

The

Rowland Stone

Communication/Journalism Department
Shippensburg University

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Digital Journalism Class Wins Award for I-81 Project Work

By Blair Young

During the fall 2010 semester, Dr. Michael Drager's COM 478 Digital Journalism class was part of a multi-media journalism project created by three area newspapers that explored the impact of Interstate 81 on the Cumberland Valley.

In May 2011, the Pennsylvania Highway Information Association (PHIA) recognized the contribution the class made to the Central Pennsylvania Joint Reporting Project Series "Interstate 81: Troubled Highway" with its outstanding achievement award.

The class worked with three area newspapers: the Chambersburg Public Opinion, the Lebanon Daily News and the Carlisle Sentinel on the project. All three newspapers received awards for the reporting project, which appeared both in print and online.

The stories looked at the impact

of Interstate 81, and students researched story ideas for the project, such as the interstate's history, crime issues, environmental impact and economic impact. Students wrote stories, took photographs and contributed audio clips and video interviews.

Becky Bennett, editor of the Public Opinion, approached Drager about the project in August 2010 and was interested in getting students involved with the newspapers. Bennett and Drager both believed it would provide good experience in investigative reporting as well as in the creation of multi-media news packages for the Web. Throughout



Digital Journalism classmates Leslie Douglas and Nick Gueguen with the PHIA award.

the years, students in the print emphasis have worked as interns and freelance writers for the three newspapers that participated in the project.

Print journalism continues to evolve,

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Social Media Use Changing the Journalism Landscape

By Professor Stephanie Witmer

Last April, I attended the annual conference of the American Society of Journalists and Authors. I suppose I shouldn't have been, but I was surprised by the amount of time that was devoted to the discussion of social media. The message from the panelists at ASJA rang out loud and clear: Journalists and other media professionals need to be tweeting,



Professor Stephanie Witmer

blogging and Facebooking, and reading other tweets, blogs and so forth — a lot.

Why? In short, there's a whole conversation out there that's happening online and outside of traditional mainstream media, and as a journalist, we need to both understand that conversation and be a part of it.

"Once an irresponsible, inaccurate or unprofessional tweet, status update, wall post, blog entry or photograph is put "out there" in cyberspace, it's virtually impossible to undo it."

The media professionals who led the panels and workshops at the ASJA conference proclaimed the benefits of social media. Journalists are using Twitter and Facebook, for example, to post a link to an article they wrote that's been published on a magazine or newspaper website, thereby directing

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Borrell's Board

A Message from the Department Chair



For many years, Casey Kasem, the original host of American Top 40, would sign off his weekly countdown of the hits with this advice: "Keep your feet on the ground and keep reaching for the stars."

It has caused me some distress to hear some of the songs he counted down in my youth now regularly populating the playlist of our local oldies radio station, but a recent reminiscence about his sign-off reminded me of the goals we have set for the more than 300 Communication/Journalism students here at SU.

Our 10 faculty members remain committed to ensuring each graduate in our program has the solid foundation ("the feet on the ground") that all communicators and journalists need — and will continue to need — as our methods of communication change. We build upon the legacy of our founding faculty to maintain our hands-on approach to the teaching of communication and journalism. Each graduate of our

program understands thoroughly the conventions of professional writing. We want next generation's journalists to be as comfortable with story-telling and grammar as the first graduates of our program were four decades ago.

The reaching for the skies part reflects the rapidly changing nature of our field. It seems that each week we hear about a new device or platform for content delivery. Rapid distribution of information through satellites and the Internet connects students on our campus in the Cumberland Valley even more tightly into the global media community.

The cost of the equipment that our professional program requires is not insignificant, but our many supporters have done an excellent job of making sure our students have what they need to be ready for their first job, even in the face of declining state support for Shippensburg University.

While today's generation is much more comfortable typing on a virtual keyboard than a typewriter, their goals are every bit as ambitious as those that students from the '70s, '80s and '90s had when they first reached our campus. I hope we can continue to count on your support as we educate the next generation of communication and journalism leaders.

Dr. Joseph Borrell
Communication/Journalism

About This Issue

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Newsletter Adviser:
Dr. Michael Drager

Editors for this Edition:
Benjamin Wiens
Dr. Carrie Sipes

Designer:
Benjamin Wiens

The Rowland Stone
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Department of
Communication/Journalism
Shippensburg University
1871 Old Main Drive
Shippensburg, PA 17257
(717) 477-1521

PRSSA 2011 National Conference — Perception is Reality: Inspiring Effective Communications

By Lisa Rediker

The PRSSA National Conference was held Oct. 14–18 in Orlando, Fla. PRSSA president Rachael Ballard, vice-president, Adrienne Williams, vice president of Shippensburg University Public Relations Agency, Leah Haugh and I were in attendance. We networked, learned and developed our professional skills with students and professionals from across the country.

We learned from professionals as they shared years of real-world experience and tips for getting ahead in our competitive public relations field. We had the pleasure to choose from a wide variety of sessions that best suited our interests. Some of the notable companies that spoke with us were Walt Disney World, General Motors, Edelman, Fox News and CNN. My personal favorite presentation was International public relations with

Craig Dezern, vice president of PR for Disney Global. He gave attendees great tips for the future. I found it interesting that he did not speak any other languages other than English yet he travels around the world 28 weeks out of the year.

Shippensburg stood out among the other PRSSA organizations at the conference because of our professionalism. From sessions to free

time our group looked and acted more professional than the other organizations. During the speed networking session, the professionals rotated throughout student groups of eight, rotating every eight minutes. Our group was one of the few that had business cards for the professionals, which put us a step above the rest. After the conference, we received invites to connect with some of the professionals.

The conference created great professional relationships which will enhance our public relations career. We realized how competitive the public relations field truly is and learned a lot of valuable information to improve our PRSSA chapters as well as our individual endeavors. "Perception is Reality" was an excellent opportunity to see a glimpse into the world of public relations and helped us decide on what aspect of public relations best suited us for a future career.



**Leah Haugh, Lisa Redicker, Rachael Ballard
and Adrienne Williams**

traffic to that site. They're using Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to find sources for stories and to mine people's posts for story ideas. They're creating websites to display their work samples and blogs to showcase their unedited writing abilities. All the while, these writers and media pros are building an audience, a following, a ready-made readership that follows them from blog to blog and link to link — which makes editors, publishers and other producers of traditional media very, very happy.

I know that this is happening; as a freelance writer and editor, I do this myself. So how does this translate to our department and our classrooms?

Many of us regularly use social media in our teaching, but our newest colleague, Dr. Mas Biswas, utilizes it perhaps most extensively and most creatively. In his Promotional Publication Design course, students find and tweet articles related to lessons and class discussions. In his PR Writing course, students create social-media press releases using the WordPress blogging platform.

As a department, we have more work to do with social media. One application is the internship Twitter feed, which I established in 2009 as a means of alerting students to internship opportunities. Currently, the feed has 125 followers and grows each week. We are exploring more ways to use digital/social media platforms to better communicate with, educate, engage and attract current and future students and alumni.

But social media do have their drawbacks. What about the editorial process, the vetting and verifying that ensures the stories we tell are accurate, objective and correct? What happens to long-form journalism as people's attention spans seems to grow ever smaller? And, in the social-media culture of sharing, linking, retweeting, and reposting, once an irresponsible, inaccurate or unprofessional tweet, status update, wall post, blog entry or photograph is put "out there" in cyberspace, it's virtually impossible to undo it.

That's where we come in. It's our job as educators to determine what social media mean for our industry and our students, and — as with everything — teach our students how to use and think about social media responsibly, critically and skillfully.

PR Class Project Blossoms Into an Internship for Grad Student By Sara Small

Many undergraduate and graduate students at Shippensburg try to obtain an internship as soon as possible. The hands-on experience is what helps these students develop what they have learned and apply it to the "real world." Graduate student Natalie Bombatch found this out by a string of luck and opportunity; she was assigned a class project and almost a year later, the project has turned into a significant internship experience.

Last fall during her PR research and campaigns class, taught by Dr. John Ellerbach, she was approached by a friend who worked with the Shippensburg Community Fair, a non-profit organization. She was asked to help with the marketing and advertising aspect of the fair. Now, Natalie is coordinating the entire PR aspect of the fair, and says her education experience at Shippensburg helped her execute the plan she has made.

"That campaigns class is extremely valuable," she said. "Everything I did as an undergraduate helped me in grad school, and in my career. It's been phenomenal. I speak highly of this program, especially the undergraduate because you get a lot of hands-on experience."

The plan Natalie wrote when all put together amounts to about 40 pages. This document has a plan for marketing and advertising for fair events, which will be valuable to the organization in the future.

The Shippensburg Community Fair works all year to produce a one-week-long fair. Natalie took on the role of the public relations chairperson.

"This gave me the capability to

make decisions and be responsible for everything," says Natalie.

Also in her role as PR chairperson, Natalie came up with an innovative idea to get a lot of sponsorships from local businesses in the community and to fundraise for the event, neither fundraising approach had been done before. For this upcoming fair, Natalie has been able to help raise \$9,400.

The experience that Natalie had at Shippensburg as an undergraduate and now a graduate student has helped her in the internship experience with the Shippensburg Community Fair and with other internships she has had prior to this. Thanks to Natalie's efforts, she was able to bring a new perspective to the community fair with her fresh and innovative ideas by raising more money for the fair than ever before and enhancing advertising and marketing for the fair. Natalie's internship experience just goes to show that even what starts as a class project, can turn into

a very interesting internship as a community volunteer.

The Shippensburg Community Fair is held every July.

Originally from Johnstown, Pa, Natalie graduated from Shippensburg in 2006 and

is currently completing her graduate degree in communications studies. This is what she said after the experience:

"I had a great experience working with the organization and got close to a lot of people having worked with them for so long. I experienced a lot of new things, never having been to an agricultural fair before. I even got to milk a cow."



Graduate student Natalie Bombatch

Journalism Award continued from page 1

and students need to develop digital skills, Drager said. Through the joint reporting project, students created web content in the form of news packages that employed text, photographs, video and audio. The project allowed students to gain more real world, news reporting experience.

"The students took on the task and did a great job, which speaks to the quality of the students we have here at

Shippensburg," Drager said.

The PHIA's mission is to educate the public and policymakers on the importance of a sound highway system. It periodically recognizes outstanding examples of news and commentary relating to highway and transportation issues.

Department News

Professor Experiences the Changing Journalism Industry

By Amy Sharp

Last summer one Shippensburg University faculty member had a unique opportunity to immerse herself in the field of an industry that is ever-changing and the chance to gain fresh ideas and perspectives for her students.

Dr. Kimberly Garris, assistant professor of communication/journalism, was the recipient of a grant from the Scripps Howard Foundation that provided her with a two week experience as a visiting professor in social media at WCPO-TV in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Garris heard about the opportunity through the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and decided to take a shot and apply. The application process was very competitive. Only two print educators and one broadcast educator were selected from all that applied and Garris was the lone broadcast educator chosen for the opportunity.

During her two weeks in the newsroom she learned how the latest digital technology is used to inform the public. Garris experienced first hand how a multimedia journalist, the one-man-band, does it all — getting stories written for the web, rewriting for TV, shooting and posting still pictures and video, and keeping Facebook and Twitter followers updated. She explained further how the impact of social media and digital technology has changed the dissemination of news but one thing stays the same — the job of the journalist is still story-telling.

Garris studied WCPO-TV's Facebook page. She interacted with those who worked closely with the Facebook page to study how they used Facebook and how it benefited WCPO-TV. She learned about all different aspects of Facebook by studying feedback, measuring responses and developing strategies.

"I wanted something more. I talked to the news director about studying their Facebook page. I figured while I'm here they should get some use out of me and I wanted to do something beneficial," Garris said.

Garris noted that the experience helped her recognize the importance of preparing her students for the industry. "I brought back a sense of urgency to get

everyone up to speed. I've now integrated social media into the classroom as not just a suggestion, but a requirement."

Garris explained that Shippensburg University and the department faculty is putting forth effort and is constantly working to keep up with the new digital industry to prepare students. However, students should still engage themselves in the digital world to better prepare themselves for the workforce in and out of the classroom.

Garris's time at WCPO-TV gave her a better understanding of how to instruct her students and the insight needed to prepare them for the workforce as a result of her experience.

As part of the grant, WCPO-TV will be sending the executive producer of new media to Shippensburg University next semester to talk to different classes, students and to work on a department project.

SUTV at the Emmys

By Laura Babetski,

On Sept. 24, 2011, SUTV made its way to Philadelphia for the Emmy Award dinner presented by the mid-Atlantic chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. SUTV was nominated for a Crystal Pillar Award in the college production category. SUTV submitted a newscast for the award that was unlike any other it had produced

before. The newscast was about the budget cut rallies that happened in Harrisburg and the majority of the footage was shot off campus. The newscast originally aired on March 31, 2011 and the content in the newscast was very extensive.

"SUTV is constantly growing, changing and adapting to the world," said executive news producer Amanda Peterson. "We want this organization to be the best it can be and we work so hard. This newscast benefitted SUTV because we can show that our hard work is recognized outside of campus. It sets us apart from other schools."

The nomination not only gave each person who worked on the news cast a piece for their portfolio, but it gave a boost to the already successful SUTV reputation.

"We've been abusing the 'Emmy-nominated' title since we heard the news of the nomination in August. No other school in the PASSHE system can say that," said General Manager Brandon Smith. "We have a great program. SUTV can use that as a tool to recruit incoming journalists. It's also a motivational characteristic; we all want to change 'Emmy-nominated' to 'Emmy Award Winning.'"

Congratulations SUTV on your accomplishment and for helping Shippensburg University student media take a huge step forward.



Kyle MacBain, Amanda Peterson, Brandon Smith, Barbara Schindo, Kyle Rogers

Department News

Diversity Summit

By Rachel Flynn

On Oct. 14 and 15, Shippensburg University's communication/journalism department was represented by three professors who attended the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) 2011 Annual Diversity Summit. Dr. Masudul Biswas, Dr. Carrie Sipes and Professor Stephanie Witmer made the early morning journey to Bloomsburg University with hopes of meeting other PASSHE educators who shared their desire to discover more ways of implementing diversity throughout their departments and campuses.

The summit consisted of keynote speakers discussing topics related to diversity in the classroom and the workplace, along with sessions and panels led by PASSHE educators that were tailored to teachers and administrators. Biswas illustrated a session he attended, focused on gender neutral housing and how universities are researching what that would entail and how to use it on their campuses. Witmer recalled a panel where West Chester University representatives discussed implementing a LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex and Allies) safe zone at their campus writing center. When the West Chester faculty realized that was not a current option, they looked to other alternatives and are venturing into a safe zone writing group. After attending this panel, Witmer plans to further investigate campus safe zones saying, "Personally I want to look into the training and see what that entails."

Shippensburg's faculty did not just brainstorm with other PASSHE professors, but also voiced some concepts of their own. "I was thinking I had practical information that could help others incorporate a diversity plan in their department," Sipes expressed. Witmer and Sipes begin creating a diversity plan for Shippensburg's communication/journalism department in the summer of 2010. "...we didn't have much guidance, so we looked at other schools, saw what we needed and what would benefit our department," explained Witmer.

All three educators value the importance of attending diversity conferences like the one held by PASSHE. "It's important we value diversity to get our students ready for [a] multicultural

workplace," Biswas explained.

Witmer illustrated how events like the Diversity Summit allow PASSHE professors to meet new people while getting out of the office and into a new perspective. Sipes believes forming relationships with other departments at neighboring institutions is vital while at these educational gatherings.

Shippensburg's communication/journalism department is fortunate enough to have members of their faculty attending these crucial PASSHE events, which helps invite diversity onto the campus and into the classrooms. Raising awareness on campus will help all students, staff, professors and administrators alike work towards the same goal.

Introducing New Faculty

Member Dr. Mas Biswas

By Jennifer Shimandle

Giving up Louisiana-style Cajun food and New Orleans jazz for the pastures of Shippensburg, is a change worth making when it comes to finding the right job.

Many people are still looking for a career they enjoy and are passionate about; for the newest faculty member of Shippensburg University's Communication/Journalism Department the search ended early.

Born and raised in Bangladesh, Masudul Biswas started writing in junior high school.

"I used to feel (and still so) freedom when I express my thoughts and ideas through writing," Biswas said.

Biswas joined the SU faculty as a tenure-track assistant professor in August with an emphasis in Public Relations. He earned his doctorate in media and public affairs at Louisiana State University.

Before LSU, Biswas completed his undergraduate studies in Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Dhaka, which is located in the capital city of Bangladesh.

After his graduation in 2001 he worked as an event manager for the Media Professionals Group, a news reporter for an English-language national newspaper, a copy editor at an online news service and contributed to "Cotton Bangladesh," a textile magazine. He continued writing for the magazine after he arrived in the United States in 2005.

Aside from writing and editing, Biswas taught basic journalism and

communication courses at a private university in Dhaka for a year. He came to the U.S in 2005 for higher education.

Biswas attended Ohio University and received his master's in international affairs with a concentration in communication and development studies in 2007.

Even though Biswas left Ohio he still worked to develop and maintain Web sites for various projects at both Ohio University and LSU while he was a graduate assistant. He also assisted the public relations unit of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, is the current public relations chair for the International Cultural Center, and takes care of the publicity activities of the Forum on Media Diversity.

During some of his time at LSU, Biswas has been teaching media design software in visual communication courses. He is currently an editor and webmaster of "Forum on Media Diversity," a web project of the Manship School of Mass Communication.

Based on his education and research interests in contemporary issues of media relations for nonprofit organizations, online/social media, crisis communication and media and diversity, Biswas set some goals for his time at SU.

One of his goals is to work on new courses in online media for public relations, web and interactive design and political communication/media and politics.

Biswas said he finds public relations and mass communication to be an interesting and creative field and has found no reason to leave it. However, it did encourage him to come to the U.S.



Dr. Mas Biswas

Summer Internship Leads Matt Kanzler to London

By Lauren Gyurisin

Matt Kanzler, a communication/journalism major with an emphasis in public relations, got the opportunity last July to witness many different aspects of public relations and business on a global scale. He was an intern with two major public relations agencies in London.

Kanzler said the classroom skills he learned at Shippensburg came in handy while observing, researching, and helping with events during the two weeks each he spent with Brand Fuel and the Bell Pottinger Group.

“One of the integral parts of my experience was getting to be involved — and literally be — in the phone hacking scandal surround News Corporation and Rupert Murdoch,” Kanzler said. “I got to contribute to Rebecca Brooke’s preparation prior to the questioning by members of the British parliament.”

Brand Fuel focuses on events as well as creative and online brand promotion, according to Kanzler. The company commits to being original and innovative while building connections.

Brand Fuel has many notable

clients and it has sponsored many large events for companies, including Google, Android and YouTube. At Brand Fuel, Kanzler shadowed founder and director David Ball, as well as assisted with research and any client events planned during his time there.

The Bell Pottinger Group is the leading public relations company in the United Kingdom. The company offers services related to brand and reputation, crisis management, political lobbying, internal communications and consumer, and luxury and lifestyle communications, Kanzler said. Bell Pottinger has produced popular campaigns for clients like McAfee, VISA and Hewlett Packard.

While working with Bell Pottinger, Kanzler was able to see how many different sections of their firm operate, luxury and lifestyle communications in particular, and he shadowed a few members of upper management.

Kanzler noted that Internships are very valuable for students to gain real world experiences, and the professors in the communication/journalism department encourage students to have at least

one before they leave SU.

“Overall, the experience was great,” Kanzler said. “I never thought that, as a 20-year-old college student I would be able to talk to members of Google and have my ideas used.”



Matt Kanzler worked at two public relations firms while an intern in London, England.

Members of the C/J Department Advisory Board

Denise Calabrese, owner, Calabrese Management Inc.

Jodi Christman, vice president of interactive and design, JPL Creative

Cathy L. Eberly, director of marketing and communications, Woodbury Forest School

Evan Forrester, news anchor/managing editor, WPMT-TV, FOX 43

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Martha LeGrand, freelance writer/editor

Robert LeGrand, program manager/analyst, U.S. Department of Education

Mark Miller, managing editor, TVNewsCheck.com

Matthew Opilo, owner/president, Opilo Advertising & Public Relations

Steve Snyder, reporter, Lebanon Daily News

Let Us Know

The Communication/Journalism Department has graduated many students over the years. Those same students have become professionals, spouses and parents. We would like to hear about what our graduates are doing now.

Please contact us via mail, e-mail or telephone at:

Department of Communication/Journalism

Shippensburg University

1871 Old Main Drive

Shippensburg, PA 17257

Phone: (717) 477-1521

E-mail: commjour@ship.edu

Thank you in advance to all graduates who send us their update. We look forward to hearing from you. Please provide the information listed below.

Name _____

Home Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Year of Graduation _____ Major: _____

BA/BS MS [Circle the appropriate degree(s)]

Name of Employer _____

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