

Associate Professor of Broadcast Journalism & Multimedia
Trauma-Informed Journalism Expert

Biography

Jesús Ayala is a tenured Associate Professor of Broadcast Journalism and Multimedia at California State University, Long Beach. He brings more than 26 years of professional news-production experience, including working as an ABC News producer for *World News Tonight*, *Good Morning America*, *Nightline*, and *20/20*. His professional work has earned five national Emmy Awards and seven Edward R. Murrow Awards. Ayala teaches broadcast journalism, field producing, multimedia production, vertical video, and mobile-first storytelling. As founding Director of Beach TV News, he has guided students in both traditional television news and emerging forms of storytelling. His students have received more than 100 national collegiate journalism awards. In 2022, the College Media Association recognized him as one of the nation's most distinguished broadcast advisers. His research focuses on journalism and mental health, burnout, and trauma-informed newsgathering.

Involvement with BEA

I have been an active BEA member since 2017, first as a full-time lecturer, then as a tenure-track faculty member, and now as a tenured professor. I have presented at BEA conferences on vertical-video production, international reporting, bilingual journalism education, mobile journalism, and preparing students for changing media platforms. I have also presented at BEA Latin America conferences in Bogotá, Colombia, and Mérida, Mexico. BEA has supported my scholarly and creative work. In 2024, I received a \$4,000 BEA Research Grant for "Covering Uvalde: Understanding Journalists' Trauma Responses to Covering Mass Shootings." That research informed the documentary *Reporting from Uvalde*, which received the 2025 BEA Festival of Media Arts award for Best Faculty Documentary. My students and student media programs have also received multiple BEA recognitions, including awards in the Festival of Media Arts and the Disrupt the News Challenge.

Interest in Serving as an Academic Director

My academic experience, professional journalism background, international engagement, research, and student-media leadership position me to support BEA's members and priorities. My goals would be to:

- Connect scholarship, classroom teaching, and current industry practice through practical programming for faculty, students, and media professionals.
- Help members navigate the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence in newsrooms, broadcasting, and the classroom by sharing practical, ethical, and effective approaches to AI use.
- Share effective approaches to mobile-first storytelling, audience engagement, and emerging platforms.
- Work with BEA's new Faculty Fellow for Students to develop a student track at the annual conference featuring career development, portfolio reviews, mentoring, networking, and hands-on sessions.
- Build appropriate partnerships with organizations such as the College Media Association, the Associated Collegiate Press, and international media-education organizations.
- Promote resources related to mental health, self-care, resilience, and sustainable professional practice.
- Expand participation and ensure that members and students from different backgrounds, regions, and countries see a meaningful place within BEA.

Supporting the Interest Divisions

My experience aligns especially well with the News, Student Media Advisors, Interactive Media and Emerging Technologies, International, Multicultural Studies, Research, Curriculum, Assessment and Administration, and Two-Year/Scholastic Institutions divisions. I would begin by holding listening sessions with the leadership and members of each division I am assigned to support. These conversations would identify priorities, challenges, opportunities, and resource needs while ensuring that support is responsive rather than one-size-fits-all. I would bring relevant experience in professional news production, award-winning student media, mobile-first storytelling, international and bilingual journalism, reporting on race and ethnicity, trauma-informed journalism research, curriculum development, assessment, and community-college journalism pipelines. Divisions would gain an engaged liaison who could amplify their priorities, promote their programming and awards, connect them with speakers and partners, and identify opportunities for cross-divisional collaboration.

Developing the Academic Director Structure

I would help build a collaborative and transparent structure by establishing clear liaison assignments, regular communication with division chairs, annual priorities, member-feedback mechanisms, and periodic progress updates. I would also support an orientation and continuity process so future Academic Directors can build on successful initiatives. I see the Academic Directors as connectors between BEA leadership, Interest Divisions, members, students, and industry professionals. My goal is to help BEA become a more connected, accessible, and forward-looking organization that supports its current members while preparing the field for the future.