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Two students – Allana Barefield, a sophomore mass communications major from Lynn MA, and Nicholas Davison, a junior art major/mass communications minor from Grand Bay AL – have been selected to the competitive New York Times Student Journalism Institute in New York City in May where they will train exclusively with veteran New York Times reporters, editors, designers etc. They will have all their expenses paid. Additionally, Barefield was also competitively selected as an intern reporter this summer with The Boston Globe.

TWO XAVIER STUDENTS EARN SPOTS IN NEW YORK TIMES STUDENT JOURNALISM INSTITUTE

New Orleans LA - Some might argue, the chances of winning the lottery are greater than getting a coveted slot at the *New York Times Student Journalism Institute*; yet not one, but two of Xavier University of Louisiana's students are heading to the big apple this summer to cash in on their professional future.

Allana Barefield, a sophomore majoring in mass communication and Nicholas Davison, a junior majoring in art and minoring in mass communication received word recently that they are two of only 26 students, out of several hundred applicants, who will work as a journalist and news page designer for the most prestigious and demanding news organization in the nation.

"The call from *The New York Times* felt amazing," said Barefield. "It felt like everything is paying off. It feels like everything is going in the right direction. Can't put a price on this."

"Once I heard that I got it, it was kind of a star-struck moment," said Davison. "I was speechless almost; (*New York Times*) so prestigious and such an honor. I'm very grateful for it all. It's awesome to see my hard work come into play."

This latest honor comes as no surprise to their professor and mentor, Dr. Shearon Roberts, Xavier University assistant professor of mass communication.

"I am proud that we have not one, but two of our students selected to this year's *New York Times Student Journalism Institute*," said Roberts. "They show that our little program is innovative, vibrant and produces future media workers who can compete with students from the biggest and best programs in the country, and who can potentially land jobs at the top of the industry."

According to Richard Jones, Director of *The New York Times Student Journalism Institute*, rarely are sophomores accepted into the program, but there was something special about Barefield and Davison that the committee could not ignore.

"Allana caught our eye a year ago," said Jones. "Her writing; her work really speaks for itself. She may not have a lot of experience, but the work she has done was done at a high level. Both (students) have exceptional promise. We are really beyond excited to be a part of their professional development."

Barefield who is in her second year of college has completed more internships than some graduating seniors. Freshman year, she covered news for the *The Louisiana Weekly* and worked at New Orleans NBC affiliate, WDSU. Last summer she interned as a reporter for *The Louisville Courier* where she covered Muhammad Ali's funeral. She is currently contributing to *The New Orleans Advocate* while carrying a full load at Xavier. And when she completes her internship with *The New York Times*, she'll travel a little farther north and spend the rest of her summer interning at *The Boston Globe*.

"Allana came into my office her first few weeks as a Xavier freshman determined to do what was necessary to get to the very top journalism opportunities that was possible for a student reporter," said Roberts. "She has the drive, perseverance, and commitment needed to succeed in the news business, but more importantly she has the heart to tell beautiful stories about the lives of both the celebrated and the man on the street."

Davison who has managed his graphic design company called Creat1ve since he was 13, received multiple awards for his creative style of work with the college paper, *The Xavier Herald*. For two consecutive years, he placed first for most effective use of graphic design on a single page; recognized by the Louisiana Press Association.

Last year he finished third for best house ad design at the College Media Association Pinnacle Awards. Davison placed first for his media app innovation for Xavier's first Media Entrepreneurship Challenge in 2016. He recently received a \$1,000 scholarship from the National Newspaper Publishers Association for his work. Davison has also produced CD covers for accomplished and up and coming musical artists.

"Nicholas stumbled upon the news business as an art major, but his visual eye allows him to design the news in ways in which stories transcend beyond words," said Roberts. "His striking cover designs make you want to pick up an issue of any newspaper."

Barefield and Davison said they do not take this opportunity with the *New York Times* for granted. According to Jones, thousands applied for the 2-week institute. The last time a Xavier student was accepted in the prestigious program was 2007. Allison Hudson, who is a public information officer in the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office, was Xavier's shining star at the time.

Barefield and Davison said they knew at an early age they were destined for careers in journalism.

"Since I was a kid I loved sports and I loved writing," said Barefield. "I don't see me doing anything else besides being a reporter."

Barefield's father passed away from cancer her sophomore year in high school. But his love for news, sports and writing which he instilled in her has propelled his daughter to heights unimaginable.

"The motivation is to keep living off of his legacy and to make him proud," said Barefield. He means a lot to me."

In the eyes of his peers, Davison is considered a self-made man. The 20-year-old started his company well before high school.

"As I grew up, I started to notice my love for the arts a lot more," said Davison. "I would always be very much on the computer. I loved MTV as a kid and Nickelodeon and Disney and capturing aspects of like different music videos so I always knew there was that interest and knack there."

Davison who is from Grand Bay, Ala. and Barefield from Lynn, Mass. said they would not be where they are today had it not been for the guidance and support given by Xavier's mass communication department. Dr. Sheryl Kennedy-Haydel, Xavier University's assistant professor of mass communication was instrumental in recruiting Barefield while attending a National

Association of Black Journalist conference. Barefield said Kennedy-Haydel left a lasting impression that sealed the deal when it came time to choosing a university.

Melinda Shelton, Xavier University's director of student publications, gave Davison the autonomy needed to create and produce award -winning graphic designs for the student paper. Davison said Shelton's skills and insight has made him a better designer because he is learning how to create art from a journalistic perspective.

"Nick is introspective, intelligent, incredibly funny, considerate, and his humility is genuine, said Shelton. " He is a living and breathing representative of Xavier's mission. The world is better for Nick's presence, and an amazing life awaits him."

The New York Times Student Journalism Institute is a bright beginning of what is to come for Barefield and Davison. One committee member said he is content with Xavier's dynamic duo that is so full of potential. "They have a clear commitment to pursuing careers in journalism," said Jones. "These two are excellent selections."

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