



College of Letters & Science
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Vilas Insider

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School of Journalism and Mass Communication



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From the Director



Greetings from Vilas Hall! We've reached the end of 2017-18, another successful academic year. We began the year hosting a

delegation of journalists from Ukraine. Soon after, we welcomed Wisconsin political journalist Charlie Sykes, science journalist Ed Yong and Italian journalist Lidia Catalano. Sarah Stillman of The New Yorker delivered our annual Nafziger lecture; she talked about her work reporting on the global immigration and refugee crisis. Sarah Kliff, a health reporter for Vox, was the Journalist in Residence for the Center for Journalism Ethics and gave a keynote address on the health care debate. The Preston Colloquium lecture featured Deen Freelon of the University of North Carolina, who spoke about Twitter usage as part of the Black Lives Matter movement. We also launched a national search for a new faculty member in the area of health communication.

As we rang in the new year, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication did not slow down. Professor Lindsay Palmer organized an international conference on human rights reporting, and Dhavan Shah led a group in hosting

an international conference about communication and the rise of populism in Europe and the United States.

In April, the Center for Journalism Ethics held its annual conference. The theme was "Division, Denial and Journalism Ethics," which focused on climate change. The center also announced the winners of its Shadid Prize, an award for reporters who best exemplify ethical decision making in challenging circumstances. Brian Grow and John Shiffman won the 2018 award for their series, "The Body Trade," which exposed the global industry of buying and selling cadavers.

At our annual awards banquet in April, we recognized several of our most prominent alums for their distinguished achievement in journalism and strategic communication. We were especially proud to award a rare Director's Award to Professor Emeritus Jack M. McLeod for his distinguished contributions to the school's teaching and research mission. Professor McLeod was on the faculty from 1962 until his retirement in 2001. The school will also dedicate the Jack M. McLeod Seminar Room in Vilas Hall in fall 2018.

Our graduation celebration was the final event of the 2017-18 year. It was held in the beautiful Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery building on May 11. SJMC

alum Charlie Berens, widely known for his popular YouTube show, "Manitowoc Minute," was the keynote speaker, and we recognized more than 200 graduating seniors, along with several students receiving M.A. and Ph.D. degrees.

The school will end the year with some good-byes and some hellos. Professor Chris Wells will leave the faculty and join the journalism department at Boston University. Also departing is our long-time department administrator, Janet Buechner, who is leaving after a 21-year career with the school. We wish them both the very best in their future endeavors! Meanwhile, the SJMC is looking forward to fall 2018, when we will welcome a new faculty colleague to our department. Kate Christy, an expert in health communication, will join us after completing her doctorate at The Ohio State University and a post-doctorate at University of Utah.

Hemant Shah

P.S. The Spring Annual Fund Campaign has started. Please consider donating, and remember that every gift, no matter the size, helps keeps the SJMC strong.

From the Dean



If spring is a time of hope and growth and new beginnings, then spring came early here in L&S. In February, we celebrated the

grand opening of SuccessWorks, the new career center designed just for L&S students, now occupying a sleekly designed space on the third floor of the University Bookstore. The event brought together students, alumni, state government representatives, UW System Regents, donors and business leaders.

After the ribbon-cutting, Chancellor

Blank told a packed room, "This space is going to transform how we prepare liberal arts students for careers and bring us that much closer to our goal of integrating career readiness into students' experiences while they are here on campus."

I hope that you share my deep gratification at those words. When we launched the L&S Career Initiative in 2014, we dreamed of a place where students from any of the college's 62 undergraduate majors — and at any point in their university experience — could come to explore and build connections between academics, personal interests and professional skills.

I am proud of the education we

provide in L&S and of the students we have the privilege of working with. I hope you share that pride. After all, it's your success that we are building on.

Check out SuccessWorks online at careers.ls.wisc.edu to read news coverage of our grand opening. And next time you're on campus, stop by for free coffee! Staff love to network with alums and talk about our successes, challenges and dreams for our students.

On Wisconsin!

Dean John Karl Scholz

Lilly Hanson



Yaros fund recipient Samantha Loomis (far right) with fellow graduate student Lauren Faust and Professor Mike Wagner. Loomis worked as a project assistant with Professor Wagner to research the intersection of journalism and religious studies.

Yaros Graduate Fellowship for Journalism Excellence

Through the Yaros Graduate Fellowship for Journalism Excellence, Ronald Yaros and his wife, Carey, have provided financial assistance for three years to innovative journalism students in the master’s program.

Yaros completed his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 2005. Currently, he is the director of Ph.D. studies at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland. He was amazed by the opportunities and assistance he received at UW–Madison and wanted to give back to future graduate students in more ways than researching and teaching.

“It’s not just the excellent education that I received as both an undergrad and doctoral student in Madison,” Yaros says. “The alums I meet here in Washington, D.C., share the same sentiments and respect for what we all hope will continue to be one of the best universities in the nation.”

Each year, Yaros and his wife provide funding to a student who is “motivated to be the best journalist and eager to think outside the box,” he says. “Perhaps most of all, the ideal candidate is in need of additional financial support to fulfill their educational dreams.”

Samantha Loomis, the 2017 fellowship recipient, was in her final semester when she received funding from Yaros. Loomis was a first-generation, independent college student with a heavy course load in addition to multiple jobs. “Tying up all these loose ends, it was really nice to have this money to fall back on for bills. You don’t want to worry about that when trying to graduate successfully,” Loomis says.

Loomis has been published in *The Isthmus*, *Curb* magazine and *Madison Commons*. Additionally, she held multiple internship positions at *Madison Magazine* and worked as a newspaper page designer at *Lee Enterprises*. For her, financial assistance has always been about more than just funding. “One of the biggest things besides the money is that... someone that doesn’t even know you believes in you. Someone donated their money for you to do well,” Loomis says.

Loomis currently combines her love of writing and the environment as a news assistant at *Agri-View*, an agricultural publication based in Madison.

— Molly O’Brien

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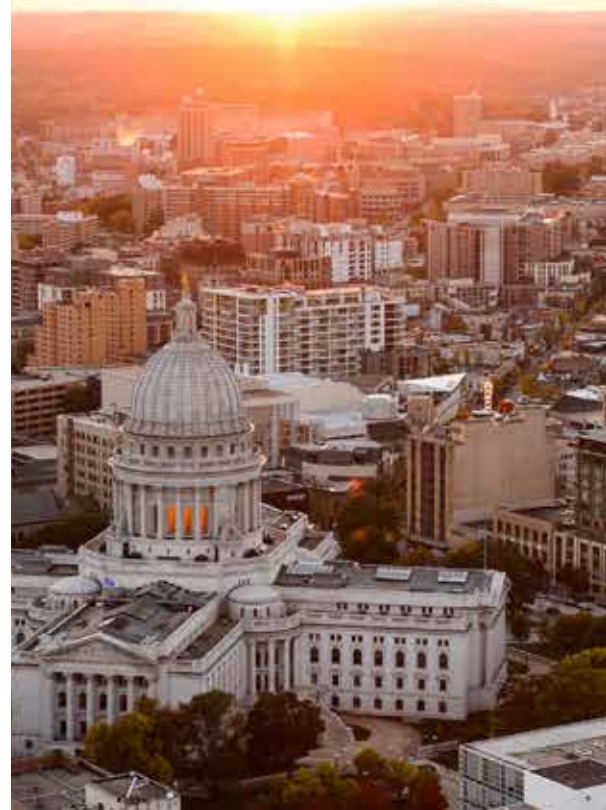
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Lilly Hanson





Thomas Torash

J203 will complement J202 and give students a foundation for gathering and presenting data and information, as well as evaluating and recognizing quality data.

Majors to take new data course

Anyone who's survived J202 knows how tough the J-School's introductory boot-camp experience can be.

Now that first semester is about to get even more challenging — but should also better prepare students for the field.

Starting in fall 2018, all 105 incoming journalism and strategic communication students will also take J203: Information for Communication, a new two-credit companion class in using and analyzing data and information for media work.

While instructors continually innovate and update individual courses, this is the first major structural change to the curriculum since it was introduced in 2000. The foundation of the curriculum requires all majors to start by taking the six-credit J202: Mass Media Practices before choosing to follow one of the school's two tracks.

Students will take the new two-credit course in the same semester as J202, meaning they'll add to their foundation by learning more about how to gather and present information in media products, such as client research reports or news stories.

Where J202 has been successful in honing students' skills in writing and developing content, J203 is intended to go more in depth on how to incorporate

the information into the content students are creating. The course will focus on questions of what qualifies as quality information and how to evaluate it, says Dhavan Shah, professor and chairman of the undergraduate curriculum committee, which led the development of the new course.

"What we've come to realize is there's a set of information gathering, analysis, synthesis and presentation skills that are now critical to all aspects of doing mass communication work, whether you're doing strategic communication or journalism," Shah says.

Some students in recent years have called on the school to introduce more coursework in data and analysis. Recent graduate Polo Rocha ('16) wrote in the *Badger Herald* in 2015 that, "Keeping a modern curriculum is an issue journalism schools across the country grapple with," and specifically called on the school to do more to teach in-depth data tools and digital journalism.

Rocha, who now works in Washington, D.C., covering the Federal Reserve for S&P Global Market Intelligence, says the new class should give all students the opportunity to work more in-depth with data, which they may use in work ranging from reporting on

city budgets to social media analytics.

"Having a dedicated two-credit class shows you're not going to come out an expert by any means, but it will give students exposure," Rocha says. "It will be a great thing for students moving forward."

Much like J202, the course is designed to be a hands-on experience that introduces the types of tools and resources students will encounter in the field — and will need to master to be successful, says assistant professor Chris Cascio, who will teach the first group of J203 students in the fall.

"It's not just us telling them more theories," Cascio says. "It shows, 'This is the job you're doing, and these are the tools you need to accomplish that and be good at it.'"

The course, built by Professor Doug McLeod and Madison-based journalist Brad Horn, will blend lectures with online modules and in-class activities. In a week focused on strategic communication, for example, students will learn in lecture about the principles of writing a survey. After doing supplementary tutorials and quizzes online, students will come back together to work in small groups to write short surveys that would be taken by the full class.

Alumni Q&A

A week centered around fact-checking in journalism would follow the same model but end with students using databases and online resources to fact-check several elements in a news story, then report back on what isn't true.

The skills used in both types of activities would be useful on all sides of the industry, Cascio says. Journalists should know how to judge the quality of a survey, and strategic communicators should be able to gauge whether information is true or not.

Jiatong Qing, a junior from Chengdu, China, who's planning for a career in public relations, started in the J-School this semester and just missed out on the opportunity to take the new course. She got some basic Excel training in J202, but wishes she could have taken the new course to get more practice understanding how to use data, which can be more relevant in strategic communication and marketing.

"For companies, data is very important," Qing says. "As a person who's going to be on the strategic communication path, it's important for me to help a company to design or plan a future using data and analyze the market and their business."

A ripple effect from J203 should influence upper-level courses within the school as well, because students will be starting the intermediate and advanced levels of classes with a stronger foundation of skills to use, McLeod says. And students who worry about being overloaded in their first semester as a SJMC major should actually benefit from the blended experience.

"It allows them to have a lighter, more integrated semester, where the classes are coming together and they can focus more," McLeod says. "They're going to get a lot more out of J202."

— Stacy Forster

Want to share your thoughts about the addition of J203 to our curriculum? Tweet them @uw_sjmc, find us on Facebook or send them to info@journalism.wisc.edu.



Majic Productions

Monica and Mike Jurken teamed up to create Majic Productions, a powerhouse in the audio-visual world.

Monica Jurken is a 2010 graduate of the University of Wisconsin–Madison SJMC who teamed up with her husband, Mike — also a graduate of the university — to build their current company, Majic Productions. As an audio-visual agency based out of Waukesha, Wisconsin, Majic runs audio and lighting at corporate, political and musical events.

Q: How did the skills you learned in the SJMC prepare you for the role you play at Majic Productions as the vice president?

A: I think the biggest thing we are taught as a student in the J-School is to have a clear, clear message. Having a clear brand is important. Rather than the image of a bunch of roadies out on tour, our brand feels more like an ad firm. It feels like you're going to tell a story. Yes, you might be running audio or lighting or video at a corporate event, but you're telling that company's story to all of its listeners.

Q: What is your favorite event that you have ever helped to produce?

A: I'll never forget, my senior year in college, I was part of the Wisconsin Alumni Student Board, and Mike and I were in charge of putting on Club Bucky. That holds a special place in my heart because it was the first year that Club Bucky was really Club Bucky. It was the first year it was outside, and we planned the tent and AV. It was senior year, it ran perfectly, and we just nailed it!

Q: What has been most challenging about working with Majic?

A: If we're not on time, if we're not set up, the biggest stories in the world won't be told. We won't have Super Bowl LIVE going off, or even with the projection we did at the Kohl Center, we had two minutes to do the show, otherwise it won't happen because it's televised. It's a high-pressure industry, and some people love it and some people don't. It's cool to see Majic thrive.

— Megan Otto

Faculty Update

Palmer Publishes Book on the Challenges of Modern War Reporting



storytelling, which places individuals in safety catastrophes.

After interviewing more than 80 correspondents and more than 20 news editors and executives for research, Palmer believes she has written a book that serves to have some “real world” applications for journalism students and scholars.

She first became interested in the project as she was completing her undergraduate studies in broadcast journalism and felt both fear that the U.S. was invading another sovereign nation and fascination with the television news

the main takeaway of Lindsay Palmer’s new book “Becoming the Story: War Correspondents since 9/11.” What’s not seen during reports of war is the labor of

reporting that was coming out of Iraq during that time. By combining those two reactions, she started the book as part of her dissertation at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She hopes readers see her critical stance of U.S. foreign policy after 9/11, as well as what journalists need to do to report on these dangerous stories.

“War reporters have to keep working, in a sense, even after they’ve been injured or killed,” Palmer says. “Even after the correspondents as individuals can no longer write the stories themselves.”

Palmer is currently working on her second book which looks at the labor of news “fixers” — the local media employees who act as translators and guides for foreign correspondents visiting their regions.

— Lilly Hanson

War reporters in the 21st century deal with intensifying industrial, technological and political challenges that make their work more and more precarious. That is

Student Update

Advertising Week



Seven University of Wisconsin–Madison SJMC students attended Advertising Week in New York City, the largest gathering of advertising and media leaders in the world, from Sept. 25-29, 2017. They were provided this unique opportunity through the contributions of Lance Pillersdorf,

SJMC Board of Visitors member, UW–Madison alumnus and chief operating officer and co-founder of Stillwell Partners consulting agency.

Advertising Week, organized by Stillwell Partners, features seminars and discussions about trends in the advertising industry with over 270 professionals in the field. This was the second year Pillersdorf and Stillwell Partners recruited SJMC students to cover the event. Students were provided airfare, housing and meals for

the entire week. In exchange, they reported on seminars for the Advertising Week blog. The students also attended networking events, concerts and comedy shows throughout the week.

“Lance financed it all, which was really cool because I wouldn’t be able to go otherwise, being an entirely self-funded college student,” says Carly Schesel, a UW–Madison senior who attended Advertising Week in 2016. “To bring in students who actively want to do this was a really cool idea that not a lot of people would have thought of otherwise.”

Another student, Jason Werre, found value in reporting on the seminars. Prior to Advertising Week, Werre didn’t have much experience in the field. Now, he plans to pursue advertising following graduation.

“From a professional standpoint, the week was really jam-packed and busy, and we had to carve out time to write two lengthy articles in the midst of all of the madness, so we were working on a deadline and learning more about the industry,” Werre says.

Pillersdorf’s contributions have continued beyond Advertising Week as well. “I think the other thing that’s cool about Lance is he really cares,” Schesel says. “Every time I see him, he asks, ‘Can I help?’ and is really hands-on, helping us get other opportunities.”

— Molly O’Brien

Events

The SJMC hosts a wide range of events for students, faculty and community members throughout the year. Ranging from large-scale conferences to more personal discussions given by visiting professionals, SJMC events cater to the interests of many.



SJMC students enrolled in Journalism 417, which produces Curb magazine, held various fundraisers throughout the fall semester to raise money to publish the print edition of Curb. One of their most popular fundraisers provides an opportunity for current UW–Madison students, faculty and community members to have professional headshots taken at the top of Bascom Hill. J417 covers a wide range of elements related to the magazine industry including reporting, writing, advertising and public relations, making it a popular class for students in both the reporting and strategic communications tracks alike.



The SJMC helped to sponsor the Advertising and Communications Career Fair in February at Union South. Various local and national companies attended the career fair to talk with students about opportunities for internships and jobs in advertising, communications, marketing, media, public relations and reporting fields. Special thanks to our fantastic career advisor, Pam Garcia-Rivera, who helped bring the career fair to life for our students.



Lilly Hanson (3)

Assistant professor Lindsay Palmer helped organize one of the largest conferences of the year for the SJMC. In collaboration with the Institute for Regional and International Studies, “Cultures in Conflict,” a conference focusing on international human rights reporting, was held Feb. 9-10 at the Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery on campus. The program featured award-winning human rights reporters and panels discussing the various challenges experienced in the field.

J202 Grammar, Style and Current Events Quiz

As a J-Schooler, J202 is the first class taken after being admitted. It is impossible to forget the quizzes that started off each lecture on Monday morning to test students on AP style, grammar and current events. If you were enrolled in J202 now, how well would you do?

1. US health officials on Friday said fewer visits to the doctor last week — 1 out of 16 — were for fever, cough, and other flu symptoms than during the previous 2 weeks. (3 errors)
2. President Trump said he would meet this spring with the leader of what country?
3. What is the first question you should ask the person you are interviewing?
4. Where is the U.S. opening a new embassy in May 2018?
5. Which major retailer said it would close all its stores in the coming months?
6. Name two examples of primary sources.

- Answers
1. U.S. health officials on Friday said fewer visits to the doctor last week — 1 out of 16 — were for fever, cough and other flu symptoms than during the previous two weeks.
 2. North Korea
 3. Can you spell your name for me please?
 4. Jerusalem
 5. Toys R Us
 6. Public documents, private research, interviews, observations