TO: Committee on Academic Policy, Programs and Research

FROM: Judith Watson, Associate Dean, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

DATE: July 26, 2012

Attached for your information is a proposal to establish the Center for Community and Ethnic Media at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism is the beneficiary of donations from five major foundations totaling $1.6 million in support of the establishment and operation of the Center for Community and Ethnic Media.

The proposed Center will provide research, training and professional support for community and ethnic media outlets in the New York City metropolitan region. Among other activities, the Center will:

- Produce market research about this media segment, as well as topic-driven "white papers," case studies and best practice manuals
- Offer training in digital technology and fundamental journalism skills for working journalists in the community and ethnic media
- Showcase the best work being produced by New York’s community and ethnic media on VoicesofNY.org
- Develop opportunities for collaboration with the Journalism School’s students, who may serve as translators, freelance writers, editors and videographers for the community and ethnic publications, as well as interns

Professor Sarah Bartlett, who directs the School’s Urban Reporting program, will provide faculty oversight for the Center, reporting to Founding Dean Stephen B. Shepard. The executive director of the Center will be Garry Pierre-Pierre, a Journalism School adjunct and co-host of CUNY TV’s Independent Sources.

In accordance with the Board’s "Policy Guidelines for Centers, Institutes, Consortia and Special Initiatives," a resolution (SEE ATTACHED) to authorize the establishment of this Center will appear in the [TBD DATE] Chancellor’s University Report for approval by the Board of Trustees.
Proposal submitted to
The City University of New York
To create the

Center for Community and Ethnic Media

Executive Director:
Garry Pierre-Pierre

Approved by the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism
Center and Institute Review Committee
Date of Committee Approval TBD

Date TBD (of submission)
The City University of New York
Graduate School of Journalism

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND ETHNIC MEDIA

Supporting Documents

I. Proposal
II. Resolution
III. Curricula Vitae of Executive Director
IV. Organization Chart
V. Budget
VI. Letters of Endorsement
Proposal for a Center for Community and Ethnic Media at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

Our Mission

The City University of New York’s Graduate School of Journalism is seeking to establish a Center for Community and Ethnic Media that would serve as a hub of research, training and professional support for community and ethnic media outlets in the New York City metropolitan region.

Overview of the Center for Community and Ethnic Media

There are over 350 community and ethnic publications and broadcast outlets in New York City, and dozens more have sprouted up in recent years in the suburban communities that ring the metropolitan area. In New York City alone, there are over 90 ethnic groups publishing in over 50 languages. The city is home to 14 Bangladeshi newspapers, seven Chinese publications, and 54 Spanish-language publications, to cite just a few examples.

Ethnic publications provide a cultural, political and educational lifeline to the 37 percent of the city’s population that is foreign-born. Of those, 1.8 million residents (23 percent of the population) speak little or no English, according to the mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. The publications that serve these communities provide a bridge between new arrivals and more established immigrants and ensure that the next generation, though assimilated, remains connected to its heritage.

The city’s ethnic press is matched in importance by a vibrant neighborhood-focused press. There are dozens of small community newspapers, public access cable stations and, more recently, neighborhood blogs that provide timely, hyperlocal information to targeted neighborhoods in New York City. Many of these communities are home to underserved minority populations; often, the only journalistic coverage they receive is from the community press. In The Bronx, for instance, the poorest county in the nation, local news is produced almost entirely by a handful of neighborhood-based community papers and a network of blogs.

Despite the demographic tailwinds that favor this media niche, all is not well. While some of these publications are owned by financially stable corporate entities, the vast majority are independent, entrepreneurial operations, with miniscule budgets and little or no paid staff. Their “employees” often wear multiple hats: reporter, editor, publisher, photographer, ad salesman, and now “tweeter.” They rarely can afford to
devote resources to training and education. Not surprisingly, the quality of their journalism is uneven. The profit margins of mainstream media are undeniably shrinking, but for the under-resourced community and ethnic press, their viability has always been in question.

In surveys, ethnic journalists have repeatedly expressed a desire for professional development to improve their skills and take greater advantage of new technological tools. They have looked to academic journalism institutions to fulfill that role. Yet a 2008 report funded by the McCormick Foundation, entitled “The Health of Ethnic Media: Needs and Opportunities,” concluded that “The journalism ‘establishment’ – schools, professional associations, etc. – has yet to take ethnic media journalists seriously.” This finding was echoed in a 2010 report of the Breaux Symposium at Louisiana State University, “The Influence of Ethnic Media on Politics and Participation.” One of its main findings was that: “Ethnic media need to be included in university and journalism organization programs to jump-start their knowledge of new technology and critical coverage areas, such as reporting on politics and policy.”

The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism wants to lead the way with a Center for Community and Ethnic Media, the first of its kind in the nation. It is vitally important to the health of our democracy that the community and ethnic press survive -- better yet, that it thrive. Strengthening these publications, in turn, strengthens the journalism that is seen and heard around the country and the world. The School is committed to helping this sector raise its professional standards, strengthen its journalistic offerings and develop a more robust economic model. In doing so, we hope to establish a public-private model that can be replicated by other journalism education institutions.

Thanks to grants from the Ford Foundation and two family foundations that wish to remain anonymous, the Journalism School has spent the last year offering free training in digital technologies and journalistic techniques to over 300 journalists from the city’s community and ethnic media segment. During that time, we have also developed a student initiative to produce investigative stories for the community press, taken over and re-launched a community and ethnic news website, hosted a journalism awards program for this media segment, and done the research and development work necessary to create a new center. We are now ready to formally establish a Center for Community and Ethnic Media.

The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism is the natural home for such a Center. As the only publicly supported graduate journalism school in the Northeast, our core mission is to provide high quality journalism education to diverse, under-served communities. There is substantial overlap between our student body and the community and ethnic media journalists we seek to serve: almost 40 percent of our students are from under-represented communities, among the highest of any graduate journalism program in the country. In addition,
The School is also home to the Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism, which studies and offers courses in the very business, strategic and technology issues that consume the city’s highly entrepreneurial community and ethnic media outlets. Those publications, in turn, provide real-world examples of the issues in which the center’s faculty and staff are engaged. The potential for cross-fertilization of ideas, strategies and best practices is great.

Thanks to a five-year, $350,000 grant awarded earlier this year from an anonymous donor, the CUNY J-School has initiated an Investigative Journalist-in-Residence program as part of our ethnic media initiative. Our first such Journalist-in-Residence is Tom Robbins, the veteran investigative reporter who spent 30 years producing groundbreaking stories for the Daily News and The Village Voice. In addition to year-round mentoring of students, during the fall semester Robbins works with a class of Urban Reporting students on an in-depth investigative project that they produce in collaboration with a community or ethnic publication.

The School’s Urban, Health and International Reporting Programs focus on subject matter that is of direct relevance to the community and ethnic media news organizations.

Our students are looking for opportunities to publish their stories in community and ethnic newspapers, blogs and broadcast outlets. Current students have shown great enthusiasm for our new website, volunteering to copy edit, translate, take photos, produce videos, or simply report and write stories. After they graduate, many of our students work as reporters and editors at community and ethnic publications throughout the city and across the country.

Our students are required to do summer internships, and about 15 percent of them choose to work at community and ethnic media outlets. While our students benefit from this work experience and gain a heightened awareness of issues important to grassroots communities, the employers benefit from having our students, trained in the latest web technologies, embedded in their organizations.

The School’s broadcast program, in conjunction with CUNY-TV, produces Independent Sources, a half-hour show focused on issues in the ethnic media and the journalists who produce those stories.

The School’s facilities are state-of-the-art, with a wireless campus in centrally located Times Square. The School has a high-tech research center, TV and radio broadcast studios, Mac-equipped classrooms and a team of highly experienced tech-support staff members.

We have the full backing – and importantly, the DNA of the City University of New York, the most diverse public university system in the country, one that is dedicated to advancing the lives of minority and immigrant populations. Forty-
seven percent of CUNY’s undergraduates have a native language other than English.

Planned Programs and Objectives

Our core principles for the Center are:

- To use research and technology to enhance audience engagement and economic sustainability
- To use education and training to raise professional journalism standards and foster greater self-reliance
- To strengthen civic engagement and cross-cultural understanding in New York City and, by extension, around the world, by building the capacity of this media sector
- To leverage the mutually beneficial relationships between our diverse, multi-talented student body, our cutting edge, entrepreneurially-focused curriculum and faculty, and the city’s vibrant community and ethnic publications

Education and Training - The CUNY J-School will design and implement ongoing training sessions in digital technology and fundamental journalism skills for working journalists in the community and ethnic media. We will also host an ongoing series of Q&As and press conferences with city officials, business leaders, academics and policymakers to improve the reporting opportunities for community and ethnic publications.

Research - The CUNY J-School will produce market research about this media segment, as well as topic-driven “white papers,” case studies and best practice manuals. We will become a national clearinghouse for information related to community and ethnic publications.

Content Development – The CUNY J-School will use a recently acquired website, now renamed Voices of New York, to showcase the best work being produced by New York’s community and ethnic media. The site also serves as a teaching tool, a platform for commissioning additional content, a tip sheet for mainstream media and public officials, and a vehicle for experimenting with a community and ethnic wire service.

Leadership and Outreach - We will use a recently acquired journalism awards program (the Ippies, targeted at community and ethnic publications), annual conferences and participation in national events to raise awareness of the importance of community and ethnic media.
Future Plans - We have ambitious plans for supporting the development of community and ethnic news for Internet radio and TV. We also want to research different strategies for delivering news on mobile platforms, to ensure that community and ethnic publications take full advantage of this next generation of technology.

Measures of Success

Education and Training – Some measures of success are quantitative: the number of training sessions we offer, the number of journalists who attend. Some measures are more qualitative: the kind of work that is produced as a result of the trainings.

Research – We will measure our success by the number of research reports we produce and the public response to those reports, in terms of articles written, downloads of the research from our website, public comment at panels and conferences and possibly even policy changes that result from the research.

Content Development – We will track the online traffic to VoicesofNY, and also the extent to which stories that are published there get wider distribution via mainstream media outlets like WNYC, the New York Times and WNET.

Leadership and Outreach – We will evaluate our success by the number of panels and conferences the Center hosts or is represented on. We will evaluate the success of our journalism awards program by the number of entrants, the attendance at the event, and the media review of it afterward.

Program Review

Education – We survey journalists after each training session and conference, to get their evaluations and feedback. We incorporate the learning from those surveys into future events.

Research – When we publish our research, we will invite public comment and feedback, both online, in print, and in open panel discussions and conferences.

Content Development – The VoicesofNY website has a comment area online following every article, and the editors review those comments regularly.

Leadership and Outreach – We will solicit public feedback at all events. We will also invite members of our board of advisors to participate in public events and give us their feedback.

Finances
The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism has received $1.6 million so far in grants from five foundations in support of our community and ethnic media initiative. Along with in-kind contributions from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, this has enabled us to work intensively on this project since the summer of 2010 and to have confidence that we can continue this level of commitment for the foreseeable future. We have constructed a five-year budget for the Center for Community and Ethnic Media that shows where we are so far against our future targets.

**Resource Allocation**

The budget for the Center for Community and Ethnic Media will be allocated across its four areas of concentration: Education and Training, Research, Content Development and Leadership and Outreach. The Center’s overhead and support structure will be funded primarily by in-kind contributions from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. Here is an overview of our 2013 budget:

**Education and Training** – $115,000 is budgeted annually for the next two years for professors, instructors, guest speakers and stipends for fellows.

**Research** – $60,000 is budgeted annually for the next two years to conduct, present, publish and publicize two to three major research projects. Costs include personnel (project manager, researchers, writers, graphic designers) and events.

**Content Development** – $200,000 is budgeted annually for the next two years for a VoicesofNY editor, freelancers, a webmaster and online designer.

**Leadership and Outreach** – $60,000 is budgeted annually for the next two years for conferences, Q&As and the journalism awards program.

**Support Structure** – Budgeted at $400,000. These costs include a portion of the Center’s management, IT support staff, webmaster, Journalism School administrative services, fundraising, travel, supplies, rent, utilities, computers, software, equipment and RF administrative fee.

**Duplication**

The Center does not duplicate any area of concentration within the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism’s current curriculum or any other academic program within the overall City University of New York system. While there are several other universities in other regions of the country that are developing ethnic media initiatives, none are full-fledged centers based in graduate journalism schools. With the establishment of this center, we would become the leader in this field.

**Leadership and Governance**
Garry Pierre-Pierre will be the executive director of the new Center. He is the founder and publisher of the *Haitian Times*, the president of the NY Press Association, and a co-host of CUNY TV’s weekly show, Independent Sources. Pierre-Pierre is a former staff reporter with the *New York Times* and was part of the paper’s Pulitzer Prize winning team for its coverage of the World Trade Center bombing in 1992. He has won a Trailblazer Award from the National Association of Black Journalists, as well as numerous Associated Press awards. His extensive journalistic and management experience building the *Haitian Times*, and his deep ties to the city’s ethnic media make him an ideal person to assume this leadership position. Pierre-Pierre, a native of Haiti, is fluent in French and Haitian Creole.

Sarah Bartlett, professor and director of the School’s Urban Reporting Program, will be the Center’s faculty advisor, helping to ensure that the mutually reinforcing goals of the CUNY J-School and this Center are met. Bartlett has 25 years of experience as a reporter and editor in New York, including *Business Week, Fortune* and the *New York Times*. She gained management experience as an assistant managing editor at *Business Week* and as the editor-in-chief of Oxygen Media. She joined Baruch College in 2002 as the Bloomberg Chair of Business Journalism. She earned her BA in Political Science and MPhil degree in Development Studies from the University of Sussex in Brighton, England. Bartlett has extensive journalistic experience overseas, having worked in print and television in England, France, Holland, Poland, Jamaica, Chile, the Philippines, Mexico, Argentina and the Bahamas.

Board of Advisors Once it is formally established, the Center will establish a board of advisors that will be drawn from the city’s leading journalistic institutions, both mainstream and community-based, as well as individuals with expertise in the publishing industry, digital technology and entrepreneurialism. The Center will also provide regular reports to the Graduate School of Journalism’s Board of Advisors (we have already made two presentations to them). In addition, the foundations that have previously funded our initiative require us to file annual reports.

Sustaining the Center for Community and Ethnic Media

With commitments from the Ford Foundation, the Revson Foundation, the Kohlberg Foundation, FJC, and the Wal-Mart Foundation, the Center for Community and Ethnic Media already has considerable fundraising momentum. We anticipate raising more funds during the next two years from a variety of sources to provide the Center with a permanent endowment. We are in the process of making proposals to a number of foundations and wealthy individuals, and we anticipate that the Center’s goals and accomplishments will continue to draw strong donor interest.

Over time, we also plan to develop new revenue streams by imposing modest fees for our training sessions, selling advertising on our website and publishing a directory of community and ethnic media outlets.
Resolution for a new Center for Community and Ethnic Media at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees at the City University of New York approves the creation of a Center for Community and Ethnic Media, to be housed at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. This Center will be financed by over $1.6 million in grants from various foundations.

EXPLANATION: The Center for Community and Ethnic Media will serve as a hub of research, training and professional support for community and ethnic media outlets in the New York City metropolitan region.

There are over 350 community and ethnic publications and broadcast outlets in New York City alone. Ethnic media outlets provide a cultural, political and educational lifeline to the 36 percent of the city’s population that is foreign-born. Of those, 1.8 million residents (23 percent of the population) speak little or no English. Ethnic media serve as a bridge between new arrivals and more established immigrants and ensure that the next generation, though assimilated, remains connected to its heritage.

The city’s ethnic press is matched in importance by a vibrant neighborhood-focused press. There are dozens of small community newspapers, public access cable stations and, more recently, blogs that provide timely, hyperlocal information to targeted neighborhoods in New York City. Many of these communities are home to underserved minority populations; often, the only journalistic coverage they receive is from the community press.

In support of the city’s community and ethnic media sector, our goals for the Center are:

- To use research and technology to enhance audience engagement and economic sustainability
- To use education and training to raise professional journalism standards
- To strengthen civic engagement and cross-cultural understanding in New York City and, by extension, around the world, by building the capacity of this media sector
- To leverage the relationship between our diverse, multi-talented students and the region’s vibrant community and ethnic media
The Governance Council of the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism passed a resolution in support of a new Center for Community and Ethnic Media, as described above, on November 29, 2011.

Garry Pierre-Pierre  
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(646-220-8730)  
Garrypierrepierre@gmail.com

Pulitzer Prize winning multi-media journalist with 20+ years of journalism, management, public relations, higher education and entrepreneurial experience.

JOURNALISM

- Founder, editor and publisher of The Haitian Times, an award winning weekly English language newspaper based in Brooklyn, NY. Managed a staff of 12 journalists. Launched and managed newspaper’s website, through the evolution of new media.
- Independent Sources, Co-host, Producer of weekly television show. Helped launched show and brought a Rolodex of more than 500 contacts from ethnic and mainstream media.
- New York Community Media Alliance, editorial director of Ethnic Journalism Education Fellowship
- Adjunct professor, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism and lecturer at University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, Rutgers University; journalist-in-residence, SUNY Oswego.

BUDGET/MANAGEMENT

- Managed budget of $1.6 million raised from various foundations for CUNY Graduate School of Journalism’s Ethnic and Community Media Center Initiative. Oversee Center’s website, voicesofny.org, a staff of a dozen, including interns and freelancers.
- Managed budget of $1 million budget for Haitian Times and Kreyolfest a music festival.
- Supervised staff of 20 writers, editors, and advertising sales personnel.
- Developed and implemented, integrated, strategic and tactical marketing communications plans for Haitian Times.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

7/08 to present – CUNY TV, New York, NY; Co-host Independent Sources  
Host and produce segments for weekly television show on public television about ethnic media, one of the fastest growing media segments in the United States.
10/10 to present - City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism, New York, NY, executive director, Center for Ethnic and Community Media Initiative, Helped launch the only center of its kind in the United States higher education. Designed and developed Center’s website, which republishes articles from more than 80 ethnic and community media. Oversees new media training program and market research of ethnic and community media segment.

10/99 to 5/08 – The Haitian Times, Brooklyn, NY Editor and Publisher
Founded award winning weekly publication. Managed a staff of a dozen reporters and consultants. Created special events to increase revenue. Supervised publication’s transition to a robust online presence.

Metropolitan Beats: Crime, transportation and immigration
International assignments: Jamaica, Congo, Haiti, Bahamas and Cuba

5/90 to 12/92 – The Sun-Sentinel, Fort Lauderdale, FL, Staff Writer
Beats include: local politics, crime and immigration
International assignments include: Bahamas, Cuba and Haiti

1/90 to 5/90 – Lakeland Ledger, Lakeland FL, Reporter.
Covered local politics and community news.

5/87 to 6/89 – Peace Corps, Lome, Togo, West Africa
Organized agricultural teachers and provided them with resources to improve teaching skills and methods.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND AWARDS

First Place from Associated Press for coverage of Harlem fire (1995)
New York Times Publisher’s Award (1993, 1995)

EDUCATION

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Tallahassee, FL
Degree: BA Degree, December 1989 Major: History

Virginia Tech University, Certificate in Cuban politics and architecture, 1996

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Fluent in French and Haitian Creole, basic Spanish

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP/ORGANIZATIONS

Association of Health Care Journalists
New York Press Association, Board Member; President
National Association of Black Journalists
Public Relations Society of America
New York Community Media Alliance
New York State Committee on Open Government

Appendix