

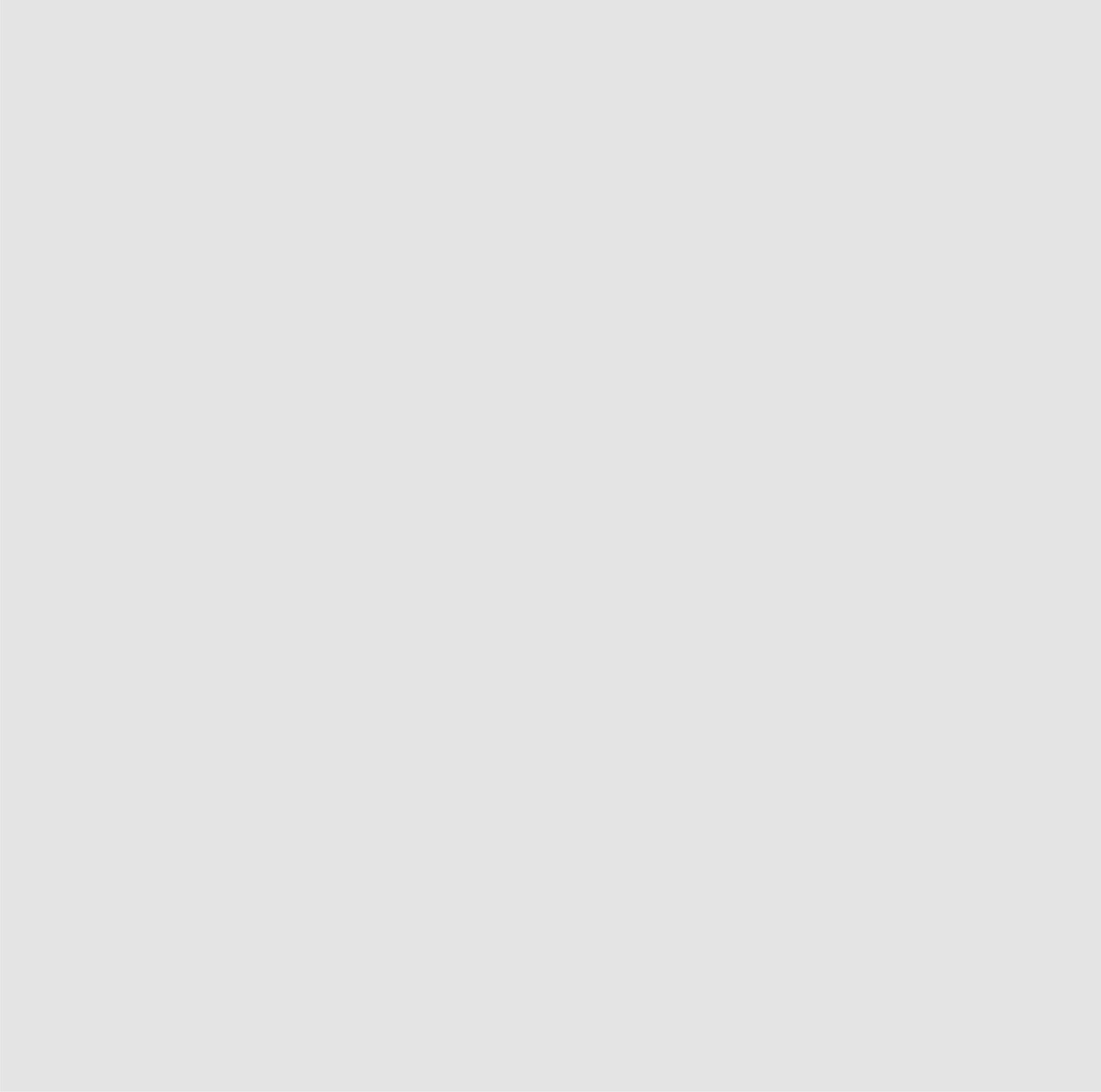


Home / News

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## New WKU program will train students with autism for careers

By AARON MUDD [amudd@bgdailynews.com](mailto:amudd@bgdailynews.com) 1 hr ago



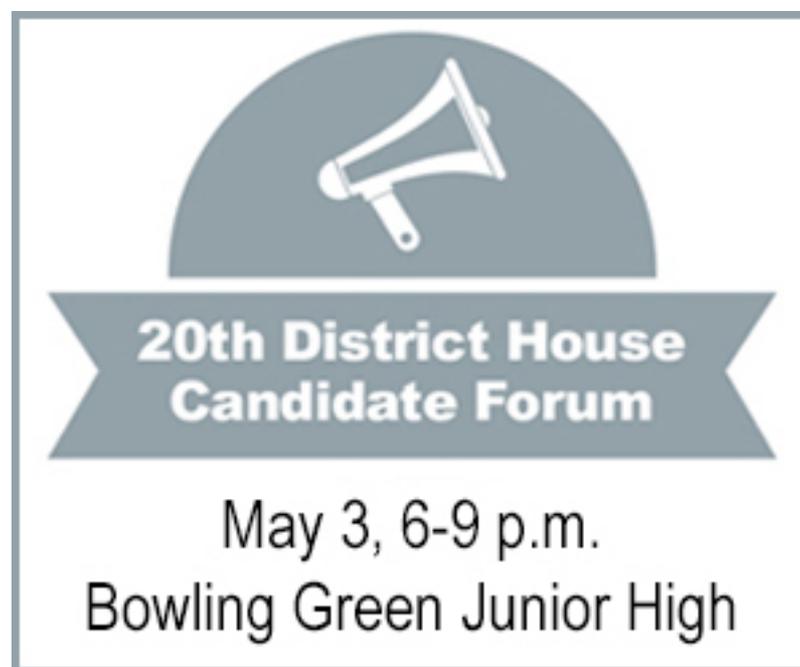
David Brinkley

Submitted

A new training program at Western Kentucky University will give students with autism experience with every aspect of public broadcasting and operations with the goal of preparing them to enter the workforce.

Each year, the David Brinkley Student Employment Fellowship Program will provide two positions with the goal of transitioning the students to part-time WKU Public Broadcasting employees after their first year, according to a news release.

The program is the result of a partnership between WKU Public Broadcasting and the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex.



David Brinkley, director of WKU Public Broadcasting, told the Daily News that the fellowship is meant to address a recurring need to help students on the autism spectrum transition into careers. He said the fellowship isn't limited to broadcasting majors and will give students experience with every aspect of business, not just on-air talent.

“This fellowship allows us to address a critical need for college students on the autism spectrum,” Brinkley said in the new release. “We have an opportunity to improve their transition from college to employment by providing practical work experience and professional training. It is central to our public service mission to educate and adds value to the communities we serve. The establishment of this fellowship is just another example of how we do that.”

The fellowship was created with money specifically set aside for scholarship use, and its first two students are expected to start their employment this fall.

Program fellows will be drawn from the Clinical Education Complex's Circle of Support, which provides academic and social support for students with autism.

Mary Lloyd Moore, executive director of the Clinical Education Complex, said in a news release that she sees WKU Public Broadcasting as particularly suited for nurturing the professional growth of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

“I can’t think of a better organization or group of professionals to guide our ASD students and help them successfully transition to the post-graduate workforce.”

Moore said the complex’s board decided to name the fellowship after Brinkley in recognition of the director.



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Brinkley, who has cancer that he doesn’t expect to recover from, said he wants to keep working and contributing to his field as long as he is able. “I’m hoping that this serves as a model,” he told the Daily News, referring to his hope that other entities will use the WKU program as a model.

WKU Public Broadcasting employs about 26 students each year in television, radio production and operations. It includes both WKU PBS and WKU Public Radio, a member station of National Public Radio.

Moore said in the release that the fellowship will having an enduring effect.

“This fellowship program not only provides training and employment opportunities, but it stands to make a lasting impact for generations to come,” Moore said.

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## **Aaron Mudd**

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