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## The Power of the Student Press

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# The Power of the Student Press

Student publications used to be by students for students. They still are, but with upheavals in media, student journalists are starting to reach audiences well beyond campus.

La DePaulia, DePaul's Spanish-language online resource, developed from an idea then-DePaulia social media editor Hillary Flores wanted to pursue. Hoy, the Chicago Tribune's Spanish-language publication, folded in December 2019, and "Hillary wanted to do a story about it," says Marla Krause, a senior professional lecturer and DePaulia faculty advisor. The story ran in English and Spanish, and, says Krause, "We got a good response."

When Flores pitched the idea of pushing out stories in Spanish on Twitter, the staff agreed, and thought it should become a full-time effort. Thus, La DePaulia, with Flores as editor-in-chief, came together over the winter break and premiered in January 2020.

"The stories we're most proud of are about how immigrants are actually making positive change and impacting their communities," says Flores. When COVID-19 hit, La DePaulia became a daily lifeline for the Latinx community.

"We've kept people informed through email and Twitter," Flores says. "We also started a Facebook page to keep people updated with the most current stories."

Another student publication that is serving the community is 14 East, the college's online magazine. "Its goal is to give students an opportunity to do meaningful, long-form, multimedia journalism," says Professional Lecturer and 14 East Faculty Advisor Amy Merrick. Among the topics 14 East has explored are voting, mental health and housing.

At 14 East, students collect and summarize "news from Chicago, the country and around the world to help people get their arms around it," says Merrick. "They focus on reporting what's happening at DePaul, but also on telling human-interest stories."

14 East launched a twice-weekly COVID newsletter, which has been very popular. It also launched a Spanish-language section called Pueblo on its website. All the stories are in both English and Spanish, with a focus on the Latinx community. "Pueblo is ramping up its own social media presence," Merrick says.

Once the protests triggered by the death of George Floyd started, all of DePaul's



student media began covering them. Faculty were advisors careful to prepare their student reporters.

"This is the first time these students have covered events with such big crowds, and we have the challenge of COVID-19," says Merrick. "So we had a lot of conversations about how to keep safe. They figured out how to keep socially distanced while still documenting what was going on," Merrick says. "They put in a lot of effort to talk to people to find out 'Why are you here?' 'Why are these issues important to you?' 'What are the changes you want to see happen?'"

Clearly, student journalism has a place in the larger media landscape. Flores says, "I didn't know the power of being able to inform our community with truth as I do now. We don't have the experience of long-time journalists, but we have an appreciation of what we're doing."

