

1998
Annual Survey of Journalism
&
Mass Communication Graduates

Lee B. Becker | Gerald M. Kosicki
Heather Hammatt | Wilson Lowrey | S.C. Shin

James M. Cox Jr. Center for International Mass Communication Training and Research
Henry W. Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602
Tel. 706 542-5023
www.grady.uga.edu/annualsurveys/

1998 Project Sponsors:

Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication
Association of Schools of Journalism & Mass Communication
Council of Affiliates of the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication
The Freedom Forum
Hearst Corporation
Institute for Public Relations
Jane Pauley and NBC
Magazine Association of Georgia
National Association of Broadcasters
Newsletter Publishers Foundation
Newspaper Association of America Foundation
Scripps Howard Foundation
Henry W. Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of Georgia



Overview and Summary

- ❑ Graduates of journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree programs were less likely to have specialized in either public relations or advertising in 1998 than were graduates in 1997 and more likely to have specialized in nontraditional areas of journalism study than at any time since at least 1986.
- ❑ Despite changes in how students labeled their specializations, students in journalism and mass communication programs remained strongly committed to professional activities in support of media careers. More than eight in 10 of all bachelor's degree recipients once again reported having held an internship in communication, and more than a third reported working for the campus newspaper.
- ❑ Eight in 10 of the 1998 graduates indicated they had sought employment with at least one of the traditional employers of journalism and mass communication graduates.
- ❑ At the same time, one in 10 of the bachelor's degree recipients reported looking for work with a web-based employer. Only weekly and daily newspapers among traditional print employers attracted more graduate applicants.
- ❑ **The percentage of journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients with at least one job available upon graduation increased significantly in 1998 and stood at its highest level since at least 1988. Similarly, the percentage of graduates who had a full-time job six to eight months after graduation was at a record level.**
- ❑ Unemployment for journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients in 1998 was 5.9%, statistically comparable to a year earlier and just above the national unemployment rate for the total labor force but below the national unemployment rate for those 20-24 years old.
- ❑ **Those receiving a master's degree in journalism and mass communication in 1998 also enjoyed a relatively strong labor market, with most of those wanting jobs finding them.**
- ❑ **Journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients who were members of a racial or ethnic minority in 1998 posted a full-time employment rate 3.6% lower than for those not considered to be minorities. The gap was the smallest gap since 1993. The gap is larger—at 6.3%—if those who are opting to go back to school are included in the computation.** Since returning to school in a strong labor employment market is often a sign of job hunting failure, the larger figure may be a more accurate reflection of continuing problems for minority graduates as they attempt to enter the journalism and mass communication labor market.

- ❑ **In 1998 women who had completed a journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree posted a full-time employment rate 5.3 percentage points higher than their male counterparts.** This gap was larger than has been true on average in recent years.
- ❑ **For the second year in a row, salaries reported by bachelor's degree recipients from journalism and mass communication programs around the country increased rather sharply.** In unadjusted dollars, the median salary of bachelor's degree recipients in 1998 was \$24,000—up \$1,000 or 4.3% from a year earlier and up \$2,500 from two years ago. In dollars adjusted for the official inflation rate, the increase was a less dramatic but still significant \$400 per year.
- ❑ **Salaries reported by master's degree recipients also increased in 1998 over a year earlier and at a rate that exceeded inflation.** On average, master's degree recipients in journalism and mass communication reported an annual income of \$30,000.
- ❑ **The median salary reported by bachelor's degree recipients who took jobs in web publishing was \$30,000—or \$6,000 higher than for all bachelor's degree recipients. The increase represented an increase of 9.8% over a year earlier and allowed graduates with these jobs to lead all industry segments in terms of median salaries.**
- ❑ The 1998 bachelor's degree recipients with full-time jobs reported receiving benefits comparable to those received by 1997 graduates.
- ❑ The percentage of bachelor's degree recipients with a job who selected it because it was what the graduate wanted to do has increased in 1998. Opportunities to learn and chances for advancement are among the important reasons for selecting a job for large numbers of graduates.
- ❑ Job satisfaction for bachelor's degree recipients with a full-time job remained high in 1998, though it is off from its peak in 1995. Satisfaction for those with a part-time job declined.
- ❑ **Three of 10 of the bachelor's degree recipients said they wished they had prepared for another career, and another 5.5% said they never intended to go into journalism or communication in the first place.** Among those who wished they had prepared for another career, two explanations stand out: low salaries in communications jobs and difficulty of finding such a job.
- ❑ **Only one in 20 of the bachelor's degree recipients with jobs expected to retire with the organization they were working with when they completed the survey, and only one out of five expected to retire in the current occupation.**



Graduate Survey Methodology

The *Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates* is designed to monitor the employment rates and salaries of graduates of journalism and mass communication programs in the United States, including Puerto Rico. In addition, the survey tracks the curricular activities of those graduates while in college, examines their job-seeking strategies, and provides measures of the professional attitudes and behaviors of the graduates upon completion of their college studies.

The 1998 Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates was conducted at the Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia, as was true in 1997. From 1987-1996, the survey was conducted at The Ohio State University.

Each year a sample of schools is drawn from those listed in the *Journalism and Mass Communication Directory*, published annually by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, and *The Journalist's Road to Success: A Career and Scholarship Guide*, published each year by the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, Inc. Schools list themselves in the *AEJMC Directory*. To be included in the *Guide*, the college or university must offer at least 10 courses in news-editorial journalism and those courses must include core courses, such as an introduction to the mass media and press law and ethics, as well as basic skills courses such as reporting and editing. Selection of schools is probabilistic, so that those chosen represent the population of schools listed in the two directories. In 1998, 97 schools were drawn from the 451 unique entries of four-year programs in the U.S. (including Puerto Rico) in the two directories.

Administrators at the selected schools are asked to provide the names and addresses of their spring bachelor's and master's degree recipients. A questionnaire was mailed in November or December 1998 to all spring graduates receiving either a bachelor's or a master's degree from the selected programs. A second questionnaire was sent to nonrespondents in January or February 1999. A third mailing was sent in April to graduates of schools with return rates of less than 45% after the first two mailings. The questionnaire asked about the respondent's experiences both while a student and in the months since graduation. Included were questions about university experiences, job-seeking and employment, and salary and benefits.

In 1998, the survey was mailed to 5,996 individuals whose names and addresses were provided by the administrators of the 97 programs. A total of 2,691 returned the questionnaires by the end of May of 1999. Of the returns, 2,391 were from students who reported they actually had completed their degrees during the April to June 1998 period. The remaining 300 had completed their degrees either before or after the specified period, despite their inclusion in the spring graduation lists. A total of 442 questionnaires was returned undelivered and without a forwarding address. Return rate, computed as the number of questionnaires returned divided by the number mailed, was 44.9%. Return rate, computed as the number returned divided by the number mailed minus the bad addresses, was 48.5%. Of the usable

questionnaires, 2,235 (93.5%) were from bachelor's degree recipients and 156 were from those who received a master's degree.

The findings summarized in this report are projectable to the estimated 33,375 students who earned bachelor's degrees and the 3,630 students who earned master's degrees in academic year 1997-98 from the 451 colleges and universities across the United States and Puerto Rico offering programs in journalism and mass communication. Comparisons are made with data gathered in graduate surveys back through 1986. Data on master's degree recipients have been available only since 1990.

Sample error for the 1998 undergraduate data is 2.1%. Sample error terms for earlier surveys were: 2.1% (1996-7), 2.0% (1990-1995), 2.1% (1989), 3.7% (1988), 2.8% (1987), and 3.2% (1986). In all cases, the confidence level is set at .05, meaning that the odds are 19 to one that the figures presented in this report are within plus or minus sample error of what would have been obtained had all graduates of journalism and mass communication programs, rather than a sample of these graduates, completed questionnaires. (Sample error, of course, is only one of the sources of error in survey estimates.) Sample error for responses from those receiving master's degrees in 1998 is 7.9%, nearly the same as in previous years for which data are available. In many instances in the report that follows, fewer than the full number of cases is used for inferences. For example, some of the data are based solely on persons working full-time when surveyed. In these cases, error is greater than 2.1%, depending on the actual number of persons for whom data are reported. In addition, many comparisons between subgroups in the sample and between the 1998 and earlier samples are made. Standard statistical tests have been used to evaluate the observed differences, or trends. Only those differences likely to hold if a census of all graduates were undertaken are discussed in the text.

Women made up 66.4% of respondents. Members of racial or ethnic minorities made up 16.9% of those returning questionnaires. These sample characteristics are similar to those in recent years and generally match the projections for graduates the 451 schools from which the sample was drawn.

Funding for the 1998 graduate survey was provided by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication, the Council of Affiliates of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, The Freedom Forum, the Hearst Corporation, Institute for Public Relations, Jane Pauley and NBC, the Magazine Association of Georgia, the National Association of Broadcasters, the Newsletter Publishers Foundation, the Newspaper Association of America Foundation, the Scripps Howard Foundation, and the Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia.¹

¹Special thanks are due to nine University of Georgia undergraduate journalism students who worked as research clerks for the 1998 *Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates*. They are: Melissa Allison, Nicole Carroll, Michelle Duke, Mark Garrison, Amy Haddix, Elise White, Kathe White, Jay Wright and Regan Young.

Curricular Activities

The graduates of journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree programs were less likely to have specialized in either public relations or advertising in 1998 than were graduates in 1997 and more likely to have specialized in nontraditional areas of journalism study than at any time since at least 1986 (Chart 1). The percentages of graduates who said they had specialized in news-editorial journalism and in broadcasting, however, were roughly the same in 1998 as a year earlier.

The increase in the percentage of students outside the "big four" specializations of news-editorial, broadcasting, advertising and public relations in 1998 reverses a trend going back to 1992. In recent years, the percentage of students not selecting the traditional journalism study areas has declined.

Chart 1 shows how the graduates classified themselves in terms of their specializations. Data from the companion *Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Enrollments* show that, in recent years, administrators of journalism and mass communication programs around the country also have been increasingly likely to report that their students were officially enrolled in specializations other than the traditional areas.

Despite these changes in how students label their specializations or how administrators classify them, students in journalism and mass communication programs remain strongly committed to professional activities in support of media careers (Chart 2). More than eight in 10 of all bachelor's degree recipients once again reported having held an internship in communication, and more than a third reported working for the campus newspaper. In fact, the percentage of students reporting involvement with the campus newspaper, with the campus yearbook, with the campus radio station and with the campus television station were all higher in 1998 than a year earlier. Only the percentage change for television station participation was large enough to be unlikely to be attributable to sample fluctuation. The percentage of 1998 bachelor's degree recipients formally involved in a campus world wide web site remained small in 1998, suggesting that web instruction and activity remains decentralized and not linked to a formal campus web offering.

Journalism and mass communication graduates completed their studies in 1998 with high marks, as has been true historically (Chart 3). A student with a C grade is the clear exception. Across time, the trend is toward higher grades—fewer graduates reported B averages in 1998 than 10 years earlier. Yet students are differentiated by their final grade point averages. Only a third had an A average in 1998. Graduates who specialized in advertising in 1998 were less likely to have achieved an A average than other students, as had been true in 1997 as well (Chart 4). Really only the advertising students distinguish themselves—by having low final grade point averages. Whether this results from poor performance, tough grading by instructors, or some of both, it is not possible to determine with the data at hand. There is little change in the reported college entrance scores of 1998 graduates versus those of 1997 or 1996 (Chart 5

and 6). Once again, print journalism students report higher scores than do students in the other specialties.

Job-Seeking Strategies

The 1998 journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients, for the most part, sought jobs with traditional communication employers. This was true even though, as Chart 1 showed, more of them than in the past had specialized in something other than news editorial journalism, broadcasting, advertising or public relations. In fact, 82% of the 1998 graduates indicated they had sought employment with at least one of the traditional employers of journalism and mass communication graduates. In 1997, that figure had been 80.1%.

As Chart 7 shows, the percentage of graduates seeking jobs in all of the traditional print outlets—with dailies, weeklies, consumer magazines, the trade press, book publishers, the wire services, and newsletter publishers were up at least slightly from a year earlier. The changes were usually small and not statistically significant individually, but the overall pattern is clear.

The attractiveness of World Wide Web publishing to students also is evident in Chart 7. One in 10 of the bachelor's degree recipients now reports looking for work with such an employer. Only weekly and daily newspapers among traditional print employers attract more graduates.

Similarly, the percentages of bachelor's degree recipients seeking work in television, radio and cable in 1998 were at levels equal to or above those of a year earlier (Chart 8). The same can be said for those seeking work in advertising and public relations (Chart 9).

Clearly it would be a mistake to read the data in Chart 1 as indicating that journalism and mass communication graduates have turned away from traditional media employers. Most, regardless of how they classify their specializations, want communication jobs.

Employment

The percentage of journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients with at least one job available upon graduation increased significantly in 1998 over a year earlier and stood at its highest level since at least 1988. Similarly, the percentage of graduates who had a full-time job six to eight months after graduation was at a record level.

In 1988—when the measure of jobs available upon graduation was first used in the graduate survey, only 56% of the graduates reported having at least one job offer upon graduation (Chart 10). That figure increased in subsequent years but dropped dramatically in the recession of the early 1990s. Among the 1998 graduates, 81.8% reported having a job offer of some sort when they left the university. The mean number of job offers was 2.2.

While not all of the graduates accept or keep those early jobs, six to eight months after graduation 75.3% of the 1998 journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients reported that they held a full-time job (Chart 11). The figure is up dramatically from only a few years ago. The percentage of

graduates with part-time work—which most often is an indicant of underemployment, as few graduates seek only part-time jobs—and the percentage returning to school declined. In a strong economy, returning to school immediately upon completion of an undergraduate degree is also often a sign of a lack of success in the job market. Only the percentage of students actually reporting being unemployed increased slightly and at a level easily explained by sample fluctuation.

Most of the jobs held by the 1998 bachelor's degree recipients were what they considered to be permanent ones, as opposed to internships or short-term assignments. Among those who were employed full-time, nine in 10 were in permanent positions, that is, positions that offered continuing employment (Chart 12). The figure has held roughly steady in the years this measure has been included on the graduate survey. Among bachelor's degree recipients with part-time employment, however, the percentage with permanent employment has declined.

Nationally, the average monthly unemployment rate for 1998 was 4.5%—its lowest level since 1969. If this represents full employment in the overall economy, as many argue it does, then the rate of 12.1% unemployment for 1998 journalism and mass communication graduates shown in Chart 11 may also represent full employment.

The 12.1% unemployment figure, however, is almost certainly an overestimation of unemployment among journalism and mass communication graduates. It includes those who are returning to school and, as a consequence, officially out of the labor force. It also includes those who report they were not looking for work at the time of the survey. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, which calculates the national unemployment rate, eliminates these individuals from the labor force calculations. The journalism and mass communication figure also is based on the conservative estimate that those who did not report their employment status in the survey were, in fact, unemployed.

Chart 13 presents an unemployment rate for the journalism and mass communication graduates that eliminates from the calculation those not seeking work as well as those not responding to the survey question asking for employment status. This revised figure puts unemployment for journalism and mass communication graduates at 5.9%, statistically comparable to a year earlier, and just above the national unemployment rate for the total labor force but below the national unemployment rate for those 20-24 years old—the age cohort for most of the journalism and mass communication graduates. Clearly relatively small numbers of journalism and mass communication graduates seeking jobs are not finding them.

Journalism and mass communication master's degree recipients in recent years have enjoyed a slight advantage in the job market over graduates earning the bachelor's degree. The percentage reporting at least one job upon graduation in 1997 was higher for master's degree recipients than bachelor's degree recipients by five points. In 1998, the reverse was true, with bachelor's degree recipients enjoying the advantage. Chart 14 shows that three quarters of the master's degree recipients had at least one job offer upon graduation. In 1997, the master's degree recipients had a full-time employment rate of 83.4%,

compared with the 73.3% figure for bachelor's degree recipients. In 1998, the full-time employment rates for both groups were at 75% (Charts 11 and 15). The estimates for the master's degree recipients are based on relatively small numbers of cases each year, so some instability in the statistics is expected. What is clear is that master's degree recipients in journalism and mass communication also enjoyed a relatively strong labor market, with most of those wanting jobs finding them. The unemployment rate for the master's degree recipients—recalculated to be comparable to those shown in Chart 13—was 10.6%, up from 3.7% the year earlier.

Print journalism bachelor's degree recipients reported a full-time employment rate at the overall figure of 75% (Chart 16), while broadcasting students reported lower full-time employment rates than the overall rate (Chart 17), and advertising (chart 18) and public relations graduates (Chart 19) reported full-time employment rates considerably above the overall figure. These trends are historical ones, but the 1998 figures, particularly in advertising and public relations, are really quite dramatic. If those students not seeking work and returning to school are included in the computation, only 7.3% of the advertising and public relations graduates with bachelor's degrees would be classified as unemployed. Using the calculation procedures underlying Chart 13, these figures drop to 2.4% for advertising graduates and 3.2% for public relations graduates!

As noted, more than eight in 10 of the graduates sought work in the communications field upon graduation. Not all of them ended up in the field six to eight months after graduation. Chart 20 shows that 62.7% of the graduates were employed in communications when they completed the interview—a figure statistically comparable to the figure a year earlier but up rather dramatically from even a few years ago. If those who continued their schooling are eliminated from the computation, the figure jumps to 67.1%. If only those who sought communication jobs are considered, 72.0% found a communication job. The figure is nearly a percentage point higher (72.7%) if those who decided to continue in school are eliminated. In other words, most students seeking a communication job are getting one.

About one in 10 of the 1998 bachelor's degree recipients said they were either writing and/or reporting as the primary activity of job held (Chart 21). The figure was the same as a year earlier. The percentage of graduates producing or selling and placing advertisements also was nearly the same as a year earlier (Chart 22). The percentage saying that promotion, marketing or corporate communication was the nature of work done was 14.7—down slightly from a year earlier (Chart 23). The percentage of students who took jobs with newspapers or wire services also held steady (Chart 24). The percentage of graduates taking jobs radio held constant, while the percentage taking jobs in television continued its steady growth from its low point in the early 1990s (Chart 25). The percentage of graduates going into public relations and advertising has remained relatively constant (Chart 26). About one percent of the students reported holding jobs in the consumer magazine industry, in newsletters and trade publishing, in book publishing, and in web publishing (Chart 27).

Among graduates of news editorial programs, 36.4% had taken a job with the newspaper industry six to eight months after graduation (Chart 28). The figure has been increasing slightly in recent years and is up markedly from as recent as 1993, when only about a quarter of the news editorial graduates had taken jobs in the newspaper industry. The percentage of broadcast graduates who had taken a job in the telecommunications industry was up slightly in 1998, and the figure is dramatically higher than it was in the early part of the decade (Chart 29). The percentage of advertising graduates who took advertising jobs in 1998 was up from a year earlier (Chart 30), while the percentage of public relations graduates going into that field was down only slightly (Chart 31). As in the past, public relations students are more likely to report doing something in communication but not specifically public relations than are graduates of other specialities.

In the 11 years from 1987 to 1997, journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients who were members of a racial or ethnic minority, on average, posted a full-time employment rate five percentage points lower than did graduates who were not minorities. Only one year—in 1988—did minority graduates show a full-time employment rate higher than that of bachelor's degree recipients who were not minorities. The gap has persisted since the recession of the early 1990s and has even appeared to be widening in recent years. In 1998, however, the gap narrowed considerably, as Chart 32 shows, and stood at 3.6%—the smallest gap since 1993. (The gap is small enough to be explainable by sample fluctuation.) The gap is larger—at 6.3%—if those who are opting to go back to school are included (and here the difference is unlikely to be explained by sample fluctuation). Since returning to school in a strong labor employment market is often a sign of job hunting failure, the larger figure may be the more accurate reflection of continuing problems of minority graduates as they attempt to enter the journalism and mass communication labor market. The 1998 figure is quite an improvement from 1997, however, when the gap between minority and nonminority employment was 14.1%, with those returning to school included in the computation.

As in 1997, minority graduates of journalism and mass communication programs look pretty much like nonminority graduates in terms of their job seeking strategies (Chart 33). Minority and nonminority graduates looked for jobs with dailies, with weeklies, in radio, in television, and in cable at about the same rate. Only in public relations and advertising are there consistent—though small—differences, with minority graduates less likely to seek such employment.

The daily newspaper industry has engaged in much discussion about its efforts—only slightly successful in recent years—to increase minority employment. The experiences of the 1997 minority graduates seeking newspaper jobs illustrated the problem. The gap in full-time employment was an astounding 17.5 percentage points, with minority graduates getting the short end of the stick. The situation was much improved in 1998, but the gap still persisted (at a much smaller 6.4 percentage points), as Chart 34 shows. Even equal levels of employment will not erase the existing under-

representation of minorities in the daily newspaper industry for a long time, i.e., until those now in the newsrooms have retired.

Women bachelor's degree recipients in journalism and mass communication have had slightly more success in the job market in the 1987 to 1997 period than have men. Across those years, on average, 72.6% of the female graduates reported being employed full-time six to eight months after graduation, while 69.9% of the men reported full-time employment. In 1998, the gap widened, with women 5.3 percentage points higher than men in terms of full-time employment six to eight months after graduation (Chart 35). A gap this large is not likely to be attributable to sample fluctuation but is more likely the result of real differences in the experiences of women and men as they seek full-time employment upon graduation.

As in 1997, only a very small percentage (3.9%) of the 1998 journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients reported they were members of a union (Chart 36). Nationally, just fewer than one in 10 of private sector workers are members of a union.

Salaries and Benefits

For the second year in a row, salaries reported by bachelor's degree recipients from journalism and mass communication programs around the country increased rather sharply (Chart 37). In unadjusted dollars, the median salary of bachelor's degree recipients in 1998 was \$24,000—up \$1,000 or 4.3% from a year earlier and up \$2,500 from two years ago. In dollars adjusted for the official inflation rate (CPI-U, 1.6%), the increase was a less dramatic but still significant \$400 per year. The 1998 increase allowed the median salary to exceed that paid to graduates in 1989 and to stand at its highest level—again with inflationary adjustments—since at least 1986. The 4.3% increase in salaries puts journalism graduates in the middle range of expected salary increases of 3% to 5% for all 1997-98 graduates, as reported by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University (www.csp.msu.edu/cei/index.html).

Salaries reported by master's degree recipients also increased in 1998 over a year earlier and at a rate that exceeded inflationary influences (Chart 37). On average, master's degree recipients in journalism and mass communication reported an annual income of \$30,000, or \$6,000 more than their bachelor's degree recipient counterparts. Adjusted for inflation, the 1998 median salary of master's degree recipients was up \$700 from a year earlier. The 1998 graduates, however, still have not matched the inflation-adjusted median salary of master's degree recipients in 1995. The peak salary for master's degree recipients was reported in 1990, when master's degree recipients were first included in the annual graduate survey.

Salaries received by journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients who went to work for the daily newspaper industry increased sharply from a year earlier (Chart 38). In inflation-adjusted dollars, the salary earned by 1998 graduates was still under the 1995 peak, but up from a year earlier. Weekly newspaper salaries, which are low in comparison with those received by graduates who

find jobs at dailies, increased in 1998 over a year earlier and increased at a rate above that of inflation (Chart 39). The salary is the highest reported by graduates who took jobs in this employment sector since at least 1987.

Radio (Chart 40) salaries for bachelor's degree recipients also increased enough from 1997 to 1998 to represent real, inflation-adjusted gains and to put 1998 salaries at their highest level since at least 1987. Salaries reported by bachelor's degree recipients who found work in the television industry, however, were lower, on average, than the salaries reported by the 1997 graduates (Chart 41). In adjusted dollars, the 1998 graduates reported a median annual salary \$400 less than graduates reported in 1987.

The median salary reported by bachelor's degree recipients who took jobs in advertising (Chart 42) grew a striking \$3,000 over the salary reported by graduates a year earlier. The adjusted salary is \$700 higher than the previous peak year of 1989. Salaries in public relations also increased in 1998, though not enough to match the peak year of 1988 (Chart 43).

The median salary reported by the 24 bachelor's degree recipients in the sample who took jobs in web publishing was \$30,000, or \$6,000 higher than for all bachelor's degree recipients. The increase represented an increase of 9.8% over a year earlier and allowed graduates with these jobs to lead all industry segments in terms of median salaries (Chart 44). As in the past, graduates with jobs in newsletter and trade publications also reported salaries considerably higher than the median. Graduates with jobs in advertising, public relations and consumer magazines also had above average starting salaries. Cable television alone among the telecommunication industry segments offered a salary approaching the overall median.

Graduates who were members of a union, as noted, make up a small minority of journalism and mass communication graduates with jobs, but they receive higher salaries (Chart 45).

The 1998 bachelor's degree recipients with full-time jobs reported receiving benefits comparable to those received by 1997 graduates. About eight of 10 have basic medical plans and major medical plans paid for either in whole or in part by their employer (Chart 46). Prescription drug programs are paid wholly or in part for three-quarters of the graduates (Chart 47). Fewer than a quarter of the bachelor's degree recipients reported holding jobs that offered wholly paid or employer-subsidized child care, but the pattern is for increased offering of this benefit—as well as maternity and paternity leave—over time (Chart 48). On average, the 1998 bachelor's degree recipients with full-time jobs were offered 4.1 wholly or partially paid benefits from those listed in Charts 46-48, and the figure was a statistically comparable 4.0 for 1997 graduates.

Not all employers provide the same levels of benefits, Chart 49 shows. The graduates working outside media companies or departments but with communication jobs had the most benefits provided to them either wholly or partially paid by their employers. Radio stations offered the fewest benefits. Benefits roughly parallel salaries, with graduates holding jobs in advertising and public relations having better than average benefits. Chart 49 is based on data for 1997 and 1998 combined.

As was true in past years, about one in four of the bachelor's degree recipients with full-time jobs report being expected to work overtime without compensation (Chart 50). Those 1998 bachelor's degree recipients working in non-media jobs were least likely to report having to work overtime (Chart 51). Approximately two-thirds of the graduates in jobs with dailies, radio, television, cable, public relations and advertising departments and agencies were required to do overtime work. Overtime work was required and uncompensated most frequently in public relations jobs.

Attitudes toward Work

The percentage of bachelor's degree recipients with a job who selected it because it was what the graduate wanted to do has increased every year since 1993—when the question was first asked in the present format (Chart 52). The percentage taking a job because it is the only one available has been on the decline during the same period. The 1998 survey instrument included some new questions designed to determine why students pick the jobs they select, and the results for the old and new questions are shown comparatively in Chart 53. It appears opportunities to learn and chances for advancement are among the important reasons for selecting a job for large numbers of graduates. Among those characteristics of jobs judged to be relatively unimportant are visibility in the community, flexibility of work schedules, salary and benefits. Communication jobs—for the most part—do not seem to offer these benefits, and the graduates may simply be reflecting on the reality of their career choices.

Consistent with the earlier data, those students who landed a job in advertising and public relations were not likely to list availability as the reason for selecting the job, while those who did not find a communication job at all were likely to list this rationale. Those without a communication job were unlikely—relative to others—to say they picked the job because it represented what they wanted to do. The graduates employed at weeklies, with television and in radio were somewhat more likely to list this motivation. Salary and benefits as motivations were more likely to be given by those who did not take a media job, by those in advertising and in public relations. Location as a reason for selecting a job was more prominent among those without a communication job, those with a daily newspaper job, and those in advertising. Flexibility of schedule was more pronounced among those with a non-media job. Those in jobs outside communication were less likely to say they selected the job because it provided challenging work; this reason was prominent among those in public relations. Listing opportunities to learn as a motivation was particularly pronounced by those working in advertising and a relatively uncommon explanation given by those outside the media. Those in television, cable and advertising were more likely to say they selected their jobs because of opportunities for advancement; those outside the media were not so likely to pick this explanation. Variety of assignments was mentioned as a reason for selecting a job more often by those at weekly newspaper jobs, those in cable, and those in public relations and relatively infrequently by those outside the media. Co-workers were more likely to be a motivation for selecting a job in public relations and advertising. Visibility in the community was listed as a reason for

selecting a job more frequently for those in telecommunication jobs than by those in print and those outside the communication field.

Job satisfaction for bachelor's degree recipients with a full-time job remained high in 1998, though it is off from its peak in 1995. Satisfaction for those with a part-time job declined (Chart 54).

Three-quarters of the 1998 bachelor's degree recipients said they would select the same major were they making the decision again (Chart 55). As in the past, graduates were most likely to select business as the alternate major from a list including English, political science, history, foreign languages and business.

The 1998 instrument contained a new set of questions with a focus on career choice, rather than selection of a major. All those completing the instrument were asked if they wished they had prepared for another career other than journalism/communication. As Chart 56 shows, three of 10 of the bachelor's degree recipients said they did wish they had prepared for another career. Another 5.5% said they never intended to go into journalism or communication, even though they had selected that major.

The bachelor's degree recipients who were unemployed when they completed the questionnaire were no more likely to second guess their decision on a major than were those with jobs, but they were more likely to think they should have prepared for another career—perhaps within the broad field of communication. Those who had not landed a communication job, however, were much more likely to have felt they should have completed a different major and much more likely to think they should have prepared for a different career.

Those graduates who had not entered the labor force because they were continuing in school were more likely to report that they had never planned to enter the journalism or communication field than were other graduates. It seems they had used journalism studies as a step toward a career requiring further study, such as law or the professorate.

Among those who wished they had prepared for another career, two explanations stand out: low salaries in communications jobs and difficulty of finding such a job (Chart 57). In fact, 44.7 % of the graduates answering the question listed both of these reasons as explanation for their feeling they should have prepared for another career. Low salaries, but not the lack of a job, were listed by 22.2%, while lack of a job but not low salaries were listed by 14.0%. The remaining 19.1% listed neither of these explanations.

Other perceived negatives of communication jobs were working schedules, poor benefits, location, and the lack of opportunities for advancement. Four in 10 of the graduates who wished they had planned for another career said simply their interests had changed. Fewer than one in 10 of the graduates said they didn't go into communications jobs because not enough people like them were in the field. This response was no more common among graduates who were members of racial or ethnic minorities than it was among other graduates. Nor were minorities more likely to list location of jobs as a reason for thinking different career preparation would have been preferable. Both reasons are sometimes offered as

an explanation for why minorities don't go into communication jobs. In fact, minority graduates are no more likely than other graduates to wish they had prepared for another career or selected another major while in college.

Eight in 10 of the bachelor's degree recipients with jobs said their employers provided them a realistic view of job demands upon employment, and the same ratio said the employers provided an explanation of work expectations (Chart 58). Seven out of 10 said they received on-the-job supervision, and about half participated in a newcomer orientation session. Just under seven in 10 said they were given assistance in dealing with the demands of their jobs. The figures are virtually unchanged from a year ago.

About six in 10 of the bachelor's degree recipients with jobs reported that the job met expectations. Three-quarters said they had a realistic view of job requirements upon employment (Chart 59). Three-quarters of the bachelor's degree recipients with jobs found the job to be interesting, two-thirds found the job to be challenging, and six in 10 reported the job provided opportunities for advancement.

As in 1997, only one in 20 of the bachelor's degree recipients with jobs expected to retire with the organization they were working with when they completed the survey, and only one out of five expected to retire in the occupation of that job (Chart 60). Those working in communication jobs were no less likely to report the expectation that they would leave the organization than were those without a communication job, but they were less likely to report they planned to retire in the occupation. Yet only one in four of the bachelor's degree recipients with a communication job expected to retire in the field in 1997, and one in five felt that way in 1998. Graduates working at weeklies, in radio, and in public relations and advertising were lower in commitment to the occupation; those with dailies and in broadcast and cable television were higher.

Concluding Comments

The journalism and mass communication labor market from the point of view of those entering in 1998 was spectacular. The rate of full-time employment was at its highest since at least 1986. Clearly most of those who wanted a job found one. In fact, the unemployment rate for journalism and mass communication graduates appears to be at what—in modern times—should be considered full-employment. That is good news for graduates, but bad news for those trying to hire.

Probably because of the tight labor market, salaries are up. The median annual salary earned by journalism and mass communication bachelor's degree recipients increased by \$1,000 in 1998 from a year earlier and \$2,500 from two years ago. In both years, the salary increase beat inflation.

It is doubtful that the increase is really enough. Three of 10 of the bachelor's degree recipients said they wished they had prepared for a career other than journalism and mass communication. Those who felt this way had two explanations. One was salaries. The other was availability of a job. Many listed both, and the message may be that jobs that pay poorly are not jobs the graduates want to take. Nineteen out of 20 of the bachelor's degree recipients with jobs expected to leave that organization before retiring, and

four out of five expected to leave the occupation. Can a field with so little commitment of its new employees be very sanguine about the future of its workforce?

That salaries are a problem should be clear enough. A median salary of \$24,000—what the 1998 bachelor's degree recipients earned—is better than what the 1997 or 1996 graduates earned, and the increases the last two years beat out inflation. But the 1998 figure is just a couple of hundred dollars above what it was in 1989 in inflation-adjusted terms, and in 1989 it wasn't much to be excited about. While a minimum wage worker earns \$10,712 per year today, the average annual income for someone in private sector employment in May of 1999 was \$23,750—or just below what a journalism graduate with four years of education earned. The National Association of Colleges and Employers estimated—based on reports of employers—that 1998 liberal arts graduates nationally received an average job offer of \$27,267 per year (www.jobweb.org/NACE/). Economics and finance graduates were reported to get offers averaging \$33,691 per year. Segments of the journalism and mass communication labor market offer competitive wages. Graduates taking web publishing positions reported a median salary of \$30,000. As in other fields, technology-oriented positions offer the highest level of compensation.

In addition to the good news about employment, the 1998 graduate survey offered good news about the employment experiences of minority graduates—or at least better news than was the case a year earlier. The gap between the level of full-time employment of minority graduates and of nonminority graduates decreased. On the other hand, it is shocking that such a gap has existed in the past and that one persists today—given all the discussion about the need to increase the diversity of the journalism and communication workforce. Diversity is going to increase only when minorities experience a more favorable employment situation than do those who are not minorities. That, currently, is not the case. If present trends continue, the percentage of women in communication will increase because women are being hired at a higher rate, but it is hard to imagine how the percentage of minorities in the field is going to change.

Participating Schools

The following 97 schools participated in the 1998 Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates:

Alabama State University (AL)	Union College (KY)
University of South Alabama (AL)	University of Kentucky (KY)
Arizona State University (AZ)	Northeast Louisiana University (LA)
Arkansas State University (AR)	Northwestern State U. of Louisiana (LA)
Ouchita Baptist University (AR)	Southeastern Louisiana University (LA)
Azusa Pacific University (CA)	University of Maryland (MD)
California State University Fullerton (CA)	Emerson College (MA)
California State University Long Beach (CA)	University of Massachusetts (MA)
Humboldt State University (CA)	Michigan State University (MI)
San Jose State University (CA)	Oakland University (MI)
Santa Clara University (CA)	University of Minnesota (MN)
University of Northern Colorado (CO)	University of St. Thomas (MN)
University of Bridgeport (CT)	Rust College (MS)
University of Delaware (DE)	University of Mississippi (MS)
Florida A & M University (FL)	Central Missouri State University (MO)
University of Florida (FL)	Lincoln University (MO)
Berry College (GA)	Maryville University of Saint Louis (MO)
Clark Atlanta University (GA)	University of Missouri--Kansas City (MO)
University of Georgia (GA)	University of Montana (MT)
University of Idaho (ID)	Hastings College (NE)
Columbia College Chicago (IL)	University of New Hampshire (NH)
Northern Illinois University (IL)	Rider University (NJ)
Northwestern University (IL)	University of New Mexico (NM)
Southern Illinois University (IL)	Ithaca College (NY)
Indiana University (IN)	Long Island University Brooklyn Campus (NY)
Purdue University (IN)	New York University (NY)
University of Southern Indiana (IN)	St. Bonaventure University (NY)
Loras College (IA)	Syracuse University (NY)
University of Iowa (IA)	Elon College (NC)
Wichita State University (KS)	Lenoir-Rhyne College (NC)
Eastern Kentucky University (KY)	University of North Carolina at Pembroke (NC)

Franciscan University of Steubenville (OH)
Ohio University (OH)
Ohio State University (OH)
Youngstown State University (OH)
Oklahoma State University (OK)
University of Oklahoma (OK)
Southern Oregon State College (OR)
University of Oregon (OR)
Indiana University of Pennsylvania (PA)
Elizabethtown College (PA)
LaSalle University (PA)
University of Scranton (PA)
University of South Carolina (SC)
Black Hills State University (SD)
Tennessee Technological University (TN)
University of Tennessee--Martin (TN)
Stephen F. Austin State University (TX)
Texas Wesleyan University (TX)

Texas A & M University (TX)
Texas Christian University (TX)
University of Texas--Permian Basin (TX)
Brigham Young University (UT)
Castleton State College (VT)
James Madison University (VA)
Regent University (VA)
Virginia Union University (VA)
Eastern Washington University (WA)
University of Washington (WA)
Bethany College (WV)
Marquette University (WI)
University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee (WI)
University of Wisconsin--Stevens Point (WI)
University of Wyoming (WY)
Howard University (DC)
University of Puerto Rico (PR)