

spig news

Fall/Winter 2016: *The official newsletter of the AEJMC Small Programs Interest Group*



Student photo by Carlos Cruz/John Carroll University

John Carroll students covered street protests in Cleveland during the GOP Convention. It Takes Roots is an effort by a variety of groups to demand justice for underrepresented communities.

Students dive into elections with an experiential twist

Close-up view of political convention is eye-opening

By Carrie Buchanan
John Carroll University

In the second week of July, a dozen communication and political science students and two professors (actually three, but only two were officially teaching) gathered at John Carroll University to begin what several described as a “once-in-a-lifetime” experiential learning opportunity.

They were there to study a na-

• *Class sees the “crazy train” up close in Florida, page 10.*

tional political convention from two perspectives: in the classroom and at the event itself.

It was the week before Cleveland hosted the Republican National Convention as the class convened.

Everyone was waiting to see whether there would be violence in the streets or protests by delegates inside the Quicken Loans Arena, as the Republicans nominated the most controversial presidential candidate in living memory: celebrity businessman Donald Trump.

As the class learned, this was

See **ELECTIONS** on page 3



New leader is learning on the job

Don't worry too much, I'm surrounded by expertise

Since America elected a political outsider as its next president, I've seen some comparisons to the Know Nothing Party of Lincoln's era.

Think of me this year as the Know Nothing leader of SPIG.

I only recently joined this organization and, in fact, have only attended two AEJMC conventions. Quite often, I don't really know what's going on.

Luckily for you, I'm bracketed by past head Pam Parry and senior vice head Sonya DiPalma. Sonya capably handled the scheduling duties for next summer's Chicago convention without me lifting a finger, except maybe to give her some deserved high fives.

My dealings with SPIG, though, have taught me that it's a close-

See **HEAD** on page 2

SPIG online: aejmc.us/spig/

SPIG's TJMC journal: aejmc.us/spig/journal/

head notes

Mendenhall is ready to learn

Continued from page 1

knit group, with an appreciation for longstanding friendships and an openness for newcomers.

I like that.

Those are important qualities for a professional group filled with individuals whose interests and skills are sprinkled across the vast realm of AEJMC.

I look forward to learning from all of the SPIG members in the coming months so that by summer I'll have grown out of my Know Nothing phase.

In the meantime, here's an introduction to help you feel like you know me.

Before entering academia, I was a newspaper guy for a quarter century. Thought I'd be a famous writer, but got sidetracked into editing and design, which were my main contributions at the *Abilene Reporter-News*, *The Nashville Banner*, *The Decatur (Ala.) Daily* and *The Huntsville (Ala.) Times*.

I've been a sports desk-man, design editor, graphics editor and managing editor.

I once created a map of the winding boundaries and various neighborhoods of my city using border tape and an X-ACTO knife. If you're under 50 or never worked for a newspaper, trust me that you should be impressed.

I produced color graphics on the first Macintosh with its black-and-white screen, duping my work into four copies to get plates for cyan, magenta,

yellow and black. You should be impressed and appalled by that.

I've been a weekly religion columnist for 16 years now. I try to keep that offbeat and unpredictable. One March, I created a 64-team, seeded bracket filled with Bible characters. Every May, I write Bible limericks. And some weeks I'm serious, maybe even grim.

I was working as design editor in Huntsville the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. It was a grim day, but my final edition is the lead example in a book of front pages, put out with the assistance of Poynter a couple of months later.

A couple of years later, I started driving 100 miles each way to night classes at Middle Tennessee State and in 2008, parlayed my master's degree in mass communication into a faculty position at my alma mater, Abilene

Christian University. We're one of a handful of religious universities with ACEJMC accreditation.

Since '08, I've completed my doctorate at Texas Tech and adjusted to the rhythms of academic life.

The classroom still seems to move slowly compared to the newsroom, but I love the challenge of keeping students awake and off their iPhones long enough to convince them that I have something to say and share.

Among my responsibilities are the JMC intro class, reporting, opinion writing, Media & Religion, internships, Race & Media and communication design.

My media research interests include diversity and civility. I try to investigate these with quantitative methods.

I'm married to Janet, who is part of a local non-profit that preaches the importance of strong community relationships — and practices what it preaches by having its employees live in struggling neighborhoods. That seems to suit us well.

We've got five kids, but only the baby is still at home. She's our only girl, is about to turn 14 and lives a much more dramatic life than Janet or me. Two of our kids are black, one of them is gay and for sure those things are important aspects of my story.

But enough about me. Here's hoping that over the next year I get to hear more of the stories of SPIG members.

Help me end my Know Nothingness.



Photo by Vern Williams/Southern Connecticut State

Pam Parry accepts a plaque for her contributions as SPIG head for 2015-16 from incoming Head Doug Mendenhall at the annual SPIG business meeting.

an election education

Elections full of opportunities

Continued from page 1

not the first time a convention had nominated a controversial candidate. Political Science Professor Colin Swearingen taught about Andrew Jackson, the president some say is most like Trump, and others, while detailing the shenanigans that took place at conventions of the past.

Communication Professor Carrie Buchanan taught the students how mainstream media and a newly emerging cadre of independent "citizen journalists" cover political conventions, and they learned how to do their own coverage. She had students blogging, tweeting and writing feature stories, to be published later on Medium when revisions were all completed.

Another source of expertise was Adjunct Professor Peter Manos, who was auditing the course and writing a blog about the experience. His PhD is in history. He also teaches communication. And his contributions to class discussions were tremendous.

The course's second week, from July 18-21, was spent at the convention and related events, as more than half the class fanned out to various media internships (some with NBC, others with ABC and one with PBS's "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly") and most of the others to volunteer positions working for the RNC and its local host committee.

A couple of the interns had to work for two weeks, one being the first week of the course, so the lectures were recorded and they did all the work for that week online.

Manos had a unique volunteer assignment, which he wrote about for our Medium publication, [Election Reflections](#) (see the RNC tab

for this and other stories from the course's Journalism students).

Manos was a "roadie," helping to move musical equipment around the city and set it up for the Singing Angels, a children's choir that appeared onstage at the RNC on opening night.

They were also on NBC's "Today Show" one morning during the convention, and sang at the Cleveland International Airport to welcome delegates and journalists and others as they arrived.

Student Carlos Cruz, who heads the Latin American Student Association at John Carroll, carved out his own unique experience as a citizen journalist, covering the street protests with Twitter and Storify, using his cellphone as a camera, recording tool, writing platform and publishing technology.

His focus often picked out Hispanic protestors, and his understanding of both the language and the culture gave him unique skills to produce top-notch work, despite his novice status.

His work was noticed by NPR and several other media. He was even interviewed by Canadian and Spanish-language journalists.

For the third week of the course, everyone came back to campus to discuss and analyze their experiences, as well as the politics and media coverage of the convention.

Students even were able to con-

It all seemed worthwhile when I saw looks of intense interest on the students' faces.

trast the RNC with the Democrats' convention, going on that week in Philadelphia.

The month's events were perfectly designed for learning. And we took full advantage of it.

This fall, the experiential learning continued as students from two introductory journalism classes wrote profiles of election candidates in all sorts of races, for Congress, the Ohio Statehouse and the local County Council.

We published these in *Election Reflections* as well, generating a new publication on Medium.com that will be available to use in future elections as well.

To do these election profiles, students were encouraged to see their candidates in action in the community. Dozens went out to community meetings and candidate forums and many attended presidential debate watch parties at the university.

They also fanned out to do individual interviews with candidates, campaign workers, community organization leaders and political science professors, as well as ordinary voters, including students.

They became involved in the political process in a way most said (in the blogs I also have them write for this course) was a revelation and a new experience. It was heartening to hear this from so many of them.

Yes, it was hard work organizing and editing it all and, often, accompanying students to community events. But it all seemed worthwhile when I saw looks of intense interest on the students' faces, enthusiastic comments in classes and many of their blogs and, in the end, the wonderful stories they wrote that they will always have, online, to show their families, friends and potential employers.

aejmc minneapolis

'Superhero' workshop swoops in to save multi-tasking faculty

Preconference focuses on preventing SPIG burnout

By Carrie Buchanan
John Carroll University

It's not surprising that the people who showed up for the Aug. 3 Preconference on Superhero Syndrome were mostly members of the Small Programs Interest Group. It's a sign of the burnout-level workload that many of us carry as professors in small programs.

It was also a friendly welcome to the conference, for most of us knew each other and, as most of our readers know, we are a congenial group.

The afternoon began with a discussion of the superhero syndrome that we're all prone to, being indispensable members of a small faculty. We're the capable ones, who can do – and thus, are often asked to do – just about anything.

This fall when I fell into a situation that was described at this very session, I followed the advice I learned from Sonya DiPalma of North Carolina-Asheville: Occasionally, you have to say no.

Sonya was, until this summer, a candidate for tenure. She earned it, becoming the first in 20 years to get tenure in her department, but she learned a few difficult lessons along the way. One was how to say no diplomatically, when everyone in her department seemed to have adopted the maxim, "Get the new person to do it!"

Be clear that you "strive for 5" on a scale of 1-5, she said. But also be clear that you can't achieve that

if you take on too much.

I hope I got that right. I was so busy listening, I didn't take perfect notes. But I learned the basic lesson and it worked!

Karie Hollerbach of Southeast Missouri State said we sometimes need to change the "underlying structures" that make us prone to this type of behavior. She recommended the book *The Path of Least Resistance* by Robert Fritz. It explains that superhero syndrome often occurs in the type of structure he calls "reactive-responsive."

I have since observed that structure in my own department. But I have also observed that our new department chair is moving us into a new structure, and we are already finding new ways of dealing with situations.

John McClelland of Roosevelt University is retired, which gave him the perfect perspective for looking back at lessons learned in a career working in a small program. I wrote down several, but one that particularly stood out was "You don't have to grade them on every assignment." He recommended prompt feedback on fewer assignments, saying that's more important, and on other things you can give what he called "random feedback."

I now do this with my students' blogs of class notes and weekly reflections on what they're learning. I don't grade them till the end of the semester, but during the semester I read them and submit comments on random occasions. They also get an interim grade at midterm or thereabouts, to let them know how they are doing and how to improve. It gets re-

vised upward if they do improve or, on rare occasions, downward if their performance drops off. I use a rubric for grading, so it's easy.

After hearing from these three panelists, moderated by Pam Parry of Eastern Kentucky, some of the audience got up to form a new panel, moderated by Doug Mendenhall of Abilene Christian, that explained how some of our programs get students involved in research. Mendenhall's own example involved inviting his introductory class to vote on a research topic that culminates in a publishable academic paper by the end of the semester (see page 7). I was involved in this panel and didn't take any notes, but was enthralled by the research conducted with their students by Mary Jean Land of Georgia College & State University and Cathy Yungmann of Cabrini University.

Yungmann's special section of the senior capstone class works as a team every year on a multimedia project with a social justice focus. She sent a link to her [presentation slides](#), so you can see how they manage the project and look at some of the websites they have created to feature their work. You'll have to join DropBox to see it, but membership is free and it's a very useful thing to have.

The third section of the Preconference was about promoting your own small program, a task many of us take on when publicity isn't supplied by the university. Here again, my note-taking wasn't perfect but one panelist, Adam Maksl of Indiana University Southeast, kindly sent his slides in response

See **SUPERHERO** on page 5

aejmc minneapolis

Our honored colleagues



Cindy Simoneau of Southern Connecticut State enjoys the Teacher of the Year luncheon in her honor at The News Room restaurant in Minneapolis. Presenting her plaque at right is Elizabeth Atwood.



SPIG Head Pam Parry presents the Dalton-Landon Foundation Award for Service to Brian Steffen and Vivan Martin.



Photos by Vern Williams/Southern Connecticut State

'Superhero' tips ease burnout

Continued from page 4

to my request on the SPIG listserv. I have posted the PDF in my Drop-Box and [this hyperlink](#) will take you to it. It's full of wonderful suggestions and samples of the beautiful promotional materials Maksl and his department have created for their program.

Panelist Lisa Carponelli of Simpson College had another list of great ideas, most of which I was too enthralled to write down, but one of which she recommended as the best ever: her "quickie" Everyday Video course. This is a three-week May course offered after the semester ends, and it always fills, bringing in new students to the department and giving them a taste

of the fun involved in learning communication. Aimed at freshmen and sophomores, it teaches them to make videos from everyday life – the kind of things they want to share on social media.

Panelist Cindy Simoneau also had a great list of ways to promote your department. One of the best was the Alumni Night put on by the campus chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Not only do alumni enthusiastically return to campus and participate in speed-dating-style chats with students, each of them also spends a few minutes recording a video on what their college experience meant to them. The camera and camera operator are set up when the night begins and it's easy

to duck into the studio and record something. Those videos can then be used for promotions on the university website.

Thanks also to Jim Simon, who put this panel together and moderated it. There were many great ideas. I have already recommended several to my department, and I'm probably not alone in that! Perhaps now a new group, our readers, will pass them on as well.

Apologies to any presenters or great ideas I missed in this story. I was not the best note-taker because I was a participant and didn't expect to be writing it up for the newsletter. But when no one else volunteered, I knew I had to take a stab at it. This was a wonderful afternoon, well spent.

aejmc minneapolis

Slow journalism panel shows why concept's growing rapidly

Audiences still hungry for more than Twitter snacks

By Michael Longinow
Biola University

Slow is cool. And Don Belt proved it in the panel session titled "Slow Journalism and Why it Matters in an Age of Instant Information" at the AEJMC conference in Minnesota. It was a joint session shared with the Magazine Division, and Belt brought insights from his 30-year career with *National Geographic*.

Multimedia? Yes. Global? Certainly. Do-able for Small Programs? Oh, yes.

Others on the panel were Jeff South, director of undergraduate studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, and Susan Sivek, head of the AEJMC magazine division and a faculty member at Linfield College in Oregon. (Full disclosure: I organized the panel and moderated it.)

The panel's initial premise was that tweets, random posted video clips and even breaking news aren't what audiences (or our students) want to see when they look for real stories. And the panelists more than proved it to be true – at least for media audiences that have stayed hungry for meaty narratives.

South pointed out that the Slow Journalism movement, one with its own magazine, is gaining traction as an alternative that readers – real readers, not skimmers or clickers – will want to choose. Steven Brill, Jill Abramson and Andrew Sullivan are the bigger names that have put their careers

and some gathered funding toward ventures that go deep. And yes, slow journalism includes podcasts such as "Serial," which got national attention earlier this year when it led to a new trial for a defendant investigated by journalists in *Serial Season 1*.

Slow Journalism has conceptual ties to the international Slow Food movement that calls on people to eat out less, cook more and take their time doing so, South noted.

That movement calls us not just to eat more slowly but also to consider where our food comes from, who provided the raw materials we cook with, how humanely and sustainably it was acquired, and how to avoid wasting it.

Belt has been working with Paul Salopek on the National Geographic project *Out of Eden*, tracing the migration of humans out of Africa, through the Middle East and Asia, and into the Western Hemisphere. It's a journey by foot, with Salopek carrying a backpack of media equipment (along with a few items for survival) in a slow marathon expected to last seven years.

Slow journalism of the kind Salopek is doing is not cheap. That came up in questions after the panelists spoke.

Salopek's project drew grant funding from National Geographic, but also from the Knight Foundation, the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, Project Zero out of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard's Nieman Foundation, Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History and Zeega, an international storytelling platform. And they're still accepting

donations.

Sivek, who is working on an upcoming project dealing with fact-checking, helped bring some quality control questions to the panel and the notion of storytelling on the road. Can facts be verified from a source, met at random, when the journalist can't do prior backgrounding? Who's to say the stories aren't fiction?

The panel didn't bring clear answers to this, though they agreed that editors are the backstop in this game. And they also agreed that seasoned journalists, professionals with many years of experience with sources, regional interviewing approaches and interviewing in general should be the ones taking on this kind of in-depth journalism.

The application to small programs?

Belt, who teaches the slow journalism approach with South in national conferences, said any degree of slow-down is good for students. It's up to faculty to craft the approach, best done in small-group discussion that precedes and follows extended, old-fashioned shoe-leather reporting.

Resulting multimedia projects have to go deep, asking lots of questions (more than students ever thought necessary), probing into stories behind the stories in a location.

The best incentive isn't a grade, Belt said, but actual publication in print or online.

And the result can be fascinating – maybe also part of what gets students hired in a digital media landscape still figuring out its future.

aejmc minneapolis

Why I'm mostly OK with being labeled 'that Miley Cyrus guy'

By Doug Mendenhall
Abilene Christian University

Nine months ago I submitted to AEJMC a final copy of a paper describing a study of Miley Cyrus that my fall semester Media Issues classes suggested and assisted with. The paper, "My Oh Miley Cyrus: Analyzing online comments from TV performances in 2009, 2013, and 2015," was later presented at the Midwinter Conference at the University of Oklahoma.

The result was what you might expect when a pop topic shows up in an academic setting. One young graduate student used the Q&A time to ask whether I'd done any research about Liam Hemsworth, the starlet's beau at the time.

In the hallway later that day, someone made introduction to one of my ACU colleagues by looking at her nametag and noting, "You're from the same school as that Miley Cyrus guy."

So that's me now. I'm that Miley Cyrus guy. Great.

The study detailed in the paper is rather mundane compared to its subject. It shows quantitatively what happened online as this young entertainer made three progressively more sexualized and raunchy TV performances in 2009, 2013 and 2015 – as Cyrus thrust the juvenile *Hannah Montana* character behind her, and instead thrust her own behind at her audiences.

Using a common social science software package, Diction 7.0, my students and I were able to show that across those three performance dates, commenters on entertainment websites used

significantly fewer words related to praise, and significantly more words related to blame, among other findings.

My rookie students helped with the literature review, the data-collection marathon, and even the analysis of the findings.

Personally, those findings didn't surprise me, and I can't pretend this was one of my top research interests even as I was writing up the paper.

But my JMC intro students voted it last August as their top choice for a media-related topic to research, with me promising we'd follow whatever path they charted, so I'm proud that their contribution has its place in a respected academic conference. Maybe it will make them prouder, too.

The strategy, which I've now employed for five semesters, is to introduce the intro students to mass media by explaining that research in our field is all about topics integral to their lives – music, movies, TV, social causes, social media. Then, on that very first day of class when they expect a dry recitation of what's in the syllabus and how many exams there will be, I instead take their nominations for a class project and let democracy pick the winner.

Anecdotally, in the case of Miley Cyrus and earlier projects, I think the students most involved in selecting and following through on this study were also the ones who learned the most and were most enthused about the course in general.

I subjected that opinion to more rigorous examination last fall by conducting an experiment as part

of a Faculty Fellowship project at my university, in which one of my two sections of Media Issues went through the process of selecting its own research topic that I just described, while the other section – practically identical in size and other demographic qualities – merely learned about media research through my standard academic lectures on the topic.

Comparing these two sections over a dozen variables, I was unable to show quantitatively that the differences in what they got out of the class were statistically significant, although the section that followed Miley Cyrus from start to finish did exhibit a small, consistent advantage in attitudes about the class.

On the other hand, the Miley Cyrus section also did slightly worse than the control section when it came to answering generic, multiple-choice questions about research on the final exam.

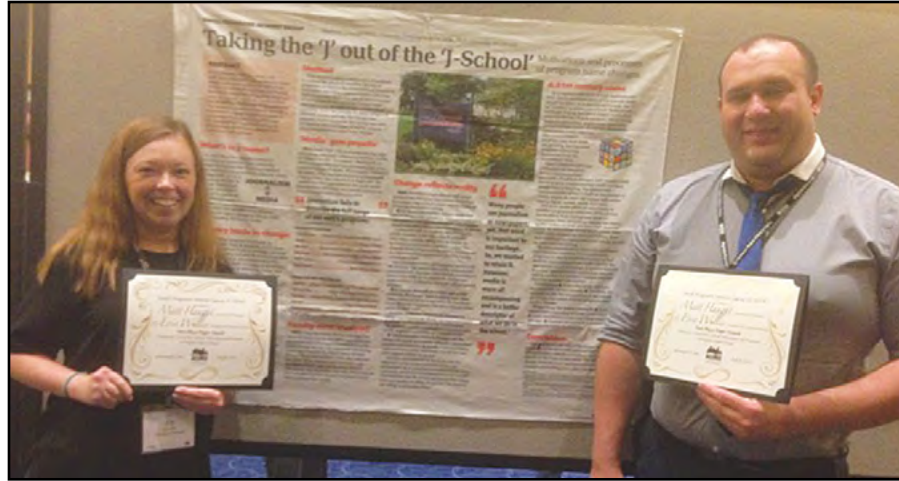
That's what I take away from this adventure, and it's consistent with a broad body of literature: Let the students control more of their own destiny in the classroom and they'll be more excited and more likely to continue down that path once the semester is over. Even if their grades don't show it.

For that reason, I'm at it again with my latest intro class. We just finished up a fascinating look at quantifying the differences in language used to discuss Black Lives Matter on black-oriented websites and on the nation's top political websites.

Maybe that will get me out from under the sting of being that Miley Cyrus guy.

aejmc minneapolis

SPIG recognizes top papers from Minneapolis competition



Matthew Haught of the University of Memphis and Erin Willis of the University of Colorado at Boulder received the 2016 SPIG First-Place Paper Award for "Taking the J out of the J-School: Motivations and Processes of Program Name Changes."



Masudul Biswas of Loyola University Maryland (pictured), along with co-authors Ralph Izzard of Louisiana State University and Sept Roshan of Astute Radio, were awarded the SPIG Second-Place Paper Award for "What is Taught about Diversity and How is it Taught? A 2015 Update of Diversity Teaching at U.S. Journalism and Mass Communication Programs."

The SPIG Third-Place Paper award was presented to Michael Longinow of Biola for "What Trauma? Social Invention and a Pedagogy of Compassion for Teaching Reporting and Writing about the Pain of Others."



Photos by Jackie Incollingo/Rider University

in the classroom

Noisy's good: Why course prep shouldn't just be multimedia

By Michael Longinow
Biola University

Let 'em talk. Students need it, we need it. And learning happens so much more when they do. But as faculty, we learn early on that classroom prep is all about throwing stuff at the assembled people in the seats. Do it with humor and novelty and you come away feeling like they're getting it. But are they?

Students' default mode is to shuffle into our classroom or lecture hall, slouch in a seat, and turn off their brains while taking notes (or playing Minecraft or skimming Snapchat, Twitter or Pinterest.) Then there's the sleepers.

The gap between what we bring to each class and what they get is wide. The primary assessment documents we all have to produce each year for program review strongly suggest we need to do better.

A side benefit of sabbatical is the distance you get from the classroom. You get to fly at 30,000 feet and see what your teaching looks like in the wider topography of your other courses, your department's courses, the rest of higher education, the science behind how we do what we do — what works, what doesn't. You're more likely to think of ways to fix stuff at that distance.

And there's fairly reputable science behind the notion that students who talk in class — to you, and to each other in guided ways — learn more than those sitting passively as you talk. And I don't mean the pause-in-my-lecture-raise-your-hand-if-you-know-what-I'm-thinking approach.

This fall, I tried a special topics workshop on politics and media. But instead of firing up PowerPoint and thinking about what other schools do with a course like this, I thought about my students. I'd been away from them for a few months, so there was some fondness in the pondering. What do they want to learn about it? What does research say they already know? What is it about politics that lights a fire in their brains and guts? (And I mean politics right now — not in the '90s, '80s or '70s.)

Sabbatical research I'd been doing on millennials said the twin portals were entertainment and social justice. So I picked a book by Shanto Iyengar on "Media Politics," and another by David Jackson on "Entertainment and Politics." The latter was a bit dated, and we all know outdated anything in our courses douses the flame fast. I had to make humor out of the references to Rage Against the Machine and film stars of the 1990s who were icons when these stu-

These students mix it up with each other. They laugh. They rant. They argue. They think — particularly when I step in and point up something none of them are bringing up.

dents were in diapers.

But I made almost the whole class about discussion. I divided the class into groups of three or four and assigned them presentation topics. I created a rubric for grading their preparation and presentation approach, and required them to analyze the textbooks through the lens of online media about politics. I also had them blog. Each of them had to talk to the class about their blog on its due date (do-able since there are only a dozen in the class and we have two 75-minute sessions a week.) A stipulation of the blog was that they had to find media that took an attack mode on an event, issue or topic, and media that did not, showing a more favorable angle or approach to coverage. That is, their opinion had to be grounded in media that looked at things from a variety of viewpoints. It's not rocket science: it's teaching basic critical thinking and media literacy.

But the talking thing worked. These students mix it up with each other. They laugh. They rant. They argue. They think — particularly when I step in (yes, I get to talk too) and point up something none of them are bringing up that sheds light on the issue in a new way. They learn from each other, they learn from me, I learn from them.

We'll see what they take away by December, but the evidence I've collected suggests this is a group of students who will remember the 2016 election in ways they might not have had I spent the semester firing up flashy, cool slides and pacing around the room.

an election education

Students chasing candidates learn benefits of an early start

By Michael Ray Smith
Lee University

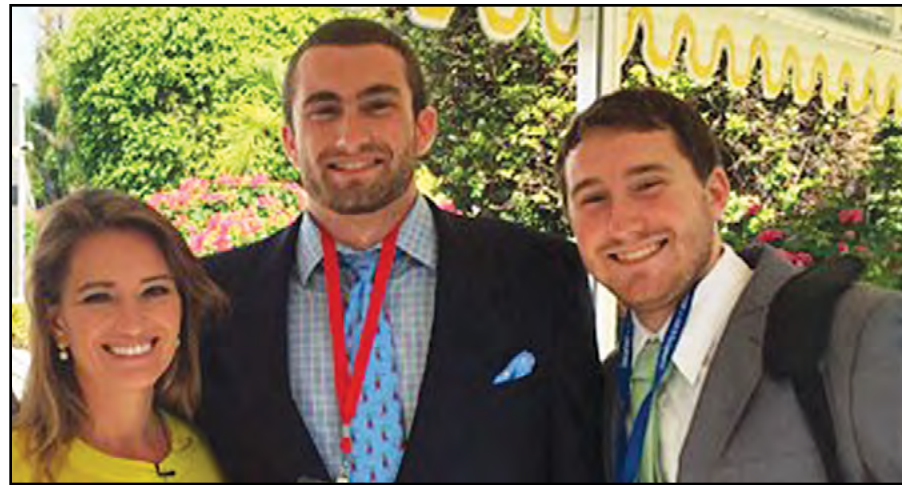
Donald Trump's 126-room Mar-A-Lago Club is at once cozy and opulent. And when the future president dropped by in this election year, it became a recording studio for journalists from as far away as Japan and as close as a private, Christian university where J students were growing their chops.

Palm Beach County, Florida, is home to wealth as well as need, Trump's estate and a young journalism program at Palm Beach Atlantic University. This presidential season, J students took turns queuing in long lines of traffic and enduring cautious security to cover Trump, Hillary Clinton, Ben Carson and Marco Rubio, all of whom visited South Florida on the windy road – they hoped – to the White House.

Earlier this year, student editors including Celeste Brown worked a Trump press conference, making videos that they immediately posted online and live tweeted in the whirlwind of competing reporters howling into network cameras.

The PBAU coverage began when student reporter Ryan Teason applied for credentials for a Trump press conference. Before long, other J students gained access to press conferences where some mainstream reporters were turned away for lack of space. PBAU students had the advantage because they started earlier: They called to request media credentials early and then showed up hours before the event to chat their way into the press parking lot, press briefing and, finally, the press conference.

The student press used the same approach when Clinton



NBC's Katy Tur with students Peter Amirata and Ryan Teason.

came to town, when Carson visited the island of Palm Beach and when Rubio spoke at the university. Sometimes things didn't work out, including the time student reporters were standing by for a one-minute interview with Rubio and the Secret Service agents shooed them away.

Other times, the gaggle of student reporters even attracted the attention of the Palm Beach Post and the editor had them live-tweet comments from Clinton supporters who stood in line for hours to get a chance to hear their candidate.

The students took photos, scribbled in their reporter notebooks and sometimes caught a glimpse of one of their pros on the job — CBS 12 TV reporter Israel Balderas.

"Live tweeting and working off campus is always surreal because I've dreamed about doing journalism for the past four years and I'm finally doing what I love in a way that actually impacts people," noted editor Celeste Brown.

The coverage also provided in-

sight into the mercurial world of candidates who aren't overly concerned with hurting feelings.

At one press conference, a J student from PBAU stood side-by-side with a working reporter who had raised the ire of candidate Trump for suggesting he wasn't being transparent. Trump's scolding sounded like angry newborns if you stretch their cries into a loop of tin as long as the 110,000 square feet of Mar-A-Lago.

"I was just glad it wasn't me," said the journalism student of the encounter, adding that watching a press conference on TV isn't the same as being at one where candidates seem to ready to hop the crazy train.

Journalism professor Michael Ray Smith taught during the spring semester at Palm Beach Atlantic University, where student media won awards from the Florida Society of News Editors and Society of Professional Journalists, among others. Smith now teaches at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee.

professional service

New Diversity Style Guide helps journalists' accuracy

By Rachele Kanigel
San Francisco State University

What pronouns should journalists use for sources who don't identify as male or female? What is the preferred term for Americans over 65? Latino or Hispanic? African American, black or Black? Is it offensive to use the term "birth defect" and, if so, what are the alternatives?

Journalists grapple with questions like this every day and now a new [Diversity Style Guide](#) is available to answer them.

About 20 years ago the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism based at San Francisco State University compiled the original News Watch Diversity Style Guide, a compilation of terms from style guides put out by the National Association of Black Journalists, the Asian American Journalists Association, the National Center on Disability and Journalism and five other organizations. It was last updated in 2002.

In 2014, when I was interim director of the center, I decided to update and expand the guide, which at that time was just a PDF posted on a website. I received a grant from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation of the Society of Professional Journalists to create a searchable online style guide. The guide, which launched last spring, now includes more than 750 terms – about double the number in the original News Watch Diversity Style Guide.

The new guide takes a broad look at diversity and includes mental health, drug and alcohol use, suicide, aging, adoption and



“Recently I’ve added definitions for gypsy and Roma, Okies and terms related to adoption in response to reader suggestions.”

– Rachele Kanigel

other issues where the news media have been criticized for insensitive or inaccurate language.

When I've talked about the guide, some friends and colleagues have asked if this isn't just a handbook on political correctness. I tell them this is not about being politically correct; it's about being accurate. It's simply wrong to refer to

a transgender man as “she” or to call someone “schizo.” It's inaccurate to say “wheelchair-bound” or “confined to a wheelchair” when wheelchairs actually liberate people who use them.

And journalists risk alienating sources and readers when they use terms like “illegal alien” to describe an undocumented immigrant or “real mother” to refer to the mother who gave birth to a child who was adopted. The Diversity Style Guide offers context and nuance for media professionals who aim to be precise and accurate.

I expected to be hounded by trolls after the guide was released last spring, but so far that hasn't happened. Instead, I've gotten helpful suggestions for refining definitions and adding terms that are missing. Recently I've added definitions for gypsy and Roma, Okies and terms related to adoption in response to reader suggestions.

I've heard that a number of professional and student publications encourage their staffs to consult the guide and some journalism and communications professors use it in their classes.

I'm currently working on a book, to be published by Wiley, that will include the glossary but also chapters on covering different ethnic, racial and religious communities as well as LGBTQ issues, mental health, drug and alcohol use, suicide and other topics.

I'm eager for suggestions for the book and the online guide. Please contact me at Kanigel@sfsu.edu if you have questions or something to share.

member milestones

Tenure, promotions & more

Michael Ray Smith, SPIG Head from 2013-2014, will be the keynote speaker at Baptist Communicators Workshop April 19-22, 2017, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Smith is professor of communication at Lee University, Cleveland, Tennessee.



Smith

Pam Parry, interim chair of the Communication Department at Eastern Kentucky University, was awarded the Applegate Award for Excellence in Research by the Kentucky Communication Association at



Parry

the group's annual meeting in September. The immediate past head of SPIG, Parry is the author of *Eisenhower: The Public Relations President* and the co-editor of a book series on Women in American Political History.

Sonya R. DiPalma has recently received tenure and a promotion to associate professor in the Department of Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina-Asheville.



DiPalma

Dave Madsen, assistant professor and chair of the Department of Mass Communication at Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa, presented a research-in-progress paper at the Super Regional Conference of the Broadcast

Education Association at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina, October 13-15. The paper, "How Millennials Are Reshaping the Local News Landscape," was co-authored by Morningside's Marilyn Eastman.



Madsen

Madsen is a new SPIG member and Research Co-chair. Before joining Morningside College in 2009, Madsen had been with KTIV-TV in Sioux City for 29 years, most recently serving as station manager. He also worked at KMEG-TV in Sioux City and KETV-TV in Omaha, Nebraska.

Madsen has a master's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

spig leadership

Head/ Newsletter Co-Editor (Design & Layout)
Doug Mendenhall, Abilene Christian University
doug.mendenhall@acu.edu

First Vice Head
Sonya DiPalma, UNC-Asheville
sdipalma@unca.edu

Second Vice Head
Carrie Sipes, Shippensburg University
casipes@ship.edu

Immediate Past President
Pam Parry, Eastern Kentucky University
pamela.parry@eku.edu

Secretary/Teach Committee Co-Chair/ Teacher of Year Competition Co-Chair
Cindy Simoneau, Southern Connecticut St. Univ.
simoneauc1@southernct.edu

Teach Committee Co-Chair/ Teacher of Year Competition Co-Chair
Elizabeth Atwood, Hood College
atwood@hood.edu

Research Committee Co-Chair
Jackie Incollingo, Rider University
jincollingo@rider.edu

Research Committee Co-Chair
Dave Madsen, Morningside College
madsend@morningside.edu

PF&R Committee Co-Chair
Michael A. Longinow, Biola University
michael.longinow@biola.edu

PF&R Committee Co-Chair
Katherine Orloff, Hood College
orloff@hood.edu

Newsletter Co-Editor (Editorial Content)
Carrie Buchanan, John Carroll University
cbuchanan@jcu.edu

TJMC Journal Editor
Jack Zibluk, Univ. of Tennessee at Chattanooga
john-b-zibluk@utc.edu

Commission on the Status of Women
Sandra Combs, Arkansas State University
scombs@astate.edu

Web Site
Mitzi Lewis, Midwestern State University
mitzi.lewis@mwsu.edu

Listserv
Brian Steffen, Simpson College
brian.steffen@simpson.edu

Membership Co-Chair
Michael Ray Smith, Lee University
writingsmith@yahoo.com

Membership Co-Chair
Darren Sweeney, Central Connecticut St. Univ.
sweeneyda@ccsu.edu

Social Media Co-Chair
Christopher Birks, Benedictine University
cbirks@ben.edu

Social Media Co-Chair
Jodie Gil, Southern Connecticut State University
gij4@southernct.edu

GIFT Liaison Co-Chair/Special Promotions
Kay Colley, Texas Wesleyan University
kcolley@txwes.edu

GIFT Liaisons Co-Chair
Jim Sernoe, Midwest State University
jim.sernoe@mwsu.edu

Hot Topics Liaison
John Jenks, Dominican University
jjenks@dom.edu

Commission on the Status of Minorities
Lona D. Cobb, Winston-Salem University
cobblo@wssu.edu