



ACCESS **Academy**
AT MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

PRSSA BATEMAN SUBMISSION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACCESS Academy was a month-long, integrated communications campaign developed by the Montclair State University Bateman Team to introduce and promote ACCESS Newswire and its EDU platform. The campaign aimed to educate and engage our target audience and ultimately drive adoption of the platform by demonstrating how ACCESS Newswire can enhance academic learning and prepare students for careers in public relations and communications.

Research conducted at the start of the campaign revealed a significant awareness gap: **92% of students** and **76% of faculty had never heard of ACCESS Newswire**. But, students and faculty expressed strong interest in learning about the platform, especially in gaining practical experience with real-world public relations tools. These insights shaped our campaign. We sought to bridge the gap between classroom theory and real-world practice by introducing faculty and students to ACCESS Newswire and encouraging its integration into coursework and professional development.

Our campaign - ACCESS Academy – combined ACCESS from the client's name with Academy, a nod to education. We targeted faculty within the **College of Communication and Media (CCOM)** as the primary audience and the gateway to students, our secondary audience. The campaign established three key objectives: to educate our target audience about ACCESS Newswire, encourage active engagement with campaign initiatives, and drive adoption of the platform among students and faculty.

The team implemented a multi-channel strategy that combined branding, media, collaborations, and events. A cohesive campaign identity and visual branding were developed and carried across social media, campus events, and promotional materials. An Instagram-driven digital strategy served as the campaign's primary communication channel – the preferred platform for the Montclair campus – and featured educational posts on ACCESS Newswire, bilingual messaging to highlight the brand's translation service, and further reach our campus of 48% multicultural students. A centralized Linktree hub served as our campaign website and directed users to resources such as a recorded platform demonstration on YouTube, campaign event schedule, and ACCESS Newswire information.

Campus partnerships played a critical role in amplifying the campaign's reach. Collaborations with student organizations and media outlets, including Montclair's Public Relations Student Society of America chapter, The Montclarion, WMSC 90.3 FM, and CCOM Career Services, helped introduce the platform to key audiences. Educational workshops, PR trivia events, and organization presentations provided interactive opportunities for students to learn how they could use ACCESS Newswire.

The team felt strongly that giving faculty and students the opportunity to experience the platform first-hand was the key to educating them and ultimately encouraging adoption. To support this, we hosted twice-weekly live demonstrations via Zoom and conducted in-class demonstrations in more than **22 classes**, reaching **429 faculty and students**. Additional initiatives, including themed events, giveaways, and a creative social media series highlighting the platform's AI writing assistant, helped maintain momentum throughout the campaign and reached another **788 faculty and students**.

Beyond education and engagement, the campaign emphasized practical adoption by working directly with faculty to explore how ACCESS Newswire could be incorporated into assignments and research.

Through strategic research, targeted outreach, and interactive programming, ACCESS Academy successfully introduced the ACCESS Newswire EDU platform to the Montclair State University community. The team exceeded expectations, engaging more than **1,217 individuals** through events, live demonstrations, and social media engagement, generating over **42,225 views** on Instagram and reaching more than **22% of the CCOM community**. Feedback from students and faculty was overwhelmingly positive and reinforced that ACCESS Newswire is a valuable resource for both classroom learning and professional development. Many expressed interest in continuing to use the platform in coursework and student projects, recognizing its potential to connect academic experiences with real-world industry practices.

"ACCESS Newswire is easy to use, comprehensive, and speedy. It lets any PR professional--even a novice--go farther faster."

Linda Thomas

*Crisis Communications Professor, CCOM,
Montclair State University*

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

- **8,401** accounts reached via Instagram.
- **42,225** views via Instagram.
- **95.6%** surveyed students and staff were inspired to use ACCESS Newswire.
- **410** students received ACCESS Newswire accounts.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Montclair State University's Bateman team was excited to develop a campaign to promote ACCESS Newswire and its EDU platform by increasing awareness and adoption across campus. Our goal was to educate students and faculty on the platform while highlighting how the platform can play a critical role in public relations efforts. We aimed to engage students, professors, and faculty throughout our one-month campaign while encouraging them to explore how ACCESS Newswire can support academic learning and career preparation in the communications field.

Our research revealed that many students and faculty had never heard of ACCESS Newswire and/or had limited knowledge of the platform. While students showed interest in gaining hands-on experience with real world PR tools, they often lacked opportunities to use them in an academic setting. Our campaign focused on educating the campus community about ACCESS Newswire and demonstrating how the EDU platform can be incorporated into classrooms and professional development.

THE RESEARCH

Secondary

Our initial research focused on understanding ACCESS Newswire's position within the newswire platform industry. We reviewed the company's leadership team, executive backgrounds, and messaging to better understand its direction, credibility, and strategic priorities. This analysis highlighted ACCESS Newswire's emphasis on innovation, transparency, and strong client service within a competitive communications landscape.

We also conducted a competitive analysis of major newswire platforms, comparing pricing, geographic reach, multimedia capabilities, dashboards, reviews, and overall brand positioning. In addition, we examined the types of organizations that use ACCESS Newswire and monitored media coverage and social conversations around press release distribution. To support our outreach efforts, we identified communication and media-related classes on campus where demonstrations would reach the most relevant student and faculty audiences.

Primary

The team conducted a pre-campaign survey to measure awareness and usage of the ACCESS Newswire platform among students, faculty, and staff. We received **142 responses**, which revealed that while most respondents were unfamiliar with ACCESS Newswire specifically, many were aware of its competitors in the press release distribution industry. This highlighted a clear gap in brand recognition and a need for stronger brand awareness on campus. Despite this lack of familiarity, many respondents indicated they would be willing to try the platform, suggesting strong potential interest once introduced. These findings helped shape our campaign strategy and provided a clear roadmap for focusing our efforts on increasing awareness and educating key campus audiences about ACCESS Newswire.

Primary Audience: Faculty accounts for **19.7%** of our campus population.
Secondary Audience: CCOM students account for **9.9%** of our campus population.
Additional Audience: The entire student body of Montclair State University.

INITIAL SURVEY

92%

of students had **not** heard of ACCESS Newswire.

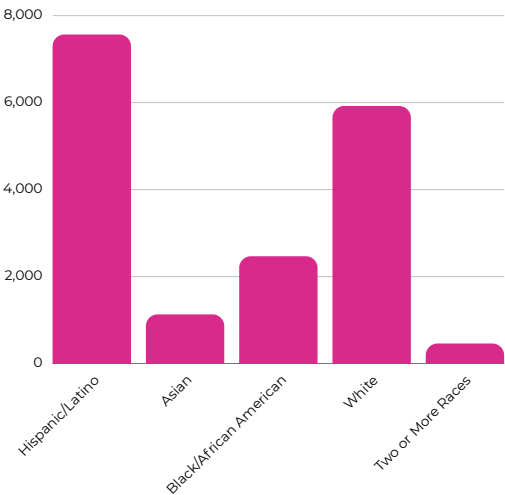
0%

of faculty had tried the platform before.

91%

of students and faculty would consider **using** ACCESS Newswire.

MSU DEMOGRAPHICS



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGE 1

92% of students and 76% of faculty have never heard of ACCESS Newswire.

CHALLENGE 2

While awareness was low for the platform, we needed to create ways to get faculty and students actively engage with our efforts.

CHALLENGE 3

In order to drive adoption, faculty needed the tools to understand how to incorporate the ACCESS Newswire platform into their curriculum, allowing students to build professional development with real PR tools.

OPPORTUNITY 1

Educate the Montclair State community about ACCESS Newswire through collaborations, events, social media content, and on-campus media.

OPPORTUNITY 2

Create a month-long campaign to **engage** our target audience and inspire them to actively participate in various events and initiatives including platform demos.

OPPORTUNITY 3

Create initiatives for specific classes, departments, on-campus organizations, and students to encourage their **adoption** of the platform.

CAMPAIGN NAME AND BRAND IDENTITY

We incorporated **ACCESS** from ACCESS Newswire, to drive brand recall and added **Academy** to reflect the strong educational element as an umbrella for the title of our campaign.

ACCESS Academy

Our unique campaign logo is true to the client's colors and typeface, while creating an original visual identity for our campaign.

ACCESS Academy
AT MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

We created a secondary campaign logo to better suit the icon landscape on social media platforms.



KEY MESSAGES

1. **ACCESS Academy** is a month-long campaign to educate, engage and drive adoption on Montclair State University's campus of ACCESS Newswire's EDU Program.
2. **ACCESS Newswire** provides students and faculty with hands-on access to ACCESS Newswire, a major newswire platform, helping them gain real-world experience with tools used by communications professionals.
3. By integrating **ACCESS Newswire** into coursework and career preparation, students can build practical PR skills, strengthen their portfolios, and better prepare for careers in communications.

CAMPAIGN GOAL: *Create a campaign to educate and engage the Montclair community, and specifically the College of Communications and Media, and inspire them to adopt the ACCESS Newswire platform.*

OBJECTIVE 1: Educate students, faculty, and campus partners, about ACCESS Newswire to achieve at least **60%** brand recognition among post-campaign survey respondents.

Rationale: This goal was informed by preliminary research showing that students were unfamiliar with major newswire platforms, indicating a need for a robust, educational campaign that introduces ACCESS Newswire and demonstrates its relevance to students, faculty, and staff.

Strategy 1: Create A Cohesive Campaign Identity to Drive **Education** of ACCESS Newswire.

- **Brand Identity:** Develop a recognizable campaign logo and visual identity that aligns with ACCESS Newswire's brand to appeal to students, faculty, and staff.
- **Consistent Branding:** Drive consistent branding across social media, events, and other digital content to reinforce and strengthen brand recall.
- **Branded Elements:** Create and distribute branded stickers and apparel at events and organization meetings to encourage peer-to-peer visibility and consistent promotion across campus.
- **Digital Hub:** Create a Linktree as a centralized campaign hub for directing students to a platform overview, YouTube platform demonstration, campaign event information, and an interest form.
- **Visual Engagement:** Use eye-catching materials—including banners, posters, and flyers with QR codes—to prompt immediate recall and drive traffic to campaign digital assets.
- **Bilingual Captions & Audience Insight:** Publish captions in both English and Spanish to reflect the linguistic diversity of our campus community—particularly the **42%** of undergraduates who identify as Hispanic/Latino—while reinforcing the client's translation feature and commitment to inclusive, accessible messaging.
- **Instagram:** Launch and sustain our campaign via Instagram, publishing concise, educational content highlighting ACCESS Newswire features, how it differs from competitors, and how students can use it.

Strategy 2: Leverage CCOM Channels and Pitch Campus Media Outlets to Educate the Montclair Community on Our Campaign.

- **The Weekender:** Target faculty and staff within the College of Communication and Media to gauge participation.
- **WMSC 90.3FM:** Secure an interview with iHeartRadio WMSC 90.3FM to share campaign messaging and reach students who regularly engage with campus radio.
- **The Montclarion:** Secure a feature on the campaign in The Montclarion, Montclair's student-run digital newspaper, to broaden campaign visibility.

Strategy 3: Introduce and **Educate** Our On-Campus Public Relations and Communications Organizations about the Campaign.

- **PRSSA:** Collaborate with PRSSA to host a workshop demonstrating how press release distribution platforms like ACCESS Newswire support professional PR campaigns.
- **FOCUS:** Work with FOCUS, Montclair's student-run multimedia news organization, to explore how the platform could support the distribution of future AI-focused stories.
- **Montclair Ad Club:** Present a live ACCESS Newswire platform demonstration at the Montclair Ad Club (MAC), highlighting how the platform fits into advertising and integrated communications campaigns.
- **Interactive Learning:** Provide hands-on demonstrations during organization meetings to show how press releases are created and distributed in real-world campaigns.
- **Career Services Partnership & Program Integration:** Collaborate with CCOM Career Services to position ACCESS Newswire as a professional development tool by incorporating it into career advising, workshops, and programming that help strengthen students' resumes and industry readiness.

OBJECTIVE 2: Inspire 20% of the CCOM students, faculty, and staff to actively engage with our month-long campaign.

Rationale: Once students, faculty, and staff *knew* about the platform, our goal was to encourage them to actively engage with various program initiatives to understand better how ACCESS Newswire can be used in academic and professional settings.

Strategy 1: Create interactive opportunities to engage students, faculty, and staff.

- **Twice Weekly Platform Demonstrations:** Host weekly platform demonstrations of ACCESS Newswire, introducing the team, our campaign goal, our social media platforms, and showcasing the platform to students, faculty, and staff, and how they can utilize it.
 - Host **two platform demonstrations via Zoom** weekly, encouraging professors and organizations to participate.
 - Reach out to every CCOM professor and adjunct, informing and encouraging them to join a demonstration.
- **In-Class Platform Demonstrations:**
 - Persuade faculty to allow the team to do in-person demos and work with them on how they could incorporate ACCESS Newswire into their coursework.
- **YouTube Platform Demonstration:** Create an online recorded demonstration on our YouTube channel to provide target audiences with a convenient resource to view a demo that could best be incorporated into their individual schedules.

Strategy 2: Leverage Instagram Due to its Popularity Among Our Campus Community.

- **Translation Feature:** Showcase the translation feature by making posts in both English and Spanish to spread awareness of the platform's feature.
- **Collaborations:** Collaborate with other prominent school accounts such as the official CCOM account, mascots, Rocky and Roxy, as well as the therapy dog Pebbles, and encourage them to repost the campaign on their stories.
 - Make daily Instagram posts featuring photos from throughout the campaign, demos, and engaging reels.
 - Provide a Linktree link on our Instagram account with links to our event calendar, media coverage, recorded demos, and more information about the team and client.
- **Ask Aimee:** Bring ACCESS Newswire's Aimee AI Writing Assistant and Recommendation Engine to life, uniquely and engagingly answering platform-related questions in a series of Instagram Reels.

Strategy 3: Create Key Moments in Time During Our Month-Long Campaign to Reach Our Target Audience.

- **Themed Events:** Leverage key moments in time during our month-long campaign, such as the Super Bowl and Valentine's Day, to encourage students to sign up for an account and follow our Instagram.
 - Incorporate the client tagline "We love you more" into our Valentine's Day tabling.
 - Collaborate with the school's mascots, Rocky and Roxy, and therapy dog, Pebbles, for our tabling events to boost student interest and engagement.
 - Use giveaways and various prizes to incentivize further engagement and interest in our campaign.
 - Have the team wear branded apparel featuring the campaign name.
- **PRSSA Collaboration:** Collaborate with Montclair PRSSA and host a PR trivia event promoting the platform and conducting a demo.
- **Giveaways:** Use giveaways to promote genuine interest in the campaign among students through interactive giveaways.
 - **Social Giveaway:** Encourage students to follow our Instagram to enter a social media giveaway resulting in a \$25 gift card.
 - **Registration Giveaway:** Encourage students to register for an account to enter a giveaway resulting in a \$25 gift card sent to their email.
 - **Survey Giveaway:** Encourage students to fill out a final survey on the campaign, resulting in a \$25 gift card sent to their email.
 - **Branded T-Shirts:** Create custom-branded T-shirts featuring our campaign logo to give out to participating students throughout our various events.

OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage 400 students, faculty, and staff to adopt and use the ACCESS Newswire platform.

Rationale: 91% of our initial survey recipients said they would be interested in using the platform, so we worked to ensure adoption of the ACCESS Newswire platform.

Strategy 1: Translate the Skills and Features Learned in the Platform Demonstration into Practical Applications for students, faculty, and staff.

- **Coursework Curriculum:** Work with individual professors on how to incorporate different features into their class assignments, projects, and lessons.
 - Target specific and relevant classes such as Crisis Communication, Brand Storytelling, Public Relations Campaigns, Public Relations Investigation and Strategy, Social Media Analytics, Sports Public Relations, Advertising Campaigns, etc.
- **Class Assignments:** Drive student adoption of the platform to help complete class assignments and projects, including media list pitching and development, social media listening, media research, and press release distribution.

Strategy 2: Reach Beyond the Classrooms to Engage Influential Groups and Individuals to Adopt and Use ACCESS Newswire.

- **Career Services:** Establish a partnership with CCOM Career Services to further spread the features of ACCESS Newswire and how it can be incorporated into your career throughout college and beyond.
 - Provide a detailed one-pager to be shared throughout their office and to students, faculty, and staff stating instructions on how to sign up for a free EDU account, watch our YouTube demonstration, contact us, and find our Instagram for further information.
- **Montclair Communications Executives:** Target university and college executives to use the free, seven-day corporate trial, including:
 - **Andrew Mees**, Assistant Vice President, Strategic Content, Communications and Marketing, Montclair State University; handles the Department of University Communications, and manages external press relations and a team of writers, photographers, and content creators.
 - **Keith Green**, Director of Communications and Strategic Operations, College of Communications and Media, Montclair State University; manages all official CCOM marketing and PR as well as the student-run PR agency within CCOM.

CONCLUSION

ACCESS Academy successfully introduced ACCESS Newswire to the Montclair community, and more specifically faculty and students within the College of Communication and Media. Guided by the campaign's core goals of **education**, **engagement**, and **adoption**, our team implemented strategic outreach, interactive demonstrations, and collaborative campus partnerships to showcase the value of ACCESS Newswire in an academic setting and professional endeavors. Through classroom presentations, live platform demonstrations, digital outreach, and engaging events, our campaign provided students and faculty with meaningful opportunities to learn about and experience ACCESS Newswire firsthand.

Our campaign highlighted how integrating real-world communications platforms into the classroom can strengthen academic learning while giving students practical experience with the same tools used across the public relations and communications industry. This initiative helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, preparing the next generation of PR and communications professionals with the tools they will use throughout their careers.

The Montclair State University Bateman Team is proud to have led a campaign that not only increased awareness of ACCESS Newswire, but also created a strong foundation for its continued use in coursework, student projects, and professional development across the Montclair community.

EVALUATION

OBJECTIVE 1

Educate students, faculty, and campus partners, about ACCESS Newswire to achieve at least **60% brand recognition** among post-campaign survey respondents.

RESULT: EXCEEDED

Following the campaign, 91% of our surveyed audience responded in the post-campaign survey saying they were familiar with ACCESS Newswire along with its features.

OBJECTIVE 2

Inspire **20%** of the CCOM students, faculty, and staff to actively **engage** with our month-long campaign.

RESULT: EXCEEDED

22% of students , faculty, and staff actively engaged and participated in our campaign, including **410 students** who **received** a student account.

OBJECTIVE 3

Encourage **400 students, faculty, and staff** to **adopt** and use the ACCESS Newswire platform.

RESULT: EXCEEDED

A total of **429** students, faculty, and staff adopted the ACCESS Newswire platform following the end of the campaign.

8,401 Accounts reached through Instagram

88.5% Of students surveyed now know of ACCESS Newswire following our campaign

42,225 Views on Instagram

95.6% Of surveyed students, faculty, and staff saying our campaign inspired them to learn more about how ACCESS Newswire can be used in classes and beyond.

BUDGET

Stickers	\$75.21
Gift Cards	\$50 (2 - \$25)
Event Decorations	\$71.37
T-Shirts	\$94.73
Total	\$291.31

DONATIONS

Catering	\$81.90
University Merchandise	\$89.00
Gift Cards	\$50 (2 - \$25)
Total	\$220.90

"From the clear branding of the campaign to how much on-campus engagement I've been seeing, as a PR student, this is the most engagement for public relations initiatives that I've seen outside from the events from our PRSSA chapter. It's uniting our students and professors within the department in a unique way that allows students to utilize tools they may have never used. I loved the free trial as someone who never used a PR tool platform."

Grace Valesquez
Junior, Social Media and PR Major at Montclair State University

"ACCESS Newswire has a lot of potential for our news team at WMSC Radio. We always have a lot of events for our student community that we sometimes struggle to get traction for. ACCESS Newswire can help us spread the word and streamline this process."

Rash Vinakota
Associate Program Director
WMSC 90.3FM at Montclair State University

"The platform provides an opportunity for students to explore the analytics tools they'll need to understand to be successful in their field. This is the academic entry point lacking in other commercial platforms."

Bond Benton
CCOM Fundamentals of PR and Advertising Professor at Montclair State University