2022 Annual Report
CASW in 2022 at a glance

133
received CASW-supported training

$62,000
in journalism prizes, fellowships, and grants were awarded by CASW

470
registered for ScienceWriters2022, the first in-person U.S. science writers’ conference since 2019

82%
of CASW’s expenditures went to direct program costs

56%
of CASW’s fellowship, grant, and award recipients were journalists of color

Tracking diversity

6 science writing graduate fellows
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25 journalists trained in statistics
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63 international journalists
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Speaker demographics at CASW’s annual science briefings

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CASW Council for the Advancement of Science Writing
Partnerships that meet the moment

A few years ago, with the news media and science both facing stiffening socio-economic headwinds, CASW held strategic discussions aimed at launching new programs to improve science journalism. Anticipating our organization’s 60th anniversary, we were proud of our legacy offerings. But we knew that it was time to refine and redouble our efforts in the context of ongoing layoffs of journalists, the accelerating spread of disinformation, and the declining flow of trustworthy science news reaching the public.

Lacking the numbers of a membership organization, CASW relies on a small but mighty staff and a distinguished panel of volunteer leaders who together are committed to ensuring that the public is served with excellent science reporting and storytelling. As such, we have been ideally positioned to forge new partnerships to develop and support a portfolio of thoughtfully conceived trainings, fellowships, awards, and gatherings.

With our Science Journalism Initiative, CASW has aimed to create new programs that play a key role in repopulating 21st-century media outlets with journalists who can skillfully and effectively expose false claims and critically cover new research trends. This work is crucial to informing public discussions of today’s existential issues.

This annual report showcases the remarkable progress that CASW has made toward these goals, despite revenue losses and a shift to fully online activities during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than ever, we believe that our organization is playing a unique role in improving the quality, diversity, and sustainability of science journalism, both in the U.S. and beyond.

Herein, we celebrate both our long-time partners and the new relationships that bore fruit in 2022. As ever, we are committed to putting science writers on firmer footing as they set out to sift fact from fiction and craft the evidence-based stories about science that need to be told. It is an honor to do this work, and we sincerely thank all who have contributed.

Robin Lloyd
President
Improving the quantity and quality of science news reaching the public

A mix of new and traditional programs enabled CASW to further its historical mission in 2022.

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Fellowships train a talented, diverse science journalism workforce

CASW nurtures talent through academic and early-career training and mentored projects

Partners

The Brinson Foundation | Howard Hughes Medical Institute | Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation | Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism | Society of Environmental Journalists

Early-career science, health, and environment reporting fellows Jesenia de Moya Correa, Nicolas Rivero, and Halle Parker met in person for the first time at the 2022 Society of Environmental Journalists Conference in Houston, having started the SHERF program during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Six talented students passionate about science journalism were awarded CASW’s prestigious Taylor/Blakeslee University Fellowships for the 2022-23 academic year, each receiving a $5,000 award to support graduate training in science writing. Their selection brought to 184 the number of science writers aided by CASW’s graduate fellowships since 1981.

Underwritten by The Brinson Foundation, a Chicago-based philanthropic organization, the fellowships honor the late Rennie Taylor and Alton Blakeslee of The Associated Press. CASW is proud to manage the only national fellowship program supporting graduate training in science writing in the U.S.

As they concluded their fall terms, the fellows reported that they were publishing work online and had completed coursework in investigative reporting, multimedia, story pitching, audio reporting, creating virtual reality stories, news feature writing, medical reporting, podcast producing and editing, storytelling and narrative writing.

“The Columbia journalism program has been an intense but fulfilling experience, and I’m incredibly grateful to the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing for making this possible.”

—Jiayu Liang
Taylor/Blakeslee Fellow 2022–23
To find out what’s happening to the planet, a former Taylor/Blakeslee Fellow trekked northward in 2022 to a fast-changing and formerly frozen Arctic area.

Massachusetts-based Saima Sidik, selected for a Mentored Project Fellowship, headed to Alaska’s Kotzebue Sound with CASW support for a close-up look at environmental field research. She unearthed multiple stories, documenting disappearing beluga whales and accelerating erosion.

The mentored fellowships, funded by The Brinson Foundation, aim to help Taylor/Blakeslee Fellows jump-start their science writing careers with freelance projects after graduation. Mentors — in Saima’s case, Amy McDermott, who won the very first mentored fellowship — help fellows plan their reporting and pitch stories to appropriate outlets.

Saima was the second project fellow to head north. Earlier in the year, 2021 grantee Brett Simpson published a National Geographic story on a controversy in the Norwegian Arctic, where the country’s plans to move to green vehicles is spurring a mining project with its own environmental costs.

Two former Taylor/Blakeslee University Fellows did important reporting from the Arctic with support from mentored project grants in 2021-22. Shannon Sidik (top left) was mentored by Taylor/Blakeslee alumna Amy McDermott (lower left) as she headed for Alaska in 2022, shortly after Brett Simpson (with microphone, lower right) reported for National Geographic and PRI’s The World on an environmental controversy in the Norwegian Arctic.
In 2021, three organizations joined together to address the challenges of building careers and leadership in science, health, and environmental journalism. Those journalism specialties faced related challenges, from the changing job market to a lack of diversity to the need for specialized training and mentoring. Generous funding for early-career training, networking and mentoring came from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. The first class of 13 SHERFs (National Science-Health-Environment Reporting Fellows) finished their fellowship year in mid-2022, and a second class of 12 began their training. A month after joining the program, the second class began working through CASW’s pilot mini-course, “Asking Questions About Data,” and preparing for a full-day preconference workshop ahead of ScienceWriters2022.

The fellowship is designed to enable training while maintaining full-time work, extending such opportunities to more diverse writers. SHERFs attended three conferences as well as custom webinars, field trips, and workshops. CASW launched the program in partnership with the Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism and the Society of Environmental Journalists.

“...I've found confidence and purpose in the health and science field again.”

—Jesenia de Moya Correa
SHERF 2021–22

**Partners**

Howard Hughes Medical Institute | Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation | Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism | Society of Environmental Journalists | Knight Science Journalism @ MIT

**SHERF cohort tackles data, cross-cutting challenges**
ScienceWriters2022: A vibrant conference

As science writers returned to in-person conferencing, CASW organized New Horizons in Science briefings, workshops, and travel fellowships.
After two years of virtual programming, the annual ScienceWriters conference roared back to life in October 2022, hosted in Memphis by St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Co-organized with the National Association of Science Writers, the conference incorporates CASW’s legacy program, New Horizons in Science, which gives science writers a look over the horizons of scientific research and a chance to tackle important issues arising where journalism, science and society meet.

In Memphis, many of the sessions curated by New Horizons Program Director Amber Dance touched on topical themes: coverage of the origin of SARS-CoV-2; what scientists are learning about gun violence; the devastating effect of the war in Ukraine on Arctic science; the troubled state of political polling; and the overdose crisis. In a session jointly organized with the MLK50 nonprofit newsroom, Memphians joined scientists in speaking poignantly of the search for solutions to gun violence.

A handout from the MLK50 newsroom, designed to help community members navigate interviews with journalists, debuted during a New Horizons in Science session on gun violence.

At ScienceWriters2022, Ukrainian biologist Olga Shpak describes the impact of Russia’s invasion of her country on Arctic science. Among those joining Shpak onstage were atmospheric physicist Markus Rex, leader of MOSAiC, the largest Arctic expedition ever; and journalist and author Andrea Pitzer.
With apologies to The New York Times, Harvard astronomer Alyssa Goodman created a front page to headline the challenges and opportunities facing astronomy as the James Webb Space Telescope, Gaia sky survey, and other huge projects deluge scientists with fresh data.

In CASW’s 10th annual Patrusky Lecture, Harvard astronomer Alyssa Goodman wowed #SciWri22 attendees with her vision of how new tools are bringing a wealth of new data and capabilities to astronomy, enabling scientists to revise their understanding of the universe and ask bold new questions. The lecture was captured for online viewing.

In a lively opening plenary moderated by CASW board member Deborah Blum (left), New Horizons in Science focused on the charged topic of journalists’ coverage of the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. Panelists were (left to right) Jane Qiu, Jon Cohen, Ben Hurlbut, and Katherine Eban. The session was recorded as a video for online viewing.
Student writers try their hand at covering science

ComSciCon-SciWri23 provides students with mentored journalism experience

As professional science writers made their way to ScienceWriters2022, 14 science graduate students and postdoctoral researchers were already in place, spending a day learning the basics of science writing from the pros.

ComSciCon-SciWri workshop was created in 2015 as a collaboration between CASW and ComSciCon, an organization of graduate students and postdocs who organize communication training for their peers. By holding a workshop at the ScienceWriters conference, participants benefit from instructors, mentors, and editors drawn from the professional community. CASW’s New Horizons in Science program provides a rich array of science topics for the attendees to cover, and their stories provide coverage of the science discussed at the conference on the CASW website. The workshop is generously supported by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

Many ComSciCon-SciWri alumni use their communication skills as they move into science careers; others have joined the profession of science writing. In 2022, three attendees of the 2021 workshop were selected as Mass Media Fellows by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.
Grants broaden conference participation

“It was definitely a life-changing experience.”
—Myriam Vidal Valero, ScienceWriters2022 travel grant recipient

Nine student and professional science writers won CASW grants to attend ScienceWriters2022. Support from EurekAlert! enabled CASW to increase the number of fellowships.

Fellows win travel, attendance support

CASW’s travel support enabled student and professional science writers alike to attend ScienceWriters2022. Thanks to new partners, CASW was able to more than double the number of grants this year.

Four early-career science writers won traditional New Horizons Travel Fellowships to attend and cover CASW’s science briefings. A grant from AAAS’s EurekAlert! service supported five more. Several of the fellows contributed stories about conference sessions and science topics to CASW’s New Horizons Newsroom.

Conference host St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital offered additional funds to enable three Memphis-area students to attend the 2022 event.
Enduring recognition for excellence in science reporting

A new award launched in 2022 remembers an incomparable science journalist

Bijal Trivedi, senior editor for science at National Geographic, accepts the first Sharon Begley Science Reporting Award from CASW President Robin Lloyd at ScienceWriters2022.
A new career prize for mid-career science journalists was launched by CASW in 2022 — one that will provide lasting recognition for an extraordinary colleague and reporting grants to those whose work embodies the high standards she embodied.

The new prize honoring Sharon Begley (1956–2021) is the result of CASW’s largest-ever fundraising campaign. More than $835,000 in donations were received in 2021 and 2022 to create the award honoring Begley’s memory.

The first winner of the Sharon Begley Science Reporting Award is Bijal P. Trivedi, senior editor for science at National Geographic and author of the book *Breath from Salt: A Deadly Genetic Disease, a New Era in Science, and the Patients and Families Who Changed Medicine Forever*. Trivedi received a $20,000 grant, which will support development of a long-form article and book on the global challenge of sickle cell anemia.

ScienceWriters2022 attendees joined Trivedi, CASW board members, and Begley’s family at a launch reception in Memphis.

“The fact that so many science journalists are following in Sharon’s footsteps should give us hope about the future of our profession—and about the prestige of the prize that’s now making its debut.”

—Alan Boyle, judging co-chair

The family of the late Sharon Begley (right) joined Bijal Trivedi for the presentation of the inaugural Sharon Begley Science Reporting Award at ScienceWriters2022. Left to right are Begley’s husband, Ned Groth; Trivedi; and Dan and Sarah Begley-Groth, Sharon and Ned’s children. Groth’s personal generosity and fundraising in 2021–22 brought in almost $850,000 to fund the award.
Medical reporters, young journalist take CASW honors

The judges chose Cohn Prize winners who “excelled at the important job of holding scientists and scientific institutions accountable” (Lee) and demonstrated “an ability to walk us through important ideas ... as though she’s holding your hand without being intrusive” (Belluck)

For the third time since the inaugural award in 2000, CASW’s Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting was shared by two journalists in 2022. In stories for BuzzFeed News and The New York Times, the two winners had excelled at digging up and reporting important stories that others had missed or dismissed.

Stephanie M. Lee, formerly of BuzzFeed News, and Pam Belluck of the Times were recognized at ScienceWriters2022 and honored along with past winners at a reception hosted by Michelson Philanthropies. The award honors the late Washington Post medical writer and health columnist Victor Cohn, a co-founder of CASW who was known as the dean of medical science reporting.

Sabrina Imbler honored with Clark/Payne Award

The oldest award in CASW’s portfolio honors the youngest science journalists. In 2022, its 34th year, the Clark/Payne Award for a young science journalist went to Sabrina Imbler, whose work encompasses essays as well as reporting.

Judges cited Imbler’s “tremendous storytelling skills” and evidence of “an artist’s attention to detail.” The submitted stories were done during Imbler’s time as a reporting fellow with The New York Times. Their first major book, an essay collection called How Far the Light Reaches, was published in December 2022.

The Clark/Payne Award honors journalists 30 years old and younger.
New program initiatives

How can we continue to provide journalists with the tools to improve coverage of science across the globe?

Support from CASW and other organizers of the 2017 and 2019 World Conferences of Science Journalists enabled 55 journalists from 21 French-speaking countries to gather for the first conference of Francophone science journalists in Dakar, Senegal in October 2022.
Interpreting statistical information for a general audience is a crucial skill for those who report on science, health, and the environment. Whether the issue is climate, environmental justice, or vaccination, many local, national, and global debates hinge on data.

CASW board members recognize that good statistics reporting is key to improving news coverage of science. In 2022, we began working with statistician-science writers Regina Nuzzo and Kristin Sainani to develop training addressing this issue.

CASW secured funding from the Kavli Foundation to pilot-test a video mini-course called “Asking Questions About Data.” Presenting case studies in a lively podcast-style debate format reinforced with problem sets that students could complete at their own pace, the two instructors showed journalists how to spot spin, fraud, and sloppy work and explain the strengths and weaknesses of new scientific results.

Twenty-two students, including 12 participants in the National Science-Health-Environmental Reporting Fellowship program, gave the course a rousing endorsement in an evaluation of the pilot in fall 2022. CASW is now working with the instructors on a proposal to expand the course, offer it more widely, and explore the concept of a data-reporting credential.

We think CASW co-founder Victor Cohn, author of the canonical text News & Numbers, would be happy to hear that.

“I am already using the information I learned in my pieces on science studies and I plan to keep using these skills to my advantage as a journalist for every science piece I write going forward.”

—mini-course participant
In January 2022, CASW and its partner organizations joined in awarding Spark Grant Initiative support to three projects proposed by science journalists in Africa, Asia, and South America. The Spark initiative was created to improve science coverage and capacity in the Global South through locally organized activities.

Two exciting “Spark” projects took place in 2022: the Himalayan Climate Boot Camp, organized by the Nepal Forum of Science Journalists, and the first Conférence des journalistes scientifiques francophones, organized in Dakar, Senegal by a network of science journalism organizations. A third grant went to a symposium being organized in Santiago, Chile in April 2023.

The projects were funded with $100,000 in proceeds from the 2017 and 2019 World Conferences of Science Journalists. CASW and the National Association of Science Writers, co-organizers of WCSJ2017, joined with the organizers of WCSJ2019 to create the program under the auspices of the World Federation of Science Journalists.

After co-funding the initiative and setting aside funds for WCSJ2023 and a future project, CASW and NASW closed out the program fund established with WCSJ2017 proceeds.
A unique opportunity for an early-career science journalist

When University of California-Santa Cruz oceanographer Phoebe Lam and her colleagues were preparing a grant proposal in 2020 for a research cruise to Antarctica’s Amundsen Sea as part of the international GEOTRACES research initiative, Lam proposed reserving a berth for an independent journalist. Lam knew that Antarctic reporting opportunities for journalists were rare and yet essential to public understanding of events that are driving global climate change.

In conversation with Lam and the director of the UCSC Science Communication Program, CASW developed a mentored Antarctic reporting fellowship as an opportunity for an early-career science journalist. The berth was allocated in October 2022.

CASW received 53 applications from journalists in 12 countries for the GEOTRACES Expedition Reporting Fellowship. With funds from the U.S. National Science Foundation, the fellowship will provide travel support, a stipend, and project mentoring to enable the selected journalist to accompany the GEOTRACES GP-17ANT expedition as it collects seawater, sediment and atmospheric samples in a region where warm ocean waters are melting glacial ice shelves at an increasing rate. CASW’s management of the fellowship will help minimize conflicts of interest and provide editorial independence for the expedition journalist.

CASW Connector: A new resource hub

Imagine being able to find the best resources for science journalism and communication at a single “one-stop shop.” That vision is close to being realized for the first time in the multi-decade history of professional science writing, thanks to a collaboration between CASW and Schmidt Futures.

In connection with a major new awards program, Schmidt Futures provided funds to support work by National Public Radio science reporter Joe Palca aimed at developing an online resource database. Palca’s database will now serve as the core of a new public website, Connector, to be launched in mid-2023 and continually updated with new resources, events, and announcements.
Financial summary

Audited Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2022

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**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**       **$1,717,544**

*Prepared by Rich and Bander, LLP
April 2023*
Financial summary

2022 sources of funds
- Foundation grants and contributions
- Individuals and sustainers
- Sponsorships and program support
- Investments and legacy funds

2022 expenditures
- Program services
- Management & general
- Fundraising

CASW Council for the Advancement of Science Writing
A debt of gratitude

**CASW’s Sustainers**
Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
American Chemical Society  
American Association for the Advancement of Science

**ScienceWriters2022 | New Horizons in Science**
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital  
National Association of Science Writers  
Michelson Philanthropies  
EurekAlert!  
Oak Ridge National Laboratory  
SciLine

**Workshop and Fellowship Programs**
The Brinson Foundation  
Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation  
Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism/AHCJ  
Society of Environmental Journalists  
University of California Santa Cruz  
ComSciCon  
Knight Science Journalism at MIT

**International Programs**
Donors to WCSJ2017  
Organizers of WCSJ2019  
World Federation of Science Journalists

**Awards**
Donors to the Sharon Begley Fund and Ev Clark Fund  
Diana Davis Spencer Foundation
The Council for the Advancement of Science Writing

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CASW Spotlight newsletter