

MC & S NEWS

The Newsletter of the Mass Communication and Society Division, AEJMC FALL 2003 Vol. 37, No. 1

Head Note

By Dr. Dane S. Claussen
Point Park College

My stated goals as Head of the Mass Communication & Society Division over the next year primarily represent a philosophy of maintaining and building on the successes of the last several years: publishing an excellent journal, sponsoring the popular Promising Professors competition, reviewing the highest or near highest number of AEJMC convention papers of any division, and so on. But I am eager to pursue what I have written about in these pages before: the idea of journalism and mass communication professors asserting themselves in the public sphere, serving as public intellectuals about and within the news media. With rare exceptions, such as the long list of professors who signed a letter to the FCC opposing its recent regulatory changes, journalism and mass communication professors are mostly missing in action when it comes to taking a public role in media criticism, media regulation, or other media accountability. Even the letter to the FCC didn't require much effort at all from anyone other than the person or persons who drafted it in the first place, nor did our colleagues' positions require any courage or even creativity. For the FCC received tens of thousands of emails, phone calls and letters opposing the rule changes, some no doubt from citizens who may not have previously heard of the FCC and certainly don't have a very good understanding of it, its relationship with media companies, its relationship with Congress and its inevitable, if unofficial, relationship with the White House.

I would be very curious to know, for instance, how many of us gave speeches or lectures, wrote letters to the editor, wrote op-ed pieces, wrote magazine articles or even posted commentary on a web site about the Jayson Blair incident. I had the opportunity to make an appearance on a radio talk show here in Pittsburgh about Blair and journalism ethics generally. Though on the air for nearly an hour, I found it stimulating and not tiring, interesting and not clichéd, and not particularly time consuming when one considers how else I probably would have been otherwise spending that hour on an early Thursday evening.

It is important for at least some of us journalism professors to willingly, even eagerly, embrace our potential roles as public intellectuals for many reasons. The first is that presumably we have something to add to the public discussion; if we're qualified to teach journalism history, or law, or ethics, or theory, or political journalism, or business journalism, or science journalism, or religion journalism, to students who already have learned a lot about journalism in other courses, especially graduate students, we're certainly in an excellent position to teach the general public something about journalists and journalism. I, like many others, have observed that average citizens think they know a lot about the media because they consume a lot of mass media, and beyond that, even the media that they do not use themselves is ubiquitous. I believe that citizens who read the columns of ombudsmen and media critics in daily newspapers, and media writers in alternative newsweeklies, magazines and other sources must be learning something about the mass media that they don't already know. If not, why would the media carry those articles, and why would anyone read an article he/she did not get some benefit from?

Here are just a few reasons why we should step into the breach:

Only a few dozen newspapers have ombudsmen, and not all of them write regular columns or articles.

Weekly newspapers, magazines, TV stations and networks, radio stations and networks and most other media have no ombudsman, no employee whose job it is to represent the public internally nor educate the public.

True media literacy education has not caught on in the United States.

Public understanding of and trust in the news media is critical to the media's credibility and ultimate survival.

When we criticize the media, we can assume the unusual and key role of the loyal opposition. We're not anti-First Amendment or anti-journalism or anti-Freedom of Information or even necessarily anti-media **see HEAD, Page 2**

HEAD

corporation. For example, we want investigative journalism done better and more often, rather than not done at all.

Public understanding of the news media is low. Many citizens complain about bias on the editorial page because they don't know the difference between that page and any other page of the newspaper (true!). Our fellow Americans often believe that newspaper publishers or TV station general managers walk into a newsroom and personally kill negative stories about their friends or their advertisers. (We know, of course, that these processes are much more indirect, especially at daily newspapers, where unethical newsroom decisions are often made on the basis of groupthink/hegemony or third-hand rumors).

Are we really that willing to be counted as the missing-in-action when journalism historians of the future try to assess the role of journalism education in improving American journalism beyond what we try to do in the classroom? I will return to that point below.

For a long time, it was considered uncouth in academia to make oneself freely available to the news media, especially to seek them out. The best-known story about this phenomenon involves the late Carl Sagan. The story has it that he was denied tenure at Harvard because he was—horrors!—popularizing science by appearing on *The Tonight Show* and speaking and writing for mass audiences. Of course he went to Cornell and spent the rest of his career associated with that institution. But today, colleges and universities often seek out and bid against each other for professors who have marquee value. Publishers also do; the primary differences between a professor who gets no advance for her book and the professor who gets a \$100,000 advance for her similar book are who the publisher is, and barring that, how famous she is. This is based on media appearances.

Journalism and mass communication professors need to be making themselves more visible on campus, as JMC departments don't bring in much grant or contract money, and most bring in very little scholarship or alumni money. For a long time, we could count on the continuously growing popularity of our majors as a kind of proxy for other accomplishments at most, and as de facto job security at the least. But in the recent state budget crises, journalism schools at public universities have not been spared the knife, and the story out of Texas A&M University is that the journalism program there almost surely will be eliminated because it is essentially too popular with students and not popular enough with administrators. In many schools, clueless administrators merge speech communication departments with mass communication departments, an arrangement that many speech communication professors are all too willing to make, as increasing numbers of them teach mass communication and media studies courses—whether they're qualified to or not.

(My favorite anecdote on this point came out of Tulane University a few years ago: a new assistant professor with a Ph.D. degree in speech communication was being required to teach an upper-division journalism history course although he had never taken such a course himself; he asked for basic help on the JHISTORY listserv.) Journalism and mass communication professors can counter this by being visible and vital in a way that speech communication professors have not been and mostly still aren't, their increasing emphases on health communication and political communication notwithstanding.

Finally, Russell Jacoby, in his new introduction to the 2000 republication of his 1987 book, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*, writes about reactions to his first edition: "some suggested teaching itself was a form of political activity. Inasmuch as intellectuals are not professors, and millions go to college, teaching constitutes a public engagement....I mention three areas to rethink [this claim].

"...Driven by academic discontent and boredom, professors might want to reinvent themselves as public writers. To a limited extent, I think this has happened. [Jacoby then mentions philosopher Richard Rorty, plus "historians and literary critics."]....

"In the last decade, the emergence of what has been called the new black public intellectuals has generated much attention. For the first time in many years a group of African American intellectuals have burst upon the scene—figures such as Henry Louis Gates, Gerald Early, Adolph Reed Jr., Randal Kennedy, and Cornel West. These are smart, hard-hitting and often graceful writers who weigh into public problems of race, sports, politics, law, and culture. They have been both acclaimed as successors to the New York intellectuals and criticized as publicity hounds who ignore earlier black intellectuals such as W.E.B. Dubois and C.R.L. James....

"Another promising recent development is the increasing importance of what is sometimes called the new science writers, many of whom have been writing for decades. [Jacoby lists Stephen Jay Gould, Oliver Sacks, the late Carl Sagan, Jared Diamond, Jonathan Weiner, and Jeremy Bernstein.]....

"Some reviewers saw [the call for academics to become public intellectuals] as an injunction to sell out—or just plain sell—an anti-intellectual demand to exchange dense and unpopular work for media coverage. I don't think so. No one can do everything, but intellectual work need not be pitched in a single register. It should be possible for thinkers and writers to be both serious and accessible—not always at the same time, but over time...Ultimately, it is not only the larger public that loses when intellectuals turn inward to fetishize their profundity, but intellectuals themselves. Their work turns arid, their arguments

see HEAD2, Page 5

Mass Communication & Society

Division Members Meeting Minutes

August 1, 2003, 6:45 p.m., Hyatt Regency Crown Center, Kansas City, Mo.

Kathy McKee welcomes division members to convene.

Paul Voakes delivers introduction of this year's Traves Award winner, Donald L. Shaw of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Shaw thanks the division for the award, stresses the importance of theory in mass communication and society in the wake of the Internet, and deliberates his idea of agenda melding.

Kathy McKee outlines the agenda of today's meeting.

Research co-chairs Jennifer Greer and Donica Mensing give awards to top three student papers competition winners, two awards to Moeller competition, and three awards to Media & Family paper competition.

Kathy McKee reports this year's achievements, including uploading the division's official Web site, creating a friendly atmosphere for new members, and involving many reviewers in paper competitions. The MC&S division's finances are sound, and sources of funding come from membership dues and the journal, *Mass Communication & Society*. The idea of mentoring program may be launched so as to foster relationship between established scholars and junior members. Two issues were mentioned to draw members' attention: 1) the growth of the number of interest groups in AEJMC may affect MC&S's programming at future AEJMC conventions; and 2) the AEJMC Publications Committee is setting up a committee to study the relationships between the AEJMC divisional journals (of which *Mass Communication & Society* is one of eight) and the rest of the AEJMC, and she hopes members will monitor that process.

Vice-Head/Program Chair Dane Claussen said this year's convention programming emphasizes professional freedom and responsibility programming, as contrasted with last year's teaching emphasis. The program was negotiated at the AEJMC winter meeting at Palo Alto, Calif.

Donica Mensing reports that this year's paper competition received 78 papers, of which 38 were accepted. There are a total of 48 judges reviewing these papers. Six panels were formed and 8 papers were presented at scholar-to-scholar sessions.

Denis Wu reports that, thanks primarily to Dane Claussen, four PF&R sessions are in the program. Several PF&R-related articles were published in the newsletter this year.

Stacey Cone: Several teaching inserts were put into newsletters. The Promising Professors workshop at the convention presented five winners from the spring competition. A trip to Negro League Baseball Museum and American Jazz Museum was also arranged.

Lois Boynton: It is hard to identify graduate students in the division. The AEJMC headquarters does not record the status of members in the directory. She says more cooperation with the Graduate Education Interest Group is being arranged to recruit more into the division.

Carol Pardun reports that *Mass Communication & Society* has continued its 16% acceptance rate, resulting in a high quality journal. The quality of manuscripts continues to rise. The profit of the journal this year is \$18,456, which means 25%, i.e., \$4,614, will be reverted to the division (see attached Journal Report). She thanks reviewers, contributors, and LEA.

Linda Bathgate of LEA says that *Mass Communication & Society* is a great success. More institutions subscribed to the journal each year. The journal will be included in the ISI index. The status report of the journal is distributed.

Division member Bill Griswold gives kudos to the editor and LEA.

Kathy McKee nominates as to be new editor of *Mass Communication & Society*, James Shanahan of Cornell University. Shanahan introduces himself to the audience and points out that the journal is congruent with the goals of his department. He also says the journal will get the full support of his department chair at Cornell University. (His proposal is attached.)

Kathy McKee calls for a vote on the new editor of *Mass Communication & Society*. James Shanahan is elected. McKee also calls for votes of officers of the division. Vice-Head/Program Chair Dane **see MINUTES, Page 5**

Promising Professor Workshop Offers Teaching Tips and Advice for Student Learning

*By Jennifer Jacobs Henderson
Teaching Standards Co-Chair*

At the 2003 Promising Professors Workshop in Kansas City, faculty winners Ted Spiker (Florida), Jennifer Floto (Southern California), Scott Maier (Oregon) and Andi Stein (California State, Fullerton) as well as graduate student winners Daniel Haygood (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) and Andrea Miller (Missouri) shared their keys to teaching success.

The workshop, comprised of a series of short teaching success stories and advice, is the outgrowth of the yearly Promising Professors competition, co-sponsored by the Mass Communication and Society Division and the Graduate Student Interest Group. This year's workshop drew a packed house as AEJMC attendees gathered to garner advice from this year's top teachers in the field.

Here are a handful of the many tips offered by the competition winners:

- * Use current, relevant information in lectures. Students learn best when they have contemporary touchstones to understand theoretical or complex ideas.
- * Make one important point each day you want students to remember. Construct all examples and explanations around this central theme.

- * Encourage students to spend time with you outside of class hours. Student mentoring outside the classroom is essential to learning in the classroom.

- * Make classes tech-based. Students are tech savvy and expect to learn using contemporary technologies.

- * Provide opportunities for "real world" experiences. Students are hungry for the chance to use skills in settings that simulate real world situations. From this, students can build valuable portfolios to be used during their job search process.

- * Give students positive feedback as well as critical feedback on each assignment. Find at least one good quality of each assignment and highlight that aspect to encourage students.

- * Create a classroom environment conducive to learning. Include all student voices in discussion, encourage minority viewpoints, reward all answers, not just answers you are hoping to receive.

In addition to this year's winners, a Distinguished Educator Award was

presented to Tom Bowers (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) for a lifetime of teaching excellence and a commitment to fostering pedagogical discussions.

Dr. Bowers rounded out the two-hour session by speaking about how the communication field and his teaching style changed over time. Dr. Bowers admitted that when he started out teaching, he didn't know how to identify or engage in good teaching. Because graduate schools in the communication field often didn't offer pedagogy courses, he explained, many faculty had no idea how to be a good teacher.

After being introduced to Joe Lowman's work "Mastering the Techniques of Teaching," Dr. Bowers realized that what he had been doing in the classroom was not the most effective form of teaching or student learning. He now uses Lowman's suggestions such as getting to know students individually and working to not be an intimidating figure in class as a guide to his teaching, and encourages other faculty and students to employ Lowman's methods.

We encourage you to be a part of next year's Promising Professors Competition as either an entrant or a judge. For more information, contact Jennifer Jacobs Henderson by e-mail at jhender4@trinity.edu or by phone at 210-999-8114.

MC & S Call for Panel Proposals

Denis Wu
Louisiana State University
Vice Head and Program Chair

Yes, it's time to think about the 2004 convention in Toronto.

You can contribute to the 2004 convention programming by submitting panels that address relevant issues in research, teaching, or professional freedom and responsibility. All panel ideas are welcome and will be considered. But, as you may know, not all panel proposals can be accepted because of the limited slots we have. To improve your chance of acceptance, be sure to provide a title of your panel, a brief description, potential panelists, and also suggest possible co-sponsorships with another division or interest group. With this information, I can "pitch" your idea at the convention planning session in Atlanta in early December. At this point, you do not need to have all your panelists confirmed, just provide names of people who would fit your panel and are likely to attend.

I look forward to receiving your panel ideas. The deadline for panel submission is **October 15, 2003**. Please e-mail your panel proposals to me at hdeniswu@lsu.edu or give me a call at (225) 578-2095 if you have any questions. Thanks very much for your contribution.

MINUTES

Claussen moves up to the head position.

Lois Boynton nominates Denis Wu for the vice head position. Dane Claussen seconds the nomination. Denis Wu is elected as vice head.

Denis Wu nominates Diana Knott and Jennifer Henderson as co-chairs of teaching. Jennifer Greer seconds. Diana Knott and Jennifer Henderson are both elected.

Dane Claussen nominates Dietram Scheufele as research chair. Lois Boynton seconds. Scheufele is elected to the position.

Marie Curkan-Flangan is nominated by Carol Pardun to be secretary/editor of newsletter position. Jennifer Greer

seconds. Curkan-Flangan is elected.

Jennifer Greer nominates Stacey Cone as PF&R chair. Lois Boynton seconds. Cone is elected.

Stacey Cone nominates Lois Boynton as graduate liaison chair. Boynton is elected.

Kathy McKee says she has been a member of the division since 1986. She recollects fun memory of being a division member and welcomes Dane Claussen as the new division Head.

Dane Claussen thanks McKee and Pardun for recruiting him to the division in 1996 and sets goals for next year. In research he aims to: 1) maintain the quality of research papers, 2) support the journal, 3) participate in a winter, spring or regional conference, 4) clarify the mission of the division

for nonmembers. He also suggested that the Division's special call for papers for 2004 would be tied to a specific research question or questions rather than a general topic. In teaching, Claussen proposes to maintain the Web site of the division and to beef up the efforts to improve the site. Regarding PF&R, he proposes to study donating funds to other non-profit mass communication organizations, and to investigate ways that the Division can facilitate media criticism and media accountability.

Stacey Cone adds that promising professor workshop may need more judges.

The meeting is adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

HEAD2

thin, their souls parched. In the life of the mind, as in life itself, vitality requires resisting the lure of the familiar and the safe."

My doctoral dissertation and forthcoming book summarize my differences with Jacoby on other parts of *The Last Intellectuals*. But this new Introduction

is right on the mark. And who better to be both "serious and accessible" to the general public than journalism/mass communication professors, most of whom both lean toward applied rather than pure research and most of whom spent years making the "serious" into the "accessible" working in journalism and/or public relations? Yet other than

James Carey, Robert McChesney, Everette E. Dennis, Jay Rosen, and perhaps a few others, where are the mass-communication-professor/public-intellectuals in the United States today? I think and hope our Mass Communication & Society Division can help answer that question in every way.

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University of South Florida Hosts 29th Annual Southeast Colloquium

By: *M. C. Flanagan*
University of South Florida

Media convergence will be the theme of the 2004 Southeast Colloquium, hosted by the University of South Florida School of Mass Communications on March 4-6, 2004. Gil Thelen, publisher of the Tampa Tribune, an international leader in multimedia journalism, will give the keynote address. Additionally, Media General, parent company for the Tampa Tribune, will host an opening reception, giving attendees an opportunity to tour the NewsCenter, the first and largest converged news operation in the world.

For almost 30 years, members of the Newspaper, Law, and History divisions of the AEJMC have come together for this mid-winter meeting. In 1997 Magazine Division members began participating in the annual event and for the first time in 2004, the Radio-Television Journalism Division members will participate. Kathy Bradshaw who is chairperson of the 2004 SEC, RTVJ group has also invited members of the Broadcast Education Association to participate in the colloquium.

Each participating division will schedule refereed research paper session. In addition, researchers can submit papers concerning other topics to an "open" competition.

Marie Curkan-Flanagan, chair of the host committee and colloquium coordinator, has compiled a Website for the colloquium. See http://members.aol.com/ht_a/flanagan960/colloquium/indix.html.

The Website includes complete details about the colloquium paper call; call for judges, information on conference registration, discount hotel information, and a complete list of tourist attractions in Tampa. Additional program information will be posted as it becomes available. Contact Curkan-Flanagan at

mflanaga@chumal.cas.usf.edu or 813-974-6789 with questions.

SOUTHEAST COLLOQUIUM CALL FOR PAPERS

Paper Competition Rules

Please send three blind copies, one original, and a 250-word abstract. On the cover page of the original, state the division for which the paper is intended; the paper's title; and the name, title, affiliation, address, office phone, home phone, fax, and e-mail address of every author. On the cover page of each of the three blind copies, state the division for which the paper is intended and the paper's title, but no information identifying any author.

Authors may submit papers in any and all divisions, but a single paper may not be submitted to multiple divisions simultaneously.

Authors of accepted papers will be expected to attend the Southeast Colloquium and present their papers March 4-6, 2004, in Tampa, Florida.

See our website for more details:

<http://hometown.aol.com/flanagan960/>

All conference attendees, including authors, must pay the conference registration fee. Detailed panel proposals also may be submitted to division chairpersons by the paper deadlines.

POSMARK DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 28

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