



School of Journalism
and Mass Communication
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Vilas Insider

SPRING 2023 School of Journalism and Mass Communication

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Sports
Communication
Certificate
Success

Undergrads Partner
with Madison Area
Food Pantry Gardens

Faculty Members
Win Major
Research Awards

Q&A: New
SJMC Faculty
Member



Dear J-School Friends,

As I wrap up my tenure as director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, I am struck by our tremendous progress.

Since 2020 we have expanded our incoming cohorts from 105 to 120 students per semester, increased the number of credit hours taught, increased the diversity of our faculty and

student body, increased our research output, and improved our worldwide ranking standing. Most importantly we did all of this while achieving fiscal balance, which puts us on a growth trajectory for the next few years.

This year, our undergrad students lived out the Wisconsin Idea in their studies through partnerships with community organizations such as Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens and Polk County. Meanwhile, many of our grad students presented their research at the 2023 International Communication Association Conference.

Research has continued to flourish with \$5 million granted from the National Science Foundation to the Center for Communication and Civic Renewal for the development of

an online misinformation tool.

Finally, the overwhelming support of our alumni and friends resulted in \$3.8 million in development funds.

It has been an honor to serve as director. Thanks to my colleagues for their support and collaboration. I am also grateful to our alumni and friends and have enjoyed meeting so many of you. As Professor Katy Culver transitions into the director role, I am confident that our J-School is in the best hands.

On, Wisconsin!

Hernando Rojas

Outgoing Director, School of Journalism and Mass Communication



As I become the 14th director in J-School history, I'm struck by a single word: gratitude.

As a three-time graduate of the J-School, I am forever grateful for a world-class education that challenged me and helped me grow in a career that began in journalism, shifted to marketing and finally landed me in academia. It takes a special program to equip

a person with the skills and adaptability to do that.

I'm also indebted to the students and tireless teaching assistants who have moved through my classrooms over the last 23 years and the Wisconsin work ethic they've embraced. I began my career here building the six-credit boot camp course known as J202, and believe me, it requires that work ethic from all involved. These days, I teach our media law class, and it is so gratifying to see young faces genuinely engaged in the law.

I'm grateful to my family for always encouraging me and putting up with no small number of working nights and weekends, Vilas Hall architecture jokes and exclamations of, "Hey, that's my former student!"

I am thankful for my

colleagues for investing their trust in me as our next leader. I will do my very best to continue on the firm footing Hernando Rojas has left for me.

And finally, I am grateful for you, our wonderful alumni. Your support and encouragement help all of us on the 5th floor of Vilas continue our important work and focus on exceptional research, teaching and service that we hope makes you all proud.

On, Wisconsin!

Kathleen Bartzen Culver

Incoming Director, School of Journalism and Mass Communication

SJMC Students Help Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens Announce Expansion

By Caroline Crowley



SJMC students created and executed a public relations campaign for the Dane County nonprofit Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens. The project was part of the students' public relations strategy coursework.

Students in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication's J464: Public Relations Strategies course spent their spring semester developing a communications plan with Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens. MAFPG, a volunteer-run, nonprofit, provides Dane County food pantries with fresh produce from its gardens. Recently, MAFPG purchased 15 acres of land for its Forward Garden.

Students used public relations strategies to support the organization's production of

produce, educational outreach and sustainable growing efforts.

"This class is an incredible asset to our nonprofit," said Katie Schmitt, a volunteer at MAFPG. "Being able to work with an incredibly talented group of students ... we're able not only to capitalize on their skills and their interests to learn, but hopefully we're giving them an experience that they can take with them into a career when they graduate."

Debra Pierce, distinguished teaching faculty and instructor of J464, said every 400-level

class allows students to work on real-world problems.

"All of our advanced level strategic communication courses in the J-School are designed to be hands-on classes that get students job ready," Pierce said. "Employers know that when they hire a Badger that comes out of our program, our students are ready to hit the ground running and to deliver real results."

The collaboration with MAFPG was a greater challenge than her normal classes — students not only created a plan; they executed one. They had to learn the material usually taught over an entire semester in five weeks before creating and implementing their ideas.

Jake Jennings, a senior in the class, said it was rewarding to see the class' work in action.

"That's what's so interesting about these higher level courses that partner with actual organizations," Jennings said. "The teacher is giving students the platform and practice to do things that are so valuable that you take for granted to an extent."

Vilas Insider

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Cover: Vilas Hall is pictured at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on June 17, 2020. The building is home to the J-School. (Photo by Bryce Richter / UW-Madison)

Students and Alumni Score Big as Sports Communication Certificate Continues to Grow

By Kara Rheingans



Students watch presentations by fellow classmates in Matt Hermann's sports marketing communication course.

Bucky Badger. Game day tailgates. Jump Around. Varsity. These time-honored traditions are nearly synonymous with UW-Madison. With 23 Big Ten varsity teams, sports and the traditions that surround them sit at the heart of campus culture. It's no surprise then that many students hope to pursue a career in the sports industry after graduation. Those students are exactly who the School of Journalism and Mass Communication is hoping to reach with the Sports Communication Certificate.

Created in Fall 2019, the 12-credit certificate provides students with the practical skills and theoretical knowledge of the sports industry to prepare them for a wide variety of professions, including sports journalism, broadcasting, sports marketing and public relations. The goal of the certificate

program has been to expose students to the sports industry through a communications lens. "Communications sits at the heart of the business of sports," said Matt Hermann, SJMC teaching faculty and Sports Communication Certificate adviser. "Ultimately, sports have such a special role in society in terms of being very public businesses that run on public events, as well as presenting themselves as being good corporate citizens. There's basically nothing you can do in sports that doesn't involve messaging."

Over the past four years, the certificate has grown rapidly with over 300 students currently enrolled in the program. Hermann credits this growth to both a passion for sports among students and the innovative nature of the industry.

"There is a seemingly bottomless enthusiasm for sports at UW so there's a real hunger for academic programs related to sports," Hermann said. "Additionally, sports have been an innovator in streaming, social media and tech spaces, so I think that students see the sports industry as a vibrant place where they can see a future."

One of the key benefits of the certificate program is the opportunity to learn from industry professionals and UW alumni. Arvind Gopalratnam (BA'04), vice president of corporate social responsibility for the Milwaukee Bucks and executive director of the Milwaukee Bucks Foundation, and Justin Doherty (MA'03), senior associate athletic director for external communications



Matt Hermann, Sports Communication Certificate Adviser

at UW Athletics, have both returned to the J-School to teach the introductory course for the certificate. The class provides an overview of sports reporting, broadcasting, marketing and public relations. Both Gopalratnam and Doherty hope to instill in their students the vast amount of career opportunities available to them within the world of sports as well as the reality of what those careers look like.

"What I love [about the certificate] is that it provides students with a breadth of different learning opportunities to understand what these jobs really are in sports. Not just what they sound like or what [students] think they might be, but truthfully, how they are strategizing and executing things in today's modern world," Gopalratnam said. "The ability to bring in professionals

to teach these classes is an added benefit and legitimizes the department's commitment to creating a program that matches student interest in this space."

Exposure to both the reporting and strategic communication sides of sports is something that alum Jared Schwartz (BA'21) appreciated. After graduation, Schwartz worked as a media and PR intern for the New York Yankees before landing a job as a sports reporter for the *New York Post* and has found that his education on both sides of the business has helped him excel.

"Having that communication background helps in reporting because I know what the PR mindset is and what their goals are when they're presenting information, so I can cut through that and get to the point which is really helpful," Schwartz said.

Alum Abby Moeckler (BA'21) agreed that the breadth of classes has enhanced her resume and made her a stronger candidate on the job market.

"The thing about sports is you have to get your foot in the door somehow and once you do, it's a lot easier to move on," Moeckler said. "I have to thank the certificate for giving me that opportunity."

Since its inception, the certificate has graduated three classes of students and Hermann hopes to see even more complete the certificate and launch their careers in the sports industry.

"I think that this program has the potential to grow at least twice as large as it is," Hermann said. "I just want to continue to grow and serve as many students as we can because I think we have a great program."



Students pursuing the Sports Communication Certificate on a visit to the Kohl Center. SCC classes often involve hands-on experiences to help students gain real-world skills.

New Faculty Q&A with Incoming Assistant Professor Miya Williams Fayne



Dr. Miya Williams Fayne will join the School of Journalism and Mass Communication in Fall 2023 as an assistant professor. Her research focuses on how entertainment content operates in the digital Black public sphere. We caught up with her to learn about her research and what brought her to Madison and the J-School.

What attracted you to UW-Madison and the J-School?

I am truly inspired by the prolific research that is being produced at UW-Madison. I love all of the collaboration with faculty and students both within and outside of the many research centers and groups at the J-School. I am excited for the opportunity to work with such amazing colleagues and student researchers.

How did you get into your field of research?

After finishing my master's degree, I worked at *JET* magazine, which is a Black press publication that was founded in 1951. I didn't feel like my questions regarding the larger Black press' production and consumption practices were being answered in industry, and

I noticed there wasn't much academic research on the Black press in the 21st century. There is scholarship on the mainstream press's adaptation to digital and many books and articles on the historical Black press, so my research works to fill the gap.

How do you feel your work relates to the Wisconsin Idea?

I believe that incorporating the Black press into scholarship ultimately expands students' conceptualizations of today's news landscape. My hope is that after engaging with my work, students will think more critically about industry norms. I believe this more comprehensive knowledge of the field of journalism will help make them more informed researchers, writers, readers and citizens.

Professor Susan Robinson Publishes New Book Exploring Trust-Building in Journalism

By Caroline Crowley



The journalism industry in the United States has been in economic and cultural crisis for decades, and one professor is documenting efforts to save it.

Sue Robinson, Helen Firstbrook Franklin Professor of Journalism at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, recently published *How Journalists Engage: A Theory of Trust Building, Identities, and Care*, a book exploring trust building in

journalism.

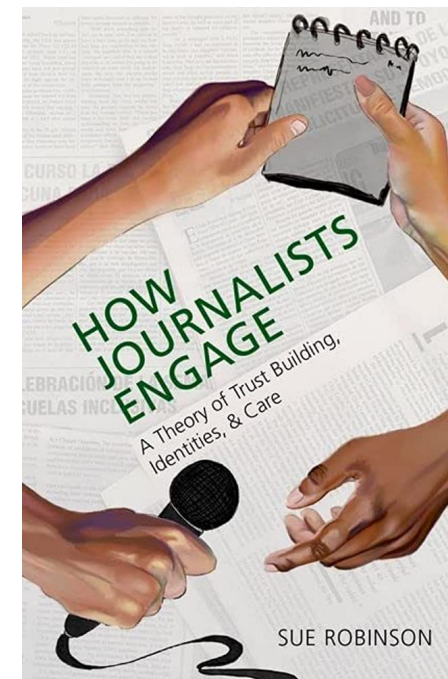
The book, published in May 2023, uses four years of collaboration with journalists through case studies, focus groups, interviews and community work to develop methods for journalists to build trust with communities.

Robinson set out to investigate the engagement journalism movement within the industry in the United States over the last 15 years.

"What I wanted to do was document that movement and pick apart what was really happening and whether journalism's mainstream traditional tenets and principles were being changed because of the movement," Robinson said.

This was accomplished through three phases: 1) documenting the movement through case studies of programs and initiatives propelling it to understand what she found to be eight new skillsets and four new roles for journalists; 2) asking journalists through surveys, interviews and focus groups whether they had practiced these new roles and skillsets and what challenges they had to doing so; and finally, 3) testing out the new skillsets and roles through participant observation of trainings in newsrooms and classrooms.

Through this research, Robinson developed a new



theory of trust building that focused on her term "identity-aware caring": *Trust building* occurs through the nurturing of personal, organizational and institutional relationships that people have with information, sources, news brands, journalists and each other during what is referred to as *engagement*.

For trust building to occur, journalistic engagement needs to be practiced with *identity-aware caring* and enacted through *listening* and *learning*.

In the past, Robinson said reporters have cared about democracy, truth, facts and ethics and other more abstract conceptualizations. However, *How Journalists Engage* highlights the importance of relational care for individuals and communities.

While journalists and researchers don't know for certain if retraining with community-building strategies will work, Robinson said the field has reached a pivotal moment.

"We do not know if this incredible, massive retraining is the right way to go," Robinson said. "But we have a lot of anecdotal evidence that trust building in these ways works with people, and I just find that fascinating."

Day of the Badger 2023: By the Numbers



J-School faculty and staff celebrate Day of the Badger 2023. Proceeds go to the Annual Fund, which provides discretionary funding for things like student scholarships, facilities upgrades and DE&I initiatives.

Thanks to our generous donors, Day of the Badger 2023 was a huge success! Here's a look at how we did:

\$41,206.84 **\$10,000**

raised in 1,848 minutes

match from 9 generous current and former Board of Visitors members:

184 gifts given during Day of the Badger

Gift leaders Ben Deutsch and Scott Farrell, Mary Conway, Shoshana Dichter, Peter Fox, Phil Haslanger, Cindy Mori, Phil Rosenthal and Dave Zweifel

30 first-time donors to the J-School

Professor Dhavan Shah Awarded Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation Named Professorship

By Kara Rheingans



Dhavan Shah, Maier-Bascom Professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication has been named the Jack M. McLeod Professor of Communication Research through the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation Named Professorship award. The award honors UW-

Madison faculty members who have made major contributions to the advancement of knowledge, primarily through their research endeavors, but also through their teaching and service activities.

Shah joined the J-School in 1998 and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in 1999. Shah's major research focus is on political and health communication, especially how online networks and the messages that flow through them build community and provide social support but also erode social ties and our information environment.

"Recognitions like the WARF Named Professorships are so gratifying because they affirm that your colleagues on campus recognize the impact of your

research and mentoring," Shah said. "I'm so grateful to my mentors, colleagues and collaborators, especially because this recognition also lets me honor someone who helped me get on this path."

The WARF award includes \$100,000 in research funding and the opportunity to select a name associated with the professorship. Shah chose internationally esteemed scholar and emeritus SJMC professor Jack M. McLeod.

"Jack is someone who I have very consciously tried to model my career after," Shah said. "When I came here, he took me under his wing, he invited me to the Mass Communication Research Center. I learned so much from Jack, and he was a wonderful mentor to me."

Professor Lucas Graves Wins H.I. Romnes Faculty Fellowship from Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation

By Kara Rheingans



Lucas Graves, Professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication received the H.I. Romnes Faculty Fellowship in recognition of his exceptional research contributions to the field of mass communication.

The Romnes Fellowship is supported by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation and recognizes faculty and their research within six years from promotion to a tenured position.

Graves has been at the J-School since 2012 and received tenure in 2018. His research focuses on new professional movements in journalism, like the global fact-checking movement.

"I am really excited to be a part of the next cohort of Romnes recipients," said Graves. "I have always been so impressed by the caliber of research carried out across this university, and it makes

me proud to be a part of an institution that supports such a wide array of scholars studying such different questions."

Fellowship awardees are granted \$60,000 and Graves will use it to support his research on fact-checking organizations around the world, studying how they operate in different political environments and how their movement is changing as threats from disinformation evolve. The award will help pay

for costs like travel, transcribing interviews, and working with research assistants to analyze large volumes of data.

"This award will help right away," Graves said. "In two weeks, I'm traveling to Seoul, South Korea, for the 10th annual GlobalFact Conference, and this funding is crucial to carry out my research there."

The challenge for many academics as their careers progress is how to transition

between different large-scale research projects. Awards like the Romnes Fellowship are meant to ease that burden for those making that transition in the years after tenure.

"This kind of funding is so important in helping people to take a step back and think more strategically about their long-term research goals and what they want to accomplish, and to look at their career trajectory in a new way," Graves said.

Kim Kelleher Kick-Starts Student Career Goals with Internship Fund

By Kara Rheingans



Longtime supporter and School of Journalism and Mass Communication Board of Visitors member Kim Kelleher (BA'93) has established an internship fund to support the goals of rising juniors and seniors in the journalism and strategic communication fields.

Kelleher has worked at some of the world's most influential publications, including *SELF*, *ELLE*, *Glamour*, *TIME* and *GQ*, among many others, and is now the president of commercial revenue and partnerships

for AMC Networks. In 2007, Kelleher was inducted into the American Advertising Federation's Advertising Hall of Achievement and was named Advertising Age's Publisher of the Year in 2011. Throughout her career, Kelleher was inspired by the talented journalists and writers she encountered, leading her back to UW-Madison and the J-School.

"After spending 20 years of my career working with journalists and writers at media brands from *ELLE* to *WIRED* to *GQ* and *Sports Illustrated*, I was introduced to the J-School when I became Global Publisher of *TIME Magazine* in 2010," Kelleher said. "The depth of my respect for journalists and their trade knows no bounds."

For students hoping to pursue a career in journalism or strategic communication, internships are often the best way to experience the reality of

a job as well as get a foot in the door within the industry.

"Internships are a fantastic way to sample a future career opportunity," Kelleher said. "They give you a foundation for entry-level employment and allow you to get a sneak peek into the culture and people of a prospective employer."

However, many internships are low-paying or unpaid or require students to relocate putting undue financial strain on students and their families. Kelleher hopes to ease that burden by providing support for passionate interns.

"Being from a small town in Wisconsin (Sister Bay), I had no connections to the media world in New York City; I had to boot-strap," Kelleher said. "In starting the internship fund at the J-School, I hope to help facilitate that connection for students so that they can jump-start their journeys."



Students in J417 created and published the 21st edition of Curb magazine. This edition, titled “Curb: Pulse,” explores the heartbeat that drives Wisconsinites forward. Above, the Curb staff and J417 instructor Stacy Forster pose together at the Curb magazine launch party Dec. 13, 2022.



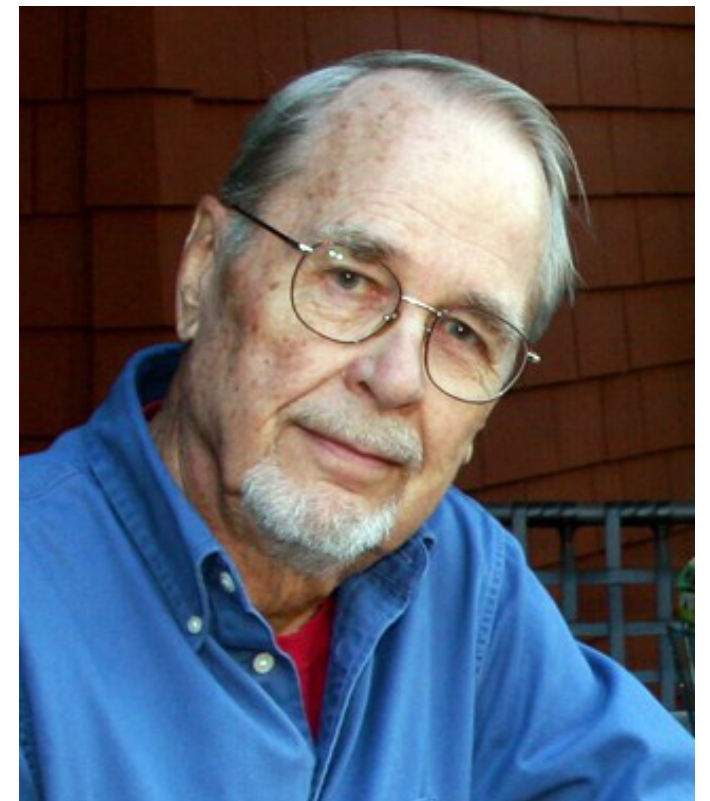
The Communication Crossroads Conference was held March 3. Crossroads is an interdisciplinary conference organized, led and presented entirely by graduate students. This panel, “Communication Ecologies: Examining Solidarity and Trust,” featured several presentations from J-School students. In front, from left, Danny Parker, Abby Youran Qin and Macau K. F. Mak (seated).



The 2023 Alumni Achievement Awards on April 28 honored the accomplishments of several of our alumni, graduate students and undergraduate seniors. Recipients of the Teaching Assistant Excellence Award pose together with Professor Mike Wagner after receiving their awards. From left to right, Jessica Needle, Jisoo Kim, Kruthika Kamath, Mike Wagner, Omar Dumdum, Carlos Dávalos and Tahereh Rahimi.



The J-School Spring 2023 Graduation Celebration was held May 12. Graduates kicked off the ceremony with a song from Bucky Badger, heard from sports talk radio host Jim Rome and were individually recognized for their outstanding accomplishments. Congratulations, Class of 2023!



We are sad to share that William Blankenburg, professor emeritus, died Jan. 1, at age 90. Prof. Blankenburg mentored countless students and published research on newspaper economics and the societal effects of mass media. Please visit go.wisc.edu/blankenburg to read our full obituary.



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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, course material and current events. If you were enrolled in J202 now, how well would you do?

1. Fix this sentence: Retired NFL quarterback Brett Favre filed lawsuits Thursday in Miss., accusing the state auditor and 2 national sportscasters of defaming him. (2 errors)
2. What does the acronym CRAP stand for when it comes to design principles?
3. What Wisconsin Badgers team won a national championship in March 2023?
4. Name two types of feature leads.
5. Thousands of people died and many more were injured or displaced when an earthquake hit on Feb. 6 – name one of the countries affected by the earthquake.
6. Fix this sentence: Surrounded by six-year-old students, Lana Scott held up a card which was dotted with pictures of words that start with Y. (2 errors)

1. Retired NFL quarterback Brett Favre filed lawsuits Thursday in Mississippi, accusing the state auditor and two national sportscasters of defaming him.
2. Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, Proximity.
3. Women's hockey
4. Emblem, anecdotal, scene-setter, contrast, character
5. Turkey and Syria
6. Surrounded by 6-year-old students, Lana Scott held up a card that was dotted with pictures of words that start with Y.

Photo by Leone Venter on Unsplash

