



While Dillard's campus winds down from commencement and gears up for the start of the summer session in June, there is still a group of students on campus in and out of Cook at all hours of the night and eating breakfast regularly from Kearny Hall each morning to fuel up for their busy schedule for the day ahead of them.

These 22 students seen on campus, occupying the newsrooms from the Communications Department in Cook, belong to the New York Times Student Journalism Institute, a two-week intensive training session for young journalists, held here on Dillard's campus from May 15-30.

"Dillard has been so good to us over the years," says Don R. Hecker, institute director and staffer from the *New York Times*. "That's why we keep coming back."

The Institute, in conjunction with the National Association of Black Journalists and the Black College Communication Association, selects "the best and brightest" undergraduate, recent graduate and graduate student journalists from around the country and Canada to participate in the program, Hecker says.



While in New Orleans, the students get hands-on training about reporting, running a newsroom and field experience from writers, editors and photographers from the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe* and regional newspapers of The Times Company

Each student has a focus and works closely with the professionals about reporting on daily stories, editing copy and video, designing pages, taking photos, but mostly writing. “The students have one-on-one personal attention,” says Dr. Cleo Joffrion Allen, chair of the DU School of Mass Communication.

“They are given constructive criticism; it’s very intensive, but nurturing,” adds Dr. Allen, who also serves as a mentor for the Institute along with Mark Raymond, DU media specialist and Dr. Jinx Broussard, formerly of Dillard, who now is an associate professor in the LSU Manship School of Mass Communication.

The students are given a brief history of the city upon their arrival, and then set off into New Orleans to report on their pre-approved story pitches about issues affecting the area, including the lack of supermarkets for a metro area this big, the public transit system in Jefferson Parish and the rising Mississippi River and how it’s affecting people along the Gulf Coast.

“It’s been a really great group of students,” Raymond says. “They’re really smart, dedicated young kids.”

Since 2003, the *New York Times* has funded this all expenses paid experience, including airfare, room and board at Dillard University, all newsgathering expenses, gas, food, and even a stipend for the students to buy souvenirs for their families.

“If you have the talent, we don’t want any barrier for you to come down here and participate,” Hecker says.

“This is a huge expense they do willingly,” Dr. Allen says. “Knowing that it’s a huge expense that they take on willingly, the DU Communications Department is so grateful that they chose Dillard

as the site they use for this experience.”



At the end of the program, students will enjoy a banquet in Kearny Hall on Sunday, to celebrate the newspaper that will be published containing the best materials created by the students.

Right now, daily stories published by the students participating in the Institute can be read here:

<http://nola11.nytimes-institute.com/>