



ICCJA Contest Directions

1. **Entries are confined** to a single calendar year, which means the dates for this year's entries are July. 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. All entries must have been published between these dates.
2. **Entries are submitted** digitally, so submit entries in any of the following manners:
 - Make PDFs for full pages for design categories. (You can make an online story from a URL by going to the print function or in Safari use the Export to PDF function.) For other entries, follow this procedure: If you want to submit a column that appears on page 3, for example, create a PDF or screen shot of the opinion piece. If you have a news story that jumps from page 1 to 6, then screen shot/PDF each page and name them 'News1' and 'News1jump.'
 - Other options to create a PDF file is to copy all aspects of an online story, paste into a Word document, and choose to save as a PDF. Formatting and layout WILL change with this option, but has less additional coding language at the start of the article for the judges to wade through.
 - If you do not have archived digital editions, you can scan pages on a copier and submit entries in this manner (usually as a .JPG). Do not send documents using InDesign or Quark formats since judges may not have that software.
 - You may also submit a link for stories to be judged, but it is your responsibility to ensure that these links and stories are accessible when judges review them.
3. **You may submit two entries in division categories**, but only **one entry for open categories and General Excellence**. Awards will be given for first, second, third, and honorable mention.

CONTEST ELIGIBILITY

Students and staffs that are ICCJA members are eligible to enter each year's contest. Entries must be published either in print or online between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Entries may not be revised after their original publication. Winners will be honored at the ICCJA Fall Convention held as an online format on November 13, 2025. The MS Teams link will be sent at the end of October to advisors. Awards will be shipped to all schools.

General Rules

1. Only active ICCJA members are eligible to participate. Dues are collected in the fall for the current school year. Jan Kopischke, Executive Director, will send a dues Invoice to each school in Mid-August.
2. All entries must have been originally published during the dates listed above.
3. Online entries will be judged at times selected by the judges.
4. All work must have been produced by a student member of a current ICCJA member and have appeared in a student publication or website. *No faculty or staff member may have contributed to any entry.*
5. Submit only entries of high quality, which merit attention.
6. **Improperly prepared or late entries will be disqualified.** Please designate a single submitter for your school. If you get locked out of your log-in, contact Adam Webster (773-481-8369 awebster17@ccc.edu) or Jan Kopischke, (708-608-4177 kopischkej2@morainevalley.edu), the contest Administrators.

Note: The GENERAL EXCELLENCE category is submitted electronically as a PDF or as a URL to your site. Note that the former Website category has been eliminated and fused with General Excellence.

ICCJA ONLINE CONTEST INSTRUCTIONS

Please, make sure to read these instructions because entries that are submitted incorrectly will be discarded. All submissions must be received by **Friday, Sept. 19, 2025**.

Step 1 — Your Association Code is ICCJA. Register on the contest website by using your email address and creating a password, which can be ICCJA25. You will receive a confirmation email, which you will need to complete registration. Use the [link](#) to register.

Step 2 — After you log in, you will see a page showing any entries you have already submitted. Complete rules for the contest are available on pages 3-4. Some browsers, such as Safari, will open the rules in a new window; others will require you to download the PDF file to your computer.

Step 3 — Click on the “Add New Entry” link.

Step 4 — On this page, select your newspaper name. A lot of information will autofill. If that information is incorrect, please call Adam Webster at 773-481-8369 or email him at awebster17@ccc.edu or Jan Kopischke 708-608-4177 or e-mail at kopischkej2@morainevalley.edu. Your Division has been pre-assigned. Fill in the preparer’s name.

Step 5 — Select “By Division” or “Open” to begin submitting entries. (*No more than two for Division and one for Open categories.*) All required fields are marked with a red asterisk.

Step 6 — Select the contest category. These are drop-down menus for your convenience. This field will clear each time you save an entry, so you must select a category for each new entry. When you select the category, special instructions will appear below it.

Step 7 — If necessary, provide an explanation of your entry. The explanation/cutline box is limited to 3,000 characters. It’s a good idea to write your explanation in another program, such as Word, and copy/paste into the explanation box. If a URL is required, fill in the URL box.

Step 8 — Include the name of the entry. If uploading full-page PDF files, it will be helpful if the entry name matches the headline on the page so the judges can find it easily. If the judges cannot tell what is to be judged, the entry will be discarded without refund. **This is especially true of photo categories.**

Step 9 — Include the name of the person or people who should be credited for any award. This is generally the writer, reporter, photographer, graphic artist, cartoonist, etc. It is not necessarily the name of the person submitting the entry nor the person picking up the award at the conference.

Step 10 — Add your file or files. You can drag and drop files or use the “Add files” button to navigate to your files. **Generally, files should be in PDF format except photos, which should be in high-resolution JPG format.** Other files and URLs may be acceptable as noted in the special instructions. Upload as many files as are necessary to complete your entry, but refer to the special instructions for any limitations for categories such as News Story of the Year, Editorial Writer of the Year, or Reporter of the Year.

Step 11 — When you have completed your submission, click the “Save” button. If you click the “Back to list” button, you will lose the entry you just completed. After clicking “Save,” you will be directed back to the list of your entries.

Step 12 — To submit another entry, click “Add New Entry.” As long as you have not logged out of the system, your newspaper name will still be in place and you can simply start at Step 6 again. You may log out and log back in later to continue adding entries. You will need to select your newspaper name each time you log in. **It is helpful to bookmark the site.**

Step 13 — If you are done submitting entries, please review the list. You may not change an entry, but you may delete an entry and resubmit it. If you have questions, please contact one of the Contest Administrators: Adam Webster at awebster17@ccc.edu or 773-481-8369 or Jan Kopischke at kopischkej2@morainevalley.edu or 708-608-4177.

OPEN DIVISIONS

These are categories in which all schools compete against one another. They include the following:

Class 01 -Podcast –Entries should focus on news reporting and/or storytelling. Judges will evaluate podcasts on their ability to tell a compelling story, reveal new information in a clear presentation, and using an appropriate, engaged voice/tone. Topics should be of interest to students. Podcasts may be live to tape, or they may be produced audio packages. Judges will also consider quality of audio and other technical aspects. Podcasts should be **no longer than 30 minutes.**

Class 02-Editorial Cartoon – Entries should comment on issues significant to the newspaper’s readers. Comics can be entered as well.

Class 03 -Graphics – Entries will be judged by how well they visually report information in charts, diagrams, or other non-narrative styles.

Class 04 - News Story of the Year – Submit at least **two** articles related to **single news event or issue** that addresses a single topic that affects the campus community. (Examples: COVID, Presidential searches, tuition increases, building expansions, mental health, etc.) Judges will look particularly for initiative and in-depth reporting, but they will also consider writing quality, accuracy, and fairness. This entry may include pieces written by multiple staff members. **No more than five** related stories should be submitted for this award.

Class 05 - Multimedia Story – Entries should include multimedia, including video, audio, text, and graphics, in order to address news, features or sports. Entries will be judged on the content and storytelling, but visual and auditory quality will also be considered.

Class 06 - Sports Column – Entries must address topics significant to its publication’s readers, but an emphasis should be made to address issues and news related to campus sports, athletes and coaches. Entries will be judged on style, writing quality, originality, and campus relevance.

Class 08 - Editorial Writer of the Year – Submit **three** published editorials by one writer or writing team. Judging will be based on clarity, strength of writing, creativity, and impact on both public policy and quality of life.

Class 09 - Reporter of the Year – This award recognizes individuals for outstanding reporting and writing that concerns significant issues and news relevant to campus life. Submit three news stories published during the previous year by the same writer. Entries will be evaluated based on the depth of reporting, quality of sources, concision of writing and precision of editing.

DIVISIONS I & II

Newspapers are divided into two divisions that are based upon school enrollment. Winners will be announced in both divisions. You have been pre-assigned to your division online.

Class 10 - Arts Review – Entries should address commentary on movies, books, TV shows, campus displays, or any other relevant art forms with the goal of assessing the value of those works.

Class 11 - Feature Photo – Entry must address an event, person, entity, or issue relevant to a newspaper’s readers. Include the feature story connected to this photo. You may submit a feature photo that was published without a story. Entries will be judged based on newsworthiness, content, originality, style, and composition. Please submit the photo as a separate .jpg file from an article.

Class 12 - Feature Writing – Entries will be judged based on human interest, reader interest, quality of writing, depth of reporting, and relevance to a newspaper’s readers.

Class 13 - Front Page Design – Entries will be judged for both design and content, which includes editing and accuracy.

Class 14 - Headline – Entries must include both the story and the headline for any news, feature, sports or opinion story.

Class 15 - News Column – Entries should address topics, issues and/or news relevant to a newspaper’s readers. Entries will be judged based upon style, writing quality, originality and local relevance.

Class 16 - News Photo – Entry must address a news event or issue relevant to a newspaper’s readers. If possible, submit a news story connected with this photo. Entries will be judged based on newsworthiness, content, and composition.

Class 17 - News Story – Entry must be a single news story that should address newsworthy and significant facts related to issues, events and people relevant to a newspaper’s readers. Entries will be evaluated by their enterprise, initiative, documentation, resourcefulness, and original reporting.

Class 18 - Page Design – Categories can include section fronts, inside pages, editorial pages – essentially any page that is *not* a front page for the newspaper. Center spreads may be used if they cover a single topic and be no more than two pages. Entries will be judged for both their design and content, which includes editing and accuracy.

Class 19 - Sports Photo – Entry must address a sports event relevant to a newspaper’s readers. Include the sports story connected to this photo. You may submit a sports photo that was published without a sports story. Entries will be judged based on newsworthiness, content, and composition.

Class 20 - Sports Game Story – Entries should focus on game coverage or relevant team coverage. Writers are encouraged to develop storylines related to these games.

Class 21 - Sports Feature – Entries will be judged based on human interest, reader interest, quality of writing, depth of reporting, and relevance to a newspaper’s readers as they relate to sports on or near campus.

Class 22 - Staff Editorial – Submit a single published editorial by one writer or by the staff as a whole. Judging will be based on clarity, strength of writing, creativity, and impact on public policy and quality of life.

Class 23 - Mike Foster General Excellence – This category examines the overall quality of the publication’s media operation. The judge will look at news content, quality of writing, evidence of in-depth reporting, presentation/design, photography, originality and editing/accuracy. Entries can be print (via PDF), emailed newsletters, social media accounts or a website (whatever medium you best use to connect to readers can be entered). The judge will be looking at the overall quality of the content as presented. We encourage submissions to include a PDF describing what they are entering (such as information on print edition PDF, links to social media, links to e-newsletters, links to the website, etc.) Please provide as much detail as possible for judges to assess your publication. **Limited to one entry per school.**

Best Student Media – No entries online for this category. Winners will be determined by an earned point system. Selection will be made by points assigned for winning other categories. Points will be assigned as follows: 4 points for a First Place; 3 points for a Second Place; 2 points for a Third Place; and 1 point for an Honorable Mention. Awards will be given in both divisions.