



SCHOOL OF  
**COMMUNICATION,  
JOURNALISM, & MEDIA**  
CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

MARCH 28

MCCPA

Michigan Community  
College Press Association  
Conference

IT STARTS WITH US

2026

#FIREUPCHIPS

 CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

# SCHEDULE

## EVENT REGISTRATION

Complimentary coffee, donuts, and bagels

**8:15AM-9:25AM**

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Nicole Yelland || Principal, GRIT PR

**9:30AM-10:20AM**

## FIRST SESSION WORKSHOPS

**10:30AM-11:20AM**

<b>Terry Foster</b>	Moore 110	The Perfect Game Story
<b>Sarah Leach</b>	Moore 112	The Art of the Interview
<b>Jake May</b>	Moore 114	DeBÍ TIRAR MÁS FOTOS
<b>Rose White</b>	Moore 120	FOIA, OMA, Public Records and Reporting

## SECOND SESSION WORKSHOPS

**11:30AM-12:20PM**

<b>Terry Foster</b>	Moore 110	Popping Podcasts
<b>Sarah Leach</b>	Moore 112	The Branding Blueprint
<b>Jake May</b>	Moore 114	Reel Recognize Real
<b>Rose White</b>	Moore 120	FOIA, OMA, Public Records and Reporting

## LUNCHEON

**12:30PM-1:10PM**

## AWARDS

**1:10PM-1:45PM**

## DISMISSAL & TOURS

Adjournment - Tours of CMU Student Media facilities available for conference attendees

**1:45PM**

# Main Character Energy: Don't Let AI Produce Your Life

*In an era when AI has made content faster, cleaner and more polished, we are drowning in sameness. It looks good from a distance but falls apart under scrutiny. Worse, it is forgettable.*

*This keynote reframes personal branding, our flawed humanity as our super power and discusses modern writing in the age of AI through the lens of reality TV. Students will learn how to identify the core elements of their real voice, develop it with confidence and build careers AI can't touch.*

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**Nicole Yelland** is a communications strategist who makes disruptive and rebellious business, leaders and products impossible to ignore. For two decades, she's transformed underdog companies, niche products and high-stakes moments into front-page stories. Her career spans automotive, beauty, consumer tech, fitness, financial services (banking, fintech, mortgage, housing finance), nonprofit, sports and retail. She has driven narratives for Fortune 500s, market leaders, and high-growth startups landing coverage in **The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, CNBC, Forbes, The Today Show, Good Morning America** and more sparking industry conversations and positive change. Yelland led PR for the largest **SPAC in NYSE history**, launched the first bilingual mortgage LMS, repositioned **automotive giants into technological leaders** and created **culture-driving campaigns** that hit media hard. From building in-house communications engines to scaling startups into industry leaders, her formula has been simple: data + guts + strategy + untouchable work ethic = measurable growth, credibility and trust for the brands she represents.

Armed with a bachelor's in Integrative Public Relations from Central Michigan University, Yelland has earned recognition as a HousingWire Marketing Leader, GM Transformers Award winner and Consumer Electronics Woman to Watch. And yes, she even designed **a shoe**. Because she knows how to spark a conversation that matters for the brands she represents.



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**



# WORKSHOP TOPICS

## TERRY FOSTER - MOORE 110

### **The Perfect Game Story - 10:30AM**

Game stories are the life blood of a sports section. So, let's get it right. We will detail the structure of a good game story. It is not always about the writing. It is about the reporting. Become a good reporter and game stories begin to write themselves.

### **Popping Podcasts - 11:30AM**

There is a lot of competition for podcasts these days. Everybody has one. Why should I listen to you. We will discuss good formats for a good podcast. And once you finish one you are not finished. Next you must promote it to draw more viewers.

## SARAH LEACH - MOORE 112

### **The Art of the Interview - 10:30AM**

To have a successful interview, you have to be a curious, structured listener. It's a delicate balance between having a plan and allowing the conversation to flow naturally. Proper preparation can mean the difference between getting a surface-level comment and getting thoughtful insight from your sources. In this session, you will learn what to do before the interview, how to build rapport and questioning techniques from broad, open-ended starters to specific.

### **The Branding Blueprint - 11:30AM**

Defining what you do and who you do it for is crucial to professional success. Your audience is more inclined to follow you if they know who you are and how you work. Branding for communications professionals has evolved beyond just being on all the platforms to having a conversation with your readership. It's not just sharing your work, but sharing your passion to earn audience loyalty. In this session, you will learn how to get your media profile out there and tips and tricks on what to do and what to avoid.

## JAKE MAY - MOORE 114

### **DeBÍ TirAR Más FOToS - 10:30AM**

Learning to take more intimate pictures to develop your stories.

### **Reel Recognize Real - 11:30AM**

How to create videos that matter on social media and beyond.

## ROSE WHITE - MOORE 120

### **FOIA, OMA, Public Records and Reporting**

This seminar will explore how journalists can pry loose public records and access open meetings and court proceedings through the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act. These are tools that journalists can leverage in accountability reporting

The training will describe the types of records that are available, the process for submitting requests, how to access court documents and other helpful resources.

# WORKSHOP SPEAKERS

Terry Foster, a 1981 graduate of Central Michigan University, dabbled in a number of media platforms. He covered high schools at the Grand Rapids Press (1981-1982), Detroit Free Press (1982-1988) Michigan football, tennis and auto racing. Some of his more interesting assignments were covering Wimbledon, The Indianapolis 500 and the Daytona 500. He was the beat writer for the Bad Boys Pistons who won titles in 1989 and 1990. He became a columnist and followed the Going to Work Pistons, the Detroit Red Wings and Detroit Lions. Foster won a number of writing awards including, APSE Top 10 sports game stories, MHSAA volleyball writer of the year and Best of Gannett writing awards. In addition to newspapers, he worked full-time radio jobs. He co-hosted the Sports Doctors show with Art Regner on Sports Radio 1130 AM WDFN. He worked 13 years on the Valenti and Foster Show, which was named a top 5 radio show nationally for three years consecutively. He enjoys and want to continue mentoring young sportswriters and journalists.



**Terry Foster**



**Sarah Leach**

Sarah Leach is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist who led The Holland Sentinel and 14 other Michigan papers for many years. She has more than 20 years of experience as a reporter, copy editor, designer and executive editor. She is a 2002 graduate of Central Michigan University (journalism) and a 2013 graduate of Baker College (graphic design). She is a fierce advocate for local journalism and student journalists.

# WORKSHOP SPEAKERS



## Jake May

Jake May is a former CMU student and an award-winning community photojournalist at The Flint Journal and MLive.com. A 2017 Pulitzer Prize finalist for his work on the Flint water crisis, Jake is committed to telling local stories with impact in Flint and throughout Michigan. Jake's photographs and stories have received local, national and international acclaim. His aim with his camera is to build trust through a listening ear, sharp eye and empathetic, heartfelt approach to reflect the stories of those he has the privilege to meet — putting the journalism into photojournalism.

## Rose White

Rose White is an investigative journalist at MLive covering immigration, labor and housing among other topics. Rose has been a professional journalist for nine years, working her first four years as a digital producer at WZZM 13 in Grand Rapids. She joined MLive in 2020 as a Muskegon business reporter then started covering the Michigan state economy in 2022. Rose's work has won awards from the Michigan Press Association, Michigan APME and Detroit Society of Professional Journalists. She graduated from Grand Valley State University in 2015 and earned a Master of Arts from the University of the West of England in 2017. Rose also teaches at Hope College in Holland.



# EVENT COORINDATORS

**Faculty  
Advisor:**

**Isabella  
Blenkle**

**Madison  
Fagerstrom**

**Abigail  
Lomoro**

**Jim  
Wojcik**



**Kathryn  
Nickell**

**Ella  
Pierzecki**

**Madelyn  
VanAlstine**

**Odessa  
Watson**



## PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

Delta College  
Grand Rapids Community College  
Henry Ford College  
Kellogg Community College  
Lansing Community College  
Monroe County Community College  
Northwestern Michigan College  
Schoolcraft College

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**FROM CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
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Volunteer Center, Admissions, and Sydney Kline  
and Timothy Otteman



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**For program  
information and judge  
comments, visit**

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