Content Creators Summit Recap

Content Creator Summit Speakers Teach Students Tips of the Trade

Elena Sanchez
Reporter

On Oct. 9, Bismarck State College held the Content Creators Summit. Multiple content creators, professionals, and instructors came to the event. The summit had a featured keynote speaker as well as multiple breakout sessions for attendees. This year, the Content Creators Summit had fresh faces and a wide variety of speakers.

The Summit started with keynote speaker, Amy Allender. Allender is the mind and creator behind the 'Hey Minot' social media accounts across Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. 'Hey Minot' is Allender's way of spreading positivity and information about Minot to others on social media. She was invited by Matt Fern, the Executive Director of Film North Dakota, to speak at the Summit. It was Allender's first time speaking at the Content Creators Summit.

While her breakout session discussed logistics behind her brand, Allender's keynote session placed heavy emphasis on mental health and the way it can be impacted when creating content on social media.

"There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about how much pain I was in mentally," Allender said. "There's not a day that goes by that I'm not grateful for recovery and for the help that I found along the way, and it was so hard speaking out."

Speaking out about mental health during her session was important to Allender, especially to a younger generation.

"I think it's important for young people, especially in the career field of content creation, where there's so much comparison and feedback instantly," Allender said. "You can really gain that approval and sense of self through your performance online and for me, that was really detrimental."

After her keynote session, Allender presented a breakout session that discussed how she set up collaborations, her brand, and the financial side. From being a keynote speaker and having her own breakout session, Allender plans to hopefully make a return to next year's Summit.

"I would love to come back if I came back as a breakout session," Allender said. "If I was to come back, I would hope to bring something very, very practical like that to the table again that these students can put into practice even immediately when they leave here today."

The first set of breakout sessions included the Reporters' Roundtable with four reporters talking about their experiences with journalism and answering students' questions. Grant Coursey, Jack Dura, Micheal Achterling, and Jacob Orledge discussed a variety of topics from what young journalists can expect going into the field to different tips that will help them.

For Dura and Coursey specifically, they came to speak to young journalists to connect with them. Dura is a reporter for the North Dakota Monitor and Coursey is a state government and politics reporter for the Bismarck Tribune.

"I believe a lot in encouraging journalists of the future," Dura said. "We need more storytellers, especially in North Dakota."

The Summit brought more than connection as both reporters felt that the event was beneficial and fun. Both reporters said they encourage other journalists and content creators to come to the Summit. Coursey is a repeat attender of the event whereas it was Dura's first time attending the event.

"It's always fun to sit down in a room with other journalists and talk to, hopefully, the future of journalism," Coursey said.

"I enjoyed asking my colleagues about how they got to where they are and tried to ask questions about things young journalists might want to know that I didn't necessarily have available to me when I started" Dura said.

It is unknown whether both journalists will return for next year's summit but both reporters can be found online. Coursey can be found through his work on his website grantcoursey.com or through the Bismarck Tribune. Dura and his work can be found through his author pages at apnews.com or northdakotamonitor.com.

For photographers, they also had breakout sessions available for them to attend. For Tanner Ecker, a photojournalist for the Bismarck Tribune, he collaborated with a photographer friend of his named Mike McCleary to hold a breakout session. Ecker explained that their session focused on composition and its importance to photographers.

"We kind of partnered up just to share the philosophy of how composition of photos really draws viewers and how to make that happen," Ecker said.

Their hope for the breakout session was similar to others: to connect with younger audiences and share their experiences, tips, and teach them something new. Ecker emphasized how sharing knowledge is powerful, especially to those entering the industry.

"We, as professionals, now have that experience, and we want to pass it along to the young ones, so they understand," Ecker said. "Photography is such a hard industry since it's competing with AI, and it's super competitive. So, it's really important, especially for the young ones, to understand how to get to that level."

Ecker encourages young photographers and students to take pictures whenever they can as it is best to take advantage of opportunities given. Additionally, if students wish to see Ecker's work, it is available on the Bismarck Tribune website at bismarcktribune.com, his own website at https://www.tannereckerphotography.com, or his Instagram @ecker.photography.



Elena Sanchez | Reporter

Words of Wisdom - Amy Allender speaking about her journey with mental health during the keynote session.



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Welcome In - Matt Fern, Executive Director of Film North Dakota, giving the keynote introduction.

Content Creators Summit Offers Student Opportunities

Gracie Heinert
Reporter

Content creation can be more than just a hobby or something associated with influencers. For anyone interested in photography, writing, video, social media, radio, and more could lead to a career path. Bismarck State College's Content Creator Summit on Oct. 9 brought together professionals in these fields to help students explore these opportunities.

The event introduced students to different areas of creative media and featured more than 25 breakout sessions led by experts in media and other creative industries. Amy Allender, the creator behind "Hey Minot," was this year's keynote speaker

The Content Creators Summit was sponsored by Film North Dakota, North Dakota Association of Counties, North Dakota Public Information Officer Association, North Dakota Newspaper Association Education Foundation, Bismarck State College Foundation , and Bringing Humanities to Life.

Film North Dakota Executive Director Matt Fern said the event was created to help people understand the creative opportunities available in North Dakota.

"I thought this event would be a great way to help students explore those possibilities, get hands-on experience and meet professionals doing this work every day," Fern said.

The Summit covered a variety of creative fields and topics, including podcasting, photography, social media, television and commercial filmmaking, radio and newspaper journalism, public relations, and media law.

Through the sessions students had the chance to hear from professionals and learn more about what working in these fields looks like. The event also allowed students to make connections with people who have experience in the creative industry.

Fern said the Summit allows students to connect with people who work in these fields every day. He also explained how the event can help students who are interested in content creation but are unsure where to start.

"If you're interested in creating content but aren't sure where you fit, this is a great place to explore what's possible," Fern said.

The Summit showed students that content creation can lead to a variety of career opportunities and gave them a chance to explore where their interests could take them.