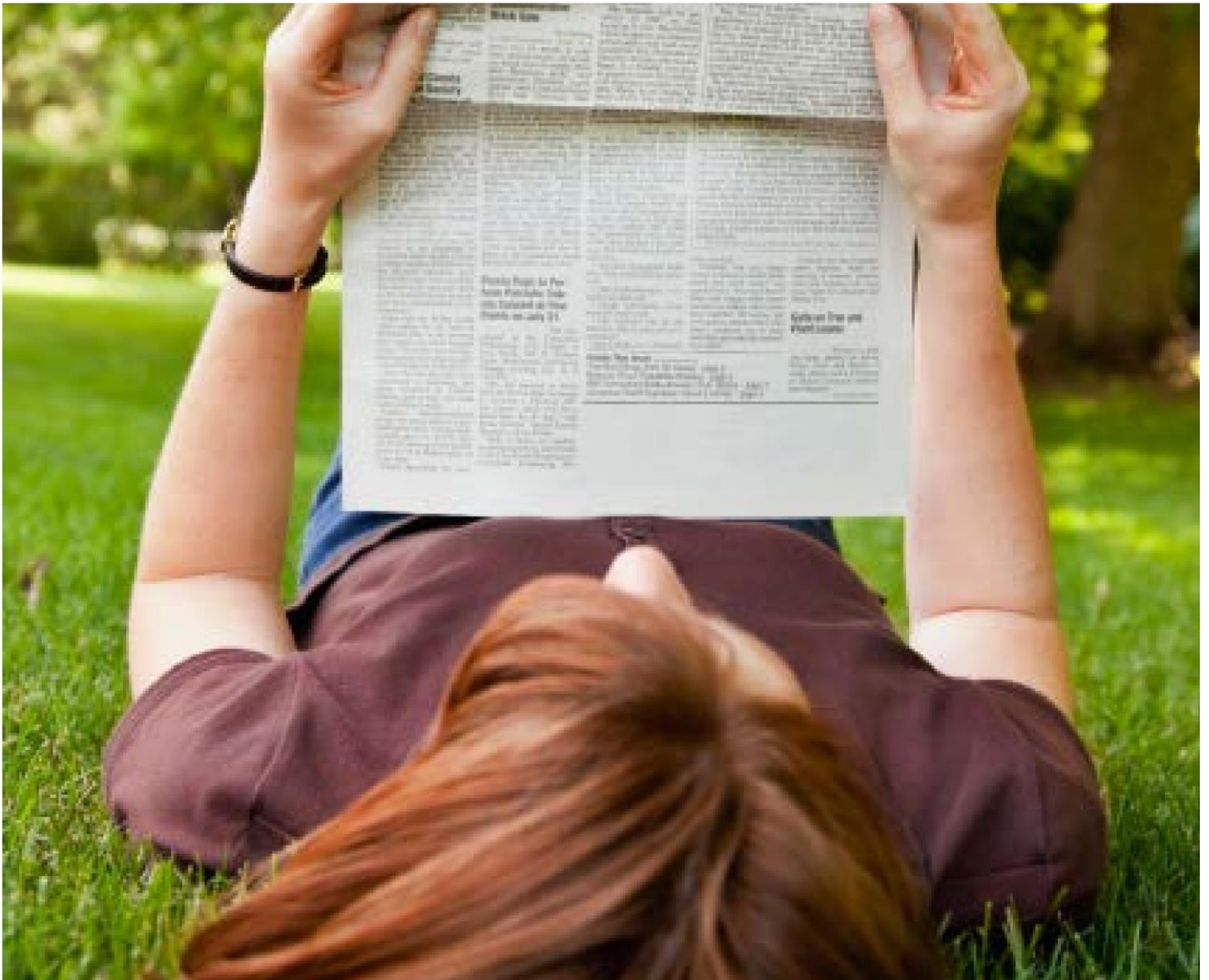


2024-2025

# NJ College Newspaper Contest



**NJPF**  
NEW JERSEY PRESS FOUNDATION

# 2024-2025 New Jersey College Newspaper Contest

Sponsored by New Jersey Press Foundation

## The Essentials

**CONTEST DEADLINE:** Friday, March 4, 2025 Entries may be uploaded until 11:59 p.m.

**CONTEST PERIOD:** March 1, 2024 to February 28, 2025

**CIRCULATION DIVISIONS:** 4-Year Colleges • 2-Year Colleges

**CONTEST WEBSITE:** [www.betternewspapercontest.com](http://www.betternewspapercontest.com) All entries must be submitted on the website.

### **YOUR PASSWORD:**

If this is the first time your newspaper will enter the contest, the temporary password is **bnc**. You will be asked to change it when you log on for the first time. However, if your newspaper entered last year, you already have a Contestant Manager who selected a password. Please contact them and request to be made an Authorized Entrant. If you don't know who is your Contestant Manager, call Peggy Arbitell at (609) 406-0600, opt. 2.

### **MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ENTRIES: Varies by category**

Please refer to the contest categories for specific information.

### **COST TO ENTER:**

**\$9 per entry for 1-27 entries, or \$225 for any number of entries, up to 38 total**

Total the number of your entries on the enclosed Contest Entry Form. Entry form must be emailed no later than Monday, March 3. Entry fees must be paid by March 31, 2025, to be eligible for awards.

### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Peggy Arbitell, New Jersey Press Foundation**

(609) 406-0600, opt. 2 -[parbitell@njpa.org](mailto:parbitell@njpa.org)



## Pay Attention

When you see this icon, it could make the difference between winning an award and having your entry disqualified.

## Entry Fee

\$9 per entry for 1-27 entries submitted, or \$225 per newspaper for any number of entries up to the maximum of 38.

The fee is for the number of entries submitted, NOT the number of examples, e.g., in many categories, two examples are allowed for each entry.

## Judging

Entries will be judged according to the guidelines set. This competition is open to all New Jersey student-run college newspapers and digital news organizations. All contest entries become the property of New Jersey Press Foundation.

The contest will be judged by active and retired editors, senior reporters, photographers and graphic artists from New Jersey daily and weekly newspapers.

The judges will select First, Second and Third place winners in each category. Awards will be granted only when they believe that special recognition is warranted. In categories that receive fewer than four entries, the judges will award prizes only if the entries merit them. The judges' decisions are final.

Winners will be announced by the New Jersey Press Foundation in late March.

**Entry fees must be paid by March 31, 2025, to be eligible for awards.**

## General Information

All New Jersey college newspapers – print and digital – are encouraged to enter the New Jersey College Newspaper Contest, which honors the skills of their student staff members in journalistic writing, photography and design.

## Eligibility

This competition is open to all New Jersey student-run college newspapers and digital news organizations.

## Contest Period

March 1,  
2024 –  
February  
28, 2025



### Entry Criteria

This contest has two divisions – 4-Year Colleges and 2-Year Colleges – which are judged separately.

All entries must have been published within the contest period, in the print and/or online college newspaper.

The contest has ten Individual categories, three Online categories and two Newspaper categories.

Newspapers may submit three entries to each Individual and Online category, and one entry to each Newspaper category – a total of up to 38 possible entries per newspaper.



Each Individual and Newspaper entry may include two examples of a student's work, except as noted in the rules. Each Online category has specific criteria regarding the number of examples that may be included.

**A student may be entered once in each category.** Articles written by two or more staff members working as a team will be considered as one entry. In this case, a team member may also submit a second Individual entry in that category. Identical or nearly identical articles or series may only be submitted once.

Each Individual and Newspaper entry must be submitted as a PDF tearsheet of the entire newspaper page or issue, including the publication date. For entries in Online categories, submit both a URL to the entry and a screenshot of the entry saved either as a PDF or JPEG.



On the contest webpage, for each entry, list the title or headline of every article, column, webpage or photo included as examples. Don't use the writer's or photographer's name.

Separate the titles using double slashes like this: **Title 1 // Title 2**

Don't use any other form of punctuation to separate titles.

The top editor or faculty advisor must verify that each entry meets the criteria and follow the rules of the contest.

For details, please refer to the **Contest Entry Instructions** and **Contest Categories** sections.

### Questions?

Contact the college contest coordinator: Peggy Arbitell (609)406-0600 opt. 2  
[parbitell@njpa.org](mailto:parbitell@njpa.org)

# Contest Entry Instructions

The New Jersey College Newspaper Contest is digital. All entries are submitted on the contest website: [www.betternewspapercontest.com](http://www.betternewspapercontest.com). For best results, the contest website recommends using the most recent version of Mozilla Firefox to make your contest entries.

## Important Entry Information

### Username and Password

Each person submitting entries will have a unique username and password.

### Contestant Manager

The "Contestant Manager" controls what is entered in a contest for your newspaper or website.



- **IMPORTANT: Your Contestant Manager is the same person year to year.** Choose someone who will be involved long-term, e.g., the newspaper's advisor. The first person who logs into the contest and makes two entries becomes your Contestant Manager. (These first two entries may be test entries that are deleted after responding to the confirmation email from Better Newspaper Contest.)

The Contestant Manager can choose to make entries exclusively, or, authorize others to make entries. To allow others to make entries, the Contestant Manager must create a separate account for each person.

The Contestant Manager has access to all entries submitted to a contest for your newspaper or website, and can edit, disable or delete any entry.

The Contestant Manager can access account information and passwords for every person he/she authorizes to make entries.

### Authorized Entrant

The "Authorized Entrant" has permission to make entries in the contest.

The Contest Manager must set up each "Authorized Entrant" before he/she can make entries.

The Contestant Manager can see and edit all of the entries and account information, the Authorized Entrant only can see and edit the entries he/she made.

### Scrapbooks

Potential contestants can save their work on the Better Newspaper Contest website in their own Scrapbook accounts. Scrapbooks are personal. They are not connected with a particular contest, but are available for any contest.

- For this contest, once a potential contestant has been made an Authorized Entrant for a newspaper, he/she can upload content from his/her Scrapbook directly into an entry.



## Start early and become familiar with the process!

We strongly recommend that you start making your entries early. Certainly don't wait until the day before the deadline!

We suggest the Contestant Manager make some test entries to learn the process. Later, if these are not your actual entries, the test entries must be "disabled" so they are not part of your official entries.

Step-by-step directions for setting up accounts and making entries are available on the contest website – [www.betternewspapercontest.com](http://www.betternewspapercontest.com). Under "Contestant Login", click on "Contestant Manager Help" or "Authorized Entrant Help".

Or use these links for PDFs of the directions:

- **Contestant Managers**

<http://www.betterbncsupport.com/category/contestantmanager/>

- **Authorized Entrants**

<http://www.betterbncsupport.com/category/authorized-entrant/>

If you have questions or problems, please contact Peggy Arbitell at (609) 406-0600, opt. 2, or [parbitell@njpa.org](mailto:parbitell@njpa.org).

For technical issues, go to the contest website –

[www.betternewspapercontest.com](http://www.betternewspapercontest.com)

Click on "contact BetterBNC", then "Start Trouble Ticket".

## Contest definitions

**Division:** a specific contest, e.g., Individual, Online or Newspaper

**Category:** a specific competition within a contest division, e.g., "News Writing" or "Column/Opinion Writing". Each division has a number of categories, which have specific requirements and limitations that are explained in the contest rules.

**Entry:** a submission in a category. Each category permits a specific number of entries. For example, a newspaper may submit three entries in the "Editorial Writing" category, but only one in the "Layout & Design" category. The contest rules provide specific information.

**Example:** Most categories allow multiple examples as part of each entry, e.g., two articles for a writing entry. In this case, ALL of the examples for the entry should be uploaded in a single PDF, e.g., two tearsheets containing the articles as separate pages in one PDF. For information on how to combine multiple tearsheets into one PDF, see **Preparing your entries** on Page 7.

## Preparing your entries



### **Keep the judges happy!**

Don't make them wait for your PDFs to be displayed because a file is too large. Entries that the judges cannot view will be disqualified.

### **Maximum entry size**

Each entry should be less than 5 MB. Smaller is better, faster.

- Eliminate extra pages. Upload only the page on which the entry is located.
- For multiple-example entries, combine all examples into one PDF.
- Reduce the size of each PDF.

### **Extract pages from multi-page PDFs**

If your entry is part of a multi-page PDF, open the PDF with Adobe Acrobat and save it with a new name. Open the new PDF, go to "Document" menu, select "Extract Pages" and follow the directions. Eliminate all pages that are NOT part of your entry. In the "Pages" panel, you can rearrange the PDFs in the order you want the judges to see them. Save the new PDF.

### **Combine multiple PDFs into one**

Using Adobe Acrobat, open the first PDF that you want in your entry and save it with a new name. Open the new PDF, go to the "Document" menu and choose "Insert Pages". Navigate to the next PDF that you want in the entry and select it. Continue until you have inserted all of your pages. In the "Pages" panel, you can rearrange the PDFs in the order you want the judges to see them. Save the new PDF.

### **Make PDF files smaller**

For printing, most newspaper PDFs include high-resolution grayscale or color images. However, contest entries will be viewed and judged on computer screens at low resolution (72–96 dpi) and in RGB color. Changing the resolution and color mode of images are the two most effective ways to reduce file size without sacrificing the screen viewing quality.

### **Use lower resolution**

In PDFs, the text is clear regardless of resolution. Resolution only relates to photos and graphics. Reducing resolution by half can reduce an image file size by 75%. The recommended maximum resolution of 96 dpi can be enforced in your Adobe Distiller settings.

You might create an Adobe PDF Preset called "NJPA Contest" with the recommended settings, and share it with all the Contestant Managers and Authorized Users in your company.

Or simply use the "Smallest File Size" preset, instead of "High Quality Print" or "Press Quality".

## Convert images to rGB color mode

Converting images from CMYK color mode to RGB will reduce image files by about 25%. This color conversion can be enforced in your Distiller settings.



## Embed all fonts

Regardless, how you make your PDFs, make sure ALL fonts are embedded. The judges will not have the same fonts as you have. If the PDF is missing fonts, your entry will not display properly.

## Redistill PDFs

After making final adjustments to your PDF, redistill it to make it smaller.

Changes you made to your PDF may not yield the expected reduction in file size until you redistill the PDF. This is true even if you reduce resolution or change color mode using a PDF editor, like Enfocus Pitstop or Quite a Box of Tricks, or use the native profiling/editing tools in Acrobat 6 or later.

To redistill, open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat. Go to the “Advanced” menu, scroll down to “Print Production” and select “Acrobat Distiller”. Enter the settings recommended above or choose the preset that you created and be sure that ALL fonts are embedded.

## Web entries

All website entries must be accessible online to the judges.

- Provide a direct URL for each entry, to a permanent location on your web server.
- If a username and password are required to view the page on your website, please enter those details in the “Comments” box on the entry page.
- If the judge cannot access your entry, it will be disqualified.

Also, upload a screenshot of each entry, in PDF or JPEG format, for the slide presentations of winning entries shown during the award luncheon.

## Making entries

### Headline or Title of Entry

Remember that you are submitting full-page PDFs, so please make sure your titles accurately identify the items the judges need to locate on the pages!

- In the “Headline or Title of Entry” box, enter the headline of the ad, article or photo being uploaded, exactly as it appears on the page.
  - Do NOT use the name of the writer or photographer.
  - For each entry, list the title or headline of every article, column, webpage or photo included as examples. Don’t use the writer’s or photographer’s name.
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- Separate the titles using double slashes like this: **Title 1//Title 2** Don't use any other form of punctuation to separate titles.
- Do NOT use commas, semicolons, colons, dashes or single slashes to separate entry titles.

### **Credits**

In the boxes labeled "Who should be credited for this entry?" you can enter up to four names of people who worked on the entry.

- If more than four people worked on the project, enter: **Editorial Staff**, etc.

### **Official Entry Form**

Once you have completed the entry form, click on the "Submit" button and you will be taken to the entry verification page, titled "This Page is Your Official Entry Form."

- From the verification page, you can "Submit Another Entry", "Manage Entries" or "Logout".
- DO NOT hit the Back button or you may eliminate this entry!

Once the maximum number of entries is reached in a category, that category is no longer available. unless an entry is "disabled" using "Manage Entries".

You may print copies of the Official Entry Form for your use, but do not send them to NJPF.

Please send NJPF the **Contest Entry Form** that is at the end of this package.

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## Contest Categories

Preference in judging is given to entries covering local campus events and college life. Quality journalistic writing, photography, artistic illustrations and design are the primary basis for evaluating entries.

Quality of leads, handling of quotes, background and supporting information for articles, and smooth transition of story elements are considered as part of a holistic appraisal of each writing category entry.

The quality of the entire newspaper is considered for the General Excellence category. The judges consider the overall “look and feel” of the newspaper and how it appeals to readers. Please read the category descriptions below for additional judging criteria.

## Individual Categories

A maximum of THREE individual entries per category may be submitted by each newspaper. A student may be entered once in each category. Articles written by two or more staff members working as a team will be considered as one entry. However, that doesn’t prohibit a team member from submitting a second individual entry in that category.

An entry consists of up to TWO writing samples by the same student or team. A sidebar to a story may be submitted as the second writing sample in an entry. In the Photography category, FOUR photos may be submitted per entry.

### 1 NEWS WRITING

Coverage of a college-related event, situation or issue qualifies as hard news. To be judged on fairness, thoroughness, local interest and style. Two writing samples may be submitted with each entry.

### 2 FEATURE WRITING

An article on a place, object or situation that is college-related and/or of special interest to students (including sports features). While the standards of good news writing apply, feature writing is judged on originality and human interest. Two writing samples may be submitted with each entry.

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### **BIOGRAPHY / PERSONALITY PROFILE**

An article about a person or small group of special interest to students, including sports personalities. While the standards of good news writing apply, feature writing is judged on originality and human interest. Two writing samples may be submitted with each entry.

4

### **EDITORIAL WRITING**

Editorial entries should be on issues of special interest to the college or to students. Judging will be based on writing quality, depth of thought, courage, public service and persuasive ability. Two writing samples may be submitted with each entry.

5

### **COLUMN / OPINION WRITING**

A column or opinion article on an issue of special interest to the college or to students (including sports columns, but NOT including arts & entertainment or critical writing). To be judged on quality of writing, depth of thought, courage, public service and persuasive ability. Does not include editorials, which are articles that represent the opinion of the newspaper rather than the individual writer. Two writing samples may be submitted with each entry.

6

### **SPORTS WRITING**

A sports news story based on college-related sports activities. Judged on quality of writing, originality, local appeal and lack of sports clichés. Two writing samples may be submitted with each entry. Please note: Sports columns must be entered in the Opinion Writing category. Sports features must be entered in the Feature Writing category.

7

### **ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT / CRITICAL WRITING**

An article that recognizes opinion writing in such areas as art, theater, movie, book and restaurant reviews. Judging will be based on technical knowledge, writing quality and local appeal to college students. Two writing samples may be submitted with each entry.

8

### **ENTERPRISE / INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING**

An investigative article or in-depth report that uncovers a newsworthy happening or series of happenings on campus. The judges will consider enterprise, initiative and resourcefulness of the writer or team of writers. Two writing samples may be submitted with each entry.

9

### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Any photo or photo series (picture story) of college or student activities, including but not limited to sports. Entries will be evaluated primarily on composition, content and local appeal. Four photo samples may be submitted.

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# Online Categories



A maximum of THREE entries per category. Each category has specific criteria regarding examples to be submitted.

## 10 OVERALL WEBSITE

Judged on the usefulness to the “reader,” quality and quantity of content, and ease of navigation and design. Judges will consider special features such as forums, advertising information and interactive elements which encourage significant audience engagement. Submit ONE website URL address per entry. Judges will view your live website. This is the only exception to the rule that entries must be published between March 1, 2024 and February 28, 2025.

## 11 WEB PROJECT

Recognizes the presentation and content of a single topic. Projects may integrate both online and print elements, and should be innovative, visually stunning and have interactive elements to engage readers. Project must have been created by the student staff. Each entry may include a description of the project and any promotion done in print. Submit ONE or TWO permanent web links to the project, and a screenshot saved as a PDF or JPG. For projects with print elements, also submit PDFs or JPGs of these.

## 12 ONLINE VIDEO

Recognizes a single video that uses visuals, natural sound, interviews and narration to tell a story. Can relate to breaking news, features or sports, and can be a supplement to print coverage or be a standalone element. Submit ONE permanent web links to the video, and a screenshot saved as a PDF or JPG.

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## Newspaper Categories

Newspapers may submit one entry per category, with TWO examples per entry.

### 13 LAYOUT & DESIGN

The layout and design of specific pages or center-spreads will be considered in this category. Major judging factors include overall attractiveness, excellence of makeup, headlines, typography, special visual and verbal aids to the reader, and use of photos, illustrations and graphics. Newspapers may submit PDF tearsheets of TWO pages or center-spreads as a single entry.

### 14 GENERAL EXCELLENCE

An overall look at the coverage, writing quality, copy editing, style use and layout in the newspaper. Judging will take local appeal, effectiveness and readability into account. Newspapers should submit PDFs of TWO different and complete issues of the paper as a single entry.

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## Sweepstakes Award

### **This year's best of the best!**

Two winners are named, one in each division (Two Year and Four Year Schools).

Winners are chosen by tallying points for each award won in the contest: Each first place award earns three points; second place, two points; third place, one point. The newspaper with the most points in each division wins the Sweepstakes Award.

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**NEW JERSEY PRESS FOUNDATION**  
**2024-2025 College Newspaper Contest Entry Form**

4 YEAR COLLEGE  2 YEAR COLLEGE

Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_  
College \_\_\_\_\_  
address \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

The fee is \$225 for the entire contest, or \$9 per entry for up to 27 entries. You may pay by check or credit card. If paying by credit card, please select "Credit Card" below and submit this form via email to [parbitell@njpa.org](mailto:parbitell@njpa.org). no later than March 3, 2023. NJPA will then email you an invoice for the payment along with a link to pay online through PayPal.

Payment options:  Credit Card  Check enclosed (payable to NJ Press Foundation)  
if paying by credit card, NJPA will send you an invoice through Paypal. Please check your junk/spam folder in case the email is sent there.

**Below, indicate the total number of entries per category that your newspaper is entering.**

CATEGORIES	# of Entries
1. News Writing (3 entries with 2 examples each)	1 _____
2. Feature writing (3 entries with 2 examples each)	2 _____
3. Biography/Personality Profile (3 entries with 2 examples each)	3 _____
4. Editorial Writing (3 entries with 2 examples each)	4 _____
5. Column/Opinion Writing (3 entries with 2 examples each)	5 _____
6. Sports Writing (3 entries with 2 examples each)	6 _____
7. Arts & Entertainment/Critical Writing (3 entries with 2 examples each)	7 _____
8. Enterprise/Investigative Reporting (3 entries with 2 examples each)	8 _____
9. Photography (3 entries with 4 examples each)	9 _____
10. Overall Website (3 entries with 2 examples each)	10 _____
11. Web Project (3 entries with 2 examples each)	11 _____
12. Online Video (3n entries with 2 examples each)	12 _____
13. Layout & Design (1 entry with 2 examples)	13 _____
14. General Excellence (1 entry with 2 examples)	14 _____

PAYMENT AMOUNT \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Contest Entry Form must be emailed by Friday, March 4, 2025 to [parbitell@njpa.org](mailto:parbitell@njpa.org)

NEW JERSEY PRESS FOUNDATION  
2024-2025 College Newspaper Contest  
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