

Hundreds attend college's inaugural celebration

More than 200 communication professionals attended the inaugural celebration of the College of Communication on May 12 at the historic Blackstone Hotel in Chicago. Attendees included media, corporate communications, public relations and advertising professionals, as well as DePaul University leadership and communication faculty.

Dean Jacqueline Taylor called it a very exciting time to study communication in Chicago. "Communication as a field of study is experiencing explosive growth nationally and here at DePaul. At many large universities, communication is now among the top five most popular areas of study for undergraduates, and at DePaul, communication has been the largest single undergraduate major for five years," Taylor said at the luncheon.

Keynote speaker and ABC News correspondent Chris Bury discussed how to keep afloat amid the seismic shifts occurring in journalism and communication today.

"There is a transfer of power from the media elite to the media consumers. Now, anyone with a computer and a cell phone wields the potential to rock the world. That's an earthquake that's shaking the media landscape like never before.

"So how do we in the communications business avoid the fate of the dinosaur? We must look to biology," Bury said. "We must adhere to the fundamental principle of evolution: we either adapt, or we die. The choice is that stark and simple."

Despite all the changes in the industry, some things remain the same, he said.

"As we look out at this great digital divide, here's the common denominator: whether we are reporting the news, creating an ad, working on a political campaign, or drafting a press release—we are, at heart, storytellers," Bury said. "We must do what storytellers have always done: inform, inspire, educate, persuade and entertain. Here at DePaul, you have a marvelous opportunity. You are shaping a new generation of storytelling pioneers."

Taylor said communication is more important than ever before. "Now, more than ever, we live in the communication age. This generation of college students has grown up in a communication world," she said. "They know, walking in the door, that they are communicating creatures, and that in a communication world, the development of their ability to create effective communication and to reflect critically on the communication of others will be essential not just in their professional lives but in their personal lives."

The Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., president of DePaul, said he has high hopes for the new college. "St. Vincent de Paul used the tools of communication and put them in the hands of others so they could communicate for themselves. He spoke for the voiceless, to be sure, but he also helped the voiceless find their voice. And that, perhaps, should be a key aspiration of this newly formed college bearing his name," he said.

Established in spring 2007, the College of Communication is DePaul's ninth and newest college, serving 965 undergraduate students and 131 graduate students in fall 2007. Begun as a major area of study in the Department of English in 1978, it is now the second-largest provider of bachelor's degrees in communication in Illinois and the fourth-largest provider of master's degrees in communication in the state. ■



Hundreds attended the inaugural celebration of the College of Communication.



Dean Jacqueline Taylor addresses attendees of the college's inaugural celebration.



Communication without borders

We are working and studying in an age of convergence. The digital era has changed journalism from a print-dominated profession to a 24/7 world of constant rapid-fire news across multiple platforms. But journalism is not the only place where this change has occurred.

We screen films in theatres, at home, on hand-held devices and in our cars. We e-mail YouTube favorites to friends and co-workers. Human face-to-face communication now regularly includes digital components, as cell phones, computers and BlackBerries interrupt or punctuate our conversations with one another.

The pace and extent of change in our world is remarkable and relentless. Communication is in the forefront of that change. While drawing on the training and disciplinary boundaries that have characterized our field and shaped our past, we are challenging ourselves in the College of Communication to continually engage in imagining and shaping what communication education should look like now, in this digital age, in this communication age.

We don't have departments. We have programs. Four M.A. programs thus far, and this coming fall, five distinct B.A. programs. We teach and do research in organizational, interpersonal, family and intercultural communication; in advertising and public relations; in journalism; in media and cinema studies; in rhetoric and public address; and in performance studies. But we are studying, teaching and working in these areas without erecting clear boundaries between them. That's a different model than the one you will find at most universities, where mass communication and communication studies are often taught on opposite sides of the campus.

Our students choose a major, but they also have the opportunity to take courses from across the college and even from outside the college and have those courses count toward their degrees. Our faculty are highly trained specialists, but they are also big-picture people who can see the connecting threads between the mass communication study of public relations and the communication studies focus on persuasion.

Theory and praxis, criticism and production, communication studies and mass communication, liberal arts education and professional training—in our college, these are not opposite or mutually exclusive categories, but simply points on a continuum that all contribute meaningfully to communication education as we believe it should be. Our faculty collaborate across disciplinary boundaries and across theoretical and applied perspectives, and because they do, our students win out.

The honorary degree goes to:

Bob Edwards, one of the nation's most distinguished broadcast journalists and a pioneer of public radio news, received an honorary degree from the College of Communication during the college's June 15 commencement. For more than 35 years, Edwards has informed public debate through exhaustive reporting on political, social and health issues. Currently host of XM Public Radio's flagship program, "The Bob Edwards Show," he played a crucial role in building the daily news presence of National Public Radio and for decades was the voice of its most popular program, "Morning Edition."

Presidential election gives students opportunity to cover national story

Faculty member Mike Conklin always looks for ways to introduce real life into his journalism classes. That means having students cover current events from the front lines. And no story is bigger this year than the presidential election.



As the media converged on Iowa in early January for the Iowa caucuses, six DePaul students rolled up their sleeves and covered the event alongside professional reporters from across the nation. Conklin, a former Chicago Tribune reporter and

columnist, called upon his own contacts and lined up assignments for the students at The Gazette of Cedar Rapids, the Mount Vernon-Lisbon Sun and the Marion Times.

“It was a national story, and there’s nothing that’ll get your juices flowing if you’re a journalist like being involved in a national story,” he says.

After a briefing on the caucus system and political reporting, the students went to caucus sites to conduct interviews and file stories. Some of the students’ bylined stories were published on the front pages of the papers they worked for, Conklin says.

“We’re just starting out as journalists and were given a big responsibility,” says junior Charlotte Eriksen. “It was rewarding to see our story on the front page. It was a lot of hard work that paid off for us.”

The students came back to campus raving about their Iowa trip. “After the experience, the kids wanted to go on to New Hampshire,” Conklin says.

“I went to a Democratic caucus, and that was the highlight,” says senior Michelle Stoffel. “I got to interview a ton of people and write the story. That was all exciting. The caucus format is really exciting—we got to see the grass-roots political process.”

“It’s one thing to read and hear about how the caucus works and another to actually be in the room and watch people get into groups and see the makeup of the candidates’ supporters,” says first-year journalism graduate student Jeff Fuldauer.

The election remained prominent in Conklin’s graduate class, News Now: Journalism in the Information Age. On Super Tuesday, the students observed or pitched in at local media outlets like NBC’s WMAQ-TV, Chicago Tribune, CLTV, Fox’s WFLD-TV, The Associated Press and WTTW-TV. Students also maintained a class Web site/blog, www.depolitics08.com, writing political columns and compiling election-related content from college newspapers around the country. The site is dormant for the summer, but Conklin says he hopes to have students contribute again in the fall.

Election Day falls near the end of the fall quarter, and Conklin already is making plans for his students to cover a local congressional race expected to garner national attention. The District 10 race between U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and challenger Dan Seals should provide the students with the high-profile excitement, access and contacts they crave.

“We plan to cover the heck out of that campaign,” Conklin says. “District 10 should be one of the more visible races [in the country], and national media will be covering it. In Iowa [for the caucus], we bumped into several reporters. I tried to pick a race around here that will give kids the best chance of networking.”

As for after the election, Conklin says he hopes to bring a group to the inauguration, and he has been kicking around the idea of traversing the state with students next winter to gather Illinoisans’ opinions about the new president’s first 100 days.

Journalism courses teaching essential multimedia skills

Multimedia skills have become essential in reporters' toolkits in the evolving journalism industry. Reporters often are required to work across media platforms and think about visual, audio and interactive features to add breadth to their written stories.

"Convergence reporting is the wave of the future. What sets us apart is that we're teaching a converged M.A.," says Assistant Professor Lisa Pecot-Hébert. "We talk about convergence in all classes, whether it's print focused, broadcast focused or online focused."

Classes like Reporting for Converged Newsrooms prepare future journalists to work in multimedia newsrooms. Students enrolled in the course covered a variety of events and incorporated into their reports a minimum of five multimedia elements that added value to their stories.

"There are now many ways to augment and expand the power of a story," says Laura S. Washington, the Ida B. Wells-Barnett University Professor and award-winning Chicago Sun-Times columnist who also has contributed to local and national radio and television programs. "A newspaper has its Web site, and on it one can link to other stories on the Internet, hear audio, view video or see photographs that relate to the subject."

Students in the Backpack Reporting class experienced what it's like to work in the 24/7 digital news cycle. Putting theory into practice, students reported their stories in multiple formats, learning to write for the Web, shoot and edit their own photos and video packages, and post their reports online.

In addition to the growing number of courses offered in broadcast journalism, students may take digital cinema classes offered through the College of Computing and Digital Media. "I'm really excited about the pairing," says Pecot-Hébert. "The strong focus on television, equipment and technology gives our students new options and additional in depth training."

Though the College of Communication has embraced the technologies that are changing the face and pace of communication, its courses also integrate DePaul's commitment to diversity, social responsibility and service to the community.

Washington's class explored topics such as the transformation of Chicago's public housing community and the state of the immigration debate. A special topics course, The Press and the Presidency, focused on the role the media play in shaping presidential campaigns. Students in the Chicago and the Olympic Bid special topics course became well-versed about the Paralympic Games—also staged in the Olympic host city—which faculty member and former



In June, Assistant Professor Lisa Pecot-Hébert took her Newscast Practicum graduate class to visit NBC's WMAQ-TV news set, where they are pictured with anchors Warner Saunders and Allison Rosati, meteorologist Brant Miller and sports reporter Paula Faris.

Chicago Tribune reporter and columnist Mike Conklin says is getting scant attention from the media.

"DePaul is different because we really have strong sensibilities when it comes to diversity, social responsibility and being community-oriented," Washington says. "We try to emphasize that because it distinguishes us."

The college offers students the opportunity to learn from accomplished journalists, bolstering students' connections to industry professionals.

Students interested in sports journalism learned about their craft from Chicago Tribune reporters John Mullen and David Haugh, as well as Marla Krause, who has held numerous editor positions at the Tribune. She was the first woman to work in the Trib's sports department. Aspiring reporters also benefit from the expertise of former Associated Press reporter Ed Lawler, who will lead a business and finance reporting course in the fall, and former Crain's Chicago Business publisher and columnist Joe Cappelletti, who is teaching a class on opinion and column writing this summer. In Conklin's News Now: Journalism in the Information Age course, students spent Super Tuesday observing or working for local media outlets, and one participant subsequently joined the Tribune's New Media Team.

"It was Conklin's out-of-the-envelope idea of taking the kids out to report about the Illinois primary that put her in contact with the Web desk and helped her get that job offer," says Bruce Evensen, director of the graduate journalism program.

Health communication emerges as a vital field of study

Many doctors feel their nurses should be more proactive problem solvers. But those same nurses argue that doctors' behavior often forces them into predictable work routines, thus limiting their problem-solving opportunities.

This is one of many contradictions present when doctors and nurses work together on a health care team. Associate professors Donald Martin and Jill O'Brien, both experts in health communication, identify and analyze these problems in an influential article they co-authored recently.

Working on a research team with a doctor and nurse from Chicago's Advocate Health Care, Martin and O'Brien wrote "Point Counterpoint: The Function of Contradictions in an Interdisciplinary Healthcare Team," which was published in the prominent health care journal *Qualitative Health Research*. In April, the research team presented its findings in an interactive "journal club" conference call with the medical residents at the prestigious Dartmouth-Hitchcock Leadership Preventive Medicine Residency Program.

"It's an honor for DePaul that they chose the article to be the focus of their monthly session," Martin says. "It's a great thing to have research conducted by DePaul faculty being used to inform the leadership at a high-caliber institution like Dartmouth-Hitchcock."

The "journal club" was just the latest high-profile speaking engagement for Martin and O'Brien, who also have presented papers on various health communication subjects at the American Medical Directors Association, National Communication Association and International Communication Association. The duo has published several articles on collaboration in interdisciplinary health care teams over the last five years.

Currently, Martin and O'Brien are working on research in the field of advance-care planning preferences, which focuses on the need for doctors and healthy patients to discuss how the patient chooses to be cared for in the event of a catastrophic accident.

"End-of-life preferences are often solicited from the chronically or terminally ill," O'Brien says. "We are interested in how medical professionals, social workers and chaplains can start this dialogue with healthy young

adults in a non-threatening manner. The question is, how do you get these patients to think about who would act as their surrogate in medical decision-making?"

The field of health communication has been pursued by researchers for some 30 years, and in the last decade has become one of the largest subspecialties of interest in communication studies, according to O'Brien.

"As all aspects of health maintenance and population wellness have grown in prominence within American life, so, too, has the study of health communication become more important to health consumers, providers and employers," she says.

Health communication is also an emergent area of study at DePaul.

"There is not an extensive curriculum, and the focus is primarily on individual research. But there is already a course in health communication, and my expectation is that there will be additional undergrad and graduate offerings forthcoming," O'Brien says. "We will now have five [health communication specialists on the faculty], and we can begin that curriculum development."

The other DePaul faculty members studying various aspects of health communication are:

- Leah Bryant, who has focused on how health care providers can better help grieving families;
- Lexa Murphy, whose primary work has been in identifying organizational development issues and improving communication among physicians, nurses and other medical staff in hospital emergency rooms throughout the United States and Canada. She has worked extensively on public health communication programs for HIV/AIDS education in Kenya, Africa; and
- Teresa Mastin, joining the faculty in the fall, who has analyzed direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertising directed at minority readership and has studied various areas of mental health communication in Rwanda.

With a growing faculty full of industry thought leaders and plans for additional class offerings, health communication is poised to become a leading discipline within the DePaul College of Communication.



Roloff helps students carve out careers one internship at a time

When WGN-TV's Diana Dionisio is interviewing a prospective intern, one specific phrase can reveal a lot about the job-seeker's ability to handle the assignment.

"When they say, 'Dr. Roloff sent me,' I know they are probably going to be a solid candidate," says Dionisio, the station's manager of publicity and promotion.

They are referring to Karen Roloff, who has directed the internship program for communication the past 15 years. The program has become a model for others throughout the country because of its connections with top employers, the way its students prepare for their internships and how their progress is monitored.

The program normally lists more than 900 approved internships, and the number of companies that return to DePaul again and again seeking interns highlights the employers' satisfaction.

"I've gotten many fantastic interns directly from DePaul," says Dionisio, who believes about a third of the interns she has hired over the past 17 years have been Blue Demons.

The internships normally last 12 to 15 weeks. Some are paid, while others feature a travel or tuition stipend. Many types of companies offer positions, including: television stations, newspapers, radio stations, independent film studios, public relations firms, advertising/marketing agencies and nonprofits, retail giants and sports organizations.

Roloff's approval of each job guarantees students will have a true educational experience.

"When a company wants to be part of the [internship] pool, they get in touch with me to talk about the position," Roloff explains. "They must pass muster by explaining the structure of the position, what students might be seeing and if there is learning attached to it."

The job description of Dionisio's WGN internship calls for students to draft press releases, work on station promotions and help organize charity events.

Internships are open to communication majors, minors and graduate students. Undergraduate participants must be juniors or seniors, which helps to ensure a level of



maturity and proficiency when representing the university. Students also must have at least a B minus grade-point average. If they start early enough, students can complete four internships during their college careers.

The final eligibility requirement is that students attend a workshop where Roloff explains the structure of the program and teaches them about résumé construction, writing cover letters and interviewing.

During the internship, students also are enrolled in a course in which they share experiences, complete assignments and meet with Roloff to discuss their progress.

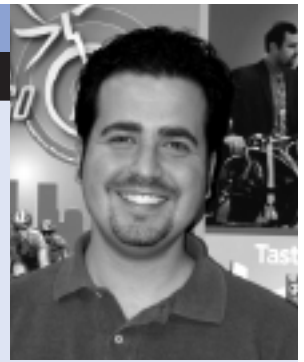
Roloff, who has spoken about the program at a number of national conferences, says that internships are beneficial whether the students get a taste of their future profession or not.

"It's possible that students can use the internships to figure out where they might fit in best," she says. "But sometimes they think they know what they want, but realize [during an internship] that it's not exactly what they thought it would be. That does not mean it's a bad experience. They can then go and refocus and take additional courses and select another internship in another direction."

Some students are hired by the companies at which they intern. But, Roloff says, "Chicago being the market that it is, radio and television stations and newspapers rarely hire freshly minted graduates. But the students go out and have other experiences elsewhere and then come back after paying their dues. It's all about carving out a career path."

Honoring her commitment:

Karen Roloff, director of internships for the college, received the Michael Steurman Distinguished Service Award from the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE). The award recognizes Roloff for demonstrating exceptional dedication and leadership to the organization over a significant period of time. Roloff has served as president of the NSEE board of directors between 2004 and 2007 and as a member of the board's executive committee from 2002 to the present.



City special events planner praises DePaul for teaching effective PR

Residence:

Chicago

Occupation:

Heitz is an event coordinator and corporate sponsorship representative in the City of Chicago Mayor's Office of Special Events. The office provides Chicagoans and visitors with year-round, family-style entertainment by producing and promoting free festivals and citywide holiday celebrations. In addition to working closely with event programmers to design activities that are fun and engaging for participants, Heitz uses the events organized through the Mayor's Office of Special Events as marketing platforms to promote sponsors' products and services.

Vital stats:

Heitz graduated from Providence Catholic High School in New Lenox, Ill., in 1996. After earning a bachelor of arts in English literature from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2000, he attended DePaul, where he earned a master of arts degree in communication with an emphasis in public relations/advertising in 2006. Heitz worked for Standard Bank and Trust for 11 years in a number of different capacities, having started there as a teller when he was 16 years old. Positions he held included teller supervisor, operations manager, training and development officer and finally branch manager. While employed at the bank, he was the director of the employee social committee and coordinated eight employee events per year. That helped him land an internship in 2005 with the Mayor's Office of Special Events. He was offered a full-time position that same year. Heitz is engaged to be married to Veronica Kelly in September 2008.

What I like most about my job:

"My job allows me to be creative and wide-reaching and to know and understand many aspects of the City of Chicago. My job keeps me on the forefront of the event marketing industry. Working with a vast array of companies exposes me to interesting people with similar marketing/communication backgrounds."

The biggest challenge I face in my job is:

"Being able to marry corporate marketing efforts with goals and objectives of city government, especially in the field of new media."

My College of Communication experience helped me by:

"Teaching the principles of effective public relations. The College of Communication allowed me to see things differently and to understand multiple communication theories. Applying and integrating these theories with real-life projects has given me a great advantage in the work force. Communication is the cornerstone to successful event coordination."

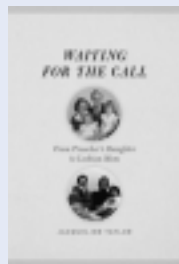
The words I live by are:

"To quote Winston Churchill, 'Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.' I am enthusiastic, positive and always bounce back from a setback, without losing a good attitude. It takes a lot to get me down."

Share your news:

In future issues of Conversations, we will feature profiles of alumni with interesting jobs in communication. If you would like to be considered for an upcoming profile, please e-mail Editor Ruhan Memishi at rmemishi@depaul.edu with information about your occupation.

Faculty honor: Associate Professor Daniel Makagon's article, "Sonic Earthquakes," won the National Communication Association Ethnography Division 2007 Outstanding Article Award. The article studies youths and loud car stereo systems. Also, Makagon's book, "Where the Ball Drops: Days and Nights in Times Square," won the National Communication Association Critical/Cultural Studies Division 2005 Book of the Year Award and the Urban Communication Foundation 2005 Outstanding Book Award.



Dean's list: Lambda Literary Award finalist Jacqueline Taylor, dean of the College of Communication, read from her nominated book, "Waiting for the Call," on May 6 at the Gerber/Hart Library in Chicago. Taylor, whose book was nominated in the women's memoir/biography category, was one of five Lambda Literary finalists reading from

their books that evening. The event was hosted by the Gerber/Hart Library and the Lambda Literary Foundation, the country's leading organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender literature. Taylor's memoir takes readers from her childhood in a strict evangelical household in the foothills of the Appalachians to her adulthood in Chicago, where she and her partner are raising a family. Told in the great storytelling

tradition of the American South, Taylor demonstrates how one woman bridged the gulf between faith and sexual identity without abandoning her principles. A performance studies scholar, she was awarded the National Communication Association Lilla A. Heston Award for Outstanding Scholarship in Interpretation/Performance Studies in 2007. It is the highest honor in the field of performance studies. The award was presented in November at the National Communication Association National Convention in Chicago. She has authored two other books and written numerous articles and essays on performance studies.

More kudos: The Critical and Cultural Studies Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) has voted to give Carol Marin its 2008 Professional Freedom and Responsibility Award. Marin is director of the Documentary Project and often works with interns from the College of Communication. AEJMC is a non-profit, educational association of journalism and mass communication faculty, administrators, students and media professionals. This award is given to media professionals (and occasionally scholars) who demonstrate strong ethics and commitment to the advancement of the best journalism/media practices, and who have made a positive impact on the field. Marin will receive the award at this summer's AEJMC national conference.

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The **Conversations** editorial board consists of Dean Jacqueline Taylor, Carolyn Bronstein, Bruce Evensen, Daniel Makagon, John McMurria and Karen Roloff of the College of Communication; Vukoni Lupa-Lasaga of Advancement; and Deborah Snow-Humiston, Ruhana Memishi and Carol Sadtler of University Relations. Copy editor is Maria Hench.

Save the date:

Come back to campus for an event-filled Alumni Weekend, Oct. 16 to 19. DePaul will be honoring classes celebrating a milestone reunion—the classes of 2003, 1998, 1993, 1988, 1983, 1978, 1973, 1968, 1963 and 1958. You can help make your reunion a success by volunteering for your reunion class committee. For more information about joining, e-mail reunion@depaul.edu or call the Office of Alumni Relations at 800.437.1898. Learn more at alumni.depaul.edu/reunions.

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