:

"You need to market yourself to your community, or they're not going to know you really exist," said **Eric Bronson**, assistant director of photography at the University of Michigan.

Bronson says he is active on his personal social media account, sharing his recent work as a 'live' portfolio. He connects with others on his campus, many in creative roles, thus encouraging more open conversations about his work.

Similarly, **Ken Bennett**, director of photography at Wake Forest University discovered the benefits of having a strong and updated portfolio. About a decade ago, he says he experienced a difficult period in his office life due to poor leadership and constant change. Although he was committed to riding it out, it did give him pause to think of what could be next.



Eric Bronson



Ken Bennett

Over a couple of years, he focused on building a personal website with updated work. He eventually assembled an 11 x 17 printed portfolio book.

"Making the portfolio was a good thing on a bunch of levels," said Bennett. "I wanted to have something to show people and it also made me feel better about my work."

When new leadership joined the team at Wake Forest, Bennett brought his book to his first meeting with a new creative director. Soon that portfolio made the rounds and Bennett says it helped create an environment where he felt his work was valued.

"[A portfolio] needs to highlight the strengths of a photographer and also the kind of work that photographer wants to get more of," advises **Caroline Couig**, visuals editor and a creative consultant. She helps photographers apply for and secure jobs, grants, and other avenues of career growth.



Caroline Couig

For **Beth Lowary**, director of content at Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) and a former UPAA member, self-promotion started with a presentation. She was a photographer at Austin Peay State University, in Clarksville TN, when a social media opportunity opened.



Beth Lowary

"A person left and there was no real plan to have anybody take over while they were trying to fill this position," said Lowary. "I advocated that that person should be me. And here's how I will do it."

Over time, Lowary, who started out as the school's first university photographer, took this expanded role and continued to grow, next working on print publications.

"I think building relationships, taking the time to advocate for the importance of university photography, and how it is a foundational, fundamental piece of the whole marketing puzzle... that is what led to me being seen as more than just a person who clicks a button," said Lowary.

Over about six years, Lowary progressed to

marketing manager and helped build a growing communications team; even hiring a former student to fill her role as university photographer. She has since left the university and now oversees a team of 16 copywriters at RNL.

Her path may seem smooth, but it still took a lot of work and advocating for herself. She created opportunity through conversations and initiative, much like

Jamie Rose advises.

"The idea of further responsibility, promotion and upward mobility is when somebody takes the reins and says, I'm going to solve this problem, because it's not

only going to make my life better, but it's going to make the product better," said Rose.

Bronson encourages others to keep in perspective what you bring to the table.

"Don't expect somebody just to come and be like, 'I think I'm going to create this new position for you,'" said Bronson. "What goes beyond your job description? Because those are the bullet points you're going to need to sell, when you're advocating for yourself, the stuff that's not on your job description."

Importance of skill development:

"Nobody ever gave me permission to do the many things that I've done in lots of different media. I pretty much seized the moment and was able to seize it because I didn't have just one skill. I had several or I was willing to develop several," said **Sandra Eisert**, who describes herself as a catalyst who has worked



Sandra Eisert

in almost every media platform, including newspapers, internet companies, and government positions. She is currently a consultant and photo coach.

"You've got to be always working for yourself, looking to grow yourself, make yourself responsible for

that growth," said Eisert. "

Eric Bronson says working on his skills was one of the first steps he took when he thought about career advancement.

"I wanted to be really good at all of [the wide range of assignments we cover] and be able to master all the different aspects of photography that our office handles," Bronson said. This included being one of the first to pass the drone license test, giving the department a new aerial perspective.

"You've got to be always working for yourself, looking to grow yourself, make yourself responsible for that growth"



Carla Wehmeyer recently relocated in August 2022 and is now a photographer at Arkansas State University. She has worked at four universities through her career thus far, but in the quiet of the pandemic, she branched out in different ways too.



Carla Wehmeyer

"I took a couple classes, just online classes, and I wasn't going to because it was more high-end photography, like fashion," said Wehmeyer. "It actually like made me start thinking outside the box a little more."

At her previous job at Knox College, she says they did a lot of portraits and the class helped her look at things differently and compose images



Fred Zwicky

in new ways.

Her approach is in line with the experiences of **Fred Zwicky**, who was recently promoted to director of photography at the University of Illinois. He thinks it's important for people to look at their strengths and weaknesses.

"It's always good to stay true to your strengths, but then tackle something that you feel you're just not comfortable doing that, grab a hold of that and focus on that for a while," Zwicky said.

When you hit the wall:

"No matter how talented, how brilliant you are, how hard you work, it doesn't matter. You're gonna have roadblocks," said Sandra Eisert.

At his recent review, **Clay Stalter** recalls the discussion with his supervisor about his career development, including more responsibilities and a raise.



Clay Stalter

"She was a little stunned," Stalter said.

Although the conversation continued, he says it's still not a clear path, as his HR department indicated he should have people to manage before being promoted.

"You need to have an administration that wants to have that position, because otherwise you can knock yourself out," said Stalter. "If the administration doesn't think that position is needed, then it doesn't matter how many of those things you do or how great a photographer you are."

For Ken Bennett at Wake Forest, a change in leadership ultimately brought about a better work environment and growth opportunities.

"I laid the groundwork, but I had somebody in my corner; I had a champion at a higher level, who was able to push that through," said Bennett. "I would never have been able to do it on my own."

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to overcome is when career advancement means putting down the camera.

"It's a decision people have to make. Do I enjoy putting together an environment and creating a structure that is incredibly efficient, but also creating great work? Or do I want to be a pure shooter?" Fred Zwicky said. "For me, it's always been, I see opportunities for ways that, as a department, we could do things better and serve the university better."

Zwicky says planning is one of the most important tasks he has as a director. "The smaller your staff was, the more important planning became, because if you lost the planning component, then you're just running around all the time with your head cut off."

Eric Bronson acknowledges his career advancement meant less time photographing in the field. "There's a lot of meetings, but I think getting involved in that entire communications apparatus at your university is the path you need to take because I don't know where else you're going to go."



Susan Steck

There are many different careers within a university, broadly divided into staff or faculty. What works for one in terms of career growth cannot be applied to the other, says **Susan Steck**, a training and coaching specialist, with the University at Buffalo, who has over 20 years of experience working in higher education. "The faculty career path is very different from a professional level, staff level career path," Steck said. She highlights that faculty have a higher threshold of education, completing the arduous PhD

process, for example.

"They have to prove themselves in the classroom, they have to prove themselves as researchers, they also have to prove themselves on getting published on a national level." Said Steck. "A staff member can come in and do their job without those kinds of pressures."

Possible steps forward:

"Photographers are really bad at talking about career development. They're really good at talking about creative development," said Jamie Rose. "It boggles my brain because what should be happening, especially in an environment where there is an established hierarchy like university, that conversation should be coming up once a year."

If you aren't having such conversations, start one. And come prepared for the conversation. Spend time thinking about what value you add to your organization.

"They need to define what they want to do, whether it's "I want to edit more, I want to do more assigning I want to be involved on the front end..." Then speak to the supervisor and ask what is possible," said Caroline Couig.

Be prepared for pushback and how you will handle your goals moving forward. Ask to be in meetings. If you are told no, keep track of those responses so you have data to take to your manager. They might have no idea how many times you have been excluded. "They realize they're having a recorded conversation about this," Jamie Rose said. "They realize that you're serious."

Build bridges and connections with the people around you.

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"As far as trying to do things that are more interesting, I would start with conversations with the marketing folks," said Couig. "Have lunch or coffee, make them an ally, because you're both doing the same kind of thing. You're both trying to tell the university story in an interesting way to get more people to apply and come to the school. It's not rocket science."

Lastly, remember to appreciate what is going well.

"Each job I've had, I feel like I have grown, and I've learned something," said Carla Wehmeyer. "This job [at Knox] actually has prepared me the most because they've been so open with what I shoot and just kind of let me take control, which is cool."

"This is a happy spot. I think there's a good balance between being able to contribute a vision for the university messaging, but then also going out to be part of the team creating those images," said Fred Zwicky. "That's a great situation, so I have no complaints at all."

"I don't want the main message to feel like you have to change who you are and what you love and what you do best to grow," said Beth Lowary. "The main message is you're already doing those things, even if they aren't the focus and what you're known for. There are skills you're doing that are not recognized and that's where I would start. Uncover those, shine them up, shout them from the rooftops that this is not just about making images. It's much more."

Can You Keep A Secret? *Well...Don't!*

Salary Transparency in Higher Education

By Clay Stalter, University of Illinois, Springfield



In the grownup world the simple question of, "How much do you make?" has become more taboo than innocent childhood curiosity. Employees are told to keep pay rates private from coworkers for a variety of reasons and those reasons tend to benefit one party above all – the employer.

Since the vast majority of UPAA members work for institutions of higher education, it makes sense to see what the academic research says about the effect of sharing one's salary.

Definitions

To start, let us define what salary transparency is not. Salary transparency is not putting a pay range on a job posting. Do not misunderstand, it is important to let potential applicants know what they might be making, but there is so much more to help potential and current employees and the business/university.

In an initial perusal of one month's worth of job listings posted to the UPAA Facebook page there were 14 positions. Of those, 5 had

absolutely no salary range attached to them. That is 35.7% of listings where there is no way of knowing if the position is viable for the candidate in terms of salary alone.

Salary ranges aren't what would be called 'pay transparency.' They are more like "pay translucence" – there's some light getting through, but the image isn't really clear. One listing offered a range of "\$66,400 – \$99,600." Guess where the organization wants to hire?

True salary transparency is knowing what the person who left the position was making at the time they left and what every other person

in the organization is making. This author would argue for job titles, job duties, years' experience, and other information to be included on disclosures. All the information should be in common English, not HR speak.

Everyone Knows What I Make

For those of us employed by public universities actual pay transparency should not be a surprise. Public employees are paid by the taxpayers and they have a right to know what public employees are being paid. The ease of accessibility of those salary disclosures varies by state depending on the nature of each state's implementation of the Freedom of Information Act, but the right of the citizen remains. The Federal FOIA assures that.

Private universities can do anything they want when it comes to disclosing salaries so long as they don't run afoul of labor laws. That is one legal distinction between public and private university salary disclosure.

By the way, it is not illegal for an employee to talk to anyone, coworkers included, about their salary. This is protected by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935.

In Practice

The question then becomes: Why do employers not want to disclose salaries in any meaningful way? According to former professor and leading business researcher and author David Burkus, PhD., lack of salary transparency benefits employers.

Burkus asserts that the assumed reason that companies keep salaries private is that, if disclosed, morale would plummet, infighting would ensue, and people would quit.

No surprise, pay secrecy saves companies a lot of money. When employees learn of pay discrepancies they are more likely to approach management about leveling the pay scale for the same positions. Burkus and other academics talk about a gap in knowledge between two negotiating parties as "informational asymmetry." This becomes a major advantage for the employer when it comes to hiring or negotiating a promotion or even just a wage increase.

For employees, keeping salaries secret can make them feel they are underpaid and possibly discriminated against. Burkus lays out in his TEDx University of Nevada talk that the taboo of talking about salary reinforces the disparities that already exist such as the gender, race, age, etc. wage gaps. Burkus cites a 2011 study that measured the female-to-male wage gap at 23%, meaning women made \$0.77 for every dollar a man makes.

By contrast, in federal employment where salary transparency is mandatory, that gap is 11% and he notes that is before economists control for variables such as years' experience, professional certifications, additional degrees, etc..

Solutions

If pay secrecy is the problem then the obvious solution is "pay openness" or pay transparency. "Openness remains the only way to ensure fairness," says Burkus.

As Burkus put it, "When people know how they're being paid and how that pay compares to their peers they are more likely to work hard to improve their performance, they are more likely to be engaged, and they are less likely to quit." Any employer/university can benefit from those outcomes.

Immediate Strategies

Changing the work culture will not happen overnight, but pay transparency is a good first step. Pay transparency will look different for every business as well. It is not a one-size-fits-all solution. If done well, it promises to greatly reduce if not eliminate pay gaps and to improve employee morale.

In the meantime, there are ways applicants can find the most information possible about potential public employers.

For public universities it is a matter of Googling the institution or state one is interested in and the words "salary database."

The best databases this author has found have position titles, the name of person currently in the position, their wage and hopefully previous years' wages. The University of Illinois database is one example but only covers the three UI campuses. There are 12 public universities in Illinois.

Another route for salary information is classifications of employees. In Illinois, public university employees are either faculty, academic professionals, or civil service employees (photographers fall here). Illinois civil service employees are governed by statute and a state agency (State University Civil Service System) and every position, promotion track, and some salary ranges are listed there. If Illinois is any indicator, these state websites are not maintained as well as the databases are, but could still help a person triangulate data. The state you are interested in may have similar websites for university employee governance.

If there is enough time between job posting and application deadline one could always submit a FOIA request (or have a friend submit a FOIA request) for the position you are interested in. Often a typed/emailed FOIA request isn't needed. Just a friendly request. That will tell you what the previous person was making and where to begin negotiations should one receive an offer.

Personally, this author would never work for less than the last person was making. That rate is what the university is used to paying and what they have the budget for. Know your value.

Clay Stalter is a refugee from the photojournalism world, has taught digital photography at the university and community college level, and has been the Senior Photographer at University of Illinois Springfield since 2016. He is currently pursuing a Masters in Business Administration at UIS.

According to former professor and leading business researcher and author David Burkus, PhD., lack of salary transparency benefits employers.

There's a blog article on that!

By Matt Cashore, University of Notre Dame
UPAA Blog Editor

The UPAA blog is available 24/7/365 with knowledge and advice by university photographers for university photographers.

There are gadget reviews, tech tips, deconstructions of contest-winning images and other articles to hopefully help solve problems and maybe give a little inspiration.

A few of the topics coming in 2022-23:

Did you know the FAA loosened restrictions on flying drones at night? We'll have a blog article on that!

Does your school send students and faculty overseas for research, study or service? Have you ever asked to go along only to be told, "We'll just use the photos the students take?" Or, "We don't have the budget for that." There are solid reasons for why you shouldn't just leave it to the students and many ways to make the budget work. We'll have a blog article on that!

If you attended the 2022 Symposium, you probably saw Mark Cornelison and Mark DiOrio making photos with their vintage 4x5 cameras. We'll have a blog article on that!

As UPAA grows in members and interests, the blog needs a diverse group of authors and topics! Articles and suggestions are always welcome, and the contact info is at the end of each article.

"How can I prioritize so many re-requests?" There's a blog article on that!

"I need a strategy for long-term photo storage." There's a blog article on that!

"What does the Photographer of the Year actually do all day...?" There's a blog article on that!

The UPAA Blog publishes every other Thursday, September through June, while the Monthly Image Competition (MIC) is active.



Top: (photo by Justin Turner)
Middle: (photo by Jaren Wilkey)
Bottom: (photo by Mark DiOrio)





“Light And Shadow”

Mark DiOrio of Colgate University won the 2022 Nikon Shootout with the theme “Light and Shadow.” He took home a Nikon Z6II kit.

Mark describes his winning image:

As we were all descending on downtown Athens in pursuit of making our Light and Shadow photograph, I had the thought of getting up high to make a photo looking straight down and started looking to the sky to find the highest point I could (legally) access.

I found a multi-story parking garage and noticed a corner with two large white arrows. These looked like they could become compositional elements of the photograph and I also liked how the only sunlight still visible on the sidewalk was a triangular shape and any pedestrians would create a long shadow.

I went with 1/800th of a second and f/11 for depth of field--going for an image that was slightly underexposed--and waited for pedestrians to

cross into the light. I camped out at this location for about five minutes or so. Finally, someone carrying a bag of clothing made their way into the lit triangle and I made a sequence of 7 photos as they made their way from left to right.

“I was completely caught off guard, being both humbled and elated when it was named the Nikon Shootout winner.”

It wasn't hard settling on this particular image out of the sequence. In this particular frame, the pedestrian swung their left arm as they were walking, giving another dynamic element to this particular image in the sequence. There was also a shadow created by the strap of their shoulder bag, a shadow from their arm, and a very thin line of separation in their shadow that exists between their head and the bag of clothing they were carrying.

I was completely caught off guard, being both humbled and elated when it was named the Nikon Shootout winner.

A full list of all contest winners begins on page 14.