

South Los Angeles Reporting Project

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Believing multicultural fluency and multimedia skills are key for successful 21st century journalists, Annenberg Radio News, *Watt Way* digital magazine and the Metamorphosis Project at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication are teaming up to produce multimedia journalism projects from South Los Angeles.

The South Los Angeles Reporting Project will build upon multimedia skills our students learn in the Journalism School's core curriculum, and it will teach them the importance of cultural literacy by reporting from communities long underserved by mainstream media. At the same time, these communities have longstanding dailies and weeklies to which our students will contribute. The project will incorporate the research conducted by the Metamorphosis Project for more substantive discussions about minority, ethnic and immigrant communities across Los Angeles. Outside the classroom, Metamorphosis research will provide stronger underpinnings for our reports from neighborhoods surrounding USC's University Park campus, including Jefferson Park, Vernon-Central, Vermont Corridor and the Crenshaw District, as well as Inglewood, Hawthorne, Compton and Watts.

In the years ahead, as Peter Bhatia, the editor of the *Oregonian*, has predicted, journalism will become more of a conversation with the communities it serves and the institutions it covers. This is already occurring in a number of markets across the country, and our project takes a step in that direction through a variety of approaches which are both inventive and meaningful.

Under our venture, the walls between *Watt Way* and *Annenberg Radio News* will be lowered, and eventually fall, with print, broadcast and online students contributing to both websites and ultimately becoming fluid multimedia journalists. Stories increasingly will appear in Spanish and Korean, a multilingual approach already embraced by *Watt Way*. Students contributing to our respective websites will also collaborate and produce multi-part projects with each other that cross websites and platforms. Student-produced work will be offered to a variety of print, radio and multi-media outlets and we will invite community-based reporters and editors the opportunity to contribute commentary pieces to Annenberg Radio News.

We are planning an ongoing series of collaborations and discussions to gauge issues of concern and interest amongst South Los Angeles organizations, business leaders, educators, parents and others. The partnerships will address an important goal: Instilling a cultural literacy in our students by requiring them to navigate communities of color, neighborhoods of immigrants, working-class and poor families to produce journalism that frames the multiple truths found in South Los Angeles. The need for journalists possessing this cultural literacy has never been greater.

By becoming more sophisticated in traveling in and through different communities, we will train a new generation of journalists to truly view the world without blinders, enabling them to produce new and higher standards for 21st century journalism.

Annenberg Radio News (www.annenbergradio.org)

Produced by journalism students at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism, covering the South Los Angeles neighborhoods surrounding the USC campus. A live radio webcast can be heard Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4 pm; newscasts and multimedia stories can be found on the website.

Watt Way (wattway.uscannenberg.org)

A digital magazine produced by graduate journalism at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism enrolled in J584, a course on education, youth and learning. The course, taught by Professor William Celis, examines historical issues and how they have helped create -- for better or worse -- the schools and society we have today.

Metamorphosis Project (www.metamorph.org)

A team of graduate researchers at the Annenberg School of Communication, led by Professor Sandra Ball-Rokeach, seeks to understand the transformation of urban community under the forces of globalization, new communication technologies, and population diversity. Metamorphosis uses its research to inform practitioner and policy maker decisions. The project's studies Los Angeles and its many ethnic communities of both new and settled immigrants.