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Vilas Insider

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School of Journalism and Mass Communication



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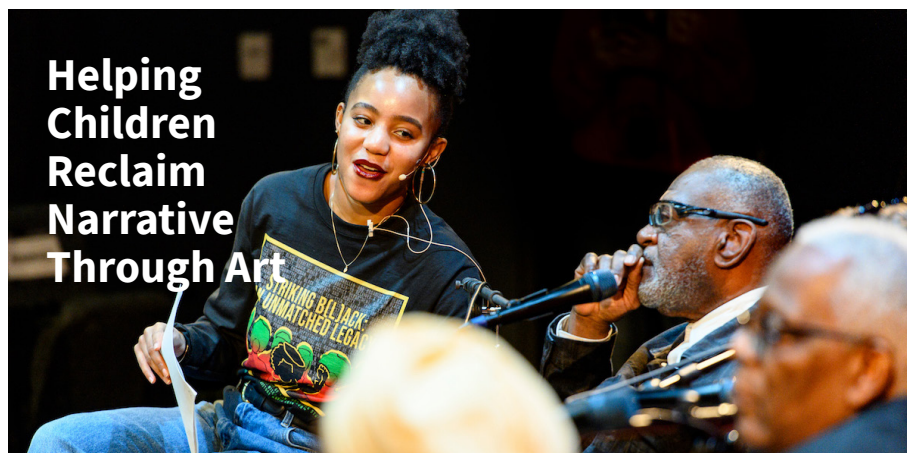
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Humant Slah





Helping Children Reclaim Narrative Through Art

In the spring semester of 2018, Shiloah Coley, a reporting-track student in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, was a sophomore who landed an internship with the Madison Children's Museum. The internship though, did not only have her working at the museum in Madison. It also took her halfway across the world to Johannesburg, South Africa, as the internship was affiliated with The National Children's Museum and Play Africa, a South African nonprofit dedicated to providing safe learning spaces for children.

While in South Africa working with Play Africa, Coley served as the art programming intern. Apart from running a collaborative program between the Madison Children's Museum and Play Africa, she also ran a program with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The Met reached out to Play Africa to run the #Met KidsProgram, where children recreate images taken from the Met's archive. As an intern, Coley was given a huge responsibility as she took on this partnership and essentially served as the curator.

Coley decided to go through the Met's archives looking for photos of children. As she was looking through the archives, she realized that there were few to no images of children of color included. This is when Coley changed her idea.

"I still selected images of children at play, portraits of children and children with their families. But when I had kids recreate it, I told them to insert themselves, their friends and their family, to make this about

them," Coley says. "I asked them to keep the composition similar, so it was this idea of reclaiming the narrative and making it relevant to the children who are making the artwork, as opposed to just having them copy all this artwork that wasn't really representative of their own lives and what was going on in their lives."

Shortly after returning to Wisconsin for the 2018 fall semester, the Met contacted Coley and invited her to run the program she created at Play Africa during the Met's World Culture Festival. She traveled to New York City, where she served more than 180 families who visited her program.

"Something for me that was super important when I was at the Met was that they had a screen showing the work that the children at Play Africa had made," Coley says. "To see that representation of black and brown children and their artwork being in the Met — that representation is so important."

Coley cites the School of Journalism and Mass Communication for preparing her well to take on an international internship.

"Overall, journalism prepared me with a skill set that made me a great communicator and really allowed me to excel in these internships — even though they weren't necessarily directly related to journalism," Coley says.

Coley is currently completing her junior year at UW-Madison and was awarded the prestigious Truman Scholarship, one of only 62 recipients for 2019. She serves as the co-editor-in-chief of The Black Voice, a black student-run online magazine.

— Megan Otto

Vilas Insider

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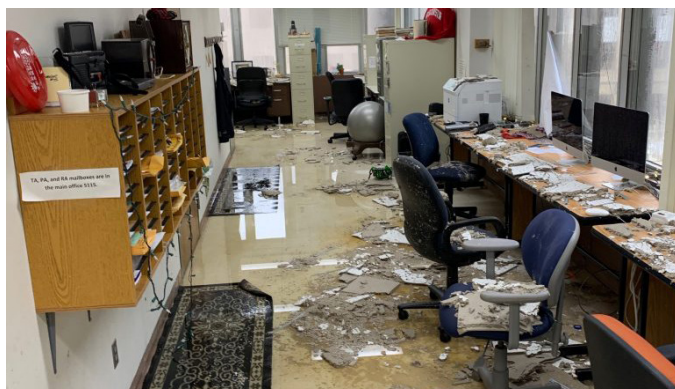
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Megan Otto





Vilas Hall Suffers Extensive Flood Damage

At first, the news came in a trickle.

“Vilas Hall is experiencing flooding,” the UW–Madison Twitter account tweeted at 7:50 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 3. “More info to come to building occupants.”

Within a couple of hours, it became clear that flooding discovered in a stairwell by a custodian working overnight had unleashed massive damage to the fifth floor offices of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. By the end of the week, the entire department had moved out so the mess could be cleaned up.

A burst pipe — likely due to the extreme cold the week before — on the sixth floor had sent water streaming down to the fifth floor.

By the time SJMC Director Hemant Shah, IT director Sterling Anderson and assistant professor Katy Culver arrived about 9:30 a.m., water on the floor was

up to their ankles. They documented the aftermath with photos of offices with standing water, soaked ceiling tiles on desks and floors, and damaged papers and books before being told by an electrician it wasn’t safe for them to stay.

Nearly 30 buildings, including the Chemistry Building, also flooded that weekend, days after temperatures dipped to -26 degrees the last week of January.

More than 170 classes usually held in Vilas Hall that Monday and Tuesday were immediately relocated to other classrooms around campus. The day after the flood, SJMC faculty, staff and students trashed bins of waterlogged items — from rugs to papers, magazines and books — while preparing for a long displacement. Everything on the floor was packed up and moved to storage while dozens of blower fans and a giant dehumidifier worked

nonstop to dry out the walls.

Despite losing its office space, the department was back on its feet within just a few days. Anderson quickly determined the second floor lab spaces used for teaching such core courses as J202: Mass Media Practices were undamaged, and students were back at work there a few days later. The SJMC administrative office was re-established in the Journalism Reading Room, giving the school a sense of normalcy while also allowing the work of the department to continue as usual. And alumni of the school’s graduate program, led by Megan Duncan (Ph.D. ’18), collected money for gift cards to help graduate students replace lost materials.

“We suffered a pretty serious disruption in our educational mission because of the flooding, which left every single office and room and meeting space on the fifth floor

unusable,” Shah says. “But within a couple of days, we had everything back up and running. It was business as usual.”

In the meantime, crews are repairing ceilings, repainting walls and replacing carpet. And the mass move may ultimately lead to more space for SJMC on the fifth floor because it’s prompted conversations about the best way to use offices and meeting rooms.

A group of faculty and staff are looking at how to use the space most effectively when they move back, for example, maybe by replacing old steel desks with furniture that’s more modular and easy to reconfigure.

“It wasn’t an ideal situation, but there were some weird benefits,” says assistant professor Kate Christy, who is part of that group, referencing the forced cleanup that prompted many faculty and staff to toss old papers they didn’t use or need anymore. “As a result, we’re going to have a more efficient use of space.”

With SJMC faculty, staff and students scattered around campus while the repairs happen, time together is rare. So in mid-March, a gathering at the University Club allowed members of the department to catch up on classes and research and trade notes on where they’ve been working across campus.

“Being apart has helped us appreciate more than ever what a terrific group of people we have in the J-School,” Culver says. “No one wants to go through a flood but if you have to stare down a bad situation, you want colleagues and friends like this to do it with.”

— Stacy Forster

From the Dean

PAULUS MUSTEIKIS



Dear alumni:

Sometimes friends, parents and alumni ask me, “What can you do after graduation with a major in [fill in the blank]?”

My answer: “Anything.”

Evidence comes from our philosophy majors and history majors working in Silicon Valley and on Wall Street; our mathematics and astronomy majors in marketing and law; our political science and psychology majors in consulting, non-profits and entrepreneurial start-ups.

A favorite expression of mine is: “A major is not a career.”

Our students develop a set of skills that serve them for a lifetime: critical thinking, the ability to make connections across disparate ideas, analytical reasoning, exemplary communication skills, and the ability to navigate differences across cultures and opinions. These skills are frequently mentioned by employers as the qualities most wanted in their employees.

To prepare our ambitious, hardworking students to think, work and act in an increasingly complex world, my colleagues in L&S work tirelessly to design and administer cutting-edge coursework in every discipline. They develop new majors and certificates in response to high demand, manage programs that broaden students’ understanding of the world, leverage technology in ways that make students better learners, and build increasingly sophisticated skills that will serve students not only in their courses, but throughout their lives. Across L&S, every course, certificate or degree reflects this forward-thinking approach.

I am proud of so many L&S faculty who bring energy and creativity to their teaching. From efforts to make larger classes feel smaller, to the connections made in First-Year Interest Groups, from our stimulating Honors program to our excellent Undergraduate Research Scholars program — our faculty are implementing high-impact learning practices in classes large and small.

A fundamental aspiration for a world-class university is to positively affect the lives of the students we teach. Together we are succeeding. On, Wisconsin!

John Karl Scholz
Nellie June Gray Professor of Economics
Dean, UW–Madison College of Letters & Science

W ALL WAYS
FORWARD

Year after year, J-School alumni make a bet for the future. They invest in our students, helping us deliver experiences that make our program among the best in the country. Your gift helps us remodel learning spaces, develop new courses and support students in internships and hands-on activities. To give today, please visit go.wisc.edu/givesjmc



Faculty Update

Professor Mike Wagner Receives the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award



Professor Mike Wagner was named a recipient of the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award in January 2019. Wagner was one of 10 faculty members chosen to receive this award, an honor that has been given out since 1953 to recognize the university's most outstanding educators.

Wagner teaches a number of undergraduate and graduate courses in the department, including the important gateway course, J202. An innovative teacher, Wagner is also a co-founder of the department's course on fact checking, which led to the establishment of The Observatory, a website that publishes student-researched and student-written fact checks for state, regional and national

news stories. Wagner also teaches graduate courses on politics and media, public opinion and political polarization.

"Teaching and mentoring our terrific students is a challenging, meaningful and fun part of my job," Wagner notes. "While it is very nice to be recognized for my teaching, the best part was reading what my students wrote about what they learned about both the course material and themselves while working with me. It was a reminder that there are many ways to learn — something I'll be sure to keep in mind and build upon in future classes."

Wagner was honored by Chancellor Rebecca Blank and Provost Sarah Mangelsdorf at a ceremony that took place in April.

— Olivia Jones

Gift Impact

Funding the Future of Journalism



Courtesy Dukehart

Sharon Stark, Nick Penzenstadler and Cara Lombardo

UW graduate Sharon Stark finds the truth to be imperative. She was enthralled with the reporting of the Watergate scandal and was the editor of a consumer advocacy and personal finance magazine. When the opportunity came to be more involved in philanthropy than she had previously been, she knew she wanted to do something with investigative journalism. From there the Sharon Stark Investigative Journalism and Internship Fund was born. This fund sponsors students holding summer internships on the investigative reporting team at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Stark has made it possible for former SJMC students like Nick Penzenstadler to take this internship. Currently, Penzenstadler is an investigative reporter at USA Today and notes that his internship at the Journal Sentinel gave him his first exposure to accountability journalism.

"It's news that's aimed at seeking out problems and exposing wrongdoing and then finding solutions for people," says Penzenstadler, whose current career in journalism has a similar focus.

Cara Lombardo, a reporter at the Wall Street Journal covering mergers and acquisitions as well as activist investors, sang similar praises for the fund that allowed her to take part in the same internship.

"Working alongside experienced investigative reporters and editors, I learned skills that make me a better journalist in my job as a staff reporter at The Wall Street Journal today," Lombardo says.

For Stark, this experience has been once in a lifetime. She is enthusiastic about meeting the interns and enjoys hearing what they are learning and working on in their positions.

"This is as much fun for me as it is valuable to the students and to the school. I just think it's just a joy to do something like this," Stark says.

Stark takes great pride in knowing that the experiences students have had thanks to her fund have helped them find something they love doing and even sometimes their career.

"When you can get somebody writing to you afterward and saying, 'You changed my life,' you know that you're having an impact."

— Olivia Jones

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.



Professor Emerita Sharon Dunwoody poses for a photo to accompany the announcement of the new Sharon Dunwoody Early Career Award presented to the first two recipients at the alumni awards event on April 26. Dunwoody was committed to the development of graduate students as scholars, teachers and people upholding the Wisconsin Idea — working in service of those on campus and beyond. The award will honor graduates of our Ph.D. program who are demonstrating these same qualities in the first five to 10 years of their career.



Steven Wang moderates a panel at this year's Communication Crossroads conference. Crossroads is an annual conference run by graduate students, for graduate students, which provides a friendly environment to practice presenting research and gain feedback from faculty and peers. Students present papers on media studies, political consumption, online social networks, marketing, framing, civic engagement, media history and more.



Students in Journalism 463: Digital Media Strategies receive feedback from their client, American Family Insurance, after presenting their digital media plan. The class provides students a hands-on agency experience working with real-world clients.

J202 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. Armed with some outdoor survival training, granola bars, and pink rubber boots, 2-sisters survived 44 hours in Californias rugged wilderness before they were found dehydrated and cold but in good spirits on Sunday, authorities say. (3 errors)
2. What are the two types of questions you want to ask in an interview?
3. In the face of mounting opposition from local people and politicians, Amazon canceled plans to open a second headquarters in _____.
4. What should go into the lead in an inverted pyramid story?
5. What movie won Best Picture at this year's Oscars?
6. A sleek new American built capsule with just a test dummy aboard docked smoothly with the International Space Station on Sunday, bringing the US a big step closer to getting back in the business of launching Astronauts. (3 errors)

Answers

1. Armed with some outdoor survival training, granola bars and pink rubber boots, two sisters survived 44 hours in California's rugged wilderness before they were found dehydrated and cold but in good spirits on Sunday, authorities said.
2. Objective/information questions and subjective/emotion and opinion questions
3. New York
4. The most important, new information
5. Green Book
6. A sleek new American-built capsule with just a test dummy aboard docked smoothly with the International Space Station on Sunday, bringing the U.S. a big step closer to getting back in the business of launching astronauts.