

'I couldn't have done this without the writing I did at LC.'

Alumnae **Scout MacEachron '12** and **Michaela Hearst '14** put the skills they gained at LC to work for them.

By Mark DiPietro

Long before Landmark College had a communication degree, students like Scout MacEachron '12 and Michaela Hearst '14 were rediscovering their love of writing and journalism thanks to faculty members like Mac Gander and Sara Glennon.

"I'll always remember Mac as this figure in my life who inspired this love that is now my career," says Scout, who is a producer for NowThis News in Los Angeles. "I can't thank him enough."

Scout arrived at LC in 2010, after attending schools in Connecticut, San Francisco, and New Delhi, India, and spending two years at Vassar College. What had been a love of writing throughout school disintegrated in college because Scout found her ADHD overwhelmed her ability to manage and complete college-level assignments on time. "Writing became this negative thing," she says.

That turned around at LC because of guidance from Professors Glennon and Gander. "Sara helped me learn that writing an essay wasn't this big, scary thing, and by the time I took Mac's journalism class, I knew I loved writing," Scout says. "He helped me turn writing into journalism."

Michaela had a similar trajectory, writing poetry and fiction since elementary school but hitting a dead stop with essay writing as she progressed through upper grades. Michaela was diagnosed with non-verbal learning disorder (NVLD) and learning disorder not otherwise specified (LD-NOS) when she was 14.

"My relationship with writing turned rocky before I came to Landmark," she says. Glennon's class taught her to "just get something on paper," and Gander "helped tap into this story-writing side of me, which I hadn't explored."



Scout MacEachron '12 photographs an art exhibit at the FLUX Art Fair in Harlem, New York, in 2015.

The two women have taken different career paths, but both involve effective writing and communication. After graduating from LC with an associate degree, Scout went on to earn a bachelor's degree in American Studies from Barnard College. She cut her teeth with internships at *Rolling Stone*, *Good Housekeeping*, NBC News, and elsewhere. (Her very first internship after graduating from LC was thanks to former LC trustee Pola Rosen, who brought Scout on as an intern at her New York City-based publication, *Education Update*.) Scout's current role at NowThis News includes video production and social media, and she was the producer of almost half (eight of 17) of the top-performing

NowThis main page videos in 2019. Scout recently helped the media company launch its TikTok account, which was covered by CNN in a story about news organizations incorporating the popular social media platform.



Michaela Hearst '14 in New York City's Central Park.

"I couldn't have done any of this without the writing I did at Landmark," Scout says. "Mac made me feel like I could be a real journalist. He believed in me and gave me the confidence to power through the rest of everything."

Michaela, after earning an associate degree from LC, went on to get a bachelor's degree in psychology from

Manhattanville College, and last year she was awarded a master's in social work from Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work. She has also earned a master's certificate in dyslexia studies and language-based learning disabilities from Southern New Hampshire University. Michaela puts her writing skills to work as an advocate for others with LD. She was recently appointed to the Young Adult Leadership Council of the National Center for Learning Disabilities and she's a project social ambassador for the NVLD Project. Michaela has written several pieces for both organizations, as well as Understood, and she became a guest blogger for Friends of Quinn, a well-known blog begun by LC alumnus

Quinn Bradlee '04. (See Michaela's blog post, "12 Rules for Life," below.)

"No one had taught me how to write effectively until I came to Landmark," says Michaela. 🐦

Michaela's 12 Rules for Life

(at least right now...)

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1. Iced coffee is the only coffee worth drinking. You can't change my mind (unless it's cappuccino).
2. Set consistent short-term goals for yourself. For me, that's winning a trophy at my next race and continuing to play my guitar in public.
3. Take comfort in knowing there are others who understand your struggles. You aren't alone. Make connections.
4. It can be so tempting to compare yourself to others, but do your best to focus on your own journey and successes.
5. When people don't understand what it's like to have LD or they doubt your ability, keep fighting back. Rely on your support system.
6. Admit when you're burned out, but realize that even in your worst moments, you're stronger than you might think you are.
7. Self-care, self-care, self-care. It's not always glamorous; it's typically not spontaneous trips halfway across the world. Maybe it's meditation, practicing gratitude, properly eating and sleeping, making sure you're in good mental and physical health, and much more.
8. Find something positive in every day.
9. As often as you can, do what you love and what makes you happy.
10. Surround yourself with people who love and care for you.
11. So many things (including these "rules for life right now") are easier said than done. Take it one day, one moment at a time.
12. To everyone with LD—you are validated. I see you. I hear you. I will fight for you.