



# Newsletter

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## A Message from the Division Head

by Masahiro Yamamoto, MCS Division Head

I am excited to begin my term as Head of the Mass Communication and Society Division. While it is a big honor, I am a little intimidated to lead this division that has a large membership base and a long history. Fortunately, I am surrounded by experienced officers that I can count on for help and support. Together, we will make sure to keep the division moving forward.

First, I would like to thank everyone involved for having made this past virtual conference a success. Our panels and refereed research sessions were all well attended. Special thanks go to officers, reviewers, moderators, discussants, panelists, presenters, and those who attended our sessions. Moving the annual conference to a virtual format was a big challenge, and I appreciate everyone's willingness to adapt, patience, and understanding in the face of the unprecedented global pandemic. It would be very remiss of me not to mention the extraordinary work the AEJMC office team and Council of Divisions did to guide us through the whole

process.

One of our goals for this year is to examine our budget and find ways to effectively use the MCS funds. In recent years, we have established new awards and increased the amount of money for our research awards as part of this effort. If you have ideas about how we can use our funds, please email me ([myamamoto2@albany.edu](mailto:myamamoto2@albany.edu)) or our Vice-Head Elect, Fan Yang ([fyang@albany.edu](mailto:fyang@albany.edu)).

We will also make efforts to increase applications for MCS awards. In this newsletter, several committees highlight awards that have received relatively few applications in recent years. If you qualify for any of those awards, please consider applying. If you know friends or colleagues who qualify, please pass the information along and encourage them to apply. We would love to learn and review accomplished records of our members.

Also, as you read this newsletter, check out the information about the upcoming Midwinter confer-

ence and submission details. The Midwinter provides great opportunities for presentations and extended discussions in an intimate and welcoming setting.

Finally, next year's conference planning is underway – many thanks to those who submitted panel proposals. Kalyani Chadha, our Vice Head and Programming Chair, is working hard to program panels that will bring diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences together. She has a brief update about where we currently are in the process of panel programming. Even though things are still uncertain in the world, we will continue to work on conference planning and will update you through our newsletter, social media, and email.

If you have any questions or ideas that you think would help our Division better serve your interests, please do not hesitate to contact me ([myamamoto2@albany.edu](mailto:myamamoto2@albany.edu)). Thank you for your continued support and engagement. I look forward to another excellent year for MCS.



## Conference Programming Update

by Kalyani Chadha, Vice Head/Programming Chair

Keeping up its strong programming tradition, the Mass Communication and Society Division co-sponsored several successful panels at the 2020 Annual Conference in San Francisco. These panels covered a wide array of topics relevant both to the interests of the Division's membership as well as the field as a whole. These included: PF&R panels on the social responsibility of journalists in the contemporary context (with the Media Ethics Division) and open research practices in journalism and mass communication (with Communication Theory and Methodology Division); research panels on tackling misinformation and the impact of community structure on news coverage (co-sponsored with the Communication Technology Division and the Community Journalism Interest Group respectively) and teaching panels focusing on how to prepare the next generation of media entrepreneurs (with the Media Management, Economics and Entrepreneurship Division) and exploring strategies for mentoring graduate students (with the Communicating Science, Health, Environment and Risk Divisions).

We are in the process of finalizing programming for AEJMC's 2021 annual conference that will be held in New Orleans. I have been in touch with the programming chairs from other divisions and interest groups and we will be partnering with the Electronic News Division, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Careers and Internships Interest Group, the Public Relations Division, the Minorities and Communication Division and the Community Journalism Interest Group. In all, the Mass Communication and Society Division will co-sponsor six panels for next year's conference, two each in the areas of PF&R, Teaching and Research, in addition to the usual refereed paper panels and high density and Scholar to Scholar research presentations. We hope that these panels which explore a variety of relevant topics will interest the membership of the division! We will let you know more about the panels soon and will also keep you informed about the annual conference.



## Membership Message

by Fan Yang, Vice Head-Elect/Membership Chair

I hope everyone is well and in good spirits during this difficult time. While we are far away from the end of the tunnel in this fight with COVID, we should never lose our hopes looking ahead into the future. As the Fall semester is in its full swing, I'd like to share with you some upbeat news regarding our division's latest status on memberships and invite you to chip in on the matters regarding the future directions of our division.

The current number of Mass Communication and Society Division members is 484 as of October 2020 – slightly down from that of last year. However, our division has been doing well financially. As of May 31,

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## Membership Message

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2020, our division has a total balance of \$35,731.92. Given the healthy financial status of our division, I'd like to invite your ideas on how we can strategically utilize our dividual funds to better support the goals of MCS and serve our members. In the past, we have spent funds on several initiatives, including co-sponsoring conference receptions, socials, and pre-conferences, as well as increasing the amount of money given to our award winners and annual paper competition winners. The division is always interested in other ways to effectively utilize our available funds to best benefit our members such as graduate student mentoring events, methods-related workshops, new awards that recognize the diverse achievement of our members in the field of mass communication research, and special issues for our division journal – Mass Communication and Society.

I cordially invite your thoughts and proposals on how our division should use the available funds to benefit our current members and to achieve the goals of the MCS Division. Please contact me at [fyang@albany.edu](mailto:fyang@albany.edu). We look forward to hearing from our MCS Division members. Together, we will make our division a stronger community!



## MCS Division Recognizes Excellence in Profession

by Brian J. Bowe, PF&R Committee Chair

Now more than ever, a crucial component of the Mass Communication and Society Division's work is the promotion of professional freedom and responsibility. These activities encompass the interaction of scholars and practitioners in five key areas: the promotion of free expression; ethics; media criticism and accountability; racial, gender, and cultural inclusiveness; and public service.

To that end, MCS offers two awards that recognize member commitment to professional freedom and responsibilities. These awards include the PF&R Award and the Professional Award. Each of them comes with a monetary prize.

The PF&R Award was established in 2015 and recognizes excellence in research, teaching or service related to the five PF&R areas (free expression, ethics, media criticism, diversity, and public service). The award is open to any individual who has made significant contributions to scholarship or has undertaken professional or service activities that promote excellence in any of the five areas. The research, service or professional activities could have been completed either during the preceding year or reflect work done over a longer period of time. In addition to the recognition, winners of the PF&R Award receive \$500.

Also established in 2015, the Professional Award recognizes professionals for upholding the values of professional freedom and responsibility, diversity and public service. It is open to members who have spent a significant portion of their careers in mass communication industries such as broadcast, print, photojournalism, advertising, public relations, and social media and recognizes their professional contributions to their fields. The Professional Award comes with a cash prize of \$250.

Both awards are open to nominations, including self-nominations. Details of the PF&R Award can be found at: <https://aejmc.us/mcs/awards/pfr-award/>. Details of the Professional Award can be found at: <https://aejmc.us/mcs/awards/professional-award/>.



## 2020 Mass Communication and Society Division Award Winners

by Xi Cui, Research Committee Chair

An important mission of the Mass Communication and Society Division is to encourage high quality research to address the society's needs and to facilitate academic conversations among diverse perspectives and methods. Each year, our Division publishes 6 issues of the Journal of Mass Communication and Society and organizes the most research panels among AJEMC divisions at the Midwinter Conference and the Annual Conference. In addition to awarding top papers at these conferences, the division also select student papers sprung out of class projects for the Moeller paper award. We also award research grants to two-faculty-led projects (\$20,000 in total), one student-led project (\$5,000), one dissertation project (\$3,000) each year.

Many grant projects come to fruition in the form of dissertations, book manuscripts, journal articles, conference presentations, etc. Below are some highlights from our 2019 award-winning projects.

Faculty research award winner, Dr. Lea Hellmueller (University of Houston), studies the rise of populist journalism in the UK and the US. Her research project seeks to contribute to a more informed perspective of the complexity of far-right (and far-left in the UK) critique raised against the news media as well as to better understand institutional responses of legacy media to such attacks from a comparative perspective. The research grant allows her and her colleagues to conduct and transcribe numerous interviews with editors and news professionals in the two countries.

Faculty research award winner, Dr. Lucinda Austin (UNC, Chapel Hill), studies the extent to which religious rhetoric in post-crisis responses influences skepticism, attitudes, trust, and supportive intentions towards religious leaders and organizations embroiled in various types of crises. Her team also examines how an individual's own religious identity impacts their perception of the religious organization and leaders at the center of fictional crises.

Student research award winner, Dr. Kelli Boling, used the research grant to fund her dissertation research which she has successfully defended in March of 2020. She interviewed 16 women who identify as domestic violence survivors and fans of true crime podcasts as well as 6 true crime podcast producers that focus on domestic violence cases. She found that survivors often listen to podcasts describing situations similar to their own because they normalize their life experiences and create a sense of community.

At the virtual conference this year, our Division awarded Drs. Stephanie Craft (University of Illinois), Melissa Tully (University of Iowa), Emily Vraga (University of Minnesota), Seth Ashley (Boise State University) and Adam Maksl (University of Indiana Southeast) for their project of "testing news literacy measures to predict news and misinformation behaviors," Dr. Scott Parrott (University of Alabama) for the project of "understanding motivations for social media use and its depression-related cognitive and emotional outcomes," and Yujin Heo (University of South Carolina) for her research on "counter-attitudinal information-seeking behavior based on selective exposure theory." The dissertation award went to Seoyeon Kim (University of Alabama). We look forward to hearing about their projects at the subsequent AEJMC conferences. For more information about the research awards, please visit <https://aejmc.us/mcs/awards/research-awards/research-award/>.



## 2020 Mass Communication and Society Research Award Winners

by Celine Song Yunya, Awards Committee Chair

Greetings from the Awards Committee of Mass Communication and Society Division. We are delighted to announce the winners and thank our colleagues who nominated, entered and supported the awards in 2020. They are all happiness heroes.

The 2020 MCS Dissertation Award went to Seoyeon Kim at The University of Alabama, with her dissertation entitled “Effects of CSR initiative type on consumer responses, in relation to company-cause fit and stigmatized industry”.

Three papers out of 71 faculty submissions received a Top Paper Award in the MCS Open Paper Competition. Winners of the first place were Michelle Amazeen at Boston University and Arunima Krishna at Boston University. The winner of the second place was Gretchen Dworzniak-Hoak from Kent State University. The winners of the third place were Summer Harlow at University of Houston and Danielle Kilgo at University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Three out of 34 student papers received Top Paper Awards in the MCS Student Paper Competition. Eric Cooks from University of Alabama won the first place. Alexis Romero Walker from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill won the second place. Anne Sadza at Radboud University won the third place. The winner of Moller Competition was Sydney Nicolla from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In addition to rewarding our authors, the Division also honors our research paper reviewers. This year we honored Michael Schmierbach from the Pennsylvania State University for providing the most thorough and timely reviews of all our judges.

The top faculty 2020 MCS Research Award went to Stephanie Craft at University of Illinois, Melissa Tully at University of Iowa, Emily K. Vraga at University of Minnesota, Seth Ashley at Boise State University and Adam Maksl at Indiana University Southeast. Scott Parrott from The University of Alabama won the second place. The student award went to Yujin Heo at University of South Carolina.

MCS also recognizes the outstanding contributions made by a vast variety of educators in our field. Promising Professor Faculty Winners were Dylan M. McLemore from University of Central Arkansas (1st Place), Yue Zheng at California State University of Northridge (2nd Place), and Jennifer Hoewe at Purdue University (3rd Place). Promising Professor Student Winners were Tegan Rae Bratcher from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1st Place), Yujin Heo from University of South Carolina (2nd Place), and Alex Kresovich from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (3rd Place).

The Professional Freedom and Responsibility Award went to Joe Grimm from Michigan State University. The Traves Award went to Fuyuan Shen from The Pennsylvania State University.

Let's share the joy of winners!



## MCS Division Seeks Nominations for Three Teaching Awards

by Dean Cummings, Teaching Committee Chair

Teaching during the pandemic has been challenging for everyone. All of us have been forced to create new pedagogies as new technologies have become hurdles for even the most tech savvy. The teaching committee hopes to be a sounding board and collection site for all the ideas used to face the challenges from the seismic transformations of our universities. Jian and I will be reaching out to you with the goal of collecting ideas, solutions, and success stories that we can share and celebrate. Feel free to contact us at any time.

Many of us are working in isolation and in the world of Zoom calls, making it hard for us to see the contributions of our peers. Our committee has ways for you to recognize the work of others or spotlight your own contributions. Each year we give out the MCS Distinguished Educator Award to those who have made a significant contribution to mass communication pedagogy. There is no doubt there are many deserving candidates out there in our Zoom and face-to-face classrooms. Please nominate them for this prestigious award. If you feel that you or a colleague deserves this award because of their innovations, please contact us and apply for the award.

Junior faculty have a hard enough time getting their pedagogical feet underneath them when they begin their careers, let alone starting a teaching career in these challenging times. Despite all the difficulties, there are junior faculty innovating outstanding teaching methods. We celebrate their hard work and excellence with the MCS Promising Professors Award. Any faculty who has taught no more than five years full-time and graduate students who have primary responsibility for teaching at least one course can submit for the Promising Professors Award.

Adjunct faculty and instructors should be recognized for their contribution to our universities during these stressful times. Each year our committee grants three awards to adjunct/instructors for their outstanding contributions and teaching excellence in the field of mass communication. If you know a colleague that deserves to be recognized please encourage them to apply.

All of our members can submit their teaching ideas to the MCS Teaching Ideas Competition award. The award builds upon the idea of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), which treats teaching as part of research agendas, using the same formal methodological techniques and standards of peer review. The teaching ideas competition is another way for our committee to recognize the hard work and dedication of our imaginative colleagues.

Many of us work in communities that need additional help or we collaborate with non-profit organizations to serve a portion of our society. We also work closely with governmental groups to enhance student perspective and experiential learning. The committee awards faculty a \$500 stipend for their service-learning courses. This award is a great way to acknowledge projects that encourage students to become involved in the community while at the same time expand their education and expertise.

The pandemic may have temporarily altered the way we teach, but it may have opened our minds to new ways of thinking. On behalf of the Teaching Committee, I hope that 2021 will bring a brighter future for our students and a safer workplace for all of us.

## Two Travel Award Opportunities for Graduate Students



by Christina J. Najera,  
Graduate Student  
Liaison

Graduate students, are you looking for opportunities to apply for travel money? The Mass Communication and Society Division has two travel award opportunities for graduate students! Becoming a member of the MCS not only offers the unique opportunity for graduate students to network and build relationships with other member scholars, but also offers the opportunity to apply for travel funding! Come join the MCS to take advantage of these opportunities!

The MCS Graduate Travel Award Program assists undergraduate and graduate students with their research endeavors by providing funds to travel to the Midwinter Conference or Annual Conference. The Midwinter travel award is in the amount of \$500 and it is awarded to two graduate students. The AEJMC annual conference travel award is in the amount of \$1,000 and it is awarded to four graduate students.

If you are interested in applying, please visit the MCS graduate travel awards website (<https://aejmc.us/mcs/awards/travel-awards/graduate-travel-award-program/>) for application deadlines, guidelines, and required materials for the Midwinter Conference and the Annual Conference. We hope to see you at the 2021 Midwinter Conference in Norman, OK, March 5-6, and the 2021 Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA, August 4-7.

## Join the Mass Communication and Society Division at the 2021 AEJMC Midwinter Conference



by Terri Hernandez, Midwinter  
Committee Chair

The Mass Communication and Society Division will once again participate in the annual AEJMC Midwinter Conference hosted by the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication in Norman, OK on Friday, March 5, and Saturday, March 6, 2021.

The Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication has ensured a healthy and safe environment for participants in light of the current COVID-19 reality with options to participate in the conference remotely (via Zoom or a similar platform). In the event that the midwinter conference has to move to a virtual/online conference because of COVID-19, participants will be contacted by early January 2021 (before participants start to register for the conference).

Midwinter is known for providing participants with the chance to present and discuss their research in a friendly, intimate setting. Graduate students are especially encouraged to submit, as Midwinter's supportive environment is seen as being comfortable for first-time presenters. In addition, Midwinter participants are welcomed and encouraged to submit their presented papers to the national AEJMC conference. Midwinter provides authors with a great opportunity to get feedback on their research before submitting to the national conference. In addition, MCS will honor the top abstract submission at the conference, and graduate students can apply for a \$500 travel award from the division. Additionally, conference participants will be able to enjoy the College's state-of-the-art teaching and research facilities, as well as the city's and campus' world-class museums, art galleries and restaurants.

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MCS is typically the largest division represented at Midwinter. In 2020, our division featured seven panels showcasing work from over 50 authors from across the United States, including more than two-dozen graduate students. As such, in addition to welcoming abstract submissions from our members, we also need members who are willing to serve as reviewers and discussants. For reviewers, the conference only allows submissions of abstracts between 600-800 words, and you do not have to be in attendance to serve as a discussant.

The deadline for abstract submission is 11:59 pm, Central Time, Tuesday, December 1st. Submit abstracts to the conference website (<http://bit.ly/Midwinter2021>). If you have not submitted to Midwinter before, you will need to create an account. Make sure to select MCS as your division when submitting your abstract. For the complete call, please visit the MCS website (<https://aejmc.us/mcs/conferences/midwinter/>). Notifications regarding conference acceptance will be emailed mid-January.

Abstracts should be clear of any identifying information, and they should be between 600-800 words in length (excluding author information and references). Abstracts should give a clear sense of relevant literature, research objectives, methodological approach, stage of research project (conceptual, data gathering, data interpreting), and expected findings and conclusions. Abstracts cannot be under review at other journals or conferences (e.g., ICA).

In addition, the conference accepts two-page panel proposals. Please direct panel proposals and any questions regarding abstract submission or the conference to the Midwinter Committee Chair, Terri Hernandez, at [thernandez@comm.msstate.edu](mailto:thernandez@comm.msstate.edu).

We look forward to seeing you in Norman!



## Communication Committee Report

by Shana Meganck, Communication/Social Media Committee Chair

The Social Media Committee's role is to utilize, maintain, create and recruit for the division's social media accounts to raise awareness of the Mass Communication and Society division. As of October 2020, there were 1,300 members on Facebook, 2,807 followers on Twitter, and 1,117 members on LinkedIn.

As a reminder, we want to encourage people to be more "social" on our sites. Some ways to do this include commenting and liking the stuff that the division posts, but also sharing important information of your own on the division's pages, such as:

- Do you have questions about teaching and/or research? We have a very large network of academics for you to tap into!
- Did you or a colleague recently get promoted? We'd love to know!
- Have you seen something in the news recently that you think would interest the MCS community? Please share it!
- Have you gotten an article or study published recently? We all want to hear about it!

## 2020 MCS Division Business Meeting Minutes AEJMC Annual Conference

by Dr. Xi Cui.

The meeting started at 9:45 pm EDT.

### Division Head

Dr. Nan Yu presented the state of the division of the past year.

### MCS Journal

Journal Editor Dr. Fuyuan Shen presented the state of the Journal of Mass Communication & Society, the reviewer awards, and best paper awards.

Dr. Shen introduced that Dr. Michael Schmierbach would take over the journal as the new editor after the meeting. The new editor will appoint the new editorial board for the next year by the end of the year. Dr. Shen then proposed to increase the cash award of top reviewers and top authors from \$500 total to \$500 each. The proposal was discussed and voted on at the end of the meeting.

### Midwinter Committee

Dr. Alec Tefertiller presented the MCS state of midwinter, informed the members of the awards awarded at the conference.

### Research Committee

Dr. Fan Yang presented about the research committee's work for this year's conference and awards.

### Awards Committee

Dr. Weirui Wang informed the members of the research- and teaching-related awards, as well as the service award and PF&R award.

### PF&R Committee

Dr. Ruoxu Wang presented PF&R committee's work, including a panel on PF&R and the planned-but-canceled tour to Google.

### Teaching Committee

Dr. Nan Yu presented for the work of the teaching committee on behalf of Dr. Jack Karlis.

### Communications Committee

Dr. Nan Yu presented the work of the communication committee on behalf of Dr. Shauna Meganck.

### Division Head

Dr. Nan Yu discussed new business, including next year's conference at New Orleans, new offices, areas of improvement such as better communication, membership retention, collaboration with other divisions, etc.

Dr. Fuyuan Shen asked the members at the meeting to rectify the change about paper award in the by-law.

Dr. Nan Yu moved to approve the change. Dr. Michael Schmierbach seconded the motion.

Members voted unanimously to approve the change.

The meeting adjourned at 10:33 pm.

# Mass Communication and Society

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