



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

**“Small Programs, Big  
Opportunities: New Ideas  
and practices for Convergent  
Classes and Curriculum”**

**AEJMC, Boston, 2009**



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

# **Ready, set, converge!**

## **Managing convergence at the small liberal arts college**

Indira Somani, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Washington and Lee University

AEJMC, Boston, 2009

# W & L



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- Teaching convergence in an all-digital multimedia platform since 2002
- Started building convergence into the curriculum in 1990
- Only accredited journalism program at a highly selective small liberal arts college

# W & L



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- Print and Broadcast sequence- merged
  - Students plan their news coverage together
  - Regularly work in lab together– stories print, broadcast and online
- “The Rockbridge Report” – television newscast and converged Website produced together



## Capstone Course— “In-depth Reporting”

- Students of all sequences: print, broadcast, online work in teams to report on local issues and produce print, broadcast and online stories

# Making the transition



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

Ph.D.-- University of Maryland, Philip Merrill  
College of Journalism

- At UMD- taught Broadcast Producing Class
- Only worked with broadcast students

# Making the Transition



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

Convergence setting— much more fully integrated at a small liberal arts college

At UMD (big program, all separate buildings):

Broadcast

Print

Online

# Making the transition



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- At W&L– work with all the students on fundamentals and concepts of journalism
- Teach technology to all students



# Collaboration



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- Co-teaching
- Beat Reporting— includes both print and broadcast students
- Teach the fundamentals together
- Review the technology with all students

# Collaboration



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- Print students required to produce at least 1 to 2 broadcast stories each term– in addition to their weekly print stories
- Broadcast students required to produce at least 1 to 2 print stories each term– in addition to their weekly broadcast stories

# Collaboration



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

## Advanced Electronic Media

- Newscast Production
- Broadcast and Online producers for the week meet together before we start production
- Sharing ideas

# Creating Balance



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- Balance teaching, research and service
- W & L – teaching & research are equal
- No research assistants
- Teaching load 5/6 (alternates each year)
- Skills classes– labor intensive
- One on one time with students to review scripts and assemble a rundown

# Creating Balance



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- Ph.D. program
- Research agenda
- Working on research articles
- Documentary film (cross-cultural issues, awards, film festivals, TV screenings)

# Teacher-Scholar Model



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- Collaborate research into my teaching
- Satellite TV use by ethnic communities
- Make documentary films

# Teacher-Scholar Model



W a s h i n g t o n a n d L e e U n i v e r s i t y

- Industry experience reflects the skills classes I teach
- Cross-cultural documentary course
- Theory class- “Media, Race and Gender”
- Future– introducing a class on ethnic media