

Dear judges,

I am nominating University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee journalism senior Samantha Calderon for collegiate journalist of the year. Samantha is extremely hard-working. She is an excellent journalist and a campus leader who is active in professional environments already and who gives back to the community. Samantha is a converged journalist who has experience in, and who excels at, multiple media genres, from print/online news writing to television news to digital journalism.

She has worked as a digital content intern for WTMJ-TV. In addition, she is a reporter for Media Milwaukee, UWM's award-winning student news site, where she focuses on the printed word. She is currently a student in my journalism immersion class in which she pitched the idea of the class going to the Texas-Mexico border. She suggested also covering events from the Mexican side of the border, including the impact on the Mexican presidential election, which is ongoing. She is bilingual.

Samantha made the dean's honors list at UW-Milwaukee in Fall 2021, spring 2022, and fall 2023. Her GPA is over 3.7. She is secretary of Sigma Delta Pi. She is a member of the Latinx Student Union, and she is an officer in the Minority Media Association, a UW-Milwaukee campus club devoted to improving diversity in the news media.

As a fall intern at WTMJ, Samantha was the second-most-read author one week. She covered everything from crime to entertainment stories, writing print/online stories for the website.

She is a senior who is double majoring in Spanish and Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies with a journalism concentration. Samantha has covered everything from Palestinian rallies to a public hearing. She wrote a print/online story for Media Milwaukee on an innovative senior housing project that allows seniors and families to share living spaces. She wrote about the City of Milwaukee's funding of flu and COVID-19 vaccines. She covered a pro-Palestinian rally in downtown Milwaukee, and more. These stories were print/online.

Samantha is an excellent writer. She is a leader on campus. She always goes the extra mile. She has a gift for seeking out unique voices that don't always make the media. She is a tribute to the profession. For all of these reasons, I nominate Samantha Calderon to be the collegiate journalist of the year. I have taught journalism for 20 years at UWM, and I am a former newspaper reporter, and Samantha is one of the most gifted students I've taught. I know she will be going places in her life and career. She is the kind of student you know you can rely on at all times.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jessica McBride

Senior lecturer, UW-Milwaukee