

CONVERSATIONS

A publication for College of Communication alumni



Professor and Associate Dean Carolyn Bronstein discusses the new Center for Communication Engagement. See page 4.



Spring 2020

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WITH PRIDE^{AND} GRATITUDE



I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones safe and well.

Our lives have been affected in unexpected ways by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moving our university to a remote learning format for spring 2020 was certainly not what any of us anticipated. However, this proactive decision helped to keep the university community safe while continuing to provide the quality education our students have come to know and expect.

Despite challenges known and unforeseen, we collectively rolled up our sleeves and went to work to address “what must be done” to move forward. This was, and is, DePaul at its finest—scholars, teachers, professionals and students all working together for the greater good.

I have never been more proud to be a part of the DePaul University community and, in particular, the College of Communication. This kind of public health crisis reminds me of the critical insights those trained in communication can provide. We know that words matter, that messaging is critical, that interorganizational and international collaboration are essential.

Thank you to our faculty and staff who went above and beyond to adapt the spring 2020 term for remote learning. The dedication, support and collaboration I witnessed was inspiring. Thank you to the many alumni and friends of the college who reached out to help, identified and provided resources, and offered words of encouragement. And thank you to the students for putting your faith in the institution we all serve and adapting to this altered reality with grace and patience. I am confident we will navigate whatever the future holds together, as a community.

In this issue, you'll learn of our college's latest efforts to broaden the ways in which we teach, support and advance the practice of communication. Whether it's inspiring the use of voice for social change, developing tomorrow's communication leaders, deepening our understanding of the right to free speech or embracing communication modes of the future, you will be reminded of the many ways communication touches every part of our lives.

Alexandra Murphy
Acting Dean

FREE SPEECH AND THE AMERICAN WAY

A amendment I of the U.S. Constitution says, in part, “Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press” Short, to the point—but anything but simple and straightforward.

It is the job of Associate Professor Jason Martin, chair of the college's journalism program, to make sense of this thorny bedrock of democracy for his students. In this interview, he discussed how free speech inflects society and the work of journalists.

How do you discuss free speech with students?

I always start by telling all students, whether or not they are going to go into a news career, that what makes the First Amendment the strongest free speech protection in the world is that it's the same rights for all people.

At the same time, it's not an absolute right. It doesn't give you the right not to be criticized, or [protect you from] a private employer or another private citizen taking action in response to your speech or your sharing of that speech. These exceptions are generally agreed upon—things like perjury, blackmail and obscenity.

How does it apply in journalism?

We don't want the government saying who is a journalist and determining who gets more or fewer free speech rights. If you gather information, interview people and

“What makes the First Amendment the strongest free speech protection in the world is that it's the same rights for all people.

publish on the internet, you have the same First Amendment protection as a journalist at the Chicago Tribune. That means you also have the same responsibilities. So that makes it possible for citizen journalists to capture events and share with people things that are newsworthy and in the public interest.

DePaul has been in the crosshairs of partisan organizations for its refusal to allow certain speakers on campus. Is the university violating the Constitution?

DePaul could enact a lot of policies that could be really unpopular about speech, but wouldn't necessarily be unconstitutional. That said, it's a very public mission to educate people. In a lot of ways, DePaul takes a lot of approaches that mirror those at public universities.

Now what has happened lately is sometimes you get people who are using their rights to speech not only to put out unpopular ideas or opinions, but sometimes to target individuals or groups directly or indirectly. Then you get into how administrators are going to respond—balancing what sometimes moves out of the realm of purely speech

and is more about behavior and classroom conduct or events that are going to happen on campus. You're talking about what and how do we want to run a university that welcomes a lot of ideas but also is really respectful of all the people in that community.

I think if people are committed to genuinely expressing viewpoints and challenging and exploring ideas, they usually work out really well. When controversial speakers are motivated by reasons other than expressing their viewpoints—for example, to gain publicity or inflame people—the decisions get more complicated. If the student groups want to bring somebody controversial, we should follow the procedures we laid out, but we also should take a really proactive stance to counterprogram and limit [the speaker's audience] to the campus community.

What about the hateful speech and conduct on social media platforms that many people would like to eliminate?

That's a little bit different from a free-speech legal environment. It's much more about these private entities having reasonable policies and enforcement in place because the body of First Amendment legal literature makes government regulation problematic. It would be nice if these companies would realize that they are contributing to a really twisted picture of the world, and threatening to distort how people think about important concepts like free speech.

ENGAGEMENT TAKES CENTER STAGE

The new Center for Communication Engagement wants to get students, faculty and the community talking

For a college that is all about communication, it makes sense to engage students, faculty and the wider community in programs that can amplify their voice, encourage dialogue and forge connections. With this idea in mind, the college established the Center for Communication Engagement (CCE) this past fall to offer communication-based problem-solving and research-based solutions for social innovation in a more accessible format. The CCE has three components that are at various stages of development: The Voice Project, labs and incubators, and community and organizational outreach.

Vincent de Paul Professor of Media Studies and Associate Dean Carolyn Bronstein explains why the college decided to establish the CCE: “I think that there has been recognition in the college that we have all these innovative and compelling projects around communicating with the public, yet we haven’t had a way to organize them and make sure that they’re working synergistically. The Center joins them under one umbrella, so that we can ensure coordinated efforts.

“Individual faculty members are administering different Center projects,” she continues. “I’m excited to be administering the Voice Project.”

Currently, the Voice Project encompasses the Op-Ed Project, a national thought-leadership training program in which diverse faculty write opinion pieces and letters to the editor on issues of social importance; public-speaking events and faculty resources in the areas of public voice and social engagement; and a partnership with staff in University Marketing and Communications to support TEDx DePaul University, an annual series of informative talks featuring “ideas worth spreading.”

Bronstein says there are plans to have an annual Day of Public Voice. “This is going to be a student speaking event that draws speakers from our many sections of CMN-104 Public Speaking, as well as other classes where speech and performance are integral to the coursework.” The event, which may be held in the atrium of the Lincoln Park Student Center, will resemble

soapbox speaking of the past, as student speakers try to attract attendees and passersby to listen to what they have to say.

This Day of Public Voice encompasses many of the central goals of the Center. “It’s about giving students opportunities to take the presentational skills they’re learning in our classes and putting them into action in ways that are meaningful and create greater engagement with the larger community,” Bronstein explains.

One lab is currently up and running—the Media Engagement Lab, administered by Assistant Professor Juan Mundel and Assistant Professor Nur Uysal. The lab is designed to conduct communication research for paying clients and the DePaul community while giving student researchers hands-on experience and a paycheck (see Conversations, Fall 2019).

Another lab in development for 2021–22 is the Virtual and Augmented Reality in Communication (VARC) Lab, run by Professor Paul Booth and Associate Professor Bree McEwan. “The VARC Lab

is going to be a site where students, researchers, instructors and even members of the community are going to be able to come and experience virtual reality in a nongaming way,” Booth explains.

“For instance, as virtual meetings are becoming more and more common, how is virtual reality going to affect the way people are communicating over great distances in organizational settings? If you put a headset on and you actually can see the people sitting in a meeting, but everyone is there virtually, that may change the way you interact with them,” he says.

“Or how is virtual reality going to be used in a new entertainment media environment? The average person isn’t going to have all of the equipment they need to experience something like that,” Booth continues. “So the lab will give students and researchers a chance to experience it.”

Programs for community and organizational outreach will go beyond the labs. In discussion are the creation of a speakers bureau, a repository of service-

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The goal of the Center is to help people solve social problems through nuanced communication.

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—Carolyn Bronstein





On a Mission to Diversify Advertising

Summer BRAND camp introduces diverse students to the advertising industry

A top priority for businesses is to increase diversity. According to the Deloitte Review, “If current trends continue, tomorrow’s workforce will be even more diverse than today’s—by gender, by ethnicity, by culture, by religion, by sexual preference and identification, and perhaps by other characteristics we don’t even know about right now.”

Yet many businesses, including advertising, have been slow to actualize diversity. Through the collaborative work of the college’s Innovation Committee, an opportunity to move more diverse job candidates into the advertising pipeline presented itself.

Seizing this opportunity, Sydney Dillard, associate professor of public relations and advertising (PRAD), and PRAD Assistant Professor Juan Mundel submitted a proposal to DePaul’s Office of Academic Affairs to fund a summer camp to

introduce students to the field. They cited DePaul’s commitment to diversity and growth as a rationale for their proposal. The funds were approved, and in June 2018, the first summer BRAND camp was held at the college.

“BRAND stands for building resources, addressing needs and diversity in advertising,” Dillard says. “From my experience in the advertising industry, the higher up you go in leadership positions, the less you see of women, of people of color. So that was one of the primary things that I wanted to focus in on—increasing diversity.”

Mundel explains further: “It’s important to have diverse people in the decision-making room so that whenever someone decides to include a diverse population [in advertising], they’re not using stereotypes or hurting a minority group in some way.”

The camp is run in conjunction with Chicago Scholars, a nonprofit devoted to long-term mentorship of first-generation students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds through college and the first few years of employment. Chicago Scholars has worked in the real estate, finance, and banking sectors, and partnered with DePaul in 2019 to expand into the marketing and advertising sectors.

“We’re working closely with high school students in the Chicago area, exposing them to the creative side of advertising and helping them understand that there is a pathway to success that you can take if you decide to do this,” Dillard explains. Mundel explains that “not only would it help us grow enrollment, but also it would help us serve a bigger purpose—to feed the pipeline for the advertising industry.”

Twenty-eight students attended the one-week camp at DePaul. They learned some of the fundamentals of the advertising industry. “We also did some travel. We were able to visit Leo Burnett, one of the largest ad agencies in the world,” Dillard says. “Students got to meet people from different parts of the agency to learn about what they do and see some of the campaigns they create.”

One surprise for the students was their visit to Facebook’s Chicago headquarters, where they got some hands-on experience designing ads. “A lot of the students are Instagram users. Initially, they thought, ‘Oh, Facebook. That’s old school,’” Dillard exclaims. “When they learned that Facebook owns Instagram, they were like, ‘Oh, really?’ I think that was pretty much a mind-blowing experience for them. But, overall, just the idea of advertising as a career was, I think, also one of those ‘aha’ moments for them.”

Dillard and Mundel found BRAND camp to be a fulfilling experience. “Oftentimes you don’t have the opportunities to find a collective group of like-minded people looking to achieve the same goal,” Dillard says. “We all see that there is a disparity in the industry, and it does take a lot of effort to address those disparities and a will to change them.”

“We see there is a disparity in the industry. It does take a lot of effort to address those disparities.” –Sydney Dillard

WHERE THE ACTION IS

Alumna Ximena Larkin finds excitement and fulfillment in the heart of Chicago

Things came easy to Ximena Larkin (CMN ’09, MA ’11) when she was a student at Lyons Township High School in west suburban Brookfield, Ill. “I would test high in high school, but I never did my homework. I did the bare minimum, enough to pass.”

People who meet her today find that hard to believe. Founder of her own communications consultancy and a Double Demon with a bachelor’s degree in communication and a master’s in journalism, Larkin has learned it takes effort to succeed. “When you get to college, you either work, or you don’t and get bad grades.”

Larkin credits her sister, Jessica Beltran Garcia (CSH MS ’05), with her decision to attend DePaul. “Honestly, I came to DePaul because my sister had. The times I had gone to visit her, I really enjoyed the school. I liked being in the city.”

Larkin majored in communication because it was flexible and because “comms work was just really fascinating to me as interpretation of language, of how people talk.” It didn’t hurt that her mother, Elizabeth Quan Kiu, was a journalist educated at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México who brought her children to the Chicago area to work as

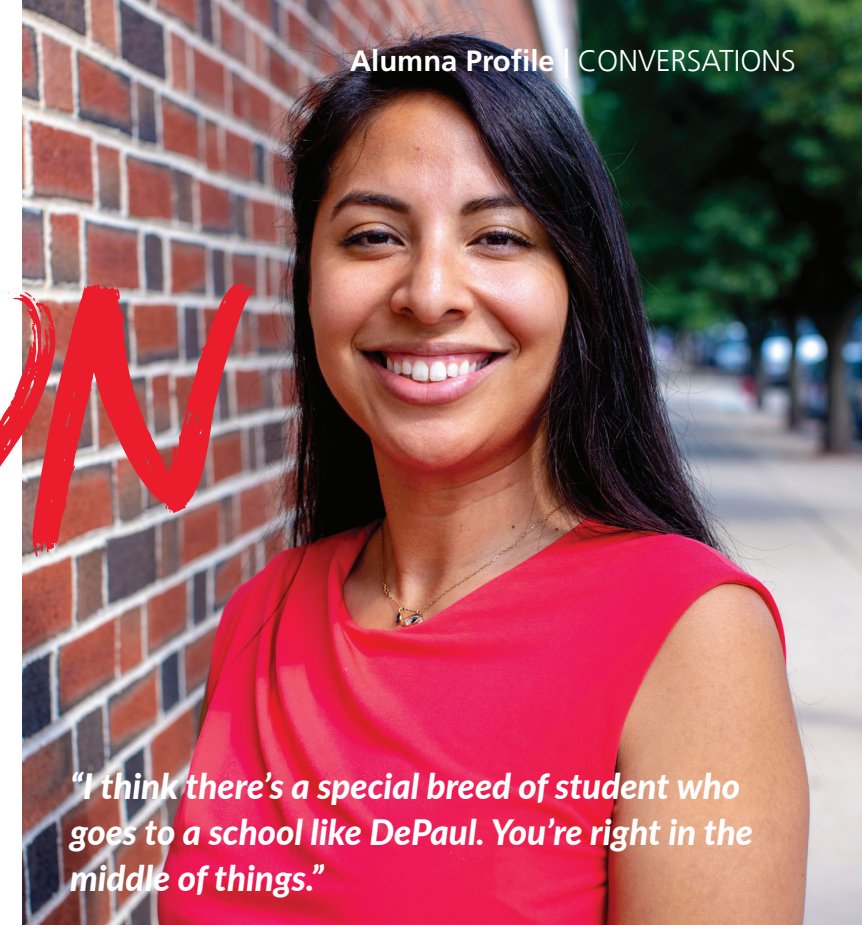
an associate editor for a Spanish-language magazine. Quan Kiu eventually became editor-in-chief of two Spanish-language publications.

“For my mom to have worked her way up was really fascinating to me,” Larkin says. “She was able to guide me, but she never pushed me on this track.”

Larkin appreciated the access she had as a DePaul student to working professionals. “Our professors could invite people from the Tribune or CNN or agencies to come in and speak to us. Nothing beats four years of having that access, the professional networking and even being able to navigate the city, understand the dress code, know where to go,” she says. “So that’s when I decided, ‘I’m going to apply to the master’s program in journalism.’”

Internships with the Chicago White Sox, iHeartMedia and the Shedd Aquarium helped Larkin broaden her portfolio of skills. When she graduated, the economy was mired in a recession. Sizing up the work environment, Larkin saw that there opportunities in PR and marketing, and refocused her career path.

As the owner of the five-year-old, Chicago-based C1 Revolution, Larkin has worked with a diverse array of clients, including the Poetry Foundation, the Chicago Marathon



“I think there’s a special breed of student who goes to a school like DePaul. You’re right in the middle of things.”

and visual artist Hebru Brantle. The Four Seasons in Mexico City also came calling. “They were looking for someone who could understand both sides of the border culturally. I was a bridge, a connector for them, and I’m bilingual,” she explains.

She took time away from the business to act as deputy director of communications for Bill Daley in his Chicago mayoral bid. “I wanted to learn from people who had done this before and were knowledgeable on it,” she says.

Perhaps surprisingly, Larkin has returned to journalism. “I realized what made me really good at PR was the writing I had done early in my career. So I started writing again. I’ve been published in New York Magazine, Food and Wine, Vice, Cosmo.” Her journalism training has helped her business, too. “It’s made me a lot more competitive. I’m able to advise clients about what it takes to shape a story in order to get it published,” she says.

Summing up her college experience, she says, “I love DePaul. It was such a transformative time in my life. My best friends came from DePaul. Most of us still live in Lincoln Park, and we look back on our time and are excited about the memories we shared and made here.”

An In-Depth View of BLACK STUDENT PROTESTS

I took my first photojournalism class as a junior at Penn State. While there, I completed a yearlong documentary project about black student protests on campus. Twenty years later, despite two graduate degrees and years working as a photojournalist, I know that those photographs I took in college remain the most important work I've ever done.

The project began as a class assignment. I documented a silent march around Beaver Stadium after black student leaders, football players and a university trustee received threatening letters in the mail. For the next year, I continued to document these students' efforts to get the university to be more responsive to racial issues.

They spoke at faculty senate meetings and held hearings with state legislators. The students wanted the university to take such threats and the fear they caused seriously. They also wanted the university to invest more in research and teaching about racism and for there to be more accountability when the university failed to meet its diversity goals. Their movement reached a peak after students interrupted a nationally televised football game and occupied the student union building for 10 days, actions that received national attention.

My images are flawed and grainy. It was 2000, before digital cameras came on the scene, so I was still processing and printing my film in a darkroom, with mixed results. There was a long delay from when I snapped the shutter to when I would see the faces slowly appear in a tray of chemicals. Those faces showed frustration, fear, anger and sadness, but also determination, resolve and joy. I spent a lot of time looking at those faces and trying to understand what was happening and why.

As extraordinary as the protests were, they were not unique. Major protests occurred at Penn State in 1969, 1988 and 2000, and to some extent in 2014 with the Black Lives Matter movement. What happened at Penn State was happening nationwide as students reacted to racial inequities on campus. That, combined with current events and political tensions, made for a powerful and combustible



By Robin Hoecker

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mix. The progress and agreements made in one era would erode, and then the next group, under the right circumstances, would raise the same demands years later. In other words, major protests break out about once a generation.

My current research examines this repetitive cycle, using Penn State as an in-depth case study. I am working with librarians and filing Freedom of Information Act requests to learn more about how administrators approached negotiations with students in different eras. I hope to interview leaders of the protests from different generations. I am also working to make sure that the documents I come across are available for other researchers through Project STAND (Student Activism Now Documented), a collaboration of archivists trying to document the activism of marginalized groups.

I am still fascinated by what I witnessed. I recognize how important my visual documents are to understanding the history of Penn State, the role of black student protests at universities and the complicated process of social change.

As George Orwell wrote in the book “1984,” “Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” My goal with this project is to make sure this part of history is documented and given the attention it deserves.

Robin Hoecker is an assistant professor of journalism.

AN EYE-OPENING experience

Journalism student Nikki Roberts turns her passion for writing into a career

Nikki Roberts doesn't remember a time when she wasn't writing. The senior journalism major who is minoring in creative writing and professional learning says, “I wrote all the time. I kept journals, and I did really well in my high school English class. I enjoyed writing, but I never thought of it as something that could be an actual career.”

That changed when a classmate said, “Hey, Nikki, I think you're a really great writer, and I think you should think about joining our newspaper staff.” Soon, Roberts was writing for the Stampede, the student newspaper at Metea Valley High School in Aurora, Ill.

“That really opened my eyes,” Roberts says. “I had so many interests, but I couldn't see myself going into a specific profession. I realized that I could do a lot more with writing than I thought and that it allows me to learn about other things constantly.”

Roberts applied to several universities, but DePaul stood out. “I really did fall in love with it,” she recalls. “When I visited DePaul, I felt like I could go to school, but I could also have a life here. I could do freelance reporting, have different groups of friends and be involved in this music scene I love.”

She is referring to Chicago's punk rock and metal scene, which she has tapped to enrich the DePaul community. “I started

a music blog called Locals Only in 2017 because I wanted to interview bands and review shows,” she says. “Then I joined Radio DePaul, and I hosted a ‘Locals Only’ show for two years where I brought in local musicians and talked about Chicago's music scene.”

After writing and copyediting for The DePaulia, Roberts decided she wanted to pursue an editor position. Roberts became an associate editor of 14 East, DePaul's award-winning online magazine, a position she still holds. “I've worked with some of the smartest people in our college,” she asserts.

Her own smarts earned her several scholarships. She has received DePaul's merit-based Presidential Scholarship for three years, the College of Communications Decade of Excellence Scholarship and the Wilke Family Endowed Scholarship in Communication. The scholarships have helped her decrease her outside work in the music industry to make time to do more reporting and attend journalism conferences.

“it's just amazing to be taught by people who are experts in their field.”

“I have a little extra padding. I can go to these things, and it's been great,” Roberts says.

As Roberts prepares to enter the workforce, she is grateful for the opportunities she has had at DePaul.

“Within the College of Communication and my journalism classes, I truly feel that I have worked with the absolute best professors,” she says. “It's just amazing to be taught by people who are experts in their field, like Amy Merrick. She's like, ‘Oh yeah, I'm teaching you guys, and I have a deadline at The Wall Street Journal this week.’

“Or when Carol Marin could not come to class because she spent the weekend jumping out of a news van to cover the Chicago Marathon. It's just crazy to me that these professors are active and creating incredible work, yet also taking the time to teach us. That makes me feel very, very lucky.

SUPPORT STUDENTS LIKE NIKKI

College of Communication Fund

Support leading scholars, campus facilities and resources, and scholarships for students in the College of Communication.

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Continue DePaul's commitment to being accessible to all students by helping fund need-based scholarships.

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Make an immediate impact through an unrestricted gift applied to DePaul's areas of greatest need, ranging from scholarships to programs.

Visit alumni.depaul.edu/newsletter to make your gift now. For other ways to support the college, contact Development Director Caroline McAteer at CMcAteer@depaul.edu or (312) 362-5162.

AROUND THE COLLEGE

New Faculty and Staff

The public relations and advertising program recently welcomed two assistant directors, Hyejin Kim and Tony Deng. Kim conducts research in social media and electronic word-of-mouth using computational research approaches. Deng's research interests include cross-cultural advertising appeal and strategies, consumer psychophysiological response to advertising messages and interactive/digital advertising strategies. Not pictured is adjunct faculty member Michael Elias, who is the new director of the internship program.



College Hosts Educators from the Republic of Georgia

This past summer, a liaison with the Media Education Program of the U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Georgia asked DePaul to host a best-practices seminar for journalism deans, professors and department heads from 13 of its universities. The result was a two-week immersion for the Georgian faculty with Chicago media leaders, technology seminars and tours of area journalism programs. The 22 visitors gave exceptionally high marks in surveys about the seminar, with the dean of the Caucasus School of Media noting that the entire program was “exceptional.”



Performance Space Upgrades

Vincent de Paul Professor of Communication Dustin Goltz is thrilled with the enhanced space now available to his performance studies classes on the Lincoln Park Campus. “We’ve been able to actually push the design. We have some stage pieces, and we’re able to have an open concept, rather than a classroom space.”



The Power 25

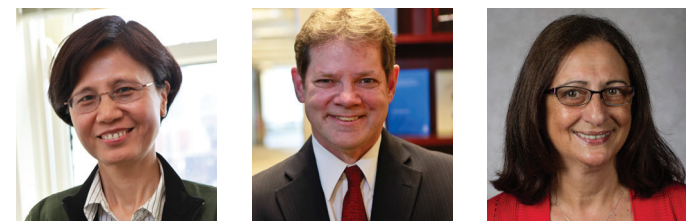
On Oct. 3, the college and the Center for Journalism Integrity and Excellence (CJIE) hosted journalist Robert Feder and 19 of the 25 women on his 2019 Most Powerful Women in Chicago Journalism list. The event, held at the Union League Club, was moderated by CJIE co-director Carol Marin, one of Feder's Power 25. Among those who spoke about their careers were Maudlyne Ihejirika, columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times, president of the Chicago Journalists Association and of the National Association of Black Journalists Chicago Chapter; Diana Maldonado, vice president of news for Telemundo Chicago; and Fran Spielman (above center), City Hall reporter for the Chicago Sun-Times.

New BA/JD Degrees Offered

All eight of the College of Communication's undergraduate majors are now eligible for the combined 3 + 3 BA/JD degree program with DePaul's College of Law. Students spend their first three years completing their communication coursework and their final three years studying at the College of Law. Students receive the Bachelor of Arts degree after successful completion of their first year of law school.

Retiring Faculty

The College of Communication thanks the following faculty members who retired in 2019: Communication Studies Professor Xing “Lucy” Lu, Journalism Professor Bruce Evensen and Internship Program Director Graciela Kenig. Lu joined DePaul as an assistant professor in 1992, Evensen came on as a professor in 1988, and Kenig joined the college in 2009 as a part-time faculty member and director of the college's internship program.



ACCOLADES



Willard, Students Trains with Climate Reality Leadership Corps

Associate Professor of Communication Studies Barb Willard was selected to receive the Climate Reality Leadership Corps training, conducted by the Climate Reality Project. Eight 8 students who are members of the Climate Reality Conservation Corps at DePaul, to which Willard the advisor, accompanied her and went through some of the same training sessions she attended. Launched by Nobel laureate and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore in 2006, the project trains attendees in climate science, targeted communications and organizing to help inspire communities everywhere to act.

AEJMC Fellows Announced

Assistant Professor Nur Uysal was selected as a fellow of the Kopenhagen Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication. The center is sponsored by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Commission on the Status of Women and the AEJMC Council of Affiliates. Associate Dean Carolyn Bronstein is one of the mentors for this program.

Associate Professor Maria DeMoya was selected as a fellow of the AEJMC Institute for Diverse Leadership program. DeMoya, who teaches public relations and advertising, centers her research around national and international public relations efforts led by, or targeting, larger ethnic communities.



Jason Martin Chosen for Harvard Training Program

Jason Martin, an associate professor and program chair in journalism, was selected to attend the Harvard Management Development Program. He completed the program in early June 2019. Jason is only the second faculty member from the college to attend this program. The first was former Public Relations and Advertising Chair Kelly Chu.



PRSSA Award

The executive board of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter at DePaul's received a Dr. F. H. Teahan Award for outstanding achievement in the regional conference category. The award was presented at the PRSSA's 2019 International Conference in San Diego this past October. This is the first time since 2012 that the DePaul chapter has received a Teahan Award.

CONVERSATIONS

We welcome your story ideas, questions and comments.

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DEPAUL RESPONDS

inspire **DEPAUL**

You can be part of DePaul University's response to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Our students and other members of the DePaul community need your support for everything from technology support for online learning to emergency assistance with everyday and extraordinary expenses. Your gift means so much during this uncertain time.

Visit **Inspire DePaul**, the university's crowdfunding website, to support efforts to help members of the DePaul community affected by COVID-19.

Be part of the response at **inspire.depaul.edu**.