



School of Journalism  
and Mass Communication  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# Vilas Insider

SPRING 2024

School of Journalism and Mass Communication

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Embracing AI in  
Education

CCCR Receives  
\$3 Million Knight  
Foundation Grant

Faculty Members  
Honored With Major  
University Awards

Eklund Family  
Leaves Lasting  
Legacy





As my first year as director comes to a close, I feel immensely proud of the community we have built here in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Our students brought home a whopping 67 awards for their excellence from prestigious associations, including the American Advertising Federation, Society of Professional Journalists, Association for Women in Communication, and the National Center on Disability and Journalism, to name just a few. Our graduate students continued to push their research forward and published papers in a variety of journals, including *Journal of Health Medicine*, *American Journalism*, *Digital Journalism*, and more. Alumni like yourself helped raise \$66,903 collectively during Fill the Hill and Day of the Badger. Who wouldn't burst with pride to be part of all this excellence every day?

But it is our faculty who have struck me most this past year.

Our students' successes are due in very large part to the commitment of our faculty members to continually push them to new heights. Their passion for mentorship fuels this department and makes it one of the best places in the world to study communication. This year alone, two faculty members received some of the university's most prestigious awards for their excellence. Professor Doug McLeod received the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award, one of the university's highest teaching honors, for his teaching excellence and dedication to his students' success. Additionally, Professor Mike Wagner was named the William T. Evjue Distinguished Chair for the Wisconsin Idea, in recognition of his contributions to outreach and service and his commitment to fostering the next generation of scholars and leaders. You can read more about each of these honors on page 8 and 9.

On top of teaching, my colleagues have continued to dedicate themselves to their research and to making the school a research and doctoral training powerhouse. The Center for Communication and Civic Renewal, led by professors Mike Wagner and Dhavan Shah, recently received a \$3 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which will enable CCCR to embark on groundbreaking research to significantly broaden our understanding of 21st century communication and civic life. Read more about this exciting investment on

page 6. Additionally, several professors have been awarded competitive fellowships: Associate Professor Lindsay Palmer was selected as a 2023-24 Fellow for the Institute of Research in the Humanities in the College of Letters & Science; Professor Sue Robinson received the 2023-24 Klein-Carnell Distinguished Fellow Award from her alma mater, Temple University; and Assistant Professor Jing Wang was selected for the prestigious UW-Madison Center for the Humanities' First Book Workshop, which provides support for junior faculty members revising their first academic books. Finally, last fall, professors Sue Robinson, Hernando Rojas and Dhavan Shah were named to the 2023 Top 2% Scientists' List by Stanford University and Elsevier and emeritus professors Sharon Dunwoody, Albert Gunther and Jack McLeod were also recognized for their lifetime research achievements.

My colleagues inspire me deeply each and every day. They help make this community strong, vibrant and close knit – the kind of place where people feel a true sense of belonging.

**On, Wisconsin!**

**Kathleen Bartzen Culver**  
Director, School of Journalism and Mass Communication

## PhD Student Jisoo Kim Awarded Phi Kappa Phi Dissertation Fellowship

By Kara Rheingans



Jisoo Kim, PhD student and instructor at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication was recently selected as a 2024 recipient of a Dissertation Fellowship by The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. The fellowship is designed to support Society members in the dissertation writing stage of doctoral study. Kim is one of 15 recipients to receive this national award.

"I feel privileged to receive this dissertation fellowship. It gives me more confidence in

my academic performance and enhances opportunities to explore research inquiries," Kim said. "Sometimes, it could be a bit challenging to fully immerse in the dissertation work while advancing other research projects one has initiated before or even after becoming a dissertator. This fellowship will provide me with greater motivation and resources to make consistent progress on the dissertation while wisely navigating through my doctoral journey."

Kim's research focuses on how communication ecologies shape public opinion and perceptions about politics and democracy. Through this line of research, Kim is pursuing a dissertation examining how the public perceives polarization in the United States and how communication environments can contribute to or help remedy the overestimation of such political divides among Americans. The fellowship will support Kim as she dives even deeper into her line of research.

"I am planning three related studies to enhance the

discussions of the relationship between communication and perceived political divides, and this fellowship will allow me to collect empirical data for one of the studies," Kim said. "Through the fellowship, I am thrilled to pursue rigor and more thoroughness in my work that would otherwise be very difficult to achieve."

The fellowship will also grant Kim the freedom to broaden her research interests and collaborate with other scholars.

"This fellowship will provide critical support not only for my dissertation work, but also for expanding my academic horizons through additional availability to explore ideas, share my research at conferences, engage and collaborate with other scholars, and enrich my research experiences," Kim said. "I also greatly appreciate it as an opportunity to showcase my ability and commitment to advancing knowledge in communication studies, which may further enhance my visibility and credibility in this field." ■

## Vilas Insider

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**Email**  
info@journalism.wisc.edu

**Website**  
journalism.wisc.edu

### Director, School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Kathleen Bartzen Culver (BA'88, MA'92, PhD'99)

### Newsletter Editor

Kara Rheingans (BA'17)

### Contributing Writer

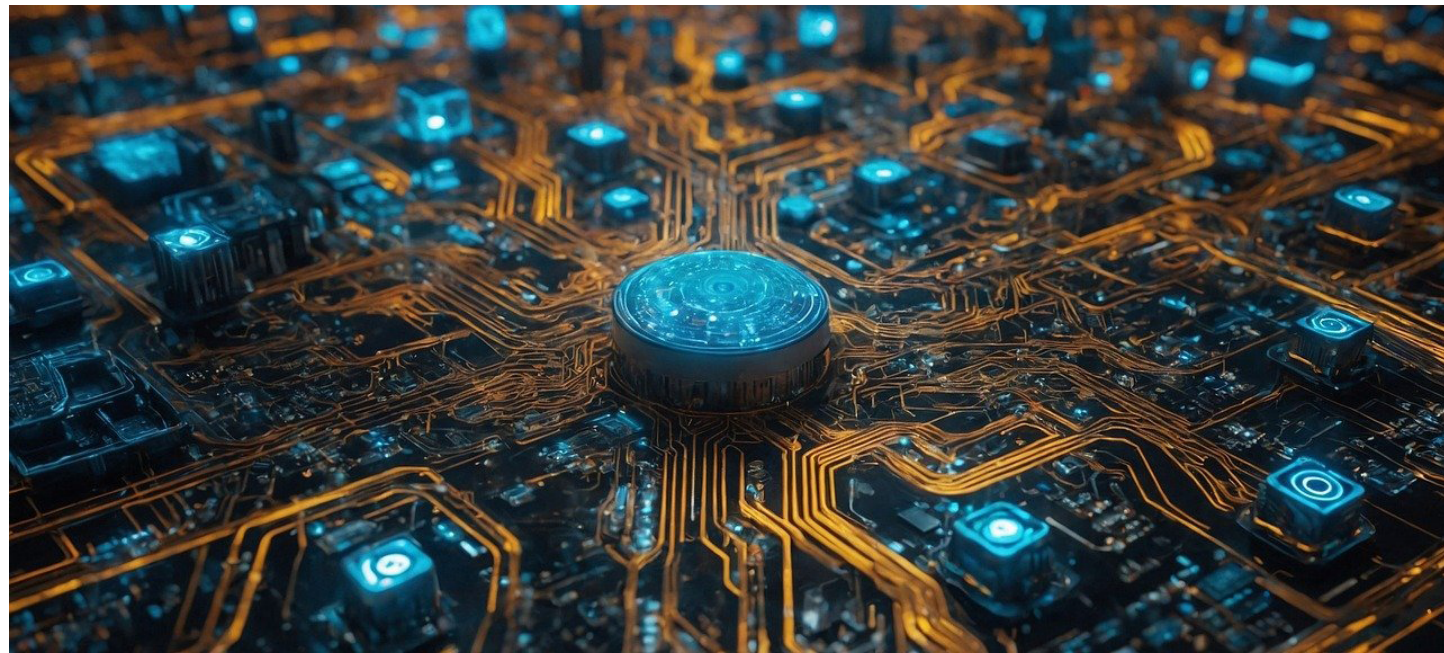
Emma Goshin (BA'24)

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Cover: James L. Baughman Senior Achievement Award winners, (from left) Rachel Hale, Audrey Thibert, Grace Xiang, Em-J Krigsman and Sophia Vento, pose at the 2024 SJMC Alumni Awards Ceremony (Photo by Mai Nguyen / SJMC)





## Innovators in Education: J-School Students and Educators Embrace AI

By Emma Goshin

In the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution, the traditional landscape of education is undergoing profound changes. With generative AI tools like ChatGPT, anyone can generate human-like text based on endless possibilities of questions. As AI continues to permeate every aspect of our lives, its integration into education is an inevitable part of the future of learning. At the heart of this transformation in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication are the people: students and educators who have come together to advance educational opportunities.

The AI revolution embodies the rapid advancement and widespread use of AI technologies, evidenced by the almost \$200 billion global AI market. According to MITSloan Management

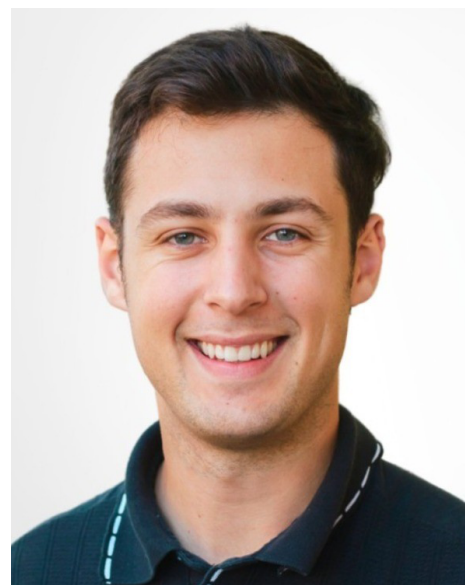
Review, 83% of companies claim that AI is a strategic priority in their business plans. Despite pervasive concerns about AI's potential to replace human jobs and increase unemployment, it is essential to recognize that AI can be harnessed for innovation in ways that enhance our experiences.

As we navigate the impacts of AI, one student stands out in his advocacy for AI use in education. Recent graduate Ben Newman (JBA'24) has a passion for technology and is an outspoken advocate for AI use in education. From a young age, he leveraged technological tools to amplify his creative expression, making music with GarageBand and crafting stop-motion videos with simple apps. When AI-powered tools emerged, he saw it as a natural extension of his interest.

"I've always been

technologically enabled and loved using technology in order to punch above some of my abilities in creative execution to achieve my vision. My interest in AI is part of a continuation of me using technological tools that help me be creative," Newman said.

His journey with AI led to experiments with various tools. Newman created an AI-generated t-shirt shop and advised businesses to integrate AI in their practices. This blend of tech-savvy and strategic



Ben Newman (JBA'24)

thinking positioned him as a valuable asset in navigating the complexities of AI.

Newman has been speaking to heads of marketing, HR teams and CEOs about the challenges and opportunities for their businesses. In fall 2023, he brought this skill to the university and gave a presentation to SJMC instructors about the uses of AI and the democratization of creativity.

"I realized that there was an opportunity to tailor that [business] presentation with all the introduction to AI ultimately to a group of educators," Newman said.

Newman's collaboration with faculty not only demonstrated the value of AI in education, but also highlighted the importance of collaboration and innovation in achieving the J-School's primary goal: preparing students for the world ahead.

As the J-School responds to the demands of the AI revolution, many instructors are integrating this new form of learning into their classes.

Professor Mike Wagner challenges the notion that AI



Ben Newman (JBA'24) presented to faculty and TAs about leveraging generative AI in academia. Newman spoke about how to use ChatGPT, Gamma and MagicSchool to assist in creating lesson plans, slide decks, lesson feedback and more.

is accurate and unbiased. For one assignment, he asks his class to type a question into ChatGPT about certain research and then fact-check whether the research publication it cites actually exists.

"A lot of times ChatGPT will hallucinate publications that don't exist," Wagner said. "Whatever AI produces is a function of who creates that particular system."

As the job market evolves, Wagner is determined to continue preparing his students for the jobs of tomorrow.

"The future of education will

change in the AI revolution. It expands the options available to students in some ways and contracts the options available to folks in other ways," Wagner said.

While classrooms adapt to the evolving landscape shaped by AI, educators like Wagner are navigating the complexities and challenges of integrating this technology into their teaching.

"We're trying to give students a set of tools to learn, to write, to think, to assess the quality of information, to rank the value of information, so that when a new job comes along in 15 years, they have the skill set that's going to help them succeed in that new area," Wagner said.

While some people view the AI revolution as a frightening future that threatens job security, both Newman and Wagner believe that the integration of AI in education serves as a catalyst for innovation. As students and educators embrace this shift, they are not merely preparing for the future but shaping it. ■







**KNIGHT  
FOUNDATION**

## Center for Communication and Civic Renewal Expands Groundbreaking Research on the Impact of 21st Century Communication on Civic Life

The Center for Communication and Civic Renewal (CCCR) is embarking on groundbreaking research aimed at significantly broadening our collective understanding of 21st-century communication and civic life.

Over the next five years, Principal Investigators Professors Mike Wagner and Dhavan Shah will lead a multi-method approach to explore national, state and local levels of civic engagement.

The new endeavor, which

will dramatically expand the Center's civic communication research and public engagement, is made possible by a \$3 million investment from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. It builds on \$1.15 million of Knight resources supporting the Center since 2019.

Co-Investigators on the grant project include SJMC Associate Professor Sijia Yang, along with collaborators in the Department of Political Science, Department of Psychology and Boston University.

"Learning how we can move from threats against democracy to civic renewal is a massive undertaking that requires detailed and extended study of the communication ecology and its social consequences using a range of approaches," said Shah, CCCR Research Director. "Without support from the Knight Foundation, this kind of multi-year, multi-method project would be impossible."

Wagner, CCCR's Faculty Director, said studying how people's interactions across the information ecology –

examining the dynamics of political conversations, the news people use, and the social media they engage with – helps reveal a more complete picture of contentious politics and how we might work to repair civic life in Wisconsin and beyond.

"We want to know how leaders and citizens can participate safely, knowledgeably and effectively, reduce threats to democracy, and support healthier governance in ways that encourage popularly elected government, citizen engagement, equal rights for all, and legal protections for political expressions that do no harm," Wagner said.

Knight funds will support large-scale multi-platform news content analysis at the national and local levels, tools for evaluating millions of social media posts on civic topics, and a series of national and regional public opinion surveys.

"With Wisconsin as its laboratory, CCCR is pioneering a multidisciplinary approach that aims to deepen our understanding of how communities are informed



*Dhavan Shah, Professor, Research Director, CCCR*

and engaged today," said John Sands, senior director for media and democracy at Knight Foundation. "During a time of profound technological and social disruption, CCCR's scholarship could not be more important."

In addition, the grant covers hiring two tenure-track faculty positions focusing on communication, social identity and civil society, funds five years of support from an Executive Administrative Director, supports graduate student research assistants, and funds conferences that will bring in scholars to campus every other year. The grant will help to fund the Center through 2028, which is a period including two presidential election cycles and two Wisconsin governor's races, among other important civic events.

Sustained Knight funding will also enable CCCR to expand its collaborative network to



*Mike Wagner, Professor and Faculty Director, CCCR*

include field-leading researchers from around the country. This will build on CCCR's existing strengths and capacities in media ecologies, contentious politics and multi-method integrative research, while also building more expertise for research on media framing around climate change, the politics of cultural consumption and social justice.

"Sharing our resources with top scholars from around the country is the Wisconsin Idea in action," Wagner said. "Engaging with and learning from these incredible people will improve our work, provide our students opportunities to grow their skills and expand their professional networks."

Along with the faculty team, a group of 23 current and former graduate students have published CCCR-related research or presented it at national and international conferences since 2019. One of those former students is Jiyoun Suk (University of Connecticut).

"The training and collaborative opportunities for students in our department are second to none," Suk said. "Knight's continued support gives us a chance to push our political communication research forward in innovative ways that can shed important light on contentious politics." ■

## Day of the Badger 2024: By the Numbers



*J-School students celebrate Day of the Badger. Proceeds go to the Annual Fund, which provides discretionary funding for things like student scholarships, facilities upgrades and inclusion initiatives.*

Thanks to our generous donors, we had yet another record-breaking Day of the Badger! Here's a look at how we did:

**\$51,627**  
raised in **1,848**  
minutes

**195**  
gifts given during  
Day of the Badger

**\$20,000**

match from **15** generous current and former Board of Visitors members:

Gift leaders Ben Deutsch and Scott Farrell, Mike Brophy, Betsy Brown, Mary Conway, Shoshana Dichter, Phil Haslanger, Kim Kelleher, Rory Leyden, Pete Marino, Anne Martino, Bob Miller, Phil Rosenthal, Ann Wessing and Dave Zweifel



## Professor Mike Wagner Named William T. Evjue Distinguished Chair for the Wisconsin Idea

By Kara Rheingans



Mike Wagner, professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, was named the William T. Evjue Distinguished Chair for the Wisconsin Idea, recognizing his outstanding commitment to outreach and service.

Additionally Wagner received the 2024 Alliant Energy James R. Underkofler Excellence in Teaching Award from the Universities of Wisconsin. The award honors extraordinary teachers in UW schools within Alliant Energy's service area.

The Evjue Chair, established by the William T. Evjue Foundation, is designed to further the legacy of the Wisconsin Idea. The award honors faculty members who have contributed substantially to the outreach mission of UW-Madison and demonstrated their ability to transfer knowledge, preferably through activities that address an impactful societal problem. Wagner is the first SJMC faculty member to receive this honor.

"It's an incredibly meaningful recognition from the university,"

Wagner said. "I've dedicated my professional life to trying to serve the Wisconsin Idea. To have people recognize that and provide resources to allow me to help students and my collaborators and I continue that work and share with the people of our state is just exceptionally meaningful to me."

Over the years, Wagner has moderated live televised or radio broadcast debates, given more than 350 public talks around the state, nation and globe, taught summer courses to legislative staff at the Wisconsin State Capitol, and become a nationally recognized political communication expert.

While the Evjue Chair honors Wagner, specifically, for his efforts, Wagner credits his students, colleagues and collaborators for the award.

"I'm thrilled to have the chair and the award, but it's a collaborative effort," Wagner said. "I couldn't do anything that I do without the help of the staff in our department or my collaborators or my students." ■

### STUDENT KUDOS

Graduate students Wil Dubree and Carlos Dávalos received campus-wide teaching assistant excellence awards.

Senior Audrey Thibert received the 2024 Overseas Press Club Scholar Award.

Eric Noansi Agyekum awarded UW-Madison's 2024 African Studies Program Research Award.

Undergraduate and graduate students won 67 awards from the American Advertising Federation, Wisconsin Newspaper Association, Milwaukee Press Club, Association for Women in Communication and Society of Professional Journalists, including Curb Magazine, which was named best collegiate magazine in the Midwest region.

Senior Samantha Stidham won the Grand Prize at the IES Study Abroad 2023 Study Abroad Film Festival.

PhD student Carlos Dávalos was selected as a Mellon Public Humanities Fellow.

## Professor Doug McLeod Wins Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award

By Kara Rheingans



Doug McLeod, Evjue Centennial Professor, has won the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award. He is one of five faculty members who were selected to receive this award, an honor recognizing UW-Madison's best educators.

McLeod has long been a shining example of the Wisconsin Idea, incorporating hands-on learning into his courses and teaching students how their work applies to the real world.

"We are delighted to see Doug earn this well-deserved recognition," said Kathleen Bartzen Culver, director and James E. Burgess Chair in Journalism Ethics. "Students rave about his engaged and professional focus. He sets ambitious goals for them and does everything in his power to help them achieve."

Recognizing a gap in the university's offerings, McLeod led the development and implementation of the Sports Communication and Digital

Media Analytics Certificates. These efforts have helped maintain the School's reputation as one of the best career preparation programs on campus.

"It's great to be recognized by the chancellor and the university. Of all the professional awards that one could get, this one means the most to me by far," McLeod said. "The fact that my colleagues, former students, grad students and undergrads wrote letters that recognize what I bring to the table, that's what means a lot to me. That's why I do what I do."

McLeod always makes time for his students who admire his passion for mentoring.

"It's easy to be the coach when you've got really fantastic players. You could be a great coach, but if you've got bad players, it doesn't matter," McLeod said. "I am blessed to work with top-notch, really good, talented people, which makes my job super easy." ■



Students in McLeod's Creative Campaign Messages course on a field trip to Shorewood, Wisconsin.

### 2024 ALUMNI AWARDS

#### Distinguished Service Award

For professional contributions in journalism and mass communication.

- Bob Donegan (JBA'76)
- Yasmin Farooq (JBA'88)
- Patty Loew (MA'92, PhD'98)

#### Ralph O. Nafziger Award

For distinguished achievement within 10 years of graduation.

- Cara Lombardo (MA'16)
- Alexandria Mack (JBA'17)

#### Sharon Dunwoody Early Career Award

For distinguished achievement in teaching and research within 10 years of graduation from the PhD program.

- Manisha Pathak-Shelat (PhD'14)
- Woohyun Yoo (PhD'14)



# ALUMNI AUTHORS

Looking for your next great read? Our alumni have got you covered. From historical nonfiction to mystery to sports to Greek mythology, there is a book for every interest.



## What Does Your Fortune Cookie Say?

Adam Albrecht (JBS'96)

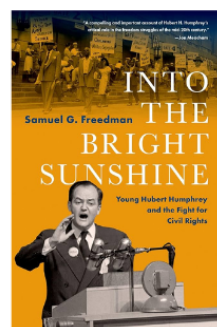
A witty and inspiring handbook offering 80 useful ways to become a better professional and happier human.



## All the Blues Come Through

Metra Farrari (JBA'08)

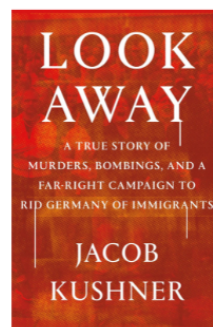
In this clever blend of chick-lit and Greek mythology, typical millennial Ryan Bell unexpectedly discovers that she is the heir of the Greek god Artemis.



## Into the Bright Sunshine

Samuel G. Freedman (JBA'77)

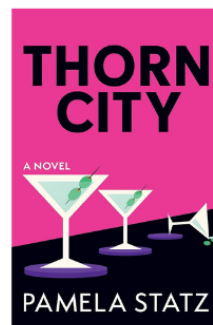
A riveting look at Hubert Humphrey whom history judged a loser, yet played a key part in the greatest social movement of the 20th century.



## Look Away

Jacob Kushner (JBA'10)

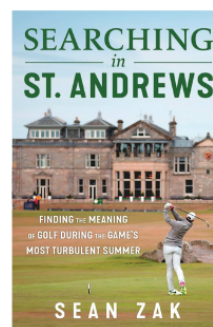
A thrilling narrative investigation into the National Socialist Underground (NSU) – a German terror organization that targeted immigrants – and how the government failed to stop it.



## Thorn City

Pamela Statz (JBA'94)

Lisa and her friends work to unravel the earth-shattering secrets that haunt them, grapple with past trauma and find a way to navigate whatever Portland throws at them.



## Searching in St. Andrews

Sean Zak (JBS'14)

Follow Sean's journey to St. Andrews, Scotland – the mecca of golf – as he brings the sport's history and the current state of the game to life.

## Gift Impact

## Eklund Family Leaves Lasting Legacy of Support for Deserving SJMC Students

By Kara Rheingans

It is an incredible privilege to financially support passionate students and watch them follow their dreams of becoming top-tier communication professionals. It is another to provide that same support long after you've gone. For the Eklund family, that was exactly the kind of lasting impact they wanted to have on students.

Laurence (BA'27) and Ethel Eklund knew that they wanted to leave a legacy of support for communicators far into the future. In 1994, the Eklunds created an estate plan for their family and established the Laurence C. and Ethel C. Eklund Scholarship Fund to support the financial needs of students in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Today, these funds are used to support deserving students in a variety of ways, including summer internships.

Recent SJMC graduate Zoe



Zoe Jaeger (JBA'24), Summer Internship Scholarship recipient

Jaeger received a Summer Internship Scholarship funded by the Eklund family estate.

"This summer, I will be the Sharon Stark investigative journalism intern at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel – the same paper for which Laurence Eklund was a reporter and Washington Bureau Chief," Jaeger said. "With this scholarship, I am honored to carry his legacy with me, and I am dedicated to uplifting Wisconsin's impressive and

***"The Laurence C. and Ethel C. Eklund Scholarship presents a significant opportunity for me to advance my education and career in journalism and mass communication."***

thriving journalism community."

The Eklund Fund also supports deserving students through more general means and helps propel students in pursuit of their dreams.

"The Laurence C. and Ethel C. Eklund Scholarship presents a significant opportunity for me to advance my education and career in journalism and mass communication. This scholarship recognizes my commitment to academic excellence and hard work and endorses my dedication to using social media as an effective tool for conveying positive and meaningful messages," said Mingwei Liu, SJMC junior.



Mingwei Liu, SJMC junior, Eklund Scholarship Fund recipient

Mr. Eklund was a journalist and head of the Washington bureau for the Milwaukee Journal. Eklund graduated from UW–Madison in 1927 and joined the Milwaukee Journal in August of that year where he specialized in Wisconsin politics. Eklund became quickly adept at providing the local angle to national stories.

In 1947, the Journal established a bureau in Washington D.C. with Eklund at its helm. During his 23-year tenure as bureau chief, he covered national political conventions and nine presidential elections. Eklund retired from the Journal in 1970 and was inducted into the Milwaukee Press Club Hall of Fame in 1990. ■

## Interested in learning more about estate giving?

Contact Marit Barkve at the Wisconsin Alumni Association Foundation at [marit.barkve@supportuw.org](mailto:marit.barkve@supportuw.org)



## In Memoriam: Jack McLeod, 1930–2024

By Kara Rheingans



Jack McLeod, Maier-Bascom Professor Emeritus and a global leader in political communication research, died January 28, 2024. He was 93.

Through his 38-year career in the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Jack left a legacy of inspiring teaching, thoughtful mentorship and field-leading research. His scholarship focused on political communication and the role of media in broadening democratic participation.

"Jack was a towering figure in communication research and one of the most humble, gentle spirits I've encountered in my academic career," said Kathleen Bartzen Culver, director and James E. Burgess Chair in Journalism Ethics. "He left his imprint on the field through his own prolific scholarship and through the careers of the more than 70 doctoral students he advised and countless others he mentored."

After earning his Ph.D. in social psychology at the University of Michigan, Jack joined the

UW faculty in 1962 and shaped the SJMC into a research and doctoral training powerhouse. Through his sociological studies, Jack had realized the importance of experiential learning and the need to expose students to the real world, infusing the SJMC doctoral program with relevance and excellence that would shape scholars for generations to come.

"Jack was incredibly humble and truly generous with his talents, despite his stature in the field, which surely led to tremendous demands," said Ohio State University Professor William "Chip" Eveland, a 1997 doctoral graduate. "The field of communication has grown tremendously since Jack McLeod joined it in the 1960s, in no small part because of his contributions. We would be better still today if there were more people like Jack McLeod. I will miss him and his influence."



(From left) Jack McLeod, Doug McLeod and Zhongdang Pan at the 2018 SJMC Alumni Awards ceremony. Jack McLeod was awarded the Director's Award for his impact on SJMC.

Jack's legacy as a researcher, mentor and friend will be felt for years to come not only within Vilas Hall, but around the globe. Colleagues will miss Jack, especially his son, Professor Doug McLeod. His knack for connecting with colleagues on a personal level was unmatched.

"Jack was generous, affable, funny, and gregarious. He loved talking about politics and the state of the world, sneaking good Scotch into Badger football games, telling stories about his travels and travails, and, of course, sharing ideas about communication research," said Dhavan Shah, Jack M. McLeod Professor of Communication Research. "He listened carefully, spoke softly, and always greeted you with a wry smile, which is why everyone felt so welcome around him. He didn't just study communication and community, he used communication to create community." ■

## In Memoriam: Ray Anderson, 1927–2023

By Kara Rheingans



Ray Anderson, Professor Emeritus and former foreign correspondent for the *New York Times*, died on September 24, 2023. He was 96.

Ray mentored countless students and was dedicated to seeing them succeed beyond the walls of Vilas Hall.

"I had the honor of learning from Ray as a student and benefiting from his deep kindness and vast experience,"

said Director Kathleen Bartzen Culver. "He was exceptionally well-read and once said reading the *New York Times* should be like enjoying a good meal. Ray launched me on my very first journalism internship and challenged me to take everything I could from it. He was a wise and supportive mentor to so many."

Despite being, as his son Alex Anderson puts it, "a Wisconsin kid," Ray's unwavering wanderlust was a driving force throughout his education and career. After graduating from UW-Madison in 1952 with a Masters degree in Russian, Ray studied at the Slavic Institute in Denmark and later returned to the U.S. to study journalism at Columbia University. He then set his sights on becoming a *New York Times* reporter.

"He once told me that had



(Photo courtesy of Alex Anderson)

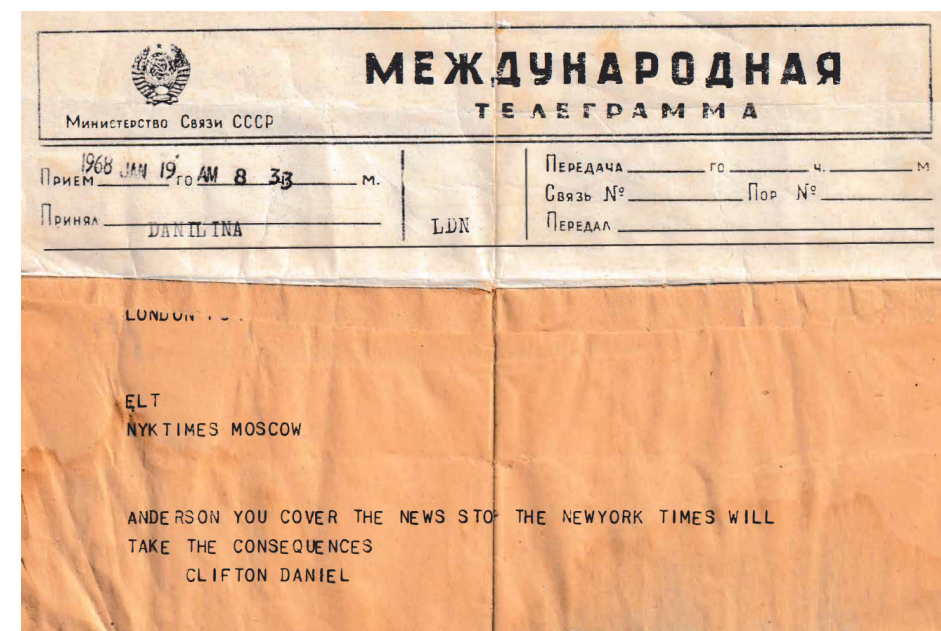
he not reached the [*New York Times*] by his mid-30s, he'd have quit journalism and gone back to teaching Russian and German," Alex said.

In 1960, he received a call from the *Times* to cover Moscow during the Golden Era of Soviet power. He returned to UW-Madison and the SJMC as a professional in residence in 1981. During his summer breaks, Ray often returned to the *Times* to work the copy desk and spent his summers at the *International Herald Tribune* in Paris.

Colleagues, friends and family will deeply miss Ray, who left a lasting impact on those closest to him.

"The greater lessons I gleaned from observing his indisputable integrity and his willingness to listen to other people's opinions with patience, even when he knew they were in the wrong," his son Alex said.

Through his reporting, mentorship, kindness and wit, Ray Anderson made his mark on Vilas Hall and in countless communities across the globe. ■



A 1968 letter from New York Times Managing Editor Clifton Daniel to Ray Anderson when he was in hot water with Soviet authorities over his coverage. (Photo courtesy of Alex Anderson)



# From Theory to Practice: New Digital Media Analytics Certificate Fuses Data and Communication

By Emma Goshin



The Digital Media Analytics Certificate prepares students for future careers by equipping them with data analysis skills and how to use data to create compelling data-driven storytelling. (Photo by Bryce Richter/UW-Madison)

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, the role of analytics has become increasingly important for businesses worldwide. Data provides insights into consumer behavior, content performance and market trends. Monitoring this data is not just beneficial – it's essential for staying competitive in a rapidly changing market. In preparing students for the real world, two J-School professors have taken the lead in developing the Digital Media Analytics Certificate this year.

The 12-credit program equips students with data analysis skills and a theoretical understanding of how digital media function in contemporary society, particularly within journalism, strategic communication, and mass media contexts. Students complete a foundational course, skills course, social impacts course and lastly a capstone

class on concepts and tools for data analysis and visualization.

Evjue Centennial Professor Doug McLeod was motivated to start the DMA certificate after successfully creating the Sports Communication Certificate several years ago. Highlighting the significance of knowledge in media analytics in various industries, McLeod underscored the critical role the J-School plays in preparing students for the job market.

"More and more people are expected have those skills and understand the pitfalls of those skills," said McLeod. It's such an omnipresent part of daily life that more and more people and more and more professions require that kind of knowledge."

Associate Professor Sijia Yang drew inspiration from insights about industry professionals and student surveys, indicating the need for a certificate of this

kind.

"I think the goal for this certificate program is that they have the hands-on experiences of actually applying these conceptual and analytical tools to address some kind of a concrete problem," Yang said.

Senior Grace Jiang recently completed the DMA certificate capstone course and learned to apply the concepts and techniques gained through her other DMA coursework and apply it to real-world scenarios.

"The DMA certificate has provided me with invaluable skills and knowledge in the realm of social media analytics. The program has not only complemented my major studies, but also equipped me with practical tools and insights that I believe will be essential in my future career," Jiang said.

Beyond its core in the J-School, students from all other majors are able to complete the DMA certificate. According to McLeod, the certificate serves several different kinds of students: journalism majors interested in developing their media research skills and students in data and computer sciences, who also have an interest in learning media and storytelling skills.

"We want to not only serve our majors well, but we want to serve other majors around campus who might be interested in or benefit from the skills that we teach," McLeod said. ■

## 2023-24: Year in Photos



**Top row:** (left) Recent Research M.A. graduate Jiayun Ye presents at the Communications Crossroads Conference Mar. 8, 2024. (center) J202 lab led by TA Binbin Wang won the Fall 2023 Tompkins Cup for their sustainability-focused app. (right) Director Katy Culver and Professor Doug McLeod pose together during Fill the Hill Oct. 5, 2023. **Second row:** BOV member and UW alum Andy Katz returned to campus Feb. 22 as a part of the Nafziger Lecture series. Andy spoke about his career journey and the importance of resiliency. **Third row:** (left) Deborah Blum (MA'82) delivers the keynote speech at the 2024 SJMC Graduation Celebration. (right) 2024 SJMC Alumni Award winners pose together at the ceremony Apr. 26, 2024 (from left, Cara Lombardo, Bob Donegan, Alexandria Mack, Patty Loew and Woohyun Yoo). **Bottom row:** Minjie Hong (BA'23, right) poses with her friend at the 2023 SJMC December Graduation Celebration Dec. 12, 2023. (center) Several BOV members pose together at the Spring 2024 BOV Meeting Apr. 26, 2024. (right) A group of new graduate students enjoy an afternoon at the terrace after orientation Aug. 30, 2023.





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## J202 Quiz

J202 is the first class students take 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: White House press secretary Karine-Jean Pierre denied the president had prior knowledge of state of the art extra-terrestrial spacecraft. "President Biden was not briefed on the existence of UFOs" she said. (3 errors)
2. Name two of the nine most common storytelling biases.
3. On May 28 T-Mobile announced its plan to substantially purchase which rival telecommunications corporation?
4. Name two of the four variant forms of metaphors (figures of speech).
5. This former Badger star and three-time Olympic medalist gave the UW-Madison commencement speech in early May.
6. Fix this sentence: More than twenty inches of rain fell in the northeast, while more than eleven inches of rain was reported in areas of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois (4 errors)

1. White House press secretary Karine-Jean Pierre denied the president had prior knowledge of state-of-the-art extraterrestrial spacecraft. "President Biden was not briefed on the existence of UFOs," she said.
2. Personalization, Ideological, Compositional, Overestimation, Correlation v. Causation, Mind-reading, Faulty recollection, Context, False equivalence
3. U.S. Cellular
4. Pure Metaphor, Simile, Allusion, Personification
5. Meghan Dugan
6. More than 20 inches of rain fell in the Northeast, while more than 11 inches of rain was reported in areas of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois..

Photo by Leone Venter on Unsplash

