

 ACCESS
newswire

FUTURE fwd.



BREAKING

NEWS

**TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY ADVOCATS
PRESENT 'FUTURE FORWARD' CAMPAIGN**

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Bateman 2026 Bateman 2026 Bateman

Advocats TXST Advocats TXST Advocats

EXECUTIVE summary

As students prepare to enter an increasingly competitive job market, many feel uncertain about whether they are truly career ready. This uncertainty is not caused by a lack of ambition, but **lack of access** and **limited exposure** to the industry-standard tools used in professional communication environments. While these platforms shape modern public relations and media relations practices, they remain largely absent from many university classrooms.

ACCESS Newswire, a global news distribution and communications platform, offers tools designed to help organizations amplify their stories and connect with key audiences. As part of its commitment to supporting the next generation of communicators, ACCESS Newswire developed its EDU Program.

To better understand how the platform could support emerging communicators, the AdvoCats conducted extensive primary and secondary research, including surveys with students and communication professionals, interviews with professors and industry experts along with focus groups. The research revealed a **significant gap between classroom learning and real-world communications practice**, with many students and faculty lacking access to the professional tools used in modern media relations.

Recognizing the opportunity to close this gap, the Texas State University AdvoCats curated and **launched the Future Forward campaign**, a strategic initiative positioning ACCESS Newswire as an essential educational and communications partner **across Central Texas**. Through hands-on demonstrations, immersive university events like Ready, Set, Launch, digital engagement and regional partnerships, the movement connected students, professors, entrepreneurs and university marketing and communications teams directly with the platform.

By turning awareness into adoption, the campaign empowered students with career-ready skills, supported faculty in delivering applied learning and provided professionals with tools to strengthen outreach. Future Forward not only exceeded all campaign objectives but also established ACCESS Newswire as a trusted partner **investing in the next generation of communications leaders**.



48 professors signed up representing 11 universities in Central Texas

826 students gained hands-on experience

55 entrepreneurs and university communications professionals signed up through referrals

17 demonstrations to classes and student media organizations

89 campus ambassadors recruited

8 regional business and educational partnerships

868 publications of press release sent through ACCESS Newswire

826,320 listeners reached through PSA

166,423 views across social media platforms

28,342 listeners reached through on-air radio interviews

7 media placements (radio and various news outlets)

7 newsletters sent to students and professors, reaching 1,572 inboxes

ACCESS Newswire tasked Bateman participants to **increase adoption** of its platform among professors nationwide as a classroom teaching tool while **positioning** ACCESS as a **trusted, long-term partner** for university newsrooms and media distribution needs.

The AdvoCats addressed three of ACCESS' priority objectives:

- Introduce ACCESS Newswire's platform into college PR, Marketing and Communications courses.
- Establish ACCESS Newswire as a trusted partner for university communications teams.
- Elevate ACCESS Newswire's role as an industry leader investing in the next generation of PR professionals.

situation ANALYSIS

Many PR students graduate with strong writing, research and strategic thinking skills but little to no experience using professional platforms. At the same time, entrepreneurs and university marketing and communications teams often face high costs for professional news distribution services. **ACCESS Newswire** is one of the top three newswire services in North America, trusted by thousands of organizations to distribute press releases and track media coverage, giving users an affordable, competitive edge in reaching media outlets. Despite its prominence, awareness of ACCESS within academic environments is critically low. Research conducted by the Texas State University AdvoCats with professionals and across 13 universities revealed:

- 83% of students are unfamiliar with press release distribution services
- 98% have no hands-on experience using them
- Only 4% recognize ACCESS Newswire by name

However, 96% of PR professionals believe that experience with these tools are important for new graduates. This gap shows the need for ACCESS Newswire to expand awareness and adoption of its platform while supporting students, educators and professionals with accessible, real-world communications resources.

secondary research

In Texas, there are more than 1.6 million college students, and Central Texas is the fourth fastest growing higher education region in the state. Central Texas is a hub where universities, community colleges and industry pipelines intersect.

Most students are a part of Gen Z, digital natives who prefer interactive, career-focused and hands-on learning. Professors note experiential learning, such as projects and platform-based exercises, improve the ability to translate theory into practice. But many lack access to tools that integrate these experiences into curriculum.

Marketing tools and technology have made business communications more measurable and efficient for entrepreneurs. However, accessibility to these tools is limited due to the high cost of most newswire distribution services.

insight:

With over 19 colleges, Central Texas is the ideal location for ACCESS Newswire to break new ground and establish itself as a prominent resource for university communities and emerging professionals.

insight:

Adapting teaching methods to meet the interactive and digital-first learning styles of Gen Z students is vital and presents an opportunity for ACCESS Newswire to become an essential resource for classrooms.

insight:

Entrepreneurs rely on communication tools to remain competitive and ACCESS presents an affordable option.

Student Survey

To understand awareness and perceptions of industry-standard tools among Central Texas college students, the team distributed the survey through high-traffic areas at Texas State University, direct outreach through professors, students and peer networks at neighboring colleges. **772 responses** were collected representing 13 universities and a total of 221 different majors across Central Texas.

2% of students have experience using a newswire service

86% of students state that they benefit from using real-world platforms



Expert Interviews

We conducted **six in-depth expert interviews** with industry leaders. All provided valuable insights into personal experiences with newswire services, perspectives on the importance of hands-on experience with communication tools prior to graduation and views on platform adoption.

"Career readiness is going and getting an internship. It is more than a portfolio of things you have done in the classroom, it is taking that added initiative to go and really work with a client, work at an agency, work in a comm department. Really see firsthand what it is we do everyday. It is easy to learn the techniques and the toolbox that you all are learning, but then it is about the application." - **Heide Harrell**

Key Insights:

While tools are valuable, relationships, accessible support and real-world applicability are critical. This presents an opportunity to position ACCESS Newswire as both a practical platform and a trusted partner for career-ready training.

Professors

Consisted of four professors from the Central Texas area.

Key Insights:

Participants prioritized ease of use, seamless curriculum integration and the media monitoring feature within ACCESS Newswire's EDU platform.

MarComm

Consisted of four university marketing and comms professionals.

Key Insights:

Insights gained included the failure of automated filtering, frustration with non-intuitive interfaces and how cost is often the final decider when selecting media tools.

Professor Interviews

The AdvoCats conducted **16 in-depth interviews** with professors across Central Texas to understand the factors influencing decisions to integrate new platforms into curriculum. Ensuring a diverse range of perspectives, participants represented disciplines including marketing, public relations, communications and business, varying in teaching experience and university.

- "The best assignments are ones that incorporate tools into them, professional tools, where you are not just doing a random assignment, you are doing something that is relevant for your career or job field. There should be a healthy mix." - **Dale Blasingame**
- "I have students use what is used in the workforce. I adopt based on what's used in the industry and career readiness." - **Michael Devlin**
- "If we don't introduce these tools right now, then we might not have done a great job equipping students for the real world." - **Mabel Mba**

Key Insights:

- Experience with professional communication tools is deemed "vitally important," "essential and imperative," and "critical."
- Exposure to industry-standard tools enables students to understand the basics and adapt when faced with different platforms.
- Access to current tools before graduation positively impacts readiness and builds the confidence needed to transition theory into practice.
- Tools must be beneficial for students, grow their skill sets and prepare them for the future.

PR Pro Survey

To gain insight into the use and reliance on newswire services among professionals, **50 PR practitioners** from across the United States were surveyed. Participants were recruited by attending the largest annual conference for PR and communications, PRSA ICON, in Washington, D.C., as well as the PRSA Austin Comms Week Mixer. The 50 responses were collected from professionals representing 15 states and two countries.

96% of PR pros believe that hands-on experience with industry standard tools is important to have as a new graduate

77% of PR pros would be more likely to hire a candidate if they have hands-on experience with industry-standard tools



Focus Groups

The AdvoCats conducted **two focus groups** to gain in-depth insight on relationships with media tools. One focus group involved university professors, and the second included university marketing team members. Both focus groups demonstrated the ACCESS Newswire platform to understand appealing features.

challenges + opportunities

These challenges and opportunities were identified through strategic communications insights derived from both secondary and primary research.

challenge 1

College students have **low awareness** of and **limited hands-on experience** with industry-standard PR tools, leaving them underprepared for professional expectations after graduation.

opportunity 1

Opportunity to **equip students with an industry-standard tool** that builds hands-on relevant skills, confidence and career readiness.

challenge 2

Professors are expected to prepare students for rapidly evolving industries **without the time, technical capacity, or equitable access** needed to confidently integrate industry-standard platforms into their curriculum.

opportunity 2

Opportunity to **provide professors with a free low-barrier, industry-aligned teaching solution** that delivers hands-on, real-world experience.

challenge 3

Media distribution tools are often **expensive, complex and difficult to navigate**, creating barriers for marketing, communications, public relations professionals and entrepreneurs to adopt.

opportunity 3

ACCESS Newswire removes these barriers through an intuitive platform and competitive pricing, **providing professionals with a more accessible solution for media distribution.**

key PUBLICS

Research-driven insights revealed the following key publics.

Students Enrolled in Universities in Central Texas

Key Demographics:

- Gen Z students (ages 18-24)
- Undergraduate and graduate students

Psychographics:

- Value career success, personal growth, social connection and making a positive long-term impact
- Technology-driven and adaptive to new digital platforms
- Gaining skills and credentials for future employment
- Social connection & community

Public, Private and Community University Professors in Central Texas

Key Demographics:

- Professors teaching PR, Marketing, Business, Communications, Entrepreneurship and more.

Psychographics:

- Motivated by impacting student success
- Academic growth and shaping programs
- Dedication to lifelong learning and professional development
- Value mentorship, student development and knowledge sharing

University Marketing and Communication Divisions

Key Demographics:

- Education: College graduates
- Professional Level: Mid- to senior-career professionals

Psychographics:

- Value access to best-in-class tools that support their role and strengthen their brand
- Balance innovation with institutional constraints and approvals; data-informed decision-makers
- Value credibility, consistency and authenticity; prioritize protecting and strengthening institutional brand reputation

Entrepreneurs in Central Texas

Key Demographics:

- Ages: 18-58
- Education: High school diploma or higher

Psychographics:

- Interested in leveraging technology for efficiency and competitiveness
- Open to third-party support and resources
- Motivated by networking, mentorship and professional guidance
- Willing to adopt tools or programs that demonstrate clear ROI

Who is ACCESS Newswire?

ACCESS Newswire is a global public relations communications platform that helps organizations communicate strategically and remain competitive.

Why ACCESS Newswire Matters

ACCESS Newswire provides access to industry-standard communications tools that help students build skills, professors enhance curriculum and professionals strengthen outreach.

What does ACCESS Newswire offer?

ACCESS Newswire offers tools for press releases, media monitoring and outreach to help users build skills and increase impact.

FUTURE
fwd.

4

theme:

The Future Forward campaign was centered on building **career readiness** and encouraging audiences to become **future forward** in their approach to communications and media relations. It aimed to prepare the next generation of communicators while supporting professors and industry professionals navigating an evolving media landscape. Research revealed a shared priority among all audiences: ensuring students graduate career ready while providing access to intuitive, cost-effective tools that maximize communications impact.

campaign TAGLINES

FUTURE
fwd.

Primary and secondary research showed that preparing students for their future was vital. "**Future FWD.**" symbolizes the campaign by encouraging students, educators and professionals to take a forward-thinking approach to communications while equipping the next generation with the tools and experience needed to succeed.

average isn't
optional anymore.
get ahead

get **access**

"**Average isn't optional anymore. Get ahead. Get ACCESS**" highlights the increasingly competitive communications landscape and underscores the importance of taking initiative to stay ahead of the norm.

ctrl
your
FUTURE

Research showed that Gen Z students are deeply immersed in technology, inspiring the keyboard command "**control**," which symbolizes students taking charge of their future.

FUTURE **fwd.** campaign OUTLINE

Campaign Goal:

Engage college communities, university marketing/communications departments and entrepreneurs across Central Texas by **motivating** them to **depend** on ACCESS Newswire as a communications partner and essential resource for career readiness.

Objective 1:

Educate and engage 500 college students in Central Texas to become career ready through hands-on use of ACCESS Newswire's EDU program by March 2.

Strategy 1: Develop shared and owned digital media that educates and encourages students to engage with ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program.

Rationale: Secondary research shows social media is Gen Z's primary source for news and information, making digital-first engagement essential to reach student audiences.

- Establish a multi-platform social media presence across Instagram, Facebook, Reddit, TikTok and LinkedIn to ensure consistent visibility among key publics.
- Publish daily, platform-optimized content showcasing the benefits of learning ACCESS Newswire's tools.
- Develop and launch a Future Forward website serving as a central information hub allowing site visitors to learn more about ACCESS Newswire, explore its services and get involved.
- Distribute a weekly student-focused newsletter providing updates on campaign initiatives and featured resources to sustain engagement throughout the campaign period.

Strategy 2: Create a large-scale career-readiness event for college campuses that incorporates live demonstrations of ACCESS Newswire's tools.

Rationale: Research shows experiential learning prompts higher student engagement.

- Seek out regional educational and business partners, including Better Business Bureau, San Marcos Chamber of Commerce, PRSA Austin, Texas State's School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- Create interactive demonstration stations where students can explore ACCESS Newswire's key features, including press releases, media monitoring, media databases, media rooms and media pitching tools.
- Recruit industry experts and Texas State University President Kelly Damphousse to participate in the career readiness panel.
- Invite campus media outlets and career-focused student organizations to attend and participate in the event to increase awareness and student engagement.
- Create an exclusive event giveaway to incentivize attendance and encourage student engagement.
- Distribute press release on the event and the event partners through ACCESS Newswire.
- Distribute media advisory prior to event to attract local media coverage and increase visibility.

Strategy 3: Create immersive opportunities for students to learn and interact with ACCESS Newswire and build skills using the platform.

Rationale: Research shows hands-on opportunities help students build practical skills and see how they apply in real-world scenarios.

- Leverage in-class and organizational demonstrations to engage students with ACCESS Newswire through curated activities and learning opportunities.
- Table on state university and community college campuses to engage and inform students about ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program.
- Leverage high-traffic internship and career fairs to onboard students through hands-on demonstration and use of ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program.
- Host a Career Matchmaking event where student groups can connect through hands-on use of ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program and interactive activities.

Strategy 4: Leverage trusted campus communities to expand reach, credibility and student participation with ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program.

Rationale: Research shows students are more likely to engage with programs that are endorsed by peers or campus communities.

- Introduce the EDU Program at student organization meetings, leveraging peer credibility to increase awareness and participation.
- Air student-focused PSAs through KTSW 89.9, the Texas State campus radio station, to build awareness.
- Secure student media placements to highlight ACCESS Newswire's value and relevance to students.

Strategy 5: Recruit student ambassadors to bring ACCESS Newswire into their networks and act as campus liaisons.

Rationale: Student ambassadors are seen as credible and trusted by their campus peers.

- Set up interactive tables at high-traffic campus locations to introduce ACCESS Newswire and recruit ambassadors.
- Partner with Campus Ambassadors to promote ACCESS Newswire within their networks and social channels.
- Engage ambassadors via email, social media and campus digital spaces to share program opportunities.
- Host consistent weekly meetings to train ambassadors, share updates and coordinate outreach efforts.
- Recognize program ambassadors by awarding the ACCESS Newswire Navigator Certificate upon completion of training and platform engagement.

Objective 2:

By March 2, motivate 40 Central Texas professors to adopt ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program and establish onboarding pathways to support use during current and future semesters.

Strategy 1: Use digital platforms to guide professors from awareness to adoption of ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program.

Rationale: Research showed that digital platforms reach professors where they are, making it more accessible to move from awareness to adoption.

- Host a webinar for professors to explore ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program and provide direct user support.
- Offer live collaborative virtual workshop sessions to guide professors in effectively using and troubleshooting the Educational Program.
- Leverage social media to further inform and engage professors by raising awareness of ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program.
- Create a subscription-based newsletter to keep professors updated on ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program and related campaign events.
- Send personalized emails to professors highlighting the benefits of integrating ACCESS Newswire into their curriculum.

Strategy 2: Leverage in-person demonstrations and influential sources to persuade Central Texas educators to adopt ACCESS Newswire.

Rationale: Research shows professors are more likely to recognize a platform's value when it is endorsed by influential academic and media leaders, making direct outreach essential for establishing communication.

- Conduct hands-on in-class demonstrations for professors and students to showcase the Educational Program's features and applications.
- Partner with university-based media outlets to inform professors of ACCESS Newswire's value in the classroom.
- Utilize community media outlets, including radio and newspapers, to engage the general public.
- Leverage influential campus leaders and department heads to introduce ACCESS Newswire to faculty.
- Host a "Faculty Forward" Appreciation Brunch to promote and encourage faculty engagement.

Objective 3:

Expand the ACCESS Newswire user base by introducing and referring 50 university marketing/communications department staff and Central Texas entrepreneurs to ACCESS Newswire by March 2.

Strategy 1: Engage university marketing and communications professionals and entrepreneurs through a strategic blend of both earned and owned mediums.

Rationale: Combining earned media with owned digital platforms can facilitate increased interest in adopting the platform.

- Distribute media materials to local news outlets to garner widespread coverage and interest in ACCESS Newswire as an integral communications tool for professionals.
- Establish a presence on local community event pages to expand outreach among the professional community.

- Develop a Future Forward website to provide marketing and communications professionals and entrepreneurs with resources, insights and tools to leverage ACCESS Newswire effectively.
- Execute a multi-platform social media strategy focused on increasing awareness of ACCESS Newswire's trusted services.

Strategy 2: Directly engage university marketing and communications professionals and entrepreneurs to drive referrals and sign-ups to ACCESS Newswire.

Rationale: Research shows that engaging professionals and entrepreneurs directly facilitates the delivery of free trial information to the appropriate and most receptive audience.

- Provide instructional resources to support a smooth onboarding experience, including tailored demonstration videos, a comprehensive onboarding guide and opportunities for one-on-one meetings.
- Conduct a webinar for professionals to explore ACCESS Newswire's services and applications.
- Implement direct, multi-platform outreach to entrepreneurs and university marketing and communications professionals to build awareness and adoption of the ACCESS Newswire free trial.
- Target university marketing and communications team leaders to introduce the ACCESS Newswire program to additional team members.

FUTURE fwd. evaluation

Throughout the **Future Forward** campaign, the AdvoCats worked to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communications experience by introducing students, educators and professionals to ACCESS Newswire. The team monitored campaign progress daily to ensure that measurable objectives were on track to be met by March 2. Evaluation and measurement included tracking hands-on use of ACCESS Newswire by students through in-class demonstrations and special events; recording sign-ups of professors and professionals wishing to adopt ACCESS Newswire as a tool; and analyzing social media engagement and website traffic. In addition the team monitored earned media coverage and gathered feedback from students, professors and professionals to ensure meaningful engagement with target audiences. As a result, the Future Forward campaign exceeded all objectives, empowering students with career-ready skills, supporting educators in delivering applied learning opportunities and connecting professionals with accessible tools.

Objective 1:

Educate and engage 500 college students in Central Texas to become career ready through hands-on use of ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program by March 2.

exceeded

Future Forward educated and engaged **826 students** through hands-on use of ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program, helping them build career-ready skills and achieving 165% of the original goal.

Objective 2:

By March 2, motivate 40 Central Texas professors to adopt ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program and establish onboarding pathways to support use during current and future semesters.

exceeded

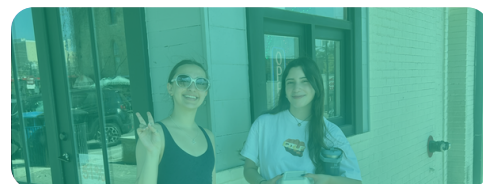
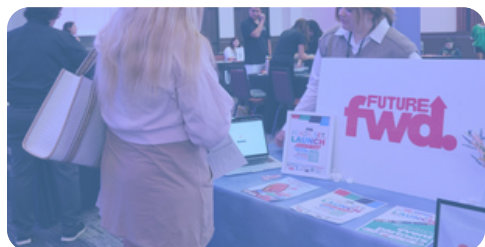
The campaign successfully signed up **48 Central Texas professors** representing **11 universities** to ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program for use in current or future semesters. The AdvoCats achieved 120% of their goal while establishing onboarding pathways to support platform adoption.

Objective 3:

Expand the ACCESS Newswire user base by introducing and referring 50 university marketing/communications department staff and Central Texas entrepreneurs to ACCESS Newswire by March 2.

exceeded

The Future Forward campaign expanded the ACCESS Newswire user base by referring **55 university marketing and communications professionals** and **Central Texas entrepreneurs** to sign up for use of the platform, achieving 110% of the campaign goal.



conclusion

The Future Forward campaign launched a regional effort to engage the next generation of communicators and motivate them to depend

on ACCESS Newswire as a communications partner and essential resource for career readiness. The campaign equipped students, educators and professionals with hands-on access to the tool shaping the future of media distribution, ACCESS Newswire. Guided by primary and secondary research, the campaign confronted limited awareness of press release distribution platforms and the need for an intuitive, accessible tool that empowers users to communicate strategically and remain competitive in Central Texas.

Through in-class demonstrations, student organization activations, and campus events, the campaign **engaged** 826 students, giving them hands-on experience with ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program and building the industry-relevant skills that 77% of PR professionals say increase a candidate's employability. After listening to educators' needs for accessible, career-driven platforms, the team **motivated** 48 professors to implement the EDU program in their current or future courses. The campaign also **introduced** ACCESS to 55 university marcomm staff and entrepreneurs to utilize as a trusted communications tool.

Future Forward received widespread traditional and social media attention. It reached 826,320 listeners through PSA plays, secured seven media placements and received 166,423 views via social media. The campaign forged eight regional partnerships and recruited 89 campus ambassadors. It connected students, educators and professionals with ACCESS Newswire, fostered a culture of career readiness and provided a foundation for integrating professional tools into academic environments and professional spaces. The Future Forward campaign creates a clear blueprint for empowering students, educators, and professionals to build career-ready skills across campuses and professional networks.

client RECOMMENDATIONS

- Scale Ready, Set, Launch in colleges nationally
- Recruit and expand campus ambassador program nationally
- Create structured outreach for professors, university staff and entrepreneurs
- Develop ready-to-use lesson plans and tutorials for classroom integration
- Enhance the EDU Program webpage on website
- Host educational webinars and virtual demonstrations
- Partner with professional organizations, PR agencies and local businesses
- Incentivize platform adoption with certifications

AdvoCat Budget

Decorations for Event	\$40.68
Supplies for Event	\$22.28
Name Tags	\$2.99
Food and Supplies for Event ...	\$155.61
Printing	\$35.25

Total: \$256.81



In-Kind Donations

Gumby's Pizza: 4 Massive Pizzas	\$38.98
UCFU: Bookstore Gift Card	\$100
Texas State University: LBJ Ballroom	\$350
Celsius: 8 Cases	\$150
Texas State University: Printing	\$100
SJMC: Office Supplies	\$10
Career Services: Parking	\$20

Total: \$768.98



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