

# spig news

Newsletter of AEJMC's Small Programs Interest Group

Winter 2010

## How we're coping

*Online papers, bigger classes, fewer adjuncts greet tough times*

**T**AKING student newspapers and projects online, increasing class sizes, adding to course loads, imposing days off without pay and eliminating the use of adjunct instructors are ways college journalism programs are getting through the recession, according to a survey of participations in the

### Inside this issue

Profile: Susan Lewis, page 3  
Teacher of Year call, page 12  
2010 call for GIFT, page 8

Small Programs Interest Group discussion list.

In a message to the list, **spig news** asked how departments

and schools were coping with the hard times. The responses offer ideas for other schools still trying to figure out what to do as universities face shrinking endowments and declining enrollment. Here is what our writers said:

**James Willis, Azusa Pacific:** We See **COPING**, page 2

## HEAD NOTES

### *We include PR, other disciplines*

Dear SPIG-sters:

Every few months or so we get an outbreak of lively listserv discussion dealing with our everyday work: the challenges of advising the student

See **HEAD NOTES**, page 9



MARTIN

**SPIG will sponsor a refereed research panel on social justice journalism at AEJMC's 2010 conference in Denver. The Call is on page 8, the story on page 15.**

## Apply by Feb. 15 to join SPIG convergence panel

Have you developed a course on converged media practices. Did your students create content and present it using multiple media? Will you share the examples and lessons you learned?

Apply by Feb. 15 to be part of SPIG's second annual pre-conference panel on convergence in print, broadcast and web journalism, photojournalism, advertising and public relations.

The session will run from 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 4, the day before the official start of the 2010 AEJMC Convention. It will be aimed at educators and administrators in departments and schools within smaller colleges or universities.

Tell the audience what you did and how it worked. Include syllabi and CDs filled with helpful tips and exercises.

*See the call on page 6.*

**COPING**, from page 1

are surviving the recession fairly well, although there are a few things we are doing -- not only because of the economy, but because of changing habits of student news consumers:

1. We are publishing fewer print editions of our student newspaper, The Clause, and are putting more effort into the digital edition. I would think a lot of campuses are doing that.

2. We are not enlarging the size of our classes, but we are being more selective about the frequency with which we offer our "boutique" reporting courses such as entertainment reporting and international reporting. What might have been offered once a year may now be offered once every three semesters.

3. During the summer terms, we are usually offering only intro courses plus our internship course and occasionally a senior capstone course for seniors who got caught in a pinch in the spring term and need that to graduate by August.

4. The university does have a hiring pause in place, but there are appeals to that, and we have been successful in making such appeals.

**John B. (Jack) Zibluk, Arkansas State University:** For once, Arkansas is in a better position than most places; we were already poor, so there wasn't much to lose. The recession has not hit as hard here as elsewhere. State revenues are a little short, but we're stable. We have cut back on some supplies, etc., and we do a very close administrative review before any job openings are posted, but there

are no cutbacks or freezes expected, according to our chancellor, who spoke at Faculty Senate..

We have made some institutional changes to buffer us financially. First and foremost, we are doing a lot of international recruiting, and that has resulted in an influx of nearly 700 new international students, about 7 percent of our student population. That number is expected to grow. They pay full-price on tuition and fees, plus a deposit.

In journalism, that means many more students in our graduate program, and that takes time and attention from

***"In my advanced magazine class, we produced our entire debut issue in Spring 2009 online, rather than paying the high costs of printing."***

**-- Teresa Housel, Hope College**

our more professionally oriented undergrads.

We have also begun a partnership with a private company, Higher Education Holdings, to "deliver" education degree programs. Many faculty are uncomfortable with the privatization of our degrees, but the administration loves the new revenue stream.

I have also noticed beyond my university that many programs have hired professionals, former high-profile editors and reporters etc., who have taken full-time and part-time jobs as teachers and student-media advisers.

The availability of experienced journalists who may not have taken

the pay cut before to take teaching jobs may change the demographics of journalism education nationwide.

**Michael Longinow, Biola University:** The only big hurt we've felt is in our adjunct budget this fall and spring. Typically, we let adjuncts cover about a third of our courses across the curriculum (and keep in mind we only have about 140 majors). But we were told that all across the university, departments had to make cuts in the tens of thousands of dollars. Our dean (who loves Journalism, as former full-time faculty member in Journalism) gave us the bad news. So we cut. And that meant putting a big hurt on seniors trying to graduate, and freshmen who were trying to figure out if they were in the right major.

I think we got it straightened out, but we felt the pinch. The publications have had to cut back on their lavish banquets

and retreats, but that's probably okay for a while. It gets them ready for the marketplace, I guess.

**Teresa Housel, Hope College:** We have a small number of journalism classes offered within the Communication Dept. at Hope College in Michigan. I do an introduction to news and features writing, and an advanced magazine class. We have a separate adviser for the student newspaper. To deal with rising costs and the recession, I have tried to produce quality student work while still being economical in my journalism classes. For example, in my advanced magazine class, we

See **COPING**, page 4

## SPIG profile: Susan Lewis

### *ACU teacher published on convergence in student media*

*This is a Q&A profile of a Small Programs Interest Group leader. If you would like to nominate someone for the next edition, send a note to the editor, Dr. Richard Hendrickson, at [newsprof@mac.com](mailto:newsprof@mac.com).*

***What is your current primary job title and employer, and what subjects do you teach?***

I'm an assistant professor of journalism and mass communication at Abilene Christian University. I teach Writing for Electronic Delivery, Electronic Publishing, Electronic Media Principles and an interdisciplinary course in the Honors College called Virtual Ethnography.

***Tell me an interesting fact about you.***

I learned to ride a bike when I was 39 years old (last year). I promptly used that skill taking bike tours of three European cities with my students during a Study Abroad experience.

***What was your first job?***

My first media-related job was as a disc jockey at country radio station KPLE in my hometown of Temple, Texas, and I worked clothing retail and was a grocery cashier. Back then (1990) the weekly Top 40 was shipped to the station on LP records and all our music and ads were recorded on carts.

***Tell me about your education.***

BS in Corporate Video, Abilene Christian University

MA in Mass Communication, Abilene Christian University



**LEWIS**

Ed.D. in Educational Technology, Pepperdine University

***What was your dissertation topic and what is your current research focus?***

My dissertation was a study of the effects of cross-ownership of television stations and newspapers in a single local market. It is suddenly relevant again as the FCC continues to consider media ownership rules. Now, most of my recognized research is on converged journalism higher education (published in the *International Journal of Learning*); and grief and the social media, which I have presented widely.

***What do you like about your job and your workplace?***

I love that I get to think hard about things that matter. The electronic media are powerful forces in our culture, and I like helping students

get a sense of that power and the responsibility that comes with it. The freedom to explore topics that interest me as a scholar and share that exploration with students is valuable, too. I also appreciate that my university is committed to advancement of technology and support of scholarship, and I'm glad that I have plenty of opportunities for interdisciplinary endeavors with my colleagues in other academic departments.

***Tell me something about your personal life.***

My husband Michael and I have been married for almost 16 years. We have two sons, Barrett (14) and Ethan (10).

***What other significant achievements have you had?***

This week I received notice that I have been granted tenure and promoted to associate professor effective Fall 2010. I was named SPIG Teacher of the Year in 2008. I've been published in national publications and international journals for my work on convergence in a student media environment and teaching ethics and history. Most of my scholarly presentations are focused on my studies of grief in the public sphere of social media.

***What are your personal or professional goals now?***

Among the other aspects of my work in JMC@ACU, I am currently working on a project with a team of professors and students to create the first university news product

See **PROFILE**, page 6

## SPIG officers -- 2009-2010

Head – **Vivian Martin**

Co-Vice Heads  
**Susan Lewis**  
**Ginger Carter Miller**

Research Chairs  
**John Jenks**  
**Teresa Heinz Housel**

PF&R (professional  
freedom and responsibility)  
Chairs  
**Dave Weinstock**  
**Mike Longinow**

Teaching Chairs  
**Jim Willis**  
**Pam Parry**

Newsletter editor  
**Dick Hendrickson**

WebMaster  
**Mitzi Lewis**

Secretary  
**Pam Parry**

Membership  
**Ann Colbert**

Hot Topics  
**Kim Landon**  
**Terry Dalton**  
**David Blow**

Liason to Commission on  
the Status of Minorities  
**Jim Simon**

Liason to Commission on  
the Status of Women  
**Ann Colbert**

**COPING**, from page 2

produced our entire debut issue in Spring 2009 online, rather than paying the high costs of printing. To print small quantities, I am investigating cheaper options such as MagCloud.

**John McClelland, Roosevelt University:** Our condition now is mixed, but not nearly so bad as it could be, and good in some ways. Disclaimer: I am semi-retired and out of the decision loop, so I may be unaware of a pending ax.

The trend to fewer and larger sections was already under way when the economy soured. It has accelerated, but not drastically. Our lab sections, limited to 12 or 16 seats, always fill up -- but sooner now, and we more rarely open new ones.

The full-time faculty decided to stop offering the full J-program in the suburbs. Some courses shared with other communication majors (ad, PR, marketing comm) are still there, but the future journalists must do some key courses in the City Center. That decision, a reversion to pre-1997 practice, was probably coming anyway because of persistently thin enrollment and risk of shallow field-reporting content, but fall 2008 numbers precipitated it.

We adjuncts (the fate of a retiree who wants to continue teaching) see fewer open sections to bid for, and I no longer get begged to take on an uncovered section outside my specialty.

Demand remains high, partly because of overall growth in the urban campus setting under an aggressive administration that's been in place just under a decade.

Our historic student base, working adults who attend part-time, is financially stressed but carries on unless a job vanishes. The growing base of traditional-age, full-time students is more frantic than ever about financial aid and job prospects.

The round of canceled sections after

November's fall advance registration for spring was not much larger than usual (about six), but we had a rare loss of a partly filled section of a required course.

**Cheryl Bacon, Abilene Christian:** We have seen a slight enrollment slide, but nothing too frightening. Campus-wide we had been required to cut back on adjuncts, so I did reduce the number of sections of announcing and cut back our entry level media course by one section.

The Ad/PR major is still booming, and we're seeing more and more students interested in film and entertainment, which I don't see as a good thing, but it does help keep the numbers up.

Over the course of the fall semester, I was pleased by how many prospective students were still interested in journalism.

The university is in the process of implementing a new core and so as new degree plans were submitted to incorporate that, we took advantage of the opportunity to further converge our three degrees, eliminating tracks and giving students greater flexibility in their upper division course menus. Again, this is a good thing.

My standard line to parents of prospective students for the past year has been that while it's a lousy time to be 40 and a journalist, I think it's a great time to be 20, because the 20-year-old will be flexible, prepared for the converged environment and young enough to ride out the current storm until media has once again reinvented itself.

**Donald Alpert Bird, Long Island University:** We are a private university with about 80 majors. This is a fairly stable number. We have three full-time faculty and a George Polk Journalist-in-Residence. (We confer the George Polk Award for Investigative Journalism.) We have experienced some cut in travel allowances and a freeze in

See **COPING**, page 5

**COPING**, from page 4

hiring. A component of the university's speech program will be joining us, but this is welcomed by nearly all. So, I guess we have not suffered to the degree of others. We keep our fingers crossed!

**Mary Carmen Cupito, Northern Kentucky:** The issues in our program are multifarious, and not only related to the economy. We have seen a precipitous drop in journalism majors, from about 190 eight years ago to about 85 today. This has meant that if we offer multiple electives, several won't fill. So we focus on teaching the core and offering an elective per semester.

We also were under a new interpretation of accreditation standards, and we have let go professionals who had taught as adjuncts, meaning the regular faculty teach their courses.

The trend toward increasing class size started before the downturn in the economy. While our lab courses are capped at 20, the number of computers in the room, other courses can reach 60 or more students.

Faculty in our department (of which journalism is the smallest part) has just been told to teach four courses instead of three per semester to try to make up a budgetary deficit.

Finally, we have been discussing how to change our curriculum to incorporate more video, audio and Web skills while not diminishing the attention to reporting and writing. If we ask students to take more video/audio/web courses, that means they'll take fewer journalism courses.

It's been a tough time. But I tell students the same thing as Cheryl Bacon. It's not a good time to be an experienced professional journalist, but it is a tremendously exciting time to be a rookie.

**Brian Steffen, Simpson:** Simpson has held its own in terms of enrollment — we have had record retention (which surprised us) and a freshman class that made our targets. But we did it at a cost. Our discount rate went

the tuition we charge. And the state of Iowa is signaling that it's going to further cut or even eliminate subsidies for students who attend private college.

My sense is that not all of the colleges in Iowa are going to be around in another 10 years. But I do think we're as well positioned to survive into the future.

In terms of our program, our administration's commitment is still strong: Our president and academic dean have been big supporters, as they're the first leaders to realize that the college must invest in programs that show good prospects of recruiting students. Our multimedia journalism major isn't attracting the numbers of students we'd hoped (I wonder why...), but our integrated marketing communication major is doing big

***“Our multimedia journalism major isn't attracting the numbers of students we'd hoped, but our integrated marketing communication major is doing big business.”***  
**-- Brian Steffen, Simpson**

up to 57 percent this year, alarming in my book. I'm told that's what it took to get a class at a small private that traditionally draws students from middle-class families. We need to figure out a way to start recruiting from the ranks of investment-banker-Dad and brain-surgeon-Mom families. But, as I'm sure you're all aware, that's tough to do, especially for a school in rural Iowa.

We had no raises this year as a result, but no staff cuts or budget cuts either. Our application pool is rising for 2010, and I'm told that the discount rate will slowly be eased back to where it was formerly. But I have to be honest: For small privates such as ours, I think the events of the past couple of years are going to be a game-changer. It's going to be very hard to make the case for

business.

I'm still planning to make proposals to further invest in digital video gear and computer technologies. I think those will get sympathetic hearings.

**Zibluk:** I was intrigued by Brian's comment:

*“Our multimedia journalism major isn't attracting the numbers of students we'd hoped (I wonder why...), but our integrated marketing communication major is doing big business.”*

In multi-media, advertising and PR, we're seeing a lot of diffusion of potential majors. At Arkansas State, the fine arts people have launched a digital media and design program, which attracts a lot of photo students, design students and others who might

See **COPING**, page 10

## Special call: Apply by Feb. 15 to join a panel presenting Best Practices in Convergent Journalism and Mass Communication for Small Programs

Small programs face special challenges and opportunities in the ongoing drive for integrated multi-media education. Building on the Small Programs Interest Group's (SPIG) pre-conference workshop on convergence at the AEJMC Boston convention, invited presenters at this pre-conference showcase in Denver 2010 will demonstrate and explain successful convergent teaching methodologies used in journalism, advertising, public relations, photojournalism, TV or radio broadcast classes.

**WHO:** Small programs faculty — defined as SPIG members and faculty teaching two and four-year schools with up to 10,000 students

**WHAT:** Presenters will focus on how they teach converged media practices and how they guide their students to success in learning those lessons. Presentations will focus on hardware and software but also teaching methods such as practical in- or out-of-class projects and exercises. Presenters will create “how to” seminars (“do this”, “don’t do that”) and will be encouraged to provide the audience with take-home materials, such as CDs with syllabi, handouts and the steps used to guide student work — along with samples of outstanding student work.

### HOW TO APPLY:

1. Submit an abstract of your best practices in teaching convergent or multi-platform journalism, advertising or public relations (e.g. print and visual, video and PR/advertising, visual and audio). The work should draw on your own professional practice/preparation; the abstract must refer to tangible, professional-level outcomes in the work of students in your classes (400-500 words).
2. Submit syllabi from courses where you've guided students' learning in convergent or multi-platform media.
3. Submit a cover letter requesting consideration for this pre-conference session (acknowledging your ability to participate given its timing in the convention week), and describing how convergent or multi-platform media has been part of your professional development as an educator.
4. Submit URLs for student media in the journalism, broadcast, photojournalism categories; online content from campaigns produced by a student PR agency (or from a PR campaigns class); or online content from a AAF national student campaign contest (or from a advertising campaigns class).

Please note classroom work will *only* be accepted if the applicant's school has no student agency or does not participate in the national competition. No classroom work may be submitted that was not produced for a live client (on- or off-campus).

5. Submit to David Weinstock by Feb. 15, 2010. [Bounder10@comcast.net](mailto:Bounder10@comcast.net)

### PROFILE, from page 3

that is optimized for use on Apple's new iPad device. ([http://acu.edu/news/2010/ACU\\_announces\\_new\\_mo.html](http://acu.edu/news/2010/ACU_announces_new_mo.html)) I love engaging undergraduate students in helping to shape the future of media by working with brand new technologies.

#### *What leadership roles have you*

#### *had in the AEJMC and the Small Programs Interest Group?*

I was webmaster from 2005-2009. This year I'm co-vice-head.

#### *What goals do you have for SPIG?*

Beyond increasing the membership, one of my goals for SPIG is to understand our

membership and their professional goals. I want to continue to seek to serve them through programming at the yearly convention and other communications throughout the year.

#### *If you had to describe yourself, what words would you use?*

Curious, optimistic, overcommitted

# Should we still show ‘All the President’s Men?’

**Q. Do you have suggestions for an “interviewing film fest?”**

**Cheryl M. Bacon, Abilene Christian (TX),** said she was planning an “Interviewing Film Fest” for an entry level media writing class. “We’re going to watch *All the President’s Men*, and (I think) *Frost/Nixon*. I’m not sure yet about the how, whether to split them up over several class periods, have a mandatory (if you aren’t working or in another class) evening showing, or just tell them to watch it. I have some reading assignments planned to accompany it, from the text and online, and a writing assignment to wrap it up. Has anyone else ever done this? How did it work? □

**Jerry Zurek, Cabrini (PA):** We ask our freshman students to watch *All the President’s Men* outside of class. Here’s our assignment:

[http://www.cabrini.edu/communications/MassCom/all\\_pres\\_men-studyguide.htm](http://www.cabrini.edu/communications/MassCom/all_pres_men-studyguide.htm)

**John B. (Jack) Zibluk, Arkansas State (AR):** I hate to be a pill, but I wonder if glorifying the bygone days of newspaper yore is something our students would respond to. I worry that *All the President’s Men* may make us look out of touch. If we could find an angle on *The Matrix* my students would respond, but I worry that *All the President’s Men* might backfire. I like the movie idea; I just think we all need to find an angle that speaks to our students’ time and experience.

## SPIG Q&A

**Bacon:** A very valid question. In this case, I’m specifically interested in using it for an Interviewing unit. I can’t think of many films of equal quality that have as many interviews, some well done, some badly done, illustrating all kinds of points. The

**“I worry that ‘All the President’s Men’ may make us look out of touch.”**

**-- Jack Zibluk, Arkansas State**

idea of following it with *Frost/Nixon* would be to provide the historical endnote, and to contrast the extended broadcast interview. I’m open to other suggestions. And either way, I’ll let folks know how it turns out. Who has used *Frost/Nixon*?

**Feron Scott, Fort Lewis (CO):** We use *All the President’s Men* in both the major’s Law and Ethics and the gen ed Media Ethics courses, both upper division. We usually divide it up over two class periods. We focus on the reporters’ and editors’ practice re: backgrounding, accuracy, interviewing practice and ethical decision-making against the clock.

Students in both classes find it intriguing in a “fighting The Man” kind of way and come away with a greater respect for journalism, they say. They also have seen parallels between what’s ancient history to them and the last couple of elections,

which they cared deeply about.

I like using the film because it adds a little texture to that wall of “history” of theirs, read: “everything that happened before I was born, which I mash into that thing called ‘the past.’” Illustration from essay exam last term: the answer began, “back in the olden days, when our grandparents listened to the radio by candlelight...”

Gotta love them.

**Donna Bertazonni, Hood (MD):** I assign *All the President’s Men* for students to read in Media History and then they have to write a book report. They’re fascinated by the book. They know something

called “Watergate” happened, but they don’t at all know the details. They can’t believe Nixon was so corrupt and that he was exposed by reporters, of all people. They frequently refer to the book as a novel. It’s quite educational. I’ve never actually asked them to watch the movie, although I know it’s been viewed by some students in the introductory news writing class.

**Donna Harrington-Lueker, Salve Regina (RI):** I’ve had good luck with *All the President’s Men* (even among those with the least interest in news/journalism). I haven’t watched it in a bit, but would *Veronica Guerin* work with interviewing techniques? I’ve had a good response to that one as well but mostly for questions like “what makes this reporter good at her job?”

**Pam Parry, Belmont (TN):** I think it is a valid question as well, but I will add that I have shown it in reporting  
See **FILM FEST**, page 12

## GIFT 2010: Celebrating 10 Years of Terrific Teaching Tips

### *Call for Great Ideas For Teachers*

The Community College Journalism Association (CCJA), Small Programs Interest Group (SPIG), the Scholastic Journalism Division and the Graduate Education Interest Group of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) are seeking Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT) for a mega-poster session at the AEJMC convention on Wednesday, Aug. 5, at 3:15 p.m. in Denver, Colorado, to showcase 25 of the year's most innovative teaching tips from the world's best journalism and mass communication educators--just in time for the new academic year!

All AEJMC members are eligible to submit one (1) GIFT for blind peer review; graduate teaching assistants are also encouraged to participate in this opportunity to share their innovative teaching tips. GIFT finalists/scholars will be selected for inclusion in the poster session, an online GIFT publication, the AEJMC program listing and GIFT scholar Web page index.

Moreover, finalists/scholars are eligible to win a \$100 grand prize and commemorative plaque to be awarded at the convention. All receive a souvenir certificate for their teaching portfolios as well.

Teaching tips wanted include but are not limited to the following courses: advertising, broadcast journalism, general or introductory mass communications, ethics, history, international/multicultural communication, law, public relations, research, technology and new media, visual

### **Special SPIG call for Denver: Social justice journalism in the classroom**

We teach techniques and technology, law and theory, but how should we handle questions of social justice?

Advocacy for the poor and powerless is nothing new to journalism. Muckrakers and crusaders through the decades have lived by the motto: "afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted." Many of us teach students about America's strong tradition of the alternative press that still thrives today. Additionally, many colleges and universities have social justice as part of their mission.

But what should this mean to journalism educators? How does a commitment to social justice square with journalists' ideals of fairness, accuracy, impartiality and truth? Here's a chance to explore. SPIG invites critical essays, qualitative papers, and quantitative research on

communication and writing.

Those who are interested in sharing their GIFT must describe their teaching idea in proper format and submit it via e-mail (preferred) to the GIFT coordinator at [john.kerezy@tri-c.edu](mailto:john.kerezy@tri-c.edu). All entries must be received (not postmarked) by April 1, 2010 and will be reviewed by a panel of eight judges based on originality, creativity, practicality, adaptability and impact. Submissions will be acknowledged but not returned.

\*NOTE: GIFT finalists only will be notified of their status after May 15.

#### **TIMELINE**

**Feb. 1** -- Call for GIFTs issued; begin accepting GIFT 2010 submissions

**April 1** -- Deadline for GIFT submissions

**April** -- Judging of GIFT submissions; top 25 papers chosen

**After May 15** -- Notification sent to 25 GIFT finalists/scholars only

**May 15** -- List of GIFTs due to AEJMC for program copy

**June** -- Ranking of top GIFTs; grand prize winner chosen

**July** -- Production of GIFTs for publication

**Aug. 4** -- GIFT poster session at the AEJMC convention; winner honored

**September** -- Highlights/photos of posters and winning GIFT go on Web site

the issues and questions involved in pursuing justice through the journalism classroom.

We already have a slot reserved for this research panel during the Denver convention – 5 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 5. This is in addition to our regular research showcase at the scholar-to-scholar session.

*Submit your papers through the standard All Academic on-line process by April 1. (Details available at: [http://aejmc.org/\\_10call.php](http://aejmc.org/_10call.php)) Make sure you use the phrase "social justice" somewhere in the title.*

If you have any questions, please contact the SPIG research co-chairs: John Jenks ([jjenks@dom.edu](mailto:jjenks@dom.edu)) and Teresa Housel ([housel@hope.edu](mailto:housel@hope.edu)).



**HEAD NOTES**, from page 1

newspaper, teaching old-school journalism ethics to the millennial generation, and, most recently, using Twitter in reporting classes. All these topics are befitting our status as a group of journalism educators. But as I've worked on program and other SPIG projects, I've had cause to ask whether thinking of SPIG as journalism educators in small programs skews our programming and general discourse at the expense of members who work in public relations, advertising, or broadcasting.

Truth be told, if someone had posed this matter to me five years ago I would have shrugged and pointed out that since my teaching area is journalism, that's what I wanted to hear about. Yet in my role as SPIG Head I have had to think a little more about how the various parts work together. People whose primary teaching responsibility is journalism may comprise the largest bloc in SPIG — 66 percent of respondents to our survey of members in 2008 identified themselves this way — but conversations with other officers have made me aware that there's a chunk of public relations and mass communication professors in our group who feel their interests are sometimes marginalized and ignored.

For them it's not just a matter of speaking out more about their interests in public relations education;

some have done so and felt the chill. Certainly, it is nothing overt — three of the last four Teacher of the Year winners have come from fields other than journalism — but with two vice heads from public relations and promotions and other officers who have lobbied to ensure that our Best Practices competition consciously include public relations and advertising, I did become more aware of blind spots I might have had. My support for panels such as one on public relations in small programs ensures we will give explicit space

*“With the reconfiguration of journalism jobs, even more journalism students will end up in public relations jobs.”*

to the other disciplines within SPIG, alongside journalism mainstays like *Hot Topics*.

SPIG, of course, has always embraced other allied mass communication fields — our co-sponsorship of GIFT, which presents teaching tips from throughout mass communication, is a huge example — but I'd like the membership to talk about the matter a little more openly so we can make sure we're hearing everyone, and help officers know if these issues I've laid out are even a concern. Is there a need to seek an explicit balance in our programming? Should we strive for an executive board on which there is at least

one person from public relations/advertising and one from journalism? Do these things eventually even out?

During my two years as vice head I served alongside other journalists and it's true that we spoke a common language. I recall some conversation over whether public relations work should be excluded from the Scholarship of Application contest, because of some discomfort with the goals of public relations in relation to journalism. We did not exclude it.

The times we are in make these issues worth reflecting on even if there aren't equity problems within SPIG. As those of us who run journalism programs seek to converge our curriculum we'll find ourselves having to work more with colleagues in

allied disciplines if we're to make the best use of resources. For example, while it is true that journalism programs have always turned out a good number of public relations professionals, my colleagues and I have tended to look the other way. The public relations students have been there, but it wasn't something we talked a lot about, partly because, until recently, my journalism program was a minor and the public relations students were over in the Communication Department but came to the English Department for the journalism minor.

With the reconfiguration of  
See **HEAD NOTES**, page 16

**COPING**, from page 5

have come our way in the past. And the business college is jumping on social media, and that's drawing many of our traditional advertising and PR majors into their marketing major.

Our/my photojournalism program has been stable numbers-wise, but our overall undergrad journalism numbers are declining. That's largely offset by growth in grad school from former journalism majors who can't find jobs, and by our institution's commitment to bringing in international students.

I do a lot of high school recruiting, and some of our traditional students are skittish about the media job market. I tell them we provide a good skill set that they can take in any direction.

So we're seeing a shift in our demographics and we're responding by re-allocating resources and teaching hours to grad classes, and the radio-tv department is bringing in more adjuncts from professional media ranks.

I think we're all seeing some tectonic shifts... I wonder if SPIG is a canary in the AEJMC coal mine.

**Steffen:** And let's be clear about something I left off our last post: Interest in our minors is pretty good. (My last newswriting class had 2-3 majors and 9-10 minors.)

Maybe it's just the nature of the faculty at my college, but there really aren't any other programs of study at our school that are involving multimedia or digital technology in any meaningful way.

**Vivian Martin, Central Connecticut:** It's a mixed bag

here, though I don't have major complaints.

We launched a new journalism major this fall but have to work around a hiring freeze. So, while we have authorization for a third full-time journalism person, we had to fill the position with a temporary person, and I'll have to put someone in that position in fall 2010 when the current occupant's contract runs out. (The union restricts how long an appointee can stay in the position.) Due to

***“We’re getting superb adjuncts, veterans who sadly have been laid off and who are happy to make a buck...”***

**--Ron Hollander, Montclair State**

Connecticut's budget crisis, faculty accepted a three-day furlough for spring 2009, and there are six days in academic year 2009-10. Things like travel, magazine subscriptions, and the library budget have been cut to. Our move to a new department has been delayed.

As of Nov. 30 we have about 30 declared majors (and about 50 minors—we've had the minor since 1984). The official number of prospective majors is an undercount because freshmen generally have not declared because the journalism major was not featured at summer orientation. None of the students could declare until this fall due to various bureaucratic layers.

But there is good news. Our little program has something that not even all the big dogs have, an endowed chair. A foundation created by the estate of

a former newspaper publisher (long since deceased) gave us \$1.4 million in 2000, which the state matched fully (definitely in better times). It takes time for the money to grow. We have tapped it here and there for mini-conferences and speakers, and we're using funds from it to pay half the costs for the 10 students in my spring break study trip to London, but for the most part we left the money alone. The stock market dive decreased the pot, but we can start hiring a visiting prof/journalist-in-residence for fall 2010.

The foundation that oversees the gift would like us to lure real big journalism names (they always mention Bob Woodward, who has been here for a dinner and lecture through another program the school runs). We have managed to lower their

ambitions a bit and help them see that Bob Woodward isn't going to teach a 15-week course and do some of the other activities we'd expect from the endowed chair.

But we're not going to have to settle. We're talking with a high-profile public radio journalist who would help us integrate audio storytelling in the curriculum and put on some events that will put the spotlight on journalism and democracy issues. He'd keep his day job, but he'd teach a regular course and maybe even broadcast some of his show from campus. I just came from a great meeting with this pro and really hope this works.

So, it's a mix here. There are cutbacks, and we had a slower start than we'd hoped, but there is a commitment to a vibrant journalism community.

See **COPING** page 16

## Ideas that work for teaching Intro to Mass Comm

### *Q. How do you teach intro to mass comm?*

**Donna Harrington-Lueker, Salve Regina (RI)**, asks: How do you handle the monstrous intro to mass comm class? I've already made peace with the idea that less is more, and don't even try to cover all the chapters in the Campbell text I use ("Media and Culture"). Trying to balance historical background (which they won't get anywhere else in the curriculum) with critical thinking skills (the term I prefer to "media literacy") is proving difficult, though. Oh, yes -- since it's one of two intro courses for majors, it needs to have a significant writing component (research paper right now).

"I'm interested in decisions people have made in similar courses. I taught it this fall for the first time in a couple of years. (This is a course that will rotate among three faculty members.) And while students enjoyed it, and I had a grand time as well, the final exam made it clear that "independent critical thinking" needed some work. The research paper -- written in stages with feedback along the way -- went well but was quite time-consuming (on my part and on theirs).

"Suggestions? I want to add readings beyond the text--and I want to keep the writing component. But I don't want the course overloaded."

**Pam Parry, Belmont:** I teach multiple sections of this course every semester, so I've tinkered with how to handle these issues. Some things have worked

### SPIG Q&A

and some have not. For what it is worth, here are a couple of things I do:

Instead of a significant research paper, I require three one-page thought pieces throughout the semester from each student. This approach makes them value the words they use rather than spouting on and on, and I am able to turn those one-page papers around much quicker than a substantial research paper. They also require critical thinking skills because they must make an argument in three paragraphs. They also have to write on three different

***"Start with some theory, build in how the media actually works (and has worked -- the history component), move on naturally to media effects, build in a research project like content analysis and save time for criticism."***

**-- John Lofflin, Point Park**

topics. It means you will grade three different times per class, but I have found it freeing for me and beneficial to them. I still grade these as hard as a formal paper.

I also provide them a democratic component to the class. For any exam, except the final, they may opt to write a five-page research paper in lieu of the exam. They may exercise this option only once and they must notify me one

week in advance. The paper must cover the course content of the exam. For example, if the exam is over the print media, the research paper must be on the print media. They love this because it gives them a sense of control. Only a handful of students usually opt for the paper, but if they choose it, they are writing more. Because it is not the whole class, you are not grading a ton of them.

I must confess I instituted this democratic component because one common complaint on my course evaluations was that I gave three exams and only one writing assignment (three thought pieces were combined for one grade). They said they wanted to write more, and I did not really believe them. I suspected, if given the chance to do so, they would not opt for more writing. By giving them the option to write more, the complaint stopped completely on my evaluations, and very few of them exercised this option, so I was not inundated with more grading. Plus, I like the idea of giving students some flexibility. So,

this has been a win-win.

**John Lofflin, Point Park:** When I joined the faculty here, I was THE journalism person and had a good deal of freedom, so I just moved the course up to the 300 level where I could teach it properly as a media criticism course with an odd historical component (James David Barber's "Pulse of Politics"). Start with some theory, build

See **MASS COM**, page 14

**FILM FEST**, from page 6

classes for interview techniques and it was a hit with my students. I do not have creative suggestions. I simply showed it and we discussed it, but it was something that resonated with them.

**John Lofflin, Park (PA):** Does contemporary journalism need the interviewing skills of Woodward and Bernstein? Do readers need the sort of information and follow up they demonstrated?

**Mary Cupito, Northern Kentucky (KY):** I think students respond to a good story, no matter how old. And *All the President's Men* tells a good story. One other thought: I have also showed episodes of *Dirty Jobs* in newswriting classes. The host is not a journalist, but in some of these

shows, he does a wonderful job of interviewing. Plus, the episodes are short and freely available on YouTube.

**MaryAlice Basconi, East Tennessee State (TN):** I have used *The Paper*, about student journalists at Penn State. They are quite intense, though, and some students don't relate. But, good examples of what it could be if they wanted to invest the effort now. In a beginner class it can raise false hopes. In an advanced class, I asked them to write on similarities/differences with what student journalism is like here. I received several good essays.

**Jean Ann Colbert, Indiana University:** I have used *All the President's Men* but the topic of the investigation and story are so out of reach for most of our students that

I have quit using it as an example to emulate. Instead, I use it for background about the importance of reporting. One that is good for introducing aspects and techniques for interviewing is *Absence of Malice* with Paul Newman and Sally Field. It provokes all kind of thinking about reporting and responsibility, as well as ways to conduct an interview, of course. I have also used the *Veronica Guerin* movie: It also provokes all kinds of useful and instructive discussion.

Other great (and shorter) sources are 60-Minutes segments, Bill Moyer interviews and some of the *Frontline* pieces. A great exercise is to ask print students to discuss how these television shows would differ if written up in print publications.

## Teacher of the Year applications due March 15

SPIG's Teacher of the Year honors a member of SPIG who demonstrates excellence in teaching and advising. Those interested can be nominated or can apply. Only members of SPIG are eligible, but the current SPIG chair, vice chair and past winners are not eligible.

Electronic submissions are encouraged.

By March 15, apply for SPIG's Teacher of the Year in three easy steps:

1. Supply ONE letter of recommendation from a former student with the names, email addresses and phone numbers of two other possible former student referees.

2. Supply ONE letter of recommendation from a colleague or former colleague, with the names, email addresses and phone numbers of two other possible referees.

3. Supply evidence of teaching and advising excellence. You MUST include:

-- A 500-WORD statement of your teaching

philosophy

-- Two course syllabi

-- Two examples of an assignment, project, test, exercise, etc.

-- Two formal teaching evaluations by students as professionally administered by applicant's institution under conditions of student anonymity, and

-- A Curriculum Vitae (no more than eight pages).

These nomination packets must be received by the SPIG Teaching Co-Chair by March 15. Email materials to: Ms. Pam Parry, [pam.parry@belmont.edu](mailto:pam.parry@belmont.edu), Media Studies Department, Belmont University, 1900 Belmont Blvd., Nashville, TN 37212, 615-566-9918 (cell), 615-460-6198 (office).

### A new home for SPIG on the web

The SPIG website has now moved to:

<http://finearts.mwsu.edu/masscomm/spig/>

## Biola students will spend week in Dominican Republic

This spring, Biola University will be taking students to the Dominican Republic for a week of visual storytelling in one of the worst areas of gang violence in Santo Domingo. The project aims to bring a rough parallel to the well known, albeit controversial, *Born Into Brothels* project. Biola students will be part of a pre-trip workshop course in which they will learn principles of tutoring and mentoring in visual storytelling (including practice sessions with bilingual children and youth in disadvantaged sections of greater Los Angeles).

Students will use their Spring Break to travel to and live in Santo Domingo guided by a non-profit group that works with children and families in the Dominican Republic and Mexico. Upon returning, their work will be edited and finalized as projects for which they will earn a grade. The best of the class members' work will be displayed as Web content or in gallery displays in greater Los Angeles or in the Arts community of Santo Domingo.

The Biola Department of Journalism will be pioneering partnership with two universities in Santo Domingo

and is seeking corporate sponsorship for some expenses of the project.

The course aims at three learning outcomes:

— greater awareness of the ethics involved with visual storytelling that retains the dignity of subjects in cross-cultural settings where the primary

***“The best of the class members’ work will be displayed as Web content or in gallery displays in greater Los Angeles or in the Arts community of Santo Domingo.”***

language is not English and where American culture is not the norm.

— greater awareness of the power of the visual image as a cross-cultural storytelling device where age as well as cultural and language barriers are a significant barrier.

— greater understanding of the ways that teaching by use of digital visual imaging can be an effective means of children's self-empowerment as owners of their own stories in a culture where their typical educational systems would not include use of visuals to help them know themselves and their world(s).

The trip will involve a contest in Santo

Domingo through which local children involved with the project will compete for top prizes for visual storytelling (though all those participating will be celebrated in their work.)

Learning in the course will be measured by pre-trip exercises in tutoring, final student portfolios of visual storytelling (still images and video); final portfolios of Dominican children's visual storytelling; depth of analytical journals and blog entries, and final presentations in which students in the course

describe how they wrestled with learning objectives of the course.

This course builds on an earlier course through the Biola Department of Journalism (2007) in which visual journalism students traveled to north central Mexico and used visuals to tell the many sides of how an orphanage in an under-served area of the country does its work with children.

*For more information, contact Michael A. Longinow, Ph.D, Professor of Journalism, Chair, Department of Journalism, Perez Hall, Biola University, 13800 Biola Avenue, La Mirada, CA 90639.*

## How you can help SPIG gain new members

“Each one bring one” has been a useful way to help build

SPIG's membership at the conventions and we can do more this summer. But we can also use a similar approach to encourage colleagues who don't attend the conventions to become members

anyway. The focus on teaching and the active listserv are two important benefits. And for those who are unable to attend the conventions, the listserv and home page help solidify professional development relationships.

Membership chair Ann Colbert is

looking for suggestions for other ways we can attract new members. As for retention, we've seen that once someone begins a membership, they find our resources helpful and usually stay. Contact her at [colbert@ipfw.edu](mailto:colbert@ipfw.edu).

**MASS COMM**, from page 11

in how the media actually works (and has worked -- the history component), move on naturally to media effects, build in a research project like content analysis and save time for criticism. Problem solved.

When I came here, after four years teaching the “intro to” course at a different university, I could see little value in tracking through yet another one of those enormous textbooks / coloring books with all the graphics and photographs. I couldn’t understand why I would assign a chapter on the life of a record producer, let alone lead a discussion of it, and the students were equally disinterested. (Oh, the evaluations were fine, but you all know what it feels like in a classroom where the engagement is with you, not the material...) So, I took the easy way out and simply moved the course up where I still think it belongs.

Later we introduced a 100-level course we called Introduction to Electronic Communication and the person who taught it tracked students through the various electronic components in the field with hands-on experiences in each. This seemed to provide the survey background they needed. For 20 years this system seemed to work fine.

However, pressure from above and within (not, notably, from students, their evaluations, or their capstone portfolios) will revive this ornery course next fall. So, I too am looking for ideas about how to make this course meaningful and will be watching the discussion here closely for clues. Lately I’ve been trying to ground all my courses in questions. So, I’m wondering from those who teach this course today what the BIG questions are of it. Please share.

If I were teaching this course I’d

be tempted to start by simply asking students the first week what they wanted to know about the media, what questions they have, then craft the course from those questions to allow them to find answers. Might be tricky... but fun.

I’m also wondering what the three or four defining areas are that this course needs to explore.

Good luck, by the way, taming the workload. Alas, I fear no solutions exist for that.

**Harrington-Leucker:** John Lofflin’s comment about incorporating “big questions” is something I’ve been thinking about. More thoughts on what those big ideas would be? Ours is a 200-level course, so if there’s a bit of a survey quality to the “big” stuff, I wouldn’t be unhappy. Media consolidation would have to be one of them, but I found, with the text that I used, everything seemed to find its way back to “media consolidation,” which even I got a bit bored with.

Censorship? Agenda-setting/Gate-keeping? Global flow of media?

**John McClelland, Roosevelt:** Our 3-semester-hour course has always been 200-level, open to freshmen but with a firm prereq for everyone of grades and assessment scores of C or better in both freshman composition courses.

Adapting from a traditional journalism intro course to a broad media survey was rocky the first year (which also was the first year of Campbell’s “Media and Culture”). Then it got good. I have not taught it in four years.

We previously had assigned a two-page essay almost every week, manageable with enrollment capped at 20 in a section. With more reading and larger sections from a broader student base (journalism, PR, advertising, more

non-majors...), we had to reduce it. We still return graded work in a week.

We kept a frequent writing concept. Last time, I had five assignments, generally 300 words plus source notes, plus a short term paper in stages and one illustrated (usually PowerPoint) presentation to the class. My norm for testing was one early quiz to get a “feel,” a substantial midterm and a moderate-weight final.

One assignment I think everyone still uses is a media-log report, journaling and assessing critically one’s own media exposure. Most of us require a comparative report, summarizing and evaluating different organizations’ handling of a current, ongoing, “real news” event, not celebrity chatter or sports unless indictments are involved.

I sometimes put right in the syllabus reading schedule, for any course, some cues as to which topics to scan, skim, read, study or master. Such a concept is new to a lot of sophomores :-(-.

One time, I allowed them to report on a skim-or-scan chapter -- and to present briefly on it to the class. I could not prevent the later-presenting students’ whining about earlier presenters on the same topic stealing their thunder.

Non-team team: Because our course meets a social sciences menu requirement in other majors, and because it attracts a lot of undecideds, we make a point of having diverse members of the faculty each do a guest lesson in their specialties. And yes, a visitor’s block can include a small graded assignment.

The early exposure to some of our “stars” may be one reason we’ve grown more than most other departments here. “Back when,” most of us did it as trade-off or pro bono. I stopped, and I know not whether the dean ever came up with cash for the extra effort.

# SPIG team wins key slots for Denver conference

## *New this year: A refereed research panel on social justice journalism*

By Vivian Martin

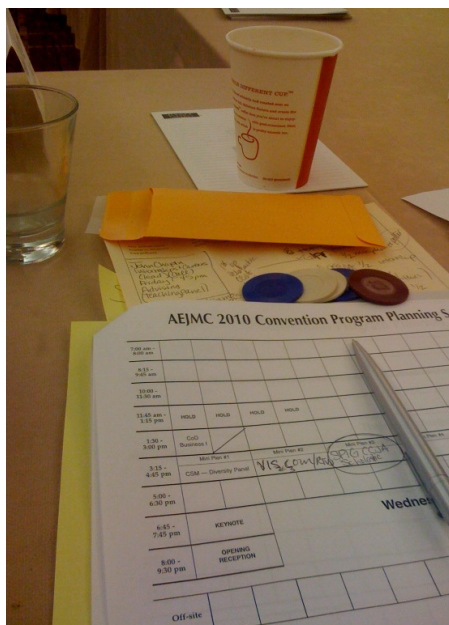
Co-vice heads Ginger Carter and Susan Lewis and I were very successful in playing their chips to negotiate slots for the Denver convention panels.

We went to the “chip auction” in Jacksonville, FL, with just three chips (we were on a half-chip reduction as part of a rotation AEJ does each year). Despite that limitation we managed to program trademark events such as GIFT and Hot Topics and, with a little chip help from our friends at CCJA, will offer new practical topics such as a session on how small PR programs can provide their students with opportunities similar to those in bigger programs.

SPIG will have a pre-conference to showcase best practices in teaching convergence media, and we’re also going to try a refereed research panel on bringing social justice into the journalism curriculum. The idea for that panel came from one of our members, Cathy Yungmann. It costs chips to put on a panel, so we always seek partners.

We weren’t able to find a partner for the social justice panel, despite talking with several previous partners and some groups we thought might be interested. We couldn’t just go off on our own and sponsor the panel; that would have taken a whole chip.

As we thought about what we might do, I recalled Ginger Carter’s earlier suggestion that we use a half chip for a referred research panel. SPIG has not programmed referred research panels; we put our research papers in the Scholar-to-



### Tools of the chip auction

Scholar sessions, which don’t cost a chip. But as I thought about how we might pursue this idea from the membership, Ginger’s idea seemed more attractive.

The vice heads and I decided to turn the social justice idea into a refereed research panel for which people can submit research papers (quantitative, qualitative, critical essays, etc) on the topic. As originally proposed, the panel would have consisted of people in programs with social justice missions discussing what they do.

A refereed research panel, however, opens up the conversation. I can even imagine scholarly essays examining the notion of a social justice journalism curriculum. The session will also help us test how we might build future panels around pedagogical research. This research panel on social justicer is scheduled for 5-15-6:30 p.m. Thursday (Aug. 5), prior to our business meeting, which will be at 6:45 p.m. this year.

## The schedule

### TUESDAY

**1-5 p.m.** - Pre-conference. The winner of the Best Practices showcase will present how-to lessons.

### WEDNESDAY

**10-11:30 a.m.** - The Three Rs of Small Programs: Recruitment, Retention, and Reconnection (CCJA, SPIG)

**11:45-1 p.m.** - Bringing best practices in Public Relations to the Small Program

Environment (CCJA, SPIG)

**3:15-4:45 p.m.** - Mini-plen - GIFT (SPIG, Scholastic, CCJA)

### THURSDAY

**8:15-9:45 a.m.** - We’re doing a panel on using Twitter and blogging as reporting tools. (CCJA, SPIG)

**11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.** - Hot Topics (Media Ethics, SPIG)

**1:30-3 p.m.** - Scholar to Scholar (All the groups have slots for six papers.)

**5-6 p.m.** - Refereed Research panel on social justice journalism

**6:45-8:15 p.m.** - SPIG members meeting with off-site social following

**8:30 --** SPIG off-site social

### FRIDAY

**12:15-1:30** - Off-site luncheon

**1:45-3 p.m.** - What campus media advisers are doing to move their student publications into the 21st century (SPIG, Internships & Careers)

**3:30-5** - A Generational Ethics Gap, or a Recognition of New Realities? (Scholastic, SPIG)

**COPING**, from page 10

**Ron Hollander, Montclair State:** Though I felt for a while that I was teaching something as germane as watch repairing, things are looking up, and I don't quite know why. We have a recent high of 68 declared minors (journalism is only a minor in the English department). In the spring we are offering again a recent high of eight courses including beside the standards such niceties as business reporting, sports in society, and sports reporting (plus this fall I offered my "The Holocaust and the American Press"). All are full, or reasonably enough so for the administration.

Speaking of which, New Jersey gave us all seven "furlough" days (nice euphemism that for "pay cut"). In addition, claiming financial hardship, the state reneged on a union-negotiated 3.5 percent pay raise due last July, putting it off until 2011! And with a change in state government administrations, linotype machines may have a better chance of making a comeback than our seeing that money.

Students are intensely motivated. Maybe it's because they live in such a news-saturated society, even if it's less and less print. They also are coming up with internships, mostly

(but not exclusively) on websites, and of course for no pay. (For years I wouldn't publicize non-paying internships because I felt the publications were profiting from free labor. Gave that one up along with my winding watch.)

Another benefit of the poor economy and even poorer media picture is that we're getting superb adjuncts, veterans who sadly have been laid off and who are happy to make a buck... or 3,000 of them. The administration likes the cache, and of course likes even more that it can fill classes without having to hire a full-timer, let alone tenure-track.

**HEAD NOTES**, from page 9

journalism jobs, even more journalism students will end up in public relations jobs. This semester I have hired the school's sports information director to teach an Intro to Profession. Over the years, my school has sent more graduates to intercollegiate sports information offices than it has to sports desks on newspapers, so it made sense to try this partnership. Meanwhile, some of the journalism students tell me they'd happily take jobs doing media relations work for professional sports teams.

A few of the editors on the student newspaper feel it's almost a sacrilege for me to bring into the journalism program the man who has stonewalled when they have tried to report on campus sport controversies. They might have some good points, but for now the course is a way to explore more options for our journalism majors and minors.

Interacting with people from other

mass communication disciplines within AEJMC and SPIG probably softened me up and made me more open to bringing public relations into our curriculum. Aside from nine months spent as a freelance writer for a series of insurance company magazines, my career prior to academia was journalism. I wrote an unpublished novel set in a public relations agency, but I didn't really like my heroine.

SPIG panels such as one in Chicago on international education featured colleagues from advertising and public relations who provided good ideas for me to take back to my classroom. Cross-disciplinary inspiration is more and more important. If Michael Longinow and David Weinstock, our Professional Freedom & Responsibility co-chairs, have their way, we'll see good examples of this principle at work at the Best Practices showcase in Denver (we got a taste of it at the pre-convention in Boston). More

explicit awareness of the diversity in SPIG may also help us grow our membership.

The disciplines we represent do have different interests; there are clearly some panels and activities that need to be more purely journalistic, whatever that means these days. On the other hand, a Denver panel designed to explore how small programs can give their students some of the same internship and creative experiences that are common in large programs is clearly targeted to the special needs of our PR members (but will probably be helpful to many more of us). It all makes us strong. SPIG-sters should feel free to speak up and advocate for their interests whatever their discipline.

*Vivian Martin, SPIG Head*

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