



INDIANA UNIVERSITY
student media

Oct. 31, 2016

A recommendation for

James Benedict

Applicant for the Star Tribune internship program

James Benedict, a senior in journalism at Indiana University, merits your highest consideration for the Star Tribune internship program.

James was digital director of the fall 2016 Indiana Daily Student newspaper, and he played a crucial role in advancing our storytelling across platforms.

Like other newsrooms, ours is pushing itself to become digital first, and with collegiate journalists, who are also full-time students, the time constraints can seem insurmountable.

But James and his two fellow digital editors have responded to the challenges. In particular, they helped us respond well to significant breaking news. A pair of student deaths rocked campus – one a suicide, and the other a murder suicide. Then the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity chapter at IU gained national renown for a sex video that prompted closure of the troubled chapter. With the ATO story, our traffic increased three-fold.

In both cases, James and his team helped us connect with readers in online, mobile and social media. They hustled not just with the breaking news, but with online-specific timelines and story forms that enhanced our coverage in photos and text.

Conversely, the Daily Student has gained a national reputation for its long-form journalism. James also played a crucial role in enhancing digital presentations of our longer narratives. He then developed a staff toolkit to allow others on staff to capitalize upon the advancements.

James' experience as a print designer strengthens his skills in digital journalism. He has a keen sense of news judgment, and he can take a complicated story, discern the information that readers need and then apply the appropriate storytelling tool.

That's a tough job for an experienced journalist, but it's also difficult for a student learning the craft.

But James Benedict is a collegiate journalist with exceptional potential. He's a hard worker who welcomes constructive criticism. He's established himself as a credible leader in the Daily Student newsroom, and he has a bright future in the business.

Thanks for giving him your fullest consideration.

Ron Johnson

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