

MEEK SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND NEW MEDIA

Will Norton, Jr., Professor and Dean

2013-14

Undergraduate Programs

Journalism

Despite decreases in journalism enrollment at other universities, students seeking a B.A.J. continue to join the Meek School.

The hands-on, professional focus of the program may be one of the reasons. A number of journalism classes are designed to incorporate “real-world” learning into the instruction. For example, in the aftermath of two tornadoes that hit Mississippi in April, faculty tapped students in JOUR 480 Advanced TV Reporting and other classes to cover the damage. The students’ work appeared on WeatherChannel.com, in the *New York Times*, for the Associated Press and was published in student media and in other local news outlets. JOUR 500 Journalism Innovation produced extensive content for local news organizations in Oxford and in Water Valley. Once again, broadcast students covered Double Decker for WTVA, the NBC affiliate in Tupelo. The depth reporting class continued to produce outstanding content – earning at least one national award.

In addition, faculty members continue to revise the curriculum to keep students job ready. For Spring 2014, Assistant Professor Vanessa Gregory created a new class called “Writing With Voice.” This course introduced

students to some of journalism's leading narrative writers and challenged them to write in a variety of forms: blogs, memoirs, a pitch letter, and a magazine-length feature story. One student, commenting on the semester, wrote, "The readings were fantastic and this class really made my creative juices flow again." In an effort to create more interdisciplinary courses within the school, broadcast engineer Darrel Jordan taught a class called "Studio Production." The course introduces IMC students to the basic principles of TV production. The students work on videos, which have generated donations for the UM Foundation. Dr. Kathleen Wickham leveraged a weeklong Business Journalism Seminar at the Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism at Arizona State University. Her JOUR 377 Advanced Reporting now includes more material on business writing. Faculty members continue to take great pride in what students accomplish. Professor Curtis Wilkie said, "The most rewarding aspect to teaching, for me, is to see students grow and succeed. Bracey Harris has excelled in several classes I taught. This year I served as advisor for her Honors College thesis on the Burns-Belfry Church's role in racial reconciliation in Oxford."

Three Meek students received Taylor Medals this year, and many graduated with honors. The focus on increasing the rigor of the journalism degree continues, and the quality of this year's graduates is evidence.

Twenty-one journalism/IMC majors were selected for Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, in recognition of their leadership, service and academic achievement.

The Meek School's freshmen retention rates continue to be among the best on campus. Earlier academic advising sessions instituted by Director of Advising Deidra Jackson, and a more streamlined freshmen-counseling process mid-semester and throughout the year, are among the contributing factors.

Among other projects, Dr. Brad Schultz published his fifth and sixth books. *The NFL: Year One* was published by Potomac Books, while the third edition of *Media Relations in Sport* was published by Fitness Information Technology. Dr. Kathleen Wickham was awarded a \$1,000 research grant by the Film & Media Archive at Washington University in St. Louis to complete research related to the civil rights documentary "Eyes on the Prize," during Summer of 2013. Professor Deb Wenger had three refereed journal articles published with a fourth in press, all focused on required job skills. One paper received a third place award at the World Journalism Education Congress in Mechelen, Belgium in July 2013. Dr. Mark Dolan and Dr. Nancy Dupont used sabbaticals to make significant progress on forthcoming books. As a professional school, many of our faculty members produce high-quality creative work. A portion of *Jewels of the Delta* by Alysia Steele, a Professional in Residence, was published in the May 2014 issue of *Southern Living*. In addition to working on a book about the role of bloggers in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Professor Cynthia Joyce wrote an extensive piece on the issue of Massive Open Online Courses in higher education. It

was published in *The Clarion-Ledger*. Professor Gregory had a major article published in *Harper's*, and she continues to be a regular contributor to *Garden & Gun*. Lecturer Robin Street was presented with the Professional Achievement Award in April by the Public Relations Association of Mississippi. The award is the association's top honor.

Led by Professor R.J. Morgan, on April 3 the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association hosted more than 600 high school students to hear speakers and participate in on-site journalism contests. MSPA is helping struggling schools to establish journalism programs. Morgan also rewrote the state journalism standards for the Mississippi Department of Education to include social media and digital publishing as required goals for journalism courses. These courses are aligned with Common Core language standards.

Dr. Samir Husni hosted the fourth annual ACT Experience (Amplify, Clarify and Testify) at the Magazine Innovation Center; 47 speakers, 100 attendees and 30 students participated. The focus was on the future of print.

UM's Association of Black Journalists was among a handful of student chapters to be awarded a \$500 seed grant in early February. The organization used the money for a semester-long series of journalism and enrichment workshops for local Boys and Girls Club youth and purchased a digital camera and case, tripod and memory card for the center.

Integrated Marketing Communications

Launched in 2011, Integrated Marketing Communications attracted 500 majors by spring 2014. Three faculty members (all with extensive

professional experience) will join the program in August 2014, bringing the tenure track IMC faculty to five. Several Journalism faculty teach IMC courses. Surveys show consistently high student satisfaction: 94 percent say they are satisfied with the program overall; 93 percent would choose the major again; and 98 percent would recommend IMC to acquaintances.

Research, promotional campaigns and marketing communication projects were completed for Water Valley, Mississippi; the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA); Yalobusha Brewery; Ole Miss Women's Basketball; and various other companies and retailers in the area. Two classes conducted market research for Ole Miss Athletics, and students handled the marketing and promotion of the first-ever Ole Miss New Media conference. An Overby Center presentation on sports marketing featuring Ole Miss Athletic Director Ross Bjork, NFL Senior Vice President Renie Anderson, FedEx Executive Vice President Mike Glenn and Associate SEC Commissioner Charlie Hussey was moderated by Michael Thompson, Senior Associate Athletic Director (and IMC adjunct instructor). Other presentations were made by Dick Starmann, formerly head of worldwide communications for McDonald's; Steve Pacheco, Director of Advertising for FedEx; Stuart Sheldon, President of Escalate Marketing; Ken Hannah, Executive Vice President of JC Penney; and Govinda Tidball, a Sri Lankan ad agency executive.

IMC students continue to be hired as interns on campus, in Oxford and beyond. For the third year in a row, an IMC student was selected as the marketing intern at Insight Park. Many IMC students intern with Ole Miss

Athletics. Students are interns at several Oxford businesses and at agencies and organizations in Memphis, Birmingham, Atlanta, Dallas, New York and a few cities in Europe. The Ole Miss Agency, a student-run marketing organization of students from the business school and the IMC program, won second place and a \$2,000 award in the EdVenture Partner AT&T SEC Campus Brand Challenge. Students presented an integrated marketing campaign to AT&T to introduce and market the new SEC network on AT&T's U-Verse services.

Graduate

With the addition of the professional master's in journalism, the graduate program offers three tracks. The graduate program of the Meek School has 22 students, 16 of whom are focusing on IMC. Thirty-nine students have been accepted into the program for Fall--nine in journalism and 30 in IMC.

Professional Master's Degree in Journalism

The first cohort will begin studying next fall. The four core courses in the track are Journalism 578/Multimedia Documentary, Journalism 590/Multimedia Storytelling I, Journalism 610/Multimedia Storytelling II and Journalism 668/Narrative Journalism.

Eight students were awarded a Master of Arts degree in Journalism with an emphasis in Integrated Marketing Communications in May 2014.

Student Media Center

An extraordinarily strong group of student journalists led Student Media during 2013-14. *The Daily Mississippian* was praised on campus and

nationally for its courageous work. NewsWatch was strengthened with more content from student correspondents, and more daily coverage. The yearbook was perhaps the best ever. Student Media's digital presence has increased. A new DM mobile iPhone app was launched during the year. As in the "real world," print advertising still provides the great majority of revenue, but the revenue is declining and presents major challenges. The Student Media Center is focusing on new initiatives to increase print, radio, website, and mobile advertising.

Each student manager was a journalism or IMC major. Adam Ganuchau was Editor in Chief of *The Daily Mississippian*; John Monteith and Miriam Creswell were NewsWatch managers; Benjamin Hurston was Editor in Chief of *The Ole Miss* yearbook; Camille Cantrell was Rebel Radio manager; and Matt Zelenik was advertising sales manager. Ganuchau was invited by *New York Times* senior editor Greg Brock (Journalism alum and former DM managing editor) to sit in on its daily news meeting. *Times* editors applauded when Ganuchau was introduced, and told him that after his DM articles in fall 2013 had gained national attention, *The Daily Mississippian* was added to the list of newspapers *Times'* staff check every day.

Journalism faculty who spent significant time at Student Media working one-on-one with students included Nancy Dupont, Deb Wenger, Darren Sanefski, Mikki Harris and Cynthia Joyce. Advanced Reporting courses (broadcast and print) met in the SMC newsroom and new classroom. Student Media facilities were used by instructors and guest speakers for workshops

and training. Guest speakers included Rob King, ESPN senior vice president, Sports Center and News; Jonathan Woods, senior editor of photo and interactive at *TIME*; and *New York Times* reporter Alan Blinder.

Many of the news packages produced in Journalism 480 (Advanced Broadcast Reporting) were aired on NewsWatch Ch. 99. In addition, faculty and SMC administrators created an easier way to funnel class assignments to *The Daily Mississippian* and other media. Dozens of articles from journalism skills courses were published in the DM or on theDMonline.com.

Several Student Media staff taught journalism or IMC courses for the first time: Assistant Director Roy Frostenson (media sales), Creative Services Manager Debra Novak (advertising layout), and Media Technology Manager Tom Chapman (a new course called Programming for Journalists). Patricia Thompson, assistant professor and Director of the Student Media Center, taught Journalism 379 (Editing) in spring semester, and students' final multimedia projects were published in the Student Media Center's spring orientation guide. Thompson also was invited to lead workshops on covering racial and sexual orientation issues on campus at two national college media conventions.

Student Awards/Honors

Meek School students were honored with more than 50 major awards. "Deeper South: Land of Plenty," a depth report produced primarily by Honors College journalism students, was named the best student magazine in the nation by the Society of Professional Journalists. In the Society for News

Design: College News Design Contest, “Deeper South: Land of Plenty” won second place for Multi-page News Design.

University of Mississippi students won 20 awards – more than any other college - in the annual Southeast Journalism Conference Best of the South contest. Students also won first place as Onsite Championship Team for their performance in contests during the Southeast Journalism Conference convention in Lafayette, Louisiana.

In the SEJC onsite competition, Ole Miss students were named grand champions after winning first places in news photography, sports photography, and feature writing, plus one third-place and three second-place awards.

In the 2013 Society of Professional Journalists Region 12 contest, University of Mississippi students won five first-place awards and 11 finalist awards. Region 12 includes universities in four states.

Public relations students in the Meek School won the three top awards in the Public Relations Association of Mississippi student competition and 10 out of 11 awards presented.

For the third year in a row, NewsWatch 99 won the Best Student Newscast award from the Mississippi Associated Press Broadcasters organization. NewsWatch 99 also won second place in Best Student Newscast. The Rebel Radio staff won an award for Best Student News story. Several Meek School students received Awards of Excellence.

In the Mississippi Press Association Better Newspaper Contest advertising division annual competition, the DM won first place for best advertising promotion, and second and third places in other categories.

Students landed many media jobs or internships throughout the nation at organizations such as *USA Today*, Burson-Marsteller, Morris Communications, Clear Channel Communications, Fox-13 in Memphis, WLBT-TV in Jackson, WAAY-TV in Huntsville, *The Decatur Daily* in Alabama, the *Daily Leader* in Brookhaven, Pierpont Communications, and June Media.

University of Mississippi Foundation

The Meek School received \$354,098 in private giving during FY14, a \$79,197 (28%) increase. Annual Giving in FY14 was \$162,798, an increase from \$104,901 in FY13 and \$91,911 in FY12. Donor participation increased with 249 gifts receipted, an 83 percent increase from FY13. A gift of \$1.5M pledge was made to establish the John and Mary Thomas Chair of Integrated Marketing Communications. A pledge of \$25K was made by John Thomas to support the Overby Center Speaker Series initiative. A pledge of \$25K was made by Charles Warner to establish the Joe Williams Scholarship Endowment. A pledge of \$50K was made by Gigi Finley and her two children to support the Dr. Jere Hoar Scholarship Endowment. A pledge of \$31K was made by Shelly Robertson Birdsong to create the Stuart Bryant Robertson and Robertson Media Group, LLC Scholarship Endowment. Dub Shoemaker increased his planned gift from \$100K to \$300K, designated for Operational usage for Depth Reporting.