

spig news

Fall 2017: *The official newsletter of the AEJMC Small Programs Interest Group*



Vern Williams/Southern Connecticut State

Jodie Gil of Southern Connecticut explains a project in which students researched local stories from World War I during the SPIG preconference workshop in Chicago.

4-part workshop kicks off a busy conference for SPIG

By Carrie Buchanan
John Carroll University

The Small Programs Interest Group's preconference workshop drew more people than SPIG organizers remember ever having at an advance session before the main AEJMC conference. The approximately 25 who came left with notebooks full of ideas for "Getting Out of the Classroom."

With four hour-long panels presenting ideas for Community

Engagement, Finding & Telling World War 1 Stories, Experiential Learning in Political Communication, and Community Education for Social Justice, the workshop was thick with ideas for each participant to adopt or adapt. In addition, each received a link to a Google Drive filled with presenters' slides and other materials to help them plan their own projects and courses. SPIG members who could

See **WORKSHOP** on page 2



Sonya DiPalma

head notes

SPIG helped me find my place in higher education

As someone who transitioned into higher education from the corporate world, I feel blessed to have found the Small Programs Interest Group within the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Serving as the secretary, second vice-head, first vice-head, and now the head of SPIG for 2017-18 allows me to give back to the organization that has helped me in my transition to higher education.

I vividly recall my first AEJMC meeting in Denver, 2010. I watched with envy as faculty from larger universities moved in packs. If you're from a small program, then perhaps you know the feeling. It can be lonely attending a conference of more than 3,000 professors.

Rescue at the conference arrived in the form of Ginger Rudeseal Carter Mill. Wearing a new member ribbon on my

See **PACK** on page 7

SPIG online: aejmc.us/spig/

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

Workshop draws early crowd

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not attend and would like access should contact DiPalma for access to the drive.

Kicking off the afternoon at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile were SPIG Head Doug Mendenhall, soon-to-be Head Sonya DiPalma, and soon-to-be First Vice Head Carrie Sipes, all of whom provided detailed descriptions of their own departments' successful attempts at community engagement.

Community Engagement

Mendenhall, of Abilene Christian University, described student forays into the county with the highest proportion of Trump voters in the United States on a mission to find out what "Make America Great Again" means to people in that county. That exercise was assigned by Meredith Clark of North Texas University, brought in as a guest lecturer to conduct a weekend-long workshop on Race and Media, teaching students to dig deeper and listen longer, asking interviewees not just what they hoped for, but how it could be done, what it would involve if done well and other follow-up questions. Then, the students were ready to take on the MAGA project, visiting sites where people with different perspectives congregate and doing interviews with regular folks around the county. One common theme from all the interviews was a desire to bring people together in a public education system that has been stratified by class and race. The class used this as the springboard for the proposal of a longer project documenting that problem and potential solutions.

DiPalma, of the University



Vern Williams/Southern Connecticut State

Cindy Simoneau of Southern Connecticut shares some of the resources that have aided her ongoing World War I project.

of North Carolina in Asheville, N.C., explained her university's move from "service learning" to the concept of "community engagement" – which she defined as "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." Her multimedia storytelling course partnered with the Asheville Art Museum, with the 16 students in two groups that centered their work around a local museum/visitors' center and a forest preservation group. She described the advance planning she did, the steps involved in putting together the students' multimedia production, and the follow-up with the partner organizations in which students got feedback from the community partners.

Carrie Sipes, of Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania, pre-

sented her department's integrated marketing collaboration with a non-profit called [feel your boobies](#) and its parent organization, the FYB Foundation, whose work encourages young women to do breast self-exams and take the risk of breast cancer seriously. The Shippensburg PRSSA group developed a highly visible fundraising campaign called "bras across campus" that collected used bras and promoted a competitive attempt to create the longest chain of bras ever produced on that campus. It succeeded well beyond its initial \$500 goal, raising \$2,400 for breast cancer awareness aimed at young women.

Remembering World War I

In the second hour, panelists Cindy Simoneau and Jodie Gil, both of Southern Connecticut State University, described a multi-semester project they and their capstone

See **LESSON** on page 3

On the road for election lesson

Continued from page 2

classes are doing in partnership with the Connecticut State Library, which is preparing for the upcoming 100th anniversary of the end of World War I on Nov. 11, 2018.

The library sought oral histories and other multimedia materials to document the lives of the state's World War I veterans. None are still living, but that's one of the things Simoneau said they liked about the project: It taught students to be resourceful and creative, use archival materials, and find and interview relatives about their memories and any possessions, such as letters and journals, that they might have of the veteran. Students worked in teams on video interviews with relatives, later transcribing those interviews – a long and detailed process that produced significant learning and provided a searchable resource, Gil and Simoneau said. They wrote feature stories with photos. They also did research and wrote about local monuments to World War I heroes, created interactive timelines and other visual materials to post online with the video interviews and feature stories. Their work is collected on the [SCSU journalism website](#) as well as the [state library's WWI site](#), where it is mixed with others' work. At the end of each semester, the students present their completed projects to invited guests from the university and community. The World War I project will continue this fall, and in both spring and fall 2018, leading up to the 100th anniversary in November 2018.

Experiential Learning

The third hour of the preconference focused on Experiential Learning in Political Communica-

tion, with Israel Balderas of Palm Beach Atlantic University in Florida, Carrie Buchanan of John Carroll University in Ohio, Jill Van Wyke of Drake University in Iowa and Michael Ray Smith of Lee University in Tennessee, all of whom used the presidential election year for experiential learning opportunities.

Balderas, who until 2016 was a TV anchor and reporter at CBS affiliate WPEC in West Palm Beach, described his work with Michael Ray Smith when both were at Palm Beach Atlantic, which is located close to President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort and the scene of many visits by the president, foreign dignitaries and, of course, the national media. Both Smith and Balderas spoke about the need to accompany students for assignments like this, and their students' success in getting into some high-powered situations. Smith elaborated later, providing more detail in his presentation on his students' presidential campaign coverage and the logistics behind it.

Balderas moved on to describe his students' coverage of immigration and refugee issues, another major focus of his classes. He recently took students on an overseas trip to the Syrian border, where they visited a refugee camp and interviewed four families and some individuals (such as a former Al-Jazeera reporter) in the camp who were trying to get to America. Balderas said he sees his role with the campus newspaper as more of a news director with students as his staff, teaching them to do professional-level work.

Buchanan, whose college is near Cleveland, Ohio, took advantage of the July 2016 Republican National Convention in that city to

team-teach a linked summer class on the RNC with political science professor Colin Swearingen, also at John Carroll. All but one of the journalism students working with Buchanan had media internships during the convention week, while Swearingen's political science group had volunteer jobs with the Republicans, several inside the convention center. The one remaining journalism student covered the street protests using his smartphone and Twitter, leveraging his Spanish-English bilingualism to cover anti-Trump protests in both languages. His work got the attention of some national and international media. The weeks before and after the convention, students spent in the classroom four hours a day, learning the history, politics and journalism of political conventions. The third week, they analyzed the convention and pulled together feature stories and research papers with help from their two profs, a class visitor from the Cleveland Host Committee and Skype chats with journalists in Washington and Cleveland. The features were published on Medium.com in a publication called [Election Reflections](#) [please link to <https://medium.com/election-reflections>], which Buchanan also used in the fall to publish two journalism classes' election-issue features, candidate profiles and election-night stories.

Van Wyke also took advantage of the presidential election, taking a group of 25 students with two professors for two weeks in Washington, D.C., around the Inauguration in January.

They did advance training and planning, with online assignments and blogs started before the trip,

See **JUSTICE** on page 5

behind the spig service award

Dalton-Landon award winner remembers founder's big role

By Jim Sernoe
Midwestern State University

Like many of us at small programs, SPIG founders Terry Dalton and Kim Landon appreciated and understood the importance of the research presented every summer at the AEJMC conference. But they also knew they (and dozens of us in smaller, teaching-intensive programs) wanted and needed something else: camaraderie.



Sernoe

They knew that life in a smaller, teaching-intensive program is far different from that in an R-1. Instead of pumping out the journal articles, writing book chapters and bringing in grant money, we are tasked with teaching, grading, navigating curriculum committees, teaching, grading, keeping the student media afloat, teaching, grading, fending off those who think the liberal arts are not needed, then teaching and grading some more. We try to stay connected to our disciplines, but with 4/4 loads and/or being the only journalism faculty member in a mishmash communication program, we aren't exactly leading candidates for AEJMC's research awards.

They understood that what we really need from the conference is panels that address our everyday

realities, not obscure research questions; lunches and dinners with colleagues where we can discuss our shared concerns; and the camaraderie that goes with talking to others who understand and can suggest solutions to our shared problems.

To address those concerns and create a way for us to connect with each other, Dalton and Landon set out to establish the Small Programs Interest Group. Navigating AEJMC's procedures for creating new groups is not easy, but they did so in the mid-'90s. Dalton served as SPIG chair twice (Landon held just about every other position in a 20-year stretch), and they both promoted everything the group did. Membership quickly topped 100.

Dalton continued organizing panels and later pushed for and organized the Hot Topics panel, which continues today. Because of the way AEJMC sets up its schedule, most panels are determined in December, but Hot Topics lets us address something more recent. These have been among our most-attended sessions over the years.

Dalton once told me he was cautioned not to pursue the idea of the Small Programs Interest Group.

Dalton once told me he was cautioned not to pursue the idea of the Small Programs Interest Group because a) many in AEJMC thought there were already too many divisions, councils, associations and interest groups and b) AEJMC was a forum for research, thus not many of us spent our days teaching and working primarily with undergraduates.



Courtesy of C. Kurt Holter

Terry Dalton was one of the co-founders of the Small Programs Interest Group.

But he wondered why there were so few panels on how to teach journalism, even though 2,000 people who teach journalism were gathered in one place. He worked with students whose personal lives included financial problems, family problems, health problems and more, and he wondered why there were so few panels on helping these students navigate not only their problems but also make academic progress. He knew there had to be others who had well-meaning colleagues on their campuses but were still isolated because no one else truly understood the joys and challenges of advising the student media.

He remained convinced that the SPIG would become those people's niche in AEJMC and pursued it anyway.

See **DALTON** on page 5

aejmc chicago

Social justice a central theme

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during which time Van Wyke impressed upon the students that, while the Inaugural would be party time for many people in Washington, they would have to work hard to complete their multimedia projects and blogs.

In all, they made more than 20 site visits, met 18 Drake alumni, walked an estimated 90 miles and logged roughly 85 miles on the Metro. And there were seven cases of flu. The results are on their website at DrakeinDC.com.

Van Wyke's presentation went over many of the details one must attend to before, during and after such an expedition. Her PowerPoint, syllabus and other materials are on the Google Drive in the Experiential Learning folder.

Shaking the Stigma

A dynamic duo from Cabrini University in Pennsylvania, Dawn Francis and Jerry Zurek, offered the fourth hour's theme: Shaking the stigma of "activism" or "advocacy" when doing journalism about so-

cial justice.

Their capstone students regularly focus their multimedia projects on issues of social justice, which is a major overarching theme at this Catholic liberal arts college.

Francis and Zurek wanted to share ways to do this without raising hackles among objective journalists. Social justice has long been an important theme in journalism, particularly investigative work. At Cabrini, they have been teaching students to approach that theme while maintaining journalistic standards and ethics.

Inspired by a [New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com) [op-ed](#) about the murder of British parliamentarian Jo Cox, Francis and Zurek singled out this quote: "The fight against hatred and division is a defining issue of our time; no institution can afford to sit it out and hope for the best." They also looked to Lawrence Frey and David Palmer's 2014 book "Teaching Communication Activism" for guidance. Solutions journalism is a key element of the approach.

A system called the "5 Whys" encourages deeper questioning on

why unjust situations occur, using "root cause analysis."

Creating connections in the community is another theme, resulting in capstone projects that use multimedia websites telling stories behind social justice issues, work with community partners and focus on solutions.

They don't shy away from international issues. This year, one student's theme was refugees. In previous years, Cabrini's capstones have focused on the 2012 Arab Spring and other international issues, teaching students to develop contacts abroad and use Skype, email, Twitter and other electronic communication to share their stories.

"We are not training partisan activist journalists," they stressed in their presentation, available on the Google Drive. "Rather, we are ... teaching communication for engaged citizenship."

PowerPoints, syllabi and other documents related to the workshop are available by request from sdipalma@unca.edu.

Winner honors Terry Dalton

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As many of you know, Dalton died in February of dementia. A small group of us had a toast to his memory at the hotel bar one afternoon in Chicago, but his real legacy is that the SPIG exists, even though he was told it wouldn't work.

As some of you also know, this summer I became the third person to receive the Dalton-Landon Foundation Award for service to

the SPIG (with a shout-out to Vivian Martin and Brian Steffen).

I would have been humbled and grateful in any case, given what Dalton and Landon achieved, but in the year of Dalton's passing, it is even more meaningful to me. I appreciate the recognition from the SPIG leadership, as well as my SPIG friends and colleagues.

As I said at the meeting, I can go to any number of conferences to

find my kind of research and academic discussion, but for 20 years I have considered the SPIG "my people." I can discuss money problems, faculty problems, curriculum problems, technology problems – and the many, many significant victories we all have – without having to explain myself. That goes a lot further toward restoring what little sanity I have than a keynote speech or research panel.

aejmc chicago

PR and journalism can coexist

By **Sonya DiPalma**
North Carolina-Asheville

Courses in small programs frequently do double duty serving both public relations and journalism students. Broad programs come with a variety of interests and the question, "Why do I have to take this course?"

Here are a few take-aways from the panelists who teach courses serving a variety of media interests.

Toni Albertson, Mount San Antonio

Public relations practitioners and journalists must engage their audience using data. You need to watch what happens and you need to know what your audience wants. You must also update and respond to information regularly.

If you saw it online, would you click on it and read it? No, it would have to be trending. What makes a story trend? Pass along value or share worthiness

Image is everything; this is the public relations role in journalism.

Distinguish between content that makes a good social media post and content that makes for a good story.

Monitor what's trending daily. Present trends to editors, and have PR students work with editors to promote stories.

Ginny Whitehouse, Eastern Kentucky

Approach media ethics from a theory-based perspective by making connection between theory and the cases. Make it personal.

Everybody has a code. Contrast and compare local, national and international codes. Compare virtues – truth, fairness, respect, conflict of interest, confidentiality.



Toni Albertson of Mount San Antonio speaks in Chicago.

Have students: 1. Pick a profession. 2. Find three codes (Online news association, MMA, SPI, PRSA, etc.). For juniors and seniors, find two or three different codes from that profession, then compare them.

The nature of ethics should be who and what we want to be and described within the code. Ask students to reflect on what it means to be a professional within that field.

Alan Goldenbach, Hood

Overcome misconceptions and stereotypes, such as that journalists and PR pros hate each other. This isn't the norm.

Old folks learned it as "newswriting." Change the name of

the class to "media writing."

Learn the basic fundamentals of how to write news stories, obituaries, accidents/disasters, speeches/meetings, and crime/court. All of these work for both PR and journalism students because they teach history/chronology of events, dialogue – when somebody speaks, observing and detailing action. What do they all teach us collectively? To spot what's needed, what's missing, extract clarity from jargon, and how to keep the audience in mind.

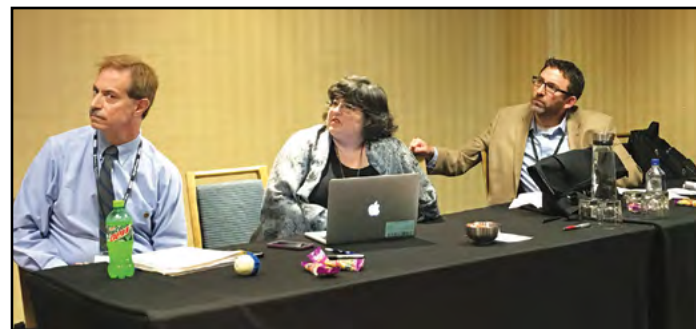
Jim Sernoe, Midwestern State

Focus on the First Amendment, free expression, and what you'll get in trouble for if you do it.

Cover censorship, prior restraint, national security, political ideas, obscenity and emotional and physical harm. Use cases and resulting damages.

Cover legal concepts such as ignorance, spirit and letter of the law. Provide an introduction to the Supreme Court and how a case moves through the system.

Make the course project-based by holding a moot court with a hypothetical case and teams and argue in court style. This requires students to speak well in public and to use critical thinking skills. Other class members may serve as justices who can ask questions.



Panelists Jim Sernoe of Midwestern, Ginny Whitehouse of Eastern Kentucky, and Alan Goldenbach of Hood College.

head notes

How SPIG became my 'pack'

Continued from page 1

nametag and no doubt looking like a newbie, I was invited by Ginger to the Teacher of the Year Luncheon. My recollection is reminiscent of Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*. I remember meeting for the first time Brian Steffen, Cindy Simoneau, Vivian Martin, and Jim Simmons, who invited me out with others for an evening stroll through the art district in Denver. This was the beginning of the formation of my pack within AEJMC.

I've experienced many benefits as a Spigger, and as still a relatively new member in higher education, I would like to take a few minutes to share the benefits of SPIG membership by debunking a few myths.

Myth 1: Universities with an emphasis on teaching don't require research.

Reality: Universities emphasizing teaching also require research. Professors are expected to present annual conference papers and publish original research. SPIG members have published numerous textbooks, academic journal articles, and mainstream publications.

Myth 2: SPIG doesn't provide a means for peer-reviewed publishing.

Reality: Thanks to the work of many, in 2011 SPIG founded *Teaching Journalism & Mass Communication*, a peer-reviewed journal. Calls for papers reach professors throughout all divisions and interest groups within AEJMC.

Myth 3: If I'm from a large university, then SPIG isn't for me.

Reality: SPIG welcomes professors from all programs. Great Ideas For Teachers, co-sponsored with Community College Journalism Association, recognizes innovative ideas in teaching from programs of all sizes. It is one of the many popular events held at the AEJMC conference, and a wonderful way to learn new techniques for the classroom.

Myth 4: New professors should focus on division groups over interest groups.

Reality: Undoubtedly, the most unsolicited "advice" I received when joining AEJMC. Without taking anything away from division groups, it's important to note that SPIG provides vital resources for balancing the many roles of a new professor – teaching, research, service, and advising. Yes, advising. In addition to teaching a 12-credit hour load, professors in small programs provide academic advising for students. You got a question or a problem? Most likely

there's a SPIG member who is willing to lend an ear.

Myth 5: Programming is so competitive, it's impossible to get a panel accepted at AEJMC.

Reality: Through co-sponsorships with other interest groups and divisions, SPIG's programming reflects the latest trends, research, and pedagogical techniques within journalism and mass communication. In addition to panels, SPIG sponsors a four-part pre-conference workshop providing more opportunities to present and to learn from others.

Myth 6: Serving as an officer seems intimidating. What if I mess up?

Reality: You can support the development and sustainment of SPIG through multiple ways. Here are a few: social media manager, newsletter editor, newsletter design & layout, TJMC editor, web design & layout, reviewer, proofreader, and officer positions such as secretary, second-vice head, first-vice head and head.

Lastly, perhaps most importantly, there's a prevalent characteristic among SPIG members. Members often view their interaction with students as part of their legacy in life. I can't think of a better legacy – or a better pack to run with.

spig officers for 2017-18

Head: Sonya DiPalma
First Vice Head: Carrie Sipes
Second Vice Head: Elizabeth Atwood
Immediate Past Head: Doug Mendenhall
Secretary: Rosemarie Alexander
Research Committee Co-Chairs: Jackie Incollingo, Dave Madsen
Teaching Committee/Teacher of the Year: Cindy Simoneau

PF&R Committee Co-Chairs: Michael Longinow, Katherine Orloff
Newsletter Editor: Doug Mendenhall
Commission on Status of Women: Sandra Combs
Web site: Mitzi Lewis
Journal editor: Catherine Strong
Listserv: Brian Steffen

Membership: Michael Ray Smith
Social Media Co-Chairs: Jodie Gil, Kim Fox
GIFT Liaisons: Adam Maksl, Jim Sernoe
Hot Topics Liaison: John Jenks
Commission on the Status of Minorities: Lona Cobb
Special Promotions: Kay Colley

teacher of the year

Maksl accepts SPIG award for power of his teaching, advising

Adam Maksl received the Ginger Rudeseal Carter Miller Teacher of the Year Award during the 2017 AEJMC convention in Chicago.

About 30 members of the Small Programs Interest Group gathered to toast Maksl during a luncheon at Volaré Italian Restaurant near the convention site.

Maksl is an assistant professor of journalism at Indiana University Southeast, where he has received several teaching awards and is the adviser to the student newspaper. His award was an-

nounced last spring.

The TOY judges noted this year's strong applicant pool, but singled out Maksl for his range of teaching skills and creative assignments.

"Committed educators motivate students to want to learn beyond the classroom walls," Maksl said in a statement of his teaching philosophy. "This is especially important when training professional communicators to go into jobs of the future."

The Ginger Rudeseal Carter Miller Teacher of the Year award,

named for a former SPIG president and long-time group proponent, honors a SPIG member who demonstrates excellence in teaching and advising.

Outgoing SPIG Head Doug Mendenhall welcomed members to the family-style event.

During the luncheon, Maksl was presented with a plaque and \$200 by Liz Atwood, director of the TOY annual contest.

Maksl shared his thoughts about the art of teaching and advising and the scramble of working at a small university.



Vern Williams/Southern Connecticut State

Liz Atwood of Hood College, chair of the SPIG Teacher of the Year Contest, presents a plaque and checks to TOY winner Adam Maksl.

teacher of the year



Photos by Vern Williams/Southern Connecticut State

Adam Maksl shares his thoughts on teaching with SPIG members at Volaré Italian restaurant in Chicago.



SPIG Head Doug Mendenhall of Abilene Christian University welcomes members to the Teacher of the Year Luncheon.



SPIG member Ngozi Akinro of Texas Wesleyan entertains her son during the luncheon celebration in Chicago.

Panelists tackle challenges of weak freshman writing skills

By Carrie Buchanan
John Carroll University

A full room greeted the Aug. 10 panel, “The Challenges of Writing 101: A Pedagogical Research Panel,” cosponsored by the Small Programs Interest Group and AEJMC’s Magazine Division. The opening question from the first panelist, Mitzi Lewis of Midwestern State University, drew the audience’s interest:

“Raise a hand if you have not had a challenge teaching a student to write,” Lewis said.

No one did, but there were murmurs of understanding. Everyone, it seemed, was there to find answers to this problem. And this panel had some.

Lewis, along with panel moderator John Hanc of the New York Institute of Technology and Robin Reid of Midwestern State, has been doing research into the question of substandard freshman writing and whether it’s as much of a problem as the muttering of professors makes out. They found evidence in their own surveys and others to back up the idea.

David Abrahamson of Northwestern and Jeff Nealy of the University of Tampa were also involved in survey development and testing.

Lewis, Hanc and Reid surveyed members of SPIG and the Magazine Division as well as members of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies about their experiences teaching writing.



Mitzi Lewis

Some who responded were members of other educator groups.

They used nonprobability, quota sampling, which means the results are not generalizable. But they got a broad variety of respondents: members of 64 organizations from 21 countries were among its 120 participants. Respondents had various levels of experience in teaching writing, with some new folks, some long-timers. Most said they teach undergraduates.

Of the respondents, 77 percent said students’ writing skills have eroded. Grammar and spelling were most commonly cited as problematic, while other elements – clarity, organization, focus, precision, development, concision – were also cited as poor among freshman writers.

Seventy percent of respondents agreed that they were spending a lot of time teaching the basics of writing. Asked if they had been given any training in how to teach these basics, 57 percent said yes, but 43 percent said no.

Lewis distributed a handout with tips, resources and quotes from the survey responses, which can be accessed [here](#). It was presented at IALJS in May, so it has that date on top. The slides from that presentation are also on [Slide-Share](#).

Kevin Lerner of Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, spoke next, pointing out that at many smaller colleges, journalism professors are teaching other courses and have combined classes with students from other majors and concentrations in them. Lerner described himself as one of those people.

77% of respondents to a survey of members of SPIG and other groups said they see erosion of student writing skills.

At Marist, he said, “Journalism is a concentration embedded within a major embedded within a liberal arts degree.” The challenge for him is how to fit journalism into a tight curriculum with many other priorities.

One solution was an online course called Readings in Journalism, with a narrative writing project that gets students out of the “freshman comp” writing style.

The assignment sends them out to observe a place and what’s going on in it. Examples? A “travel study” on a place they have visited.

The perennial favorite, however, is the “bar study,” Lerner said. He provides guidelines and they go out to the place they have chosen,

do detailed observations and write a narrative observation piece. He said he has found the experience produces some good writing and is compelling for most students.

David Abrahamson of the Medill

See **WRITING** on page 11

Writing teachers don’t give up

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School of Journalism at Northwestern University is in the opposite kind of program: one where he can teach long-form journalism and magazine editing. Abrahamson, who spoke next on the panel, actually read his paper aloud, an unusual approach but, in this case, he had everyone’s rapt attention.

“I believe high expectations in a classroom are everything,” he said. You can pitch your course to the level of the slowest class members, he said, but that bores the brightest students. At a medium level, you lose the slowest and bore the best students. So, he pitches high and forces everyone to scramble.

He offers students two of what he acknowledges are “chestnuts”: “One is they are going to write the best piece they have ever written in their lives,” he said. And “I want you to find the region of your heart where the animal roams free.”

He also promises them: “Don’t worry, I won’t let you drown. Please come down to the deep end of the pool.”

A couple of techniques he uses are interactivity and multiple drafts. Students share their drafts and write editing notes for each

“I believe high expectations in a classroom are everything.”

David Abrahamson
Northwestern University

other. The first draft is not graded; it’s just for editing and feedback. The second draft is graded and edited, as is the final draft.

“Almost all of them rise to the occasion,” he said.

The fourth panelist, Calvin Hall of North Carolina Central University, was not able to attend, so his paper was read by moderator Hanc.

Hall’s paper offered several tips for teaching literary journalism:

- He recommends an assignment to write in the style of one of the famous literary journalists;
- If the idea of long-form is imposing, go shorter. Do short literary writing;
- Encourage publication. It encourages people to do their best work;
- Have students read some of the great literary journalists’ work aloud in class;
- Get students to read their own

writing aloud.

The paper also discussed one advantage of teaching online classes: Students who hold back in person will contribute online. It can bring them out.

Hall’s paper also offered suggestions he gives to his “grammar problem students”:

- Discuss this problem in class;
- Tell students, “Your reputation is on the line with everything you put out, even social media” and “Make it a branding thing – this is your brand.”
- Create games that test grammar. Make it fun.

In the question period following the panel, one idea, raised by Vincent Filak of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and Carrie Sipes of Shippensburg University, was to give a proficiency test that identifies students who need extra help with basic grammar, and ensure that they get that help outside class.

Sipes, who is SPIG’s first vice head, said anyone who wished to know about the system she uses could email her about it or use the SPIG listserv.

member milestone

Journal editorship

Dane S. Claussen, who holds the James Pedas Chair in Media, Communication and Public Relations at Thiel College (Greenville, Pennsylvania) officially becomes editor of *Newspaper Research Journal* on January 1. Claussen is also editor of *The Intelligencer*, the newsletter of the American Journalism Historical Association.

In spring 2017, Claussen was one of two official nominees for AEJMC vice president; he lost the election to Texas Tech Dean David Perlmutter. Also, Claussen is one of only four U.S. scholars chosen for the Research Committee of the World Media Economics & Management Conference, to be held May 6-9 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Squirrel away a story for SPIG News winter edition

With a tentative publication date in February 2018, SPIG News is now recruiting articles and photographs from all SPIG members for its winter edition.

Write about your own classroom successes, out-of-classroom experience, technology applications or academic/professional crossovers – or just provide us with coverage of an academic event you’ve attended that’s of interest to SPIG members.

Send your ideas or completed stories to doug.mendenhall@acu.edu.

aejmc chicago

How do you recruit students? One by one, panelists suggest

By Catherine Strong
Massey University, New Zealand

In an era of tough competition for students, journalism programs that are small may have the bonus of being able to better connect with prospective students.

But it is not easy, according to six journalism educators from across the country.

Michael Longinow from Biola, a private Christian university in southern California, pointed out that the students today are quick to change schools or majors and don't stick around like they once did.

"Once you get them in the front door they are looking at the back door, getting ready to leave," he said. "It used to be students would change year to year, but now it is semester to semester."

He said personal touches can keep them engaged with the small program, such as showing prospective students and their parents that you know them individually by contacting them and knowing their background and interests.

One way to be visible is to get off campus and take every opportunity to show you are interested in them, said Toni Albertson of Mount San Antonio, a community college in Los Angeles.

"Look at your newsroom more as a business than just an academic program," she said. "And like a real business, promote your brand. Talk to students all over the place."

She said she visits 15 surrounding communities and looks for opportunities to talk to high school clubs and student newspapers, as well as on-campus days. She said she shows them that



Welcome prospective students with open arms, say educators, from left: Alan Goldenbach (Hood), John Kerezy (Cuyahoga), Toni Albertson (Mount San Antonio), Donna Bertazzoni (Hood), and Michael Longinow (Biola).

journalism is not just writing and that there are myriad of careers they can join.

"When I go, none intend to come to us, but often after a talk I get four or five who changed their minds and are interested," she said.

Albertson and John Kerezy of Cuyahoga Community College in Ohio said they believe many students want a small program, because of smaller class size and closer relationship with teachers.

Kerezy said he felt that small programs give students a better chance for internships and freelancing before they set off for a four-year-university.

He advised two-year programs to make it easy for students to transition to a four-year institute by helping them design a course schedule that slots in smoothly to the bigger university.

On the other hand, Donna Bertazzoni, from four-year Hood

College in Maryland, advised making it easy for two-year college students to flow into your four-year college, such as by accepting the students' previous courses.

"When they are going to shift to a four-year college we want to make sure it is us," she said.

Alan Goldenbach, also from Hood, described an open attitude to offering "taster" classes. When a prospective student wants to sit in on any class, Goldenbach said the faculty's immediate reaction was, "Yes."

He also said that a small program meant more flexibility. "We can tailor a course each semester to fit what the students want, such as including sports journalism."

The educators agreed that it is tough to keep enrollments up no matter how much effort you put in, but that encouraging a dozen students at a time can make a difference to the overall numbers.

spig research competition

Winner is cross-disciplinary



First place for The Trifecta: Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration Among Journalism, Public Relations and Video Production Students in a Simulated Environment. Katherine Fink, Pace University. Not pictured, Paul Ziek, Pace University.



Second place for How to Communicate University Reputation: In-depth Interviews of Parents to Understand Their Perceived University Reputation and Communication Behavior. Christa Burkholder, left, and Youngah Lee, Ball State University.



Third place for "Using Their Own Voice": Learning to Tell Stories with Instagram. Robert Byrd, University of Memphis. Not shown, Pamela Denney, University of Memphis.

Photos by Dave Madsen/Morningside

spig business meeting minutes

By Rosemarie Alexander-Isett

*University of Alaska Southeast
SPIG treasurer*

SPIG Head [Doug Mendenhall](#), Abilene Christian University, convened the meeting at 7 p.m.

SPIG financials “appear to be on steady ground,” he said, with \$4,800 on hand at the end of June.

The group voted to convene a small ad hoc committee to determine the future of SPIG’s peer-reviewed journal, [Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication](#). SPIG has published TJMC since 2011.

Outgoing editor [Brian Steffen](#), [Simpson College](#), outlined several options for TJMC:

- Make the journal part of [Sage Open](#). Sage Publication’s open-access journal. While the TJMC editor would remain in charge, Sage would handle all production, publication and editing. The publication fee would be \$395 per article to be paid by SPIG or the authors.

- Contact other publishers, such as Taylor & Francis, about taking over TJMC. It’s expected that could be as costly as the Sage option.

- Participate in AEJMC’s discussions on the creation of an

online “mega journal” for several divisions and interest groups. That would likely result in a long-term suspension of TJMC, while the association determines its action.

- Pay for TJMC out of SPIG membership fees. Currently at \$12 a year, it’s estimated that SPIG fees would increase to about \$30 per year to produce the journal. TJMC marketing and sales would fall to SPIG members.

- No change. SPIG would continue publishing TJMC, which has become a much greater work load than anyone had anticipated at the beginning, Steffen said. The original goal was to publish four times a year. “The reality is we publish twice a year and it’s pretty stressful to get it done that often,” Steffen said. (Following the meeting, [Cathy Strong](#), Massey University, agreed to serve as TJMC editor.)

Based on the decision to form a committee to consider TMJC options, SPIG members voted to keep dues at \$12 for 2017-2018.

SPIG elected officers for 2017-18, with [Sonya DiPalma](#), University of North Carolina Asheville, as Head. [Carrie Sipes](#), Shippensburg

State University, and [Liz Atwood](#), Hood University, are first and second vice heads.

Jim Sernoe, associate professor at Midwestern State University, received the Dalton-Landon Foundation Award for Service to SPIG. Calling him “a clear servant on behalf of our interest group,” Mendenhall nominated Sernoe for the award.

Sernoe has served twice as SPIG head and is an invaluable resource for other SPIG heads, Mendenhall said. He has always been a welcoming presence for new SPIG members.

Sernoe is currently TJMC reviews editor and has played other roles in publication of the journal.

In accepting the award, Sernoe said he’s always cared about SPIG. “It gives us a niche,” he said. “There are other conferences I go to for my research needs and my scholastic kinds of things, but this is where my people are.”

The Small Programs Interest Group was founded in AEJMC in 1994 by Terry Dalton and Kim Landon. In 2015 the interest group honored the founders by naming the service award after them.