

spig news

Fall 2019: *The official newsletter of the AEJMC Small Programs Interest Group*



Photo by Carrie Sipes

Jackie Incollingo, left, receives SPIG's Ginger Rudeseal Carter Miller Teacher of the Year Award from Kalen Churcher during the 2019 AEJMC conference in Toronto.

Incollingo receives TOY for her work with Rider News

By Kalen Churcher
Wilkes University

The Small Programs Interest Group was proud to present Jackie Incollingo of Rider University with the 2019 Ginger Rudeseal Carter Miller Teacher of the Year Award at this year's AEJMC conference.

The award, named for a former SPIG president and long-time proponent of the interest group, honors a SPIG member who demon-

strates excellence in teaching and advising.

Kalen Churcher, associate professor of communication studies at Wilkes University and current vice head of SPIG, was the chair of the 2019 Teacher of the Year committee.

Incollingo is a former reporter and Washington correspondent, working at such newspapers and agencies as The Philadelphia In-

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Liz Atwood

head notes

It's the people who come first with this group

By Liz Atwood
Hood College

During a panel discussion at the AEJMC conference in Toronto, I heard a professor graciously thank all those who had helped make her book possible, including more than a dozen student researchers, the foundation that had awarded her a large grant, and her university, which supported her eight-year project.

Her work environment was one I could hardly imagine.

Then I talked with my SPIG colleagues. We shared worries about student enrollments and bemoaned the small travel stipends. We talked about the challenges of teaching seven or eight courses a year while at the same time balancing service and scholarship.

I thought, these are the people who understand me.

It isn't just a matter of misery loving company. My colleagues in

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head notes

SPIG will focus on four goals

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the Small Programs Interest Group are, for the most part like me—former journalists and public relations practitioners who are trying to teach communication skills to students who are coming of age in a media world very different from the one we knew.

In the nearly 10 years I've been a member of SPIG, I have been in awe of the dedication of those who work in small schools. They teach a heavy course load, but they keep on top of the latest trends in the profession. They don't have an army of student assistants, but they nevertheless find time to conduct research, write books and publish in academic journals. Oh, yeah, and many are also heads of their departments and programs.

Yet as much as I admire the professional accomplishments of the

SPIG members, the main reason I joined the group is this: People are always willing to help.

When a SPIG member has a problem, all he or she needs to do is post a question to the SPIG Listserv, and within a day there will be a half dozen folks around the country ready to offer advice and impart their own experiences.

To me, this is the heart of SPIG—a group of professionals who believe teaching is their mission, and they are happy to share that knowledge and enthusiasm with anyone who asks.

Already, many volunteers have stepped forward to help with SPIG programming, recruitment and professional development projects.

I am looking forward to the coming year as SPIG celebrates its 25th anniversary. I am excited about the possibility of a virtual panel on teaching students with

autism. I can't wait to see the great panel ideas that members come up with for the conference in San Francisco. I'm looking forward to working with the new officers. And I am looking forward to continuing to learn from all of you.

This year, I will concentrate on four major goals:

1. Recruiting new members, particularly racial and ethnic minorities
2. Assuring a diverse representation on the SPIG conference panels
3. Providing new teaching and professional development opportunities, including a virtual conference
4. Refining the GIFT competition and publicizing the winning ideas.

I welcome your suggestions and encourage your involvement in these endeavors.

cover story

Incollingo 'fierce' in defending students

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quirer, The Tampa Tribune, and the Associated Press. She has worked at Rider University since 2014 and advises the student newspaper, *The Rider News*.

"The role has brought me tremendous joy, but has also put me in the position to serve as a fierce advocate for student journalism," Incollingo said as part of her teacher of the year application packet.

About 20 people attended the luncheon award ceremony at the Toronto AEJMC conference. After saying a few words, Churcher presented Incollingo with a plaque and monetary award.

Members of the committee noted the commitment all applicants

had to their teaching, and described the nominees as exceptionally gifted.

"Jackie Incollingo is for our students an impressive role model. ... She is unfailingly encouraging and helpful," said one of Incollingo's references. "Students respond positively to her and show a remarkable comfort in exchanging ideas with her."

Application information for the 2020 teacher of the year award will be announced in spring 2020.

Professor Jeremy Sarachan, chair and associate professor in the Department of Media and Communication at St. John Fisher College, is heading up this year's committee. SPIG members are encouraged to nominate themselves or others.



Photo by Carrie Sipes

Jackie Incollingo worked professionally with the Associated Press and several daily newspapers before joining the faculty of Rider University as adviser of the student newspaper.

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Panel proposals are almost due for San Francisco

It's hard to believe that AEJMC 2019 is over and plans are already in motion for 2020. Who's ready for San Francisco?

Panel proposals are being accepted by Kalen Churcher, vice head of SPIG and an associate professor of communication studies at Wilkes University. Panel proposals are due to Churcher (kalen.churcher@wilkes.edu) by Sept. 15.

Fully developed panel proposals are welcome, but those with concepts/ideas in-progress may also submit. Remember that the panel scheduling process encourages co-sponsorship with other interest groups and divisions. As such, you are encouraged to reach out to other divisions and interest groups when establishing your panel. Such co-sponsorship is encouraged; however, please only submit your panel proposal to ONE division or interest group.

Thinking of submitting? Here are some tips for your proposal:

- Be clear. Remember that reviewers don't always have the same expertise as you. Be concise in stating your objectives and goals.
- Be realistic. What can you accomplish within the time limit of your proposed panel? Decide if you're looking for depth or breadth – then tackle it.
- Be innovative. Did you attend a great panel at the 2019 conference? If so, chances are that same topic isn't needed again. Per-

haps consider "continuing the discussion," but remember to be sure there's advancement.

- Be choosy. What type of panel would you like to submit? Is it a preconference program? Teaching panel? Research? PF&R? Consider your options, then start writing.

- Be diverse. There are wonderful presenters out there. Diversify! Let's get various thoughts and ideas from diverse institutions, diverse backgrounds and diverse ideologies.

- Be local. Consider inviting panelists from the San Francisco area who may have just the expertise you need.

- Be thoughtful. If you are still in need of a co-sponsor, be sure to leave spots for the other IG or Division to be represented.

- Be open. Explore interest groups or divisions you have not worked with in the past.

- Be flexible. Is there another person with an idea that is similar to yours? Why not combine panels to create something potentially stronger.

- Be aware. There are deadlines for a reason. The panel proposal/program creation process is quite involved. Don't be left out because of a missed deadline.

Ready to submit? The SPIG panel proposal form is online this year at <https://forms.gle/5aBA6DWjAo35WAQ97>. Still have questions? Email Churcher (kalen.churcher@wilkes.edu)

toronto: pre-conference 1

Opening panel explores what interviews bring to profession

By Doug Mendenhall

Abilene Christian University

“The interview was not a happy invention,” humorist Mark Twain said in an interview long ago. “It is perhaps the poorest of all ways of getting at what is in a man.”

Nevertheless, three SPIG panels filled Aug. 6 in Toronto with thoughts on how to get the most out of interviewing.

Vivian Martin of Central Connecticut State brought up the Twain quote early in the first session, which focused on an academic approach, using interviews for qualitative research. Joining Martin were CCSU colleague Theodora Ruhs and Sue Robinson of Wisconsin-Madison. Mitzi Lewis of Midwestern moderated the discussion.

Martin listed a number of weaknesses of relying on interviews:

- They rely on second- and third-level reflections.
- Non-expert interviewees are merely taking a first stab at what they might think.
- They are primarily shaped by existing discourses.
- Excuses and justifications receive heavy emphasis.
- Too much stock is placed on the interviewee’s cultural repertoire.

On the other hand, though, without interviews, where would the information-gathering process be? Martin cited an example from the film “The Paper,” in which editors argue there simply is no publishable story until the reporter can “get the cop quote,” even though it may be hurried and almost incidental.

Martin shared a spectrum of interview types, ranging from simple qualitative to ethnographic, to phe-

nomenological, to grounded theory.

At the upper end of that spectrum, she said a grounded-theory or phenomenology interviewer would attempt to ask a single question that was as broad and eliciting as possible.

For example, she said, “Tell me about school?” instead of “When did you first become a victim of bullying?” When done well, she said this method can result in 10 questions being answered with one broad opening.

Ruhs offered a case study of her observations at a local television newsroom in Maine, following Herbert Gans’ 1999 assertion that interviewing is a participatory action, which can be considered a form of ethnography.

She gained access to the station through an internship, then sent a letter to staff members explaining her intent so that there would be no hints of deception or secrecy. Ruhs said she built relationships and engaged in conversations to increase trust, then used those to narrow her focus, trying to find patterns.

A good ethnographer still must stay open to things that don’t obviously fit into the obvious patterns, Ruhs said.

In her case, the focus that finally emerged was on what newswiness looks like and how reporters define it.

Offering specific tips for ethnographers, Ruhs suggested:

- Rewriting notes as soon as possible. Be as descriptive as possible. Revisit the day.
- Balance what is seen and what is said.
- Remember the questions that were asked, not just the answers to

them.

- Don’t let past experiences color your interpretation of the present.

Robinson’s discussion flowed from her experience as AEJMC’s 2019 winner of the Tankard Book Award for “Networked News, Racial Divides: How Power and Privilege Shape Public Discourse in Progressive Communities.”

When interviewing across divides, Robinson said it is crucial for an interviewer to stay aware of her lack of a lens equal to the subject’s and to understand that the divide increases the time and effort required for the process.

“If I’m interviewing a middle-aged white female reporter,” she said, “I can do it in an hour.” However, interviewing anyone who isn’t just a mirror image takes her longer.

Robinson said that not understanding why someone takes offense at a question is not the point. An aware interviewer should just know that they did take offense and adjust.

She also learned, during the eight-year process of completing the book, the importance of working to note different interpretations than her own, and of following up with participants to check her own analyses against their understanding and experience.

She said it was essential to have an African-American researcher read her book before publication, just to look for potential race-related oversights that she might not have been aware of.

While the process was slowed by these extra steps, Robinson said it was worth the effort.

“The cost benefit was that it changed my life,” she said.

toronto: pre-conference 2

Teaching art of interviewing is about taking down barriers

By Doug Mendenhall

Abilene Christian University

The art of the interview is to conduct them so that subjects don’t know they are being interviewed, said Joe Treaster of Miami, who moderated the second session of the SPIG preconference workshop, “Teaching the Art of the Interview: News Interviewing, The Fundamentals.”

Not everyone is good at this, Treaster asserted.

His point was proved in an exercise in which panelist Michael Longinow of Biola interviewed panelist Alan Goldenbach of Hood College.

“Most of that was ad lib,” Gold-



University of Miami photo

Joe Treaster of Miami said one of the most important qualities of a good interviewer is the ability to fit in – to put the subject at ease and then just have a conversation.

enbach said after the awkward, stumbling effort.

The former Washington Post sports reporter said common nomenclature adds to the difficulty of teaching interviewing. He said his beginning students think of “interviewing” as difficult and intense — Oprah Winfrey on the couch, not just having a conversation, so he tries not to use the I-word with them.

“Nobody wants to talk to anybody ... and now they have to do it in an interview setting?” he said. “Noooo. They’ll never do it.”

Panelist Kalen Churcher of Wilkes agreed with that assessment. She said the first thing students want to know is whether they can just email or text questions to a subject.

To get past this obstacle, Churcher said she uses mock interviews, which need to be tailored to the subject, whether it is the university president or an elementary school student.

Churcher said this gets students to think more about what goes into an interview, such as dress and the perceived authenticity of the interviewer. “Kids are among the most difficult to interview,” she said, “because you may have to play Legos for a while first.”

Adding to those specifics, Treaster, with more than 30 years of experience at The New York Times, suggested a go-with-the-flow approach, with the interviewer trying to fit in. “I’d like to talk to you,” is his preferred opening, while blue jeans, white shirt and blazer is his preferred outfit because it can easily be dressed up or down.

You must know the subject

ahead of time, he said, but you also must interview longer than you need, always looking for more “color and juice.”

Even then, Treaster said he ends interviews with, “Is there anything I didn’t ask you about? Or that you want to tell me?”

Nicole Kraft of Ohio State likened the interview process to a chess game, in which success depends on the ability to visualize as far into the future as possible, anticipating a subject’s answer, then the next question in response.

Kraft suggested picturing the interview as a bell curve, and trying to pose the most difficult question just past the peak of the curve. Think carefully about every word of that question, she said.

Eavesdropping can be a good way for beginning interviewers to hone their craft, Kraft said, sharing an exercise in which a student goes to a coffee shop and writes down the dialogue around them.

Longinow said his approach to interviews combines theory and practice with relationship and identity.

“You are not approaching a receptacle of knowledge,” he said, but a human being. Know the person, the important variables about them such as race, ethnicity, religion, origin, experiences, Longinow said, because, without that, you may blow the interview and damage your story.

Humility is also key, he said.

He said interviewers must know the language of the space they are entering — like a veteran returning to a combat zone as a reporter, who will flourish because of that familiarity.

toronto: pre-conference 3

Even experienced educators need to keep their skills fresh

By Kathleen McNulty
Marist College

Journalism has been turned on its head in recent years, but conducting good interviews still requires plenty of prep, a professional demeanor and lots of practice in order to excel.

So was the consensus of a panel on teaching advanced interviewing. It wrapped up a three-part discussion on the overall topic of interviewing, sponsored by the Small Programs Interest Group at the AEJMC 2019 Conference in Toronto

No matter whether they're called "conversations" or "interviews," the same best practices apply, the four journalism educators and the writer/editor on the final panel said.

Among the practical tips they offered to hand off to students were:

- Do research on the subject and topic
- Make eye contact with interviewees
- Know when to stop talking and asking questions
- Face to face is the best format
- Dress and act professionally
- Let the interviewee know what to expect – who else will be there, such as a videographer
- Build rapport and save tough questions for later
- Be nice but be nosy

The list aimed at students grew longer with each speaker. At least one bit of advice was offered for instructors. Journalism educators should keep a hand in the business, said Brian Steffen of Simpson College in Iowa, who does podcast interviews with people on his campus.

"It helps keep your skills fresh," Steffen said. For students, he also recommended a "reflection" writ-



Photo by Kathleen McNulty

From left, panelists Brian Steffen, Jim Sernoe, James Simon, Pam Parry and Lauren McKeon.

ing assignment in which they look at what went right and wrong, giving them a chance to "unpack and reflect."

Longer, more advanced, long-form stories are going to take many interviews, building rapport with subjects, keen observation skills and a willingness to be nosy, said Lauren McKeon, digital editor for The Walrus Magazine, which is Toronto-based.

The prize-winning journalist, who has reported on many subjects including her own experience as a victim of sexual assault, said staying organized and focused is important in long-form features.

"Know what you want to learn," she said.

Student journalists must remember that people's lives are affected by what they do with a story, said Pam Parry of Southeast Missouri State University. "Treat them like you would want to be treated," she said, recalling an unintentional mistake she made as a college stu-

dent that still bothers her.

"Every story can hurt someone," she said.

James Simon of Fairfield University in Connecticut said students will discover that the interview isn't over when the questions end. "Keep talking as you exit" and hand over a business card or email address, he advised.

Jim Sernoe of Midwestern State University in Texas provided a hefty list of tips to be used in teaching interviewing.

Perhaps one of the most important had to do with helping students get over a fear of asking questions. "You will look more stupid getting the information wrong," he tells young journalists.

And Steffen offered a few words of wisdom to share with students when they're working hard and doing everything right, but still getting discouraged.

"It is frustrating and intimidating," he tells students. "But it will get better over time."

toronto: aejmc 2019

Panel shares good, bad, ugly for faculty members of color

By Dawn Francis
Cabrini University

The late Toni Morrison said, "Make a difference about something other than yourselves." This is what faculty in small journalism and mass communication programs do each day, and while there are many rewards in doing so, there are also significant challenges. That is especially true for faculty members of color.

The panel titled "Small Programs: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly" on Aug. 7 at the AEJMC 2019 Conference in Toronto, Canada, explored these themes. It was co-sponsored by the Small Programs Interest Group and the Minorities and Communication Division.

Among the "good" highlighted in small programs was the ability to form strong relationships with students, as well as the collegiality among faculty within departments and across the university.

For panelist Christina Smith

from Georgia State College and University, her desire to teach in a small program flows from her desire to engage with students through the lens of her multiple social identities. Friend, journalist, teacher, scholar, Mexican-American, mother, partner, mentor and more.

"These identities motivate me to do what I do and how I do it, especially at a small liberal arts institution," she said.

Felicia McGhee from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga agreed that getting to know students and forming meaningful mentoring relationships with them is a benefit of teaching in small programs.

McGhee regularly sits with her students, looks up their grades with them, and discusses ways to stay on track. If they are performing poorly in a course, McGhee said, "I sit in classes with my students to find out why they're failing."

This type of personal buy-in by faculty on behalf of students can

"We go out of our way to bring in students who otherwise may not come to college. We have a moral, if not legal, obligation to serve them well."

Emmanuel Onyedike
Virginia Union

occur more easily in small programs, which McGhee said is a plus.

With the good comes the bad. Emmanuel Onyedike of Virginia Union University highlighted the stressors of heavy teaching loads coupled with the expectation to research and secure grant funding.

Onyedike also cited the demands of teaching students from underserved populations, most especially at historically black colleges and universities.

"We go out of our way to bring in students who otherwise may not come to college," Onyedike said. "We have a moral, if not legal, obligation to serve them well."

Both Smith and McGhee discussed the struggle inherent in the limited diversity of students and faculty members at their institutions.

"There are certain expectations put on people of color," Smith said. McGhee agreed, saying that she is often asked to serve on committees where a minority voice is valued, yet when she is the only faculty member of color those requests can become very time consuming and

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Photo by Dawn Francis, Cabrini

Panelists are Christina Smith, Georgia College and State; Felicia McGhee, Tennessee at Chattanooga; Emmanuel Onyedike, Virginia Union; and moderator Sydney Dillard, DePaul.

toronto: aejmc 2019

SPIG, Scholastic join forces for a lively GIFT competition



Photo by Carrie Sipes

Holding their certificates are winners of the Great Ideas for Teachers competition: from left, first-place winner Cessna Winslow, Tarleton State (her entry: Listen. Think. Ask. Do.); Nathan Gibbs, Abilene Christian, second place (his entry: Using Online Instruction To Teach Podcasting); and Lillian Agosto, Sagrado Corazon, third place (her team's entry: Los Rostros del Caño: an Exploration in Immersion Journalism from University). SPIG co-coordinators flanking the group are Jim Sernoe, Midwestern State, left, and Brian Steffen, Simpson, right. Scholastic Division co-coordinators at back are Mark Goodman and Karla Kennedy.

Faculty of color share their challenges

Continued from page 7

burdensome.

All panelists agreed the “ugly” aspect of teaching in small programs is the push by administration to continually develop new programs, as well as to research and publish while maintaining a 4/4 teaching load and aggressive service agenda.

Smith shared that finding time

for research is particularly challenging for faculty who not only teach heavy loads, but who require multiple skill-building assignments.

“We say ‘teach,’ but it is much more than that in my department. I teach all writing courses. This is different than teaching theory and concepts. It takes a whole different type of energy,” she said.

Despite the challenges, the facul-

ty panelists reiterated their strong commitment for teaching in small programs.

Onyedike also offered this suggestion: “Don’t bunker down. Build relationships with colleagues. You will find others with strategies to help you. I have often found this through AEJMC.”

Sydney Dillard of DePaul University moderated this panel.

toronto: aejmc 2019

Not easy, but getting students published can pave their paths

By Michael Longinow
Biola University

It’s a harsh truth. Some programs won’t talk much about it. But the reality is that no matter their major, their GPA, or the name of the college or university on their diploma, students won’t get very far in the media job hunt unless they’ve got some work published.

Thirty years ago, we called it a “clip file,” so named because it was scissor-clipped articles from as prominent a publication as we could find to run our work. We photo-copied clips on high-bright paper and sent them out in brown envelopes with a resume and cover letter.

Now it’s all digital, but the idea is the same: writing, photos, video or a combination of these — with the student’s name in the byline, photo credit or video credit. It’s what students send out as links to inquiring editors or media supervisors. The more impressive those links, the better chance they have.

The Toronto SPIG session “Real World, Real Time: How Students Can Publish Professionally” made the case for classrooms as launching pads for student publishing.

Panelists, Robert Bergland of Missouri Western State, Michael Clay Carey of Samford, Aileen Gallagher of Syracuse, Jodie Mozdzer Gil of Southern Connecticut State, Joe Gosen of Western Washington, Vivian Martin of Central Connecticut State, and Catherine Staub of Drake, brought varied approaches.

Nomi Morris of the University of California at Santa Barbara moderated the panel. Her recent article in TJMC journal unpacked the difficulties of classroom restraints on publishing aspirations.

The first hurdle, though, is often a chasm in students’ minds between the classroom and the world off-campus. Some don’t think that much, if any, pre-graduation work is necessary for landing a job.

A study of recent grads shows this casual attitude extends into the years after graduation. Research by industry leaders suggests that faculty who step up and make their classrooms a practical place for career prep are the ones who will retain their students and become magnets for incoming students wary of fluffy, aimless pedagogy in meandering academic programs.

Martin called it developing in students a “publication state of mind.” To make it work, departments need to rally all faculty into folding practical assignments into their classes.

There must be goal-setting from year to year, and there must be evaluation (What did we do? How did we do it? What can we do better next year?) And there must be incentives — a carrot vs. a stick approach.

Martin pointed out that setting up a Plan B (and Plan C) are important in these hands-on projects. All best-laid plans can fail, so the ability to reach into a folder and pull out another do-able version of one’s key assignment can prevent disaster.

Collaboration with other programs can help (we’re small programs, after all), and targeting course projects at student interest areas also helps: sports media is big and a growing area of career entry; podcasts are a format students love, combining elements of what we used to know as album-rock stations with talk-radio and the radio theater our grandparents grew up with.

Staub echoed many of Martin’s

ideas but noted that creativity in the classroom in ways that aren’t sustainable in the curriculum can become flash-in-the-pan successes. She spoke of student-publication projects beginning in entry-level courses, leading to developmental projects, culminating in senior capstone experiences.

Staub’s projects were magazine-focused, cultivating in students a sense of their own voice as writers early in the program and preparing them for competitive internships and professional writing.

Bergland, who showed examples of pro-level student journalism — writing and photos — being published through academic venues, also noted that story pitching is an important learned behavior for students. Alumni, he said, can often provide a sympathetic ear (or eyes) for students’ work before it gets pitched (and said shadowing is as good a contact point as any).

Gosen agreed with pitching’s importance, applying it specifically to photo projects, which his students showcase in a senior capstone course. That course is portfolio-based and involves goal-setting, teamwork, multiple layers of evaluation, and reflection.

A downside of project-based teaching? Grading. There’s a lot of it, and rubrics for what’s expected of students in projects becomes crucial to guide their approach to the work.

Should students get a low grade for high-quality work that never gets published? Tough call.

Panelists mentioned one-on-one mentoring of students on projects as a helpful tool — depending on how big an enrollment one has for the course.

toronto: aejmc 2019

Canada deals with 'fake news' more directly, says TV exec

By John Kerezy
Cuyahoga Community College

Attendees saw and heard three perspectives on fake news from the panel "Fake News Across Borders: How Journalists Can Respond to Audiences" presented by SPIG and the Electronic News Division at AEJMC 2019 on Aug. 8.

Moderator Michael Longinow of Biola set the stage for the presentations by pointing out how fake news is a worldwide phenomenon, and how journalists have a special responsibility to report on how we see it, react to it, and help audiences critically analyze it.

Lorna Dueck, first speaker on the panel, is CEO of yestv.com, a multi-faith religious television channel and network that the Canadian government authorized in the late 1980s as a response to Canadian pastors and churches' introduction of Pat Robertson and the Christian Broadcasting Network into the country.

"We are the gatekeepers on how

religious tones are picked up in Canada," she said.

"In this country we believe that the words 'fake news' are created and owned by Mr. Trump, so we've rebranded it as 'disinformation,'" Dueck added.

She pointed out that the Canadian government moved vigorously to inhibit or prevent the spread of disinformation in its upcoming October elections through the introduction and adoption of a plan to protect the integrity of its elections and elections communication, begun in January.

The Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online, introduced in May, is an important part of that process.

Dueck pointed out that integrity, authenticity and transparency are the three key aspects of the Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online. The policy calls for social media platforms to work to remove fake accounts and inauthentic content from their platforms, and work to assist users to better understand

the sources of information they are seeing and block and remove malicious bots.

She also provided recent examples of disinformation about Canada and its leaders propagated in social media in the U.S. and around the world.

Megan Duncan, assistant professor at Virginia Tech, presented a wealth of analytical data on the public's opinion of news, news bias and news sources.

Duncan presented research showing how the public no longer believes that news sources level each other out in terms of coverage.

"We didn't think that they were making up the news was a common belief," she said. "That's not true anymore. It's easy to make a social media page and publish news onto it. Visual cues diminish the news brand, and there's just so much misinformation out there."

Next, she examined how journalists respond effectively to fake news in some situations, and said the au-

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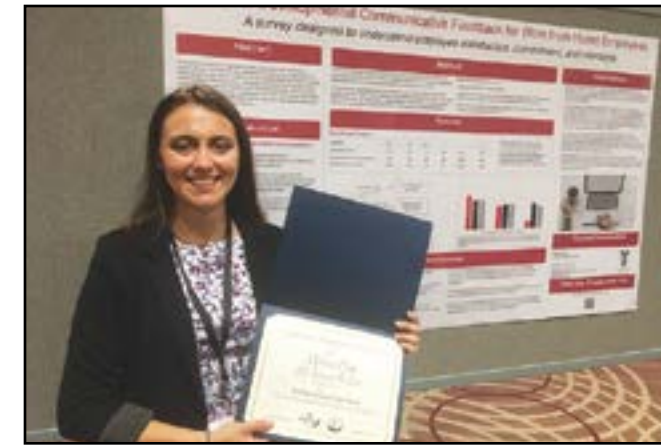


Photo by John Kerezy

"Fake News Across Borders" participants, from left, are Yes TV CEO Lorna Dueck, Jeff South of Virginia Commonwealth, Megan Duncan of Virginia Tech and moderator Michael Longinow of Biola.

toronto: aejmc 2019

SPIG research poster winners



Photos by Jackie Incollingo

Taking first place in the SPIG research poster contest was the study "Effects of Developmental Communicative Feedback" by Malena Price (left photo) and YoungAh Lee of Ball State University. The second-place entry was "Students' Perception of the Classroom Environment: Comparison between Innovative and Traditional Classrooms" by Isaac Chang Wan Woo (right photo), Lori Britt, Toni Whitfield and Tim Ball of James Madison University.

Fake news calls for new research and roles

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dience's perception of algorithms – once believed to be the solution for ferreting out fake news – would not provide a solution in the eyes of the public. Duncan conducted survey research that demonstrated the public preferred that human editors make decisions about what stories they saw.

"One predictor of the belief we needed human editors over algorithms is age," Duncan explained. "In general, older wanted more human editors, but more of all age groups preferred humans. Not everyone will equally trust news decisions algorithms make, but audiences want people involved in the decisions."

Duncan also pointed out that Facebook is striving mightily to be non-political in its decision-making about posts which are suspicious and possibly fake.

"Facebook wants to be seen as politically 'neutral' in the vision of

the audience," she said.

She also discussed companies such as News Guard, which is trying to develop a label for political organizations. She called such efforts "credibility indicators."

Jeff South, associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth, began his portion of the presentation by describing what he learned when he visited St. Petersburg, Russia, in 2015 and came across journalists who had gone "undercover" to expose the inner workings of an organization there called the Internet Research Agency.

"We learned then that Russia had already interfered through social media manipulation in elections in Finland, in the Brexit vote, and elsewhere," he said.

In assessing communication channels through economic terms, supply and demand, South pointed out how he perceived his role as one of educating journalists (supply) about their responsibility to discern and not report fake news, and

consumers (demand) about their responsibility to become informed, skeptical, vigilant, and to check everything. He said that in Finland, the education system is teaching grade school students how to identify and discount fake news stories.

The old principles of journalism still apply," South added. "Accuracy trumps speed. Fact checking and checklists are a must. Be skeptical – look for bias. Triangulate all the information you come across."

South also recommended author John McManus' "S.M.E.L.L." test, introduced in his new book titled "Don't be Fooled."

"Apply a test: Source, Motivation Evidence, Logic and Left Out. Look at those five attributes to ascertain if it's believable," he said.

Craig Silverman's "Verification Handbook" is also a resource that South recommends.

Following the panelists' presentations, attendees ended the session by engaging in a spirited question-and-answer period.

toronto: aejmc 2019

With cinema, darkened room can open the eyes of students

By Liz Atwood
Hood College

A movie doesn't have to be true to illustrate universal truths, panelists pointed out in a discussion about how to use films to teach about society.

"Using Popular Cinema as Cultural Communication in the Mass Media Curriculum" was co-sponsored by SPIG and the Entertainment Studies Interest Group and presented at an Aug. 8 session in Toronto.

The speakers included Gregory Adamo from Morgan State University, Thom Lieb from Towson University and Katherine Orloff of Hood College, who also moderated the discussion.

Adamo said one of his favorite films to show students is "Network," Paddy Chayefsky's 1976 film about a fictitious TV news show that struggles with ratings.

"Even though the business of television has changed, the language has not," said Adamo, who uses the film to introduce students to such concepts as Nielsen ratings, audience research, market share, syndication and Q score. "The students always love the film," he said.

Lieb discussed two films he uses to teach students about social and economic class— "High-Rise" and "Snowpiercer." Both films present a dystopian view of society in which classes live in segregated compartments. In "High-Rise," a 2015 film based on a J.G. Ballard novel, the classes are divided by floors in an apartment building; in "Snowpiercer," a 2013 South Korean film, the classes live in separate train cars.

The films provide a thoughtful entry into discussing class and so-



Photo by Liz Atwood

From left, moderator Katherine Orloff, Thom Lieb and Gregory Adamo discuss strategies to use films in insightful ways in the classroom.

cial mobility, Lieb said.

Orloff discussed ways to incorporate D.W. Griffith's controversial film, "Birth of a Nation," into the curriculum. She suggested approaching the movie as a means to look into early 20th century filmmaking and as a way to illustrate the prevailing racist views of the period. "The content, as abhorrent as it is now, reflected the culture of the time," she said.

While "Birth of a Nation" illustrates the resurgence of Southern pride and revival of the Ku Klux Klan, it was not unique in the way it depicted blacks. For most of the 20th century, the cinematic portraits of minorities were overtly racist, Orloff said.

Even such beloved actors and singers as Judy Garland, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra appeared in movies wearing blackface, she noted.

Orloff also discussed how modern movies can be used to teach students about changing social attitudes. For example, Nate Parker's "Birth of a Nation" employed a mostly black cast to tell the story of the Nat Turner slave rebellion. Fox Searchlight paid a record \$17.5 million for the distribution rights to the film, but the movie turned out to be a box-office flop when Parker was caught up in the #MeToo scandal.

"The movie, when it opened, had such a stain on it, it never made back the money Fox paid for it," Orloff said.

Although stereotypes have not disappeared entirely, more recent movies including Jordan Peele's "Get Out" and Jon M. Chu's "Crazy Rich Asians" depict racial minorities in new ways and offer opportunities to discuss how racial attitudes have changed, Orloff said.

toronto: aejmc 2019

Programs vary in approach, but rely heavily on portfolios

By Doug Mendenhall
Abilene Christian University

Each student creating an online portfolio to display their media-related abilities is unique, and so are the approaches taken by different colleges and universities to assess those abilities.

Five panelists shared their portfolio protocols and tips during an Aug. 9 AEJMC session co-sponsored by SPIG and the Visual Communication Division. SPIG member Dawn Francis of Cabrini moderated the discussion.

In a capstone portfolio class at South Carolina, Tara Mortensen said visual students produce a 20- to 30-page print portfolio, as well as web and iBook forms to allow flexibility. The web rubric used for grading is detailed.

USC's program does teach coding, so students use Code Academy to create their portfolios, with Adobe DreamWeaver allowed as well.

Browsing through the school's archive of completed portfolios, Mortensen attempted to show strong and weak examples.

"Actually, most of these are pretty good," she said of the 2017 batch.

South Carolina's online archive dates back to 2005. Mortensen said some students look at their portfolios again after graduation, but others update them for professional use.

Matt Haught of Memphis said he encourages students to "think of themselves as a personal brand" as they create a portfolio. This includes creating a tagline for how they wish to be perceived, and working toward business status as an LLC.

Requirements for the portfolio

itself include work samples, a résumé, profile, video component, and either a rate card for professional services they wish to offer or a listing of their business practices.

Assessment of portfolios at Memphis is handled by the school's advisory board rather than faculty.

Haught said Memphis students must manually edit some of the code contained in their page on one of those sites. Students also are encouraged to show their work on ISSUU, a digital publishing platform.

Haught said it can be challenging to assess a portfolio and keep a balance between whether it provides "hire-ability" for the student versus demonstrating evidence of the 12 standards of ACEJMC accreditation.

Panelist Lona Cobb said that although her skills are writing-focused, at Winston-Salem State she stepped in to take over the portfolio capstone three years ago when no other teacher was available to direct students who are oriented toward

video or audio and don't think they should have to write.

Cobb said she learned on the job by looking at the approach of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, a fellow HBCU.

She said she learned that the students in her small department need to have a variety of components within their Wix-based portfolios, which now include writing samples, a video public service announcement, video cover letter, reflective essay, newspaper op-ed or letter to editor, résumé and audio component.

With few of these skills herself, Cobb said she uses a library liaison to help direct and judge the students' video and audio needs, while she handles duties such as evaluating the language for appropriateness.

It works, she said.

"These seniors take this seriously," Cobb said. "This is putting their

Please see **PORTFOLIOS** on page 14



Photo by Doug Mendenhall

Moderator Dawn Francis of Cabrini opens the Aug. 8 session on strategies for creating and evaluating digital portfolios, which was co-sponsored by SPIG and the Visual Communication Division.

spig business meeting

Thursday, August 8, 2019
Moderating/Presiding: Carrie Sipes

1. Welcome (Carrie Sipes)

2. Council of Divisions Meeting Recap (Carrie Sipes)

- Membership Numbers
 - AEJMC membership 3434 total; student members 702; international members 234
 - 118 SPIG members, which puts SPIG as the second largest IG behind political communication which has 186.
- Locations for AEJMC 2024 – Vote
 - Philadelphia = 21 votes (first place)
 - Nashville = 13 votes
 - New York City = 8 votes
- Membership rates – Any change
 - Current cost to join the Small Programs Interest Group is \$12/year. Members voted to keep the rate the same
 - Desire to recruit graduate students to SPIG. While many of our departments don't offer graduate degrees, the thinking is that many graduate students may want to learn about small programs.
 - Carrie reported that there is no additional expense to us to have more members in SPIG.
 - SPIG members voted to open membership to graduate students for free
 - 20 votes = yes
 - 0 votes = no
 - 1 vote = abstain
- Panel participation – Any no shows? Maybe one or two

3. SPIG Financial Report (Carrie Sipes)

- As of May 2019 = \$6,343.50
- Income from dues = \$744
- Members questioned if the \$20/person fee that AEJMC charges for the SPIG pre-conference event comes back to SPIG. Carrie wasn't sure and said she'd follow up with AEJMC's Business Office staff.
- Members discussed the value of pre-conference workshops but

the lack of substantial attendance. Questions were raised about how AEJMC promotes these pre-conferences. Members suggested promoting them in the other divisions and interest groups to which they belong.

- Discussion ensued about a potential pre-conference session for next year that would be relevant to graduate students and help us with their recruitment to SPIG.
 - Working title: "Teaching Toolkit for New Faculty." Partner with the Grad School Division for this pre-conference session. Content ideas for that panel include:
 - Course design; learning outcomes
 - Problem students; classroom management
 - Assessment; building and using rubrics
 - The following people expressed interest in putting together a proposal for this workshop: Brian Steffen, Jim Sernoe, Cindy Simoneau, John Hanc, Alan Goldenbach, and Carrie Sipes
- ACTION ITEM: Determine what happens to the \$20/person fee that AEJMC charges for pre-conference sessions. Does that come back to SPIG? Carrie will ask the Business Office.
- ACTION ITEM: SPIG is celebrating its 25th anniversary. We have money in our budget to celebrate that. Determine the best way to celebrate using a portion of this money.
- ACTION ITEM: Brian Steffen will pull together the people interested in the pre-conference workshop so they can begin working on a proposal.

4. TOY Report (Kalen Churcher)

- Jackie Incollingo won this year's Teacher of the Year Award
- More members are encouraged to enter the competition. More members are also encouraged to volunteer to read the applications.
- ACTION ITEM: Kalen will not be coordinating the TOY Competition next year, so SPIG needs a volunteer to take that over.

5. Programming (Liz Atwood)

- We had 13 proposals this year, and we had 3 chips. Each panel is a chip, but if we partner with another group, we only spend a half a chip. Pre-conference workshops don't count for a chip.
- See Liz's e-mail to SPIG for a full list of SPIG panels at this year's

Digital portfolios come in varied packages

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best foot forward."

Award-winning photojournalist Ross Taylor, who teaches photo courses at Colorado-Boulder, said he wants his students to "Take ownership of your space on the web."

Taylor said he always fosters the idea of personal branding in any class. He said students are pushed to build followers while they are building their portfolio and to think hard about the question, "What do you represent?"

Make sure you get your domain name for that online space, he said,

citing his personal experience in a Houston job interview, where the interviewer clicked the "Ross Taylor" link he'd been given only to end up at a porn site.

Taylor said he knows enough about coding to know that he does not want to teach coding; students rely on Squarespace as a ready-made portfolio platform.

He said he emphasizes doggedness and sticking to your professional intent. For example, one student included in their portfolio an unusual photo story about autopsies – with a prominent warning about graphic images.

"One good project can really help you stand out," Taylor said. "I'm a big fan of not diluting your intent."

Ralph Hanson of Nebraska-Kearney, author of the textbook "Mass Communication: Living in a Media World," said, "One of the challenging things is working with students who are not wonderful," while helping them through the portfolio process.

"To me that's one of the key things here to remember, that this is part of our university assessment" – not simply grading the students, but the process.

spig business meeting

conference.

- We lost Hot Topics. We couldn't burn a whole chip on it ourselves.
- Members discussed bringing back a previously popular session that was co-sponsored by CCJA – "Ten Tech Tips in 10 Minutes." This idea was warmly received, perhaps in the format of 4 panelists and a moderator or 9 panelists and a moderator for a shorter amount of individual presentation time.
- ACTION ITEM: Consider if we want to bring back "Ten Tech Tips in 10 Minutes" for next year and look for a co-sponsor to do so.
- ACTION ITEM: In terms of programming for next year, consider our desire to recruit grad students into SPIG and provide enticing programming for them.

6. TJMC Journal Report (Mitzi Lewis on behalf of Cathy Strong)

- The journal has been publishing since 2011.
- Cathy Strong has served as editor since 2017, and she will remain in the role until 2020. Those interested in stepping into the role should consider getting involved as a reviewer if they haven't already, and they should reach out to Cathy to express their interest so she can work to mentor this person to assume the position.
- There is zero income and zero expenditures for the journal; it is an all-volunteer operation. It is not aligned with a publisher.
- Rejection rate is 50%; however, rather than publicize that fact, we want this to remain an entry-level journal for new scholars and encourage them to publish.
- The journal needs copyeditors!
- The journal wants to apply for indexing from Scopus. <https://www.scopus.com/home.uri>
 - We need to seek approval from AEJMC first as we need their endorsement to apply for Scopus indexing. AEJMC has been reticent to give us their endorsement thus far, perhaps because of the journal's JMC education focus that is similar to Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, an AEJMC journal pub. Some discussion was had about changing the journal name to avoid confusion with J&MC Educator, but we agreed to talk to AEJMC first.
 - ACTION ITEM: Have a conversation with the home office. Ask if changing the name would make a difference to them. The concern would be confusing people in the process of changing the journal name. Carrie will ask Cathy Strong if she wants to speak to the home office staff about this issue.

7. Paper Competition – Poster Presentation (Jackie Incollingo)

- 5 papers were submitted, two entries were accepted, three were rejected
- 7 people served as reviewers
- Discussion arose about incentivizing graduate students to apply to the competition next year
- Jackie and Dave Madsen coordinated this year's competition. Dave will stay on next year to do it again. Jackie will cycle off.
- ACTION ITEM: Find a new co-chair volunteer to work with Dave.

8. Commission on the Status of Minorities Report (Lona Cobb)

- The commission would like SPIG's help in promoting News Engagement Day to its members.
- Several members raised their hands to say they already participate in News Engagement Day at their universities.
- ACTION ITEM: Carrie will post about News Engagement Day on the listserv, and she will share what she's done for the day at Shipensburg. She'll encourage others on the listserv to share what they've done as well.

9. GIFT Report (Brian Steffen & Jim Sernoe)

- GIFT made a comeback this year, led by Brian and Jim. We partnered with the Scholastic Division for this competition this year. Brian and Jim will remain leaders of GIFT next year.
- There were 86 entries. It was highly competitive. Many good ideas.
- There were 18 judges and each judge reviewed two entries. Jim tallied the scores and determined the top 25 entries.
- Discussion ensued about two points:
 - (1) Does it always need to be 25? Could it be more? Jim mentioned that previously it had always been 25, so he stuck with that number.
 - (2) Is there a place where we could post these ideas online – from the winners as well as those who didn't win but whose ideas are good and innovative? On the second point, we discussed putting these ideas on Google Drive or in a Dropbox file for everyone to access. On the first point, we discussed possibly finding out if there is space for more posters in San Francisco, but not too many as people won't be able to see every poster.
- Jim and Brian stated the factors in play in their decision making on the entries:
 - If people lost, it was because their entries weren't innovative enough.
 - The ones that won were not discipline specific or they could be easily transferable to other disciplines
- ACTION ITEM: Jim and Brian should distribute the rubric at the time they make the call for GIFT next year.
- ACTION ITEM: Consider the best place to post the winning and other strong GIFT entries on Google Drive or Dropbox (or another platform) to share with the listserv. Once they've been uploaded, notify the listserv.

10. Dalton-Landon Award

- Kay Colley is the recipient of this year's Dalton-Landon Award, which recognizes a member of SPIG who volunteers his/her time and talents in service of the membership. Kay was not in attendance, but Mitzi read a few words from her and all in attendance offered Kay a loud round of applause.

Other Business

SPIG Newsletter:

- Doug Mendenhall will step down as editor of the SPIG newsletter but continue to offer design and layout assistance. Brian Steffen or Jackie Incollingo will talk with Carrie and Liz about potentially assuming the role of editor. The SPIG Newsletter publishes twice a year.

2019-2020 slate of SPIG officers:

- Liz Atwood will replace Carrie Sipes as SPIG Head
- Kalen Churcher will move into the position of First Vice Head
- The Second Vice Head position is still open at this time.

Change in SPIG Leadership:

- The SPIG Business Session: Members Meeting ended with the official passing of the leadership baton from Carrie Sipes to Liz Atwood
- SPIG members thank Carrie for her significant service and efforts on our behalf
- Welcome Liz as the new SPIG Head

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Dawn M. Francis