***Professor’s Initial Review of Blogs***

**Blog Feedback:**

I sent detailed feedback over the break. Contact me if you didn’t receive my feedback.

**Notable blogs so far:**

1. <http://stayfitsju.wordpress.com>
2. <https://thecheapescape.wordpress.com/>
3. <https://nycinabucket.wordpress.com/>

If the semester ended today, these blogs would have A/A+. Keep up good work. If I didn’t mention your blog, that doesn’t necessarily mean you’re not doing well. But the above blogs are particularly strong and have content I wanted to highlight as a model for other students to follow.

**Tips for Improving Blogs:**

By now, you should now have at least 3 substantive posts. If not, you’re behind. Some of you have yet to make one substantive post and your grade will be impacted. I don’t expect perfection on your initial posts, but you do need to at least do the work. Missing work gets penalized. You need to post regularly in order to receive a good blog grade at semester’s end. You can’t just make 10 posts the final week of class and expect to receive a decent grade. Successful blogs require regular updates. They require bloggers to be self-motivated and set their own editorial calendar. This assignment assesses you on how well you do that, among other things.

When you write a post, provide context, explain terms. Remember, if you’re writing about an organization, non members may be reading your blog. If your topic involves St. John’s, don’t assume only St. John’s students are reading your blog. So… cover your 5Ws and provide context to outsiders. Don’t assume your readers know what you know. E.g., Don’t just write, “this is how you submit work to the film festival” – which festival? If you’re writing about a restaurant, include the address of the restaurant. Don’t make readers go Googling for it.

You need to interview sources. This is how journalists create value – by talking to experts and sharing their insights. Without sources, all you have is your own limited opinion and perspective and your blog will likely read more like a personal journal than a piece of journalism. When citing sources, use full names and some sort of description/title/qualification. You won’t get good grade without this.

Include links to expand on info in your posts. E.g. if you say the organization you’re covering “sponsored an event as part of St. John’s ‘Gives Back Month,’” provide a link to more info on that month. If you mention people, link to their St. John’s profile page, personal website, LinkedIn account, Twitter feed, etc. If you go to a place like a restaurant, include link to its website, Yelp reviews, menu, etc. If you’re mentioning a charity or organization, link to its website. But avoid obvious links, such as linking to stjohns.edu every time you mention St. John’s. Links should be seamlessly integrated into text (so that a word or words in your post link to a site related to it), not written as http://www

Writing: Proofread. Use proper grammar, including correct capitalization. Use short paragraphs. Remember, this is a journalism course and good writing is a must!

Remember, your posts need visuals. All text is boring. Make sure you have permission to use images you do. Use interesting and relevant visuals. If you post about person, have pic of them, preferably in action. Put at least visual one near top of post, otherwise the reader initially just sees all text.

Vary the content/topics of your posts. Don’t just do a profile or Q&A of a new club member each week. Have news blurbs, have coverage of events, have enterprising pieces, have videos or photo blogs, etc.