

## Student Journalists Nominated for Two "Mark of Excellence" Awards

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Last summer may seem long past, but on April 8 and 9, Brooklyn College students from the Department of Television and Radio who participated in the Summer Broadcast News Institute will be hoping to win a Mark of Excellence Award. Presented by the Society of Professional Journalists, the Mark of Excellence Awards honor the best in student journalism in a variety of categories. The students have been nominated in the categories of Best All-Around Newscast and Best Television General News Reporting, both in the four-year college/university division for Region 1.

Barbara Taylor Nevins, an Emmy-winning investigative reporter who has taught in the department since 2010, suggested the students submit their work for consideration. "The Society of Journalists is the pre-eminent organization in American journalism. I thought this would be a good opportunity for the students."



Matthew Vann

Professor Nevins also suggested the idea that garnered Matthew Vann, '11, and Seve Chambers, '11, the General News Reporting nod. "Minorities always come out of recessions worse than anyone else," said Vann. "We thought we should go out and do a story that would show the seriousness of the recession for black men."

To create the story, Vann interviewed multiple sources, getting viewpoints of the men themselves as well as from such nonprofits as STRIVE and Community Service Society. Vann was especially happy with his decision to interview Columbia professor Marc Lamont Hill, whose academic view he felt "ties up all the ideas together."

Chambers worked as the cameraman on the segment, a role that is more complicated than just pointing and shooting. "For the topic, it was bit difficult to conceptualize visually, so I had to try different things to come up with footage that could be relevant to the topic and engage people."

Avi Sandler, '10, produced the newscast and submitted it for Best All-Around Newscast. He coordinated varied segments on topics such as the mixed reactions to a new Sheepshead Bay mosque, finding good clothing deals on the internet and the culture of classic car collectible. "Putting [the pieces] together, you feel pressure on your shoulders, and you want it to be as professional and perfect as can be. Seeing how the newscast improved as students got the hang of things was incredible."

Getting nominated was the icing on the cake. "I knew our newscast was good, but when I submitted it to the SPJ, I didn't know if we would even hear back from them, because there are a lot of schools out there. When I heard we were finalists, it was the greatest moment."