

BRENNA SWANSTON

CONTACT

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EDUCATION

B.S., JOURNALISM

Minor: Religious Studies
California Polytechnic State
University, San Luis Obispo

AWARDS

**Association of Alternative
Newsmedia Awards 2020:**
Second Place Long-Form
News Story

**North Carolina Press
Association Editorial and
Advertising Awards 2019:**
Second Place Education
Reporting

**California Newspaper
Publishers Association
Better Newspapers
Contest 2016:**

- *First Place* Agricultural Reporting
- *Honorable Mention:* Profile Feature Story
- *Honorable Mention:* Coverage of Education

**College Media Association
Pinnacle Awards 2015:**
Third Place Arts &
Entertainment Story

**CNPA Campus Excellence
in Journalism Contest 2015:**
First Place Profile Feature
Story

FREELANCE CONTENT EDITOR & WRITER | Various Clients / July 2014 - Present

Recent notable projects include:

- For Slack (2022 - present): Write and edit blog posts, ebooks, and marketing emails to drive awareness of Slack tools, integrations, and new features
- For various tech companies (2022 - present): Ghostwrite op-ed articles on behalf of executives for placement in publications like *Human Resource Executive* and *CMSWire*
- For Assurance IQ (2023 - 2024): Wrote and edited long-form SEO web articles covering health, life, and homeowners insurance
- For Queen City Nerve (2018 - 2019): Wrote a three-part series exploring racial and socioeconomic segregation in North Carolina schools (*placed second for long-form news story at the AAN Awards, second for education reporting in the NCPA Editorial and Advertising Awards*)

DEPUTY EDITOR, EDUCATION | Forbes Advisor / Remote / May 2022 - June 2024

- Collaborated with the education vertical's managing editor and SEO team to ideate, outline, and assign 60 long-form articles per month covering higher ed degrees, career paths, alternative education options, and college rankings
- Edited all education content to ensure accuracy, clarity, and compliance with style, grammar, and SEO best practices
- Nov. 2023 - April 2024: Backfilled for the managing editor during her leave; saw record growth on EDU vertical from ~114,000 weekly sessions to ~206,000 weekly sessions
- Dec. 2023: Led a content optimization project to update 200+ legacy education articles in one month, contributing to 37.7% SEO growth rate month over month
- Worked with the PR team to produce stats pages and other data-driven content, securing 228 backlinks in 2023 with an average link score of 79.53
- Supported the data team in designing and applying methodologies for articles ranking the best online universities, degree programs, and coding bootcamps
- Managed an updates editor and a remote team of ~20 freelance writers and editors
- Created and maintained the education team's style guide

COPY EDITOR, EDUCATION | Red Ventures / Remote / Sep. 2020 - May 2022

- Copyedited SEO and news content for Red Ventures' portfolio of higher ed (EDU) sites
- Maintained and continually updated EDU style guide
- Created and continually updated EDU's conscious language guide to ensure the use of inclusive, appropriate language across all EDU content
- Developed training and feedback system for EDU writers to keep them current on EDU's style guide, sourcing best practices, and other writing processes
- Helped develop QC process by which EDU copy editors audited live content monthly
- Promoted to manager after exceeding goals and demonstrating leadership skills

STAFF WRITER | The Sun / Santa Maria, CA / Jan. 2016 - June 2017

- Wrote a weekly food column, plus long-form news articles and short-form briefs covering education, agriculture, immigration, religion, and environmental issues
- Copyedited the paper's news section weekly
- Backfilled for proofreader and managing editor when OOO
- *Won first for agricultural reporting at the CNPA Better Newspapers Contest; earned honorable mentions for profile feature story and education coverage*