Interim Report: DisHonorRoll

March 1, 2018

The Media Consortium’s Campus Sexual Assault project, now called “DisHonorRoll,” was officially begun November 2017. This is our second interim report.

1. DisHonorRoll soft launched January 31, with a piece by Andi Zeisler at Bitch:

<https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/dishonor-roll/everything-scold-new-again>

and followed by two more pieces from Bitch:

February 28, [https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/dishonor-roll/campus-rape-activism-accessible](https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/dishonor-roll/campus-rape-activism-accessible%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

March 1, [https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/i-kissed-consent-goodbye/purity-culture-and-sexual-violence-evangelical-christian-campuses](https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/i-kissed-consent-goodbye/purity-culture-and-sexual-violence-evangelical-christian-campuses%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

2. Resource Guide was completed and made available to writers on January 31, 2018

3. Bitch Media created a logo for use by collaborating outlets for the series (attached)

4. The following outlets have been recruited to produce DisHonorRoll stories:

* Ms. Magazine
* Wear Your Voice
* TruthOut
* Making Contact
* Student Nation (part of The Nation)

5. Mother Jones continues to work on their investigative piece, which we expect will be ready in late spring.

**Challenges**

We have faced unexpected challenges in recruiting outlets. These challenges arise from two different issues:

1. Economic—While most news outlets are struggling, independent progressive outlets are stable and growing. As a consequence, they increasingly have focused on improving their business strategies. Outlets that once would produce stories for $100-$200 now recognize that the true cost of a story includes editing and marketing as well as reporting, and have told us that their true cost is more like $500-1000 per story. Thus, what we thought would be an enticingly high amount, $500, is actually now perceived as a relatively low amount.

2. Trump—News explodes every day now, especially around progressive issues. Immigration, climate change health care, criminal justice—every day, even every hour, the Trump administration is up to no good, not to mention other breaking stories like the massacre of teens in Parkland and the bombing of civilians in Syria. That means that outlets are stretched thin—they already feel they are not doing a good job covering their core competencies. So where a few years ago editors would have appreciated the opportunity to cover campus sexual assault, this year editors tell us they don’t have the bandwidth to move outside of their core verticals.

**Solutions**

The challenges we face to this project became apparent as we recruited outlets between January 15-February 15. Now that we understand the challenges, we have made changes to our strategy:

1. We are targeting outlets that see reporting on gender, violence and millenials as core to their audience and mission. These include outlets beyond Media Consortium members. It takes more time to make connections with outlets that don’t know us as well, but we expect to be able to bring on at least 2-3 of these outlets by the end of March.

2. Providing longer timelines for outlets to produce content. Outlets do want to produce content on campus sexual assault but can’t allocate resources quickly. So we are working with outlets like Truthout to schedule stories far in advance, so they can be worked on in the few quiet moments between Trump tweets.

3. Providing more economic opportunities for outlets by offering them the ability to do 2-3 pieces over a 10 month period. Originally, we thought we would go with 15-20 outlets doing one piece each, but financially outlets are telling us they would prefer to do 3 pieces (for $1500 total) rather than 1 piece at $500. It is more cost-effective for them. That means paying 6-10 outlets to do 2-3 pieces.

4. We are testing the idea of recruiting freelancers, and offering outlets the option of a well-edited piece by a known freelancer instead of having to develop a piece on their own. We believe some outlets will be excited at the idea of free edited content. But we won’t know until we test this solution.

**Next Steps**

* Bring on 5 additional outlets by April 15
* Begin running pieces by a wide variety of outlets by March 15 .