

CCS NOTES

Official Newsletter of the Cultural & Critical Studies Division of AEJMC

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A note from Division Head Peter Głowiczki

Our digital lives transcend geographic boundaries. I'm writing this column on the evening of May 29, 2020, and I've spent most of today listening to livestreams of Minneapolis media outlets. Processing the tragic events of this week in Minneapolis, I worry for my adopted city, where I spent five generative years of my education (2007-2012). Technology makes me feel more connected: physically here at home in the Carolinas, I am also tethered to the unfolding events at 38th and Chicago. Freedom of expression calls us to give voice to the critical issues of the day. To engage in journalistic work is to provide a layered, multivocal portrait of novel happenings.



We need the work of Stuart Hall, Sonia Livingstone, Michel de Certeau, Judith Butler, James Carey, Angela McRobbie, Norman Denzin and others, to mine the histories and trajectories of media power in times of crisis, throughout social unrest and across everyday life. Our varied and exciting AEJMC program will do well to engage issues at the core of our discipline. As we look ahead to our virtual gathering, I invite presenters and

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participants to mine the roots of their work as research and teaching activities. What inspires our professional and scholarly pursuits? The time has come for us to reflect on what we do and how and why we do it.

Difficult cultural moments, such as those we are currently living through amidst COVID 19 and the murder of George Floyd, respectively, call us to remember the enduring necessity of journalism and mass communication. Stories and storytelling are as essential today as ever. Journalism as a social practice serves to bear witness to all aspects of the human experience. Even, and especially, when it might be more convenient to look away or avert our eyes, journalism is engaged in the affirming work of looking, so that the public might see what would otherwise fall outside of their (and our) gaze.

When we gather virtually for our August conference on the exciting vFairs platform, I hope we will do so in a way that admits our vulnerabilities, steps into our power and works to begin making sense of the realities of our times. I look forward to our conference, not only as a novel means of connecting digitally, but also, in the spirit of friendship, fellowship and shared understanding. I hope that you will be able to join us.

I submitted my registration this evening, just before I sat down to author this column. AEJMC 2020 promises to be an excellent experience, and I am grateful to the hardworking staff and leadership in the central office. They are working diligently to plan a memorable slate of events.

May each of us continue to embrace the possibilities and challenges at the center of our work in the academy. I believe together we can achieve more than we might achieve on our own. In this particular American moment, I consider a specific opportunity to learn toward the collective wisdom of our shared experiences. In doing so, it is my sincere hope that we might emerge stronger during these divisive times.

Through our research, teaching and shared service activities, we are, and will always be, stronger together. Thank you for the chance to work with you and learn from you this year. I am honored to have had that opportunity. I am eager to build and sustain those connections during the upcoming conference in August. I will see you there!

Register for the 2020 conference now!

The AEJMC 2020 conference will be virtual. Our new registration rates can be found online. The AEJMC Board has decided to reduce registration rates for the benefit of our attendees.

Registration is now open. We look forward to your virtual attendance!

Register here: <http://aejmc.org/events/sanfrancisco20/register/>

Lila LaHood, Michael Stoll and The San Francisco Public Press to Receive PF&R Award



*A note from Jeanne Criswell,
Professional Freedom &
Responsibility Chair*

The Cultural and Critical Studies Division is proud to announce that Lila LaHood, Michael Stoll, and The San Francisco Public Press have won the division's 2020 Professional Freedom and Responsibility Award. LaHood is the publisher and Stoll is the executive director and editor of the SFPP, a nonprofit alternative to San Francisco's legacy media. The award will be presented at the AEJMC annual conference in August during the PF&R panel session "Telling Lies in America: Are Today's Journalists Watchdogs, Lapdogs, or Something Else?" during which LaHood and Stoll also will serve as presenters. The award and panel session will be Thursday, Aug. 6, 3:15 - 4:45 p.m. Pacific Time (6:15 - 7:45 p.m. Eastern Time) as part of this year's virtual conference.

This award from division members recognizes LaHood, Stoll and the SFPP for their work in numerous areas. According to its [website](#), the SFPP is a local nonprofit, noncommercial news organization that enriches civic life in San Francisco by delivering public-interest journalism to broad and diverse audiences through print and interactive media not supported by advertising. Through its website and quarterly newspaper, and partnerships with other public media and civic groups, the SFPP reports on local issues—including environment, education, housing, homelessness, labor and elections—and frequently hosts public events. Since 2009, the SFPP has established a reputation in the community for producing high-impact, in-depth reporting projects on a wide range of topics,

AEJMC 2020 CCSD Top Paper Award Winners

First Place

Erica Cizek (University of Texas at Austin),

Richard Mocarski (University of Nebraska at Kearney), &

Elaine Almeida (University of Wisconsin-Madison): "Capital and Legitimacy: Trans*

Communicators as Cultural Intermediaries"*

Second Place

John Vilanova, Lehigh

University: "Critical

Embellishment: Rolling Stone and Pitchfork Pans as

Journalistic Signaling"

Third Place

Jiachun Hong, Southern Illinois University:

"Documentary Maker as

Worker: Precarity in the Chinese Television

Documentary Industry"

*Cizek, Mocarski and Almeida will receive the Jim Murphy Award for Top Faculty Paper

explaining complex local policy issues in an accessible way, investigating problems and reporting on ideas for tangible solutions. The SFPP's goal is to do for print and online news what public media have done for radio and television; and in the fall of 2010, SFPP won an award from the Society of Professional Journalists for explanatory journalism for a series of pieces published online and in print about plans to develop San Francisco's Treasure Island. The newspaper is celebrating its 10th anniversary, and the SFPP recently launched a companion low-power community radio station, KSFP, its audio initiative, which also includes podcasts and streaming.

LaHood, Stoll and the SFPP join some 43 past recipients of the annual PF&R Award, which CCS has for more than four decades presented to individuals and organizations demonstrating dedication, courage, leadership or achievement in one or more areas of (1) free expression, (2) ethics, (3) media criticism and accountability, (4) racial, gender and cultural inclusiveness, (5) public service, and (6) equal opportunities for students. (More information on these areas is available on the AEJMC Web site at <http://www.aejmc.org/home/2011/03/ethics-prf/>.) Past winners of the award have included Ben Bagdikian, Molly Ivins, Noam Chomsky, Nina Totenberg, Studs Terkel, James Carey, Bill Moyers, Leonard Pitts Jr. and many others.

Reflections on using our power as educators and researchers

A note from Vice-Head Ruth DeFoster

As I write this newsletter update, I am sitting in my backyard in the Twin Cities, grading discussion posts for a Mass Media and Popular Culture course I am teaching during May Term at the University of Minnesota. In the past few days, the Cities have boiled over in frustration and unrest following the murder of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin. My students have responded with an outpouring of heartbreak and rage.



AEJMC CCSD 2020 Top Student Paper Award Winners

First Place

Jeffrey Duncan & Taylor

Voges, University of Georgia:

“EULAs as Unbalanced

Contractual Power Between an
Organization and its

(Unannounced and Underage)

Users: A Mobile Game Textual
Analysis”**

Second Place

Alyvia Walters, Rutgers

University: “Modern Mourning:

The Violence and Potentialities
of Public Grief Online”

Third Place

Lourdes Mirian Cueva Chacón,

University of Texas at Austin

(affiliation will change to San

Diego State University): “A

‘Gentlemen’s Agreement:’ How

News Discourse Helps to

Perpetuate Segregation”

**Duncan and Voges will

receive the James Carey Award

for Top Student Paper

We had just finished talking about cultural studies in the course when the protests began. We talked about the myriad ways that scholars in the movement – Stuart Hall, Celia Lury, Angela McRobbie, Paul Gilroy, Ann Gray and more – worked to change the way the academy viewed popular, or “low” culture. We talked about how this new generation of scholars argued that the voice of the people mattered, that “culture” was to be found even in the everyday and the mundane, and that the role of public scholars was the tirelessly investigate the relationships of power and oppression that maintained systems of inequality.

This perspective has never been more important than it is now, in the midst of a global pandemic that has laid bare our deepest and ugliest societal inequities. People and groups with substantial existing power and cultural cache—large corporations, the wealthiest classes, citizens, the stably employed and safely housed—have been largely unaffected by this crisis, while the groups with least power—the marginal, the poor, the homeless, the nonwhite, those with low-income jobs—have suffered the most. In a global crisis with a terribly real and tangible human cost, it is incumbent upon all of us who work within the critical tradition to continue the work of unmasking systems of power.

As the events of this year – both far-flung and in our own backyards—continue to highlight the starkest differences and inequities in human experience, may we continue to use our positions as educators and public scholars to challenge hegemonic institutions of unchecked power, speak truth with compassion, and offer our students a rigorous, thorough, historical education in cultural studies.

Returning to Normal: Dangers of Nostalgia in Recovering From COVID-19

Robert (Ted) Gutsche, Jr.

CCSD Website Co-Editor

About the Murphy Award for Top Faculty Paper:

“Qualitative Studies Division, AEJMC, announces the establishment of the Jim Murphy Paper Competition Award. It will be given each year, beginning in 1985, for the best faculty paper submitted for the QS research paper competition.

“The award has been funded initially by the sale of Jim’s “research vehicle,” the VW camper van which took him and family from one end of the country to the other gathering data for his book and articles.

“A product of Liberal education with a strong Jesuit flavor, Jim Murphy had an undergraduate degree in the Classics and Philosophy, a master’s in English, and a doctorate in Mass Communication and Literature, finishing the latter degree at the University of Iowa. Then he spent four years on the staff of the Milwaukee Journal, with stints on virtually every desk in the newsroom as part of a management-training program. A year lecturing at the University of Nigeria lured him away in 1977.

From 1979-1983 he taught at the Southern Illinois University School of Journalism, heading the school’s professional master’s program, teaching writing and magazine design courses (*continued*)

News outlets across the globe have asked the same question that’s on many of our minds in the middle of this pandemic: “When will things return to normal?” Being cooped-up for many across the globe is certainly an unequal experience – [Hollywood stars have been criticized](#) for complaining in the comforts of their massive homes, the use of masks have been shown to have [unequal implications based on race](#), and some communities have claimed lockdown measures are an [infringement of their rights](#). Meanwhile, large swaths of our societies [remain at work](#), from surgeries to service industries with little protection and added benefit for their efforts.



Let’s get back to normal, indeed.

But let’s remember that [nostalgia is a dangerous thing](#) that relies on false memories, collective forgetting, and a “return” to “normal” or “the way that it was” for those who would have had a privileged past. In short, let’s just remember for many life wasn’t that great to begin with before COVID-19.

How things “were” have seeped into the coverage of today’s crises, with hints that should be unpacked before we wish for when things were “better.”

- Intersections of pollution and racial and economic inequalities, the pandemic, and our responses have [put some populations and communities in worse situations](#) and with greater medical risks than others, a continuation of racial divides within the US, for example. Instead of talking about this on our zoom parties, we celebrate the revival of nature without so many cars on the road. Why? Take a look at Robert Bullard’s [Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality](#) or even better, [Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States](#)) by Carl Abraham Zimring.

- In the UK, Black people are [four times more likely](#) to have died from COVID-19 than whites. Wonder what that’s about? [Reread](#)

Murphy Award (continued)

"Author of *New Journalism in Critical Perspective* (monograph based on his doctoral dissertation) and co-author (with Sharon Murphy) of *Let My People Know: American Indian Journalism, 1828-1978*, he also wrote for numerous academic journals and popular magazines.

A 1981 National Endowment for the Humanities grant supported his field study of Alaska Native journalism and broadcasting. In 1982 he was a fellow at the Modern Media Institute, St. Petersburg, Florida. In 1982 and 1983 saw him and his SIUC students establish a regional magazine, *Accent on Southern Illinois*. While in Carbondale he began establishing himself as a writing coast and free lance journalist. He died of cancer May 13, 1983."

Stuart Hall's *Policing the Crisis*.

• [Gendered aspects of home](#) and [work life](#) have emerged, as have stories of child and intimate and domestic partner violence. These things didn't happen because of COVID-19, but because of the state of society and injustice before it.

• Digital images and memes have also tried to [remind of these inequalities](#), including the fact () that in the U.S., anyway, "Suddenly, the whole nation is depending on the same people they say shouldn't make \$15 an hour." To be sure, this dependence on lower-wage workers is the case across the globe. Remember how we cheered – or jeered– even silently, when [China halted and restarted manufacturing](#)?

• Celebrities (yes, the same we also have criticized) and scientists have noted the ecological normal wasn't all that great: "The pursuit of consumerism and an obsession with productivity have led us to deny the value of life itself: that of plants, that of animals, and that of a great number of human beings," [200-some signatories wrote in a newspaper column](#) published in France. "We believe it is unthinkable to 'go back to normal'," they wrote.

Certainly, all of this is not say that for many, working and getting paid, being able to leave the dwelling to socialize or visit doctors or worship in places of faith has not been detrimental. The economic, psychological, and physical outcomes from what the world has faced will last. But how do we as critical and cultural scholars producing meaningful work about what's going on without slinking back into remembering our hours at Starbucks or our fancy after-conference drinks in some bistro in Spain?

In my own house, I am challenged to find avenues to change inequalities around access to education after watching on multiple occasion my nearly three-year-old son clutch his backpack and cry for school. This should remind us, as it did me, the opportunities of access to good education that is deprived of so many youth – and adults. "How can my research or action help with that?" is a better response then, "We need to get this kid back into school." And, moreover, it rekindles a desire to ask tough questions about his schooling. Was it that great? In many ways, yes, but I do think now I will offer to conduct a census of all police cars and racially insensitive and gender binary tools in the school house.

Thank you!

Many thanks to everyone who reviewed for our division this year. We couldn't have prepared for this year's conference without you!

Some good might be coming from critical perspectives of COVID-19. Allegheny County in Pennsylvania, [debated](#) in May a motion that would “designate racism as a public health crisis,” a debate rejuvenated by the disparities of health outcomes across racial groups. Kudos to that effort. But remember what I said about the disparities of the past still remain? Comments from one council member should remind us:

It seems that they're calling out whites as a collective and claiming that whites are responsible for this ... racial classification scheme and things like that... And I'm sorry, that language, I just can't support it. To the folks on the right, we believe that white privilege is something that's just something created by the left to try to create division.

COVID-19 hasn't changed us enough. So while the desire to return to normal is something [that can change behavior](#) and [assist in the care of people](#), beware the danger of going forward, particularly in terms of our scholarship that frequently lags behind the times, becomes retrospective, and often shapes collective forgetting that keeps us in the pretty past.

Learning from our Mentors

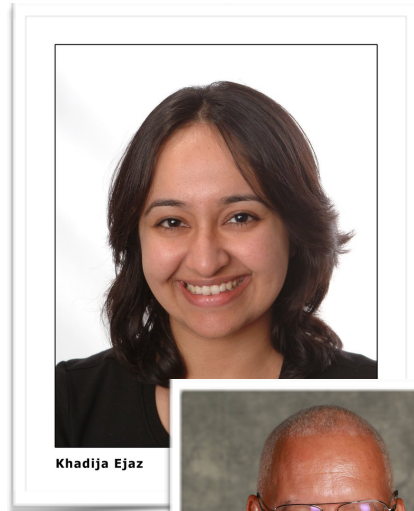
Secretary Khadija Ejaz interviews one of her academic mentors, Ernest L. Wiggins

Ernest L. Wiggins is an associate professor of journalism and mass communications at the University of South Carolina, specializing in media writing and editing, media literacy, mass communications practices and the intersection of mass media and marginalized communities. A graduate of the University of South Carolina, Wiggins joined the faculty in 1993 after 10 years as a newspaper reporter and editor. Wiggins is a native of Washington, D.C. He moved to South Carolina at an early age and has been a resident since.

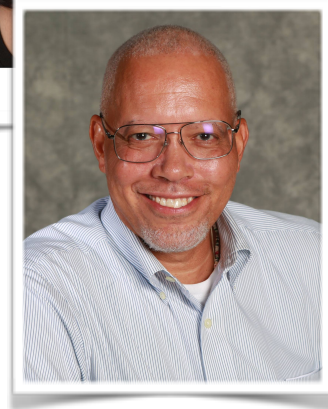
How did you get started with teaching?

My earliest experience with teaching was at a summer camp run by the District of Columbia when I was 16. I taught 4th grade mathematics to children from the neighborhood near the church and school I attended when I was living in Washington. I enjoyed the experience but can't attest to my success as a math teacher; I

believe the idea of the camp was to stave off a bit of the learning recession that takes place during the summer. I do think it planted a seed because I often sought opportunities to be in the classroom, either as an adjunct instructor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications during my years at The State newspaper or as an English instructor for the University of South Carolina's Trio Programs for a couple of years. I don't know if it's a "calling," but it certainly matches my interests and skillsets.



Khadija Ejaz



What do you think are your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher?

I think I am disciplined and focused in my instruction. I think about my students' capacities and interests as I arrange instruction and adjust as evidence dictates. I'm sure that's pretty common. I was lucky to have been mentored by highly disciplined veteran professors when I came to the university – and, of course, had many, many fine instructors through all of my formal schooling. They all offered well-integrated learning experiences – equal measures of free inquiry and exactitude.

A weakness I recognize is I'm easily distracted when I am laying down foundational instruction. I get testy when students leave the classroom noisily, arrive while I'm lecturing. It usually takes me a while to get back into gear after a disruption. I admire those who can power through undaunted. I am not one to "wing" a foundational lecture. I do enjoy a fairly freewheeling exchange during application and recitation, however.

What do you think is the biggest challenge that students face today? How do you motivate students to learn?

I don't know that I can authoritatively respond to questions about

student challenges but I too often detect impatience. I think they feel knowledge and skills should easily sync with their moods and dispositions, that learning should be osmotic and not require concentration, focus and mental energy. This is certainly not all students, but many. Helping them recognize how much time and effort is involved in learning is part of my strategy. Regrettably, many resist.

What frustrates you the most in a classroom?

I am frustrated most by many student's perception that a "C" is a failing mark. I begin that work on the first day of class. I am not always successful in helping them recalibrate because the notion is pretty indelible. I'm not one to advocate for the eradication of grades as some of my colleagues; I do think attaching a measure to mastery is important. And that is what it is really all about, moving students beyond the thinking that "familiarity" is sufficient when mastery should be their goal. Markers of the "familiarity" mindset? "Do we have to know dates? Do we need to have the spelling exactly right? Can I get some credit for turning it in?"

Do you have any special moments from your teaching career that still stay with you?

I've been at it for quite a while so there are many, but I will always be especially touched by a student thanking me, repeatedly, during Honors College revocation for the impact I had on his learning. He was a pretty brilliant young man, whom I never had in a class though I was his honors thesis adviser. Today, we are good friends and keep in touch.

Looking back, what teaching advice would you give yourself?

If I were able to advise me as I was entering teaching I would urge my younger me to heed my own advice and be patient – with myself, my students, my colleagues, the institution, the WORLD. A friend and counselor once called me on my obsession with "perfectibility." It's a pretty arrogant obsession, to be sure, but I do think if we teachers are to inspire others we shouldn't accept "good enough for government work" as a motto.

Balancing Research, Teaching, and Service

A note from Co-Research Chair Krishnan Vasudevan



In May 2020, I completed my third year at the University of Maryland. As I work towards tenure, two pieces of advice continue to help me balance my roles as a researcher and teacher.

When writing my dissertation, my advisor encouraged me to spend no more than two hours each day writing, but stressed the importance of writing **every** day. Although it has been challenging during the pandemic to focus on anything, the process of seeing the same project each day helps me live within the world of the study and develop what Csikszentmihalyi described as “flow.” I also heed her advice of working on one project at a time, which suits me well as I like to exhale after completing a single manuscript rather than feeling scattered by several irons in the fire.

I teach an advanced publication communication theory course to our first-year doctoral students, in which they are introduced to critical, cultural theories. During my first year on the job, a faculty member encouraged me to revise syllabi each year with new readings that were both relevant to the course and that I was genuinely interested in reading. Given the limited amount of time I have to read new pieces, heeding this advice has helped me seamlessly expand my knowledgebase while also remaining an engaged instructor.

While everyone has different ways of working and realities, especially right now given the pandemic, I hope this advice passed down to me by my mentors can be useful to some of you as well.

Graduate Research Is Labor Worth Pay

*Graduate Outreach
Chair Steven Wang
offers some reflections on
labor in graduate school*



One thing that shows in a pandemic—I have much privilege. I’m cis-male, in my late 20s, and relatively healthy. I have sufficient fund for food and shelter, and a job allowing me to work from home. I don’t have care duties, and no one in my family is directly affected by the virus. So for a second, I really bought the productive break myth—oh, let’s get some research done.

Then I realized: I still had teaching responsibilities, still had virtual meetings to attend, still had a degree to work on, plus the things everyone had to do to keep life going in a pandemic. Grocery run became such an adventure. Then I realized: I had never really had time for research. Not time on the clock. Officially, I was half-time graduate student, half-time teaching assistant. I did squeeze time outside of that 100% for research. And that’s supposed to be fine because research was my...hobby?

My department offers some grants, and grad students are paid when working with faculty. Still, in my field, RA is rare, and many projects are student-led. International students are not allowed anything more than 50% campus employment. (Yes, waiting tables to fund school can lead to expulsion for us.) Yet, like everyone eyeing for a job in academia, we are expected to prove the ability to conduct research individually and produce first-authored publications.

Free research labor in exchange for a ticket to the academic job market makes graduate school a prolonged unpaid internship. Imagine an entry level job demanding 5-year field experience. When you get a job (extremely lucky you are), your income does not reflect what you have done at graduate school, but your potential to produce more research.

This model seems even less viable given that the 20-21 academic year is likely to have 20-21 jobs open. I want to believe that knowledge production should be inclusive. The rhetoric that passion in research outweighs economic incentive is prohibitive. Not everyone can afford to pursue an unpaid passion for years. The situation is worse for social sciences and humanities disciplines without an easy pathway to a lucrative corporate industry outside of academia.

I think graduate research is valuable. At least universities say so, in their prospectuses and press releases. Then maybe find a way to compensate it? This may be another normal we don't want to go back to after the COVID-19 pandemic.

California dreamin': Seeing privilege in my digital semester at Cal State Fullerton.

Teaching chair Chelsea Reynolds reflects on her mid-semester shift to online instruction.



CSUF was the first major U.S. university to announce its plans to hold its fall semester online. Or so [reported the Los Angeles Times](#) on April 21 in a statement that was retracted by the university's president, Framroze Virjee, only to be re-announced weeks later.

That fumbled announcement set the tone for communication about the inevitable. *Hold on to your bats, folks: We're teaching online in the fall.*

CSUF is a 40,000-student commuter campus tucked between three major interstates in the San Gabriel foothills 40 miles east of Los Angeles. We are the largest of the 23-member California State

University system, which itself is the largest public university system in the United States. We also rank #2 in the country for degrees awarded to underrepresented students.

Based on our student body size, proximity to major urban centers like L.A. and San Diego, and service to at-risk communities, I supported CSUF's early call to go digital. Many of my colleagues disagreed.

Selfishly, I was excited to imagine my days without two hour-long commutes. I was relieved not to agonize about classrooms packed full of 20-something party-goers, or how to project my voice from behind an N95 mask. I felt comfort for my coworkers who wouldn't bring COVID home to their aging parents. I daydreamed about my new garden.

For many reasons, an advanced work from home order felt like the compassionate choice. A break after this spring's chaos.

But as students' final projects rolled in this May, it became clear to me that online learning crystallizes the systems of inequity that our academic institutions simultaneously uphold and discourage. While staying online might serve me as a faculty member, it does not serve all of my students.

I am concerned about my students who live in tight quarters with extended families. What can they do when course content isn't appropriate for parents or children? Our undergrads use campus as their safe space away from domestic pressures.

I am concerned about my students who don't have access to WiFi or laptop computers, and for my students who crash on friends' couches or sleep in their cars. The library was their place to recharge -- both spiritually and technologically.

I am concerned about my students who suffer from depression or anxiety, like I do, and for whom an academic and social routine provides the necessary structure to avoid self-destruction. Substance abuse disorders will be catalyzed by more time at home, I'm certain.

As I re-design my fall syllabi, I am challenging myself to check my privilege.

What would I want if I were stuck in a tiny apartment with five roommates, a sick parent, or childcare responsibilities? How would I be coping if I'd lost my only source of income? Who would I turn to if I couldn't find the motivation to complete an assignment?

I am revising my course expectations accordingly and advise you do as well, should your institution go virtual. For me, that looks like shorter paper requirements, eliminating group assignments, and minimizing the number of required Zoom meetings.

The greatest teaching tool we have is empathy. Our students wish they were headed back to campus, and after some reflection on our move to digital, I can see why.

Looking Ahead to Our Virtual Conference: Planning for Panels

Be sure to plan for our CCSD co-sponsored sessions!

CCSD + PCIG – Telling Lies in America: Are today's journalists watchdogs, lapdogs, or something else? (PF&R Panel)

CCSD + ESIG – Mobilizing Culture: Using popular media to teach about race, class and gender in the digital sphere (Teaching Panel)

HIST + CCSD – Media, War and Memory: Researching Remembrance of the past (Research Panel)

CCSD + CSW – Teaching the 19th Amendment: 100 Years of votes for women (Teaching Panel)

CCSD + PRDV – Advocacy, Strategic Communication, Journalism and Social Change: Disrupting Narratives (Research)

LGBT + CCSD – Queering Methods: Exploring the Emerging Topics and Research Methodologies within Digital Spaces (Research Panel)

MMAG + CCSD – Culinary Journalism, Food Justice and the

Social Sphere (PF&R Panel)

ETHC + CCSD – Codebreaker: Teaching Media Ethics Beyond the Code of Ethics (Teaching Panel)