

DePaul communication grads landing big jobs despite economy

As a senior associate producer for “The Tyra Banks Show,” Brooke Stangeland (B.A. ’05) followed a heroin-addicted prostitute through her daily struggles—and later heard the woman had cleaned herself up.

As a marketer and salesperson for the Cardenas Marketing Network, David San Jose (B.A. ’09) helps the company book tours for artists like Ricky Martin and Shakira.

As a local editor for the Wheaton Patch, the “hyper-local” online news operation owned by AOL, Charlotte Eriksen (B.A./M.A. ’10) took the site for the western suburb live on Sept. 17.

These recent College of Communication graduates and many more are taking big steps toward their career goals already—never mind the difficult job picture facing them.

“The linkages our faculty are making for our students are really making a difference, either through the internships or through special opportunities we create,” says Jacqueline Taylor, dean of the college. “Everybody knows this, but it’s never been more important than it is now for students to do internships.”

San Jose, who majored in media and communications, parlayed a marketing job with a cutlery manufacturer into an internship with one of his top customers, who owned the Aragon Ballroom; he worked there during college, which provided his initial grounding in the concert promotion business. Now he works for an agency that counts Billboard magazine among its top clients. “I’m a jack-of-all-trades, the youngest kid who works here,” says San Jose.

Stangeland, who majored in journalism and is now a producer at ABC News’ “20/20,” experienced a wide range of emotions after she and her “Tyra Banks” colleagues attempted to stage an intervention with the heroin-addicted prostitute, but she declined their help, “which was devastating personally and professionally.” The woman called later to say she had cleaned up, which “was a full-circle moment.” Stangeland also has worked for “The Oprah Winfrey Show.”



Stangeland



Anderson

Working on the public affairs side of public relations is Brooke Anderson (M.A. ’09), a journalism graduate who is now an account executive at Chicago-based Serafin & Associates. She has handled media relations and issue campaigns for clients that include the U.S. Department of Commerce. She’s met public officials like Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, as well as top political reporters.

“It’s interesting to be around that kind of success and people at the top of their game,” Anderson says. “It’s opened up a whole new world of opportunities and experiences. I’ve gotten to help plan and formulate the gubernatorial debates.”

Megan Gilbert (M.A. ’09), a senior account supervisor at Edelman Digital whose degree also is in journalism, builds websites and “social media embassies” on Facebook and Twitter for her clients. One of them hired her to help run an international blogging competition about favorite recipes.

“One of the things this job has helped me to do better is to think about how people really behave online,” she says. “You’re trying to think about what the user experience is going to be like.” Regarding social media, she adds, “It’s important for any communicator, any PR person, to realize it’s much more difficult to control messages.”



Gilbert



Exciting changes dominate our future

As we look forward, rapid change is the constant. While communication professionals still need to communicate effectively in writing and orally, think critically, draw on a rich array of communication behaviors and strategies, find and evaluate information and analyze the communication of others, these hallmarks of communication are no longer sufficient. In today's workplace, oral and written literacy must be joined by technological literacy. Employers expect anyone with a communication degree to know how to navigate the world of social media and create polished messages that have an impact in cyberspace.

The future calls for changes in what we offer our students and how we deliver it.

Today's students, shaped by a media-rich world, prefer to work and study in groups and collaborate on projects and creative products that allow them to integrate and demonstrate what they have learned. Their interest in project-based education resonates with the needs of the workplace, where complex problems will demand solutions created by teams with complementary skills. Going forward, teamwork and projects will play central roles across our curriculum.

E-portfolio development needs to become standard practice for all of our students as they create Web-based records of what they have learned and can do. Such a curricular emphasis will produce graduates who can document what they know and have something concrete to show to potential employers or graduate schools.

Courses will be offered in a variety of flexible formats. Face-to-face courses will be joined by online and blended courses. Formats will include the traditional term-long courses and a variety of modular units.

Interdisciplinary connections between communication areas will increase, as convergence drives us to work across traditional lines and communicate across multiple platforms.

Programs and courses will address global issues and topics. Expanded study-abroad opportunities will be augmented by international university partnerships that allow place-bound students to participate on research or project teams via the Internet with students in other countries. Likewise, emphasis on diversity must be embedded across the curriculum. Intercultural awareness and facility in communicating successfully in a richly diverse world and workplace will be ever more critical competencies for the communication graduates of the future.

The best programs will be characterized by strong internship programs and robust professional linkages, where students can develop the network and savvy that will make them marketable when they graduate. Students will seek extracurricular opportunities that support their professional and career goals. The most effective and competitive communication programs will provide faculty-supported clubs and organizations that allow the students to develop their abilities as performers, debaters, journalists, directors, advertisers, filmmakers, broadcasters, public relations professionals, bloggers, Web-page designers, community organizers and organizational leaders.

The future calls for changes in what we offer our students and how we deliver it.

Alumni will have opportunities to retool their skills to meet the requirements of the changing workplace because cutting-edge programs will augment degree programs with communication-related continuing education courses. In fact, our college is already at work on an initiative to bring the first of such courses to you within the next year.

We have the thrill and the challenge of teaching in a field that is at the epicenter of exciting and daunting change. Communication is and should remain one of the most dynamic, relevant, meaningful and important majors available to undergraduates. But the world and our fields are evolving at breathtaking speed. To make the most of our opportunity, we will have to embrace change and constantly acquire new skills, imagining into existence our amazing future even as we carry forward the great strengths of our past.

This essay is adapted from a piece originally created for Spectra, the magazine of the National Communication Association, and scheduled for publication in the November issue.

Making a difference in the fight against HIV in Kenya

In a health crisis, communication can be as powerful a tool as any drug or medical procedure, and DePaul communication faculty have spent the past five years deploying their tools in multiple ways to reduce the rate of HIV infection in Kenya, East Africa.



Those efforts have expanded into a closer collaboration between the College of Communication and institutions in Kenya, including the University of Nairobi. In addition, the college's first study-abroad session will be held in Kenya this December, as part of a Communication, Culture and Community course taught by Assistant Professor Lisa Pecot-Hébert. Students will study the dynamics of grassroots communication.

It all started in 2004 with a faculty trip to Kenya sponsored by the Vincentian Endowment Fund. Fourteen DePaul faculty and staff members from various parts of the university explored ways they could use their talents to help a country where 7 percent of the adult population is living with HIV or AIDS. They included Lexa Murphy, associate professor in the College of Communication, and Gary Harper and Leah Neubauer of the master of public health program.

After that first visit, DePaul and the Kenya Episcopal Conference-Catholic Secretariat were paired up, or "twinning," by the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center, a project of the American International Health Alliance. The



Murphy was accompanied by DePaul colleagues Leah Neubauer (l) and Teresa Mastin (r) on a recent trip to Kenya.

a radio social marketing campaign and a health education program for parents. Murphy says the school program has reached upward of 200,000 schoolchildren in all 25 of Kenya's dioceses.

center is funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR.

The partners have developed a faith-based abstinence and behavior change program targeting youth in Catholic-sponsored schools,



Associate Professor Alexa Murphy with Kenyan children

The parent program has been particularly gratifying, Murphy adds. Talk of sex is taboo in many parts of Kenyan society, and parents couldn't talk with their children about what the children were learning in the school program. "I felt like I was on the verge of a cultural change," she says. "I heard parents say how much it had changed their dynamics with their kids and their partners, and they were talking about other topics more easily, too. That's what keeps me going back."

Associate Professor Teresa Mastin, who teaches in public relations and advertising, joined the college's "Kenya team" in 2009. Working with the University of Nairobi's Center for HIV Prevention and Research, her role is to get grant funding.

Her first project is to request support for women who were sexually assaulted during the violence that followed Kenya's controversial 2007 election. The center has compiled 30 narratives from affected women and wants to use them to mobilize the government to help with health care, counseling and other services. "They need not only services, but acknowledgement that it actually happened," Mastin says.

A larger objective is to help Kenya's sex workers organize into a network to be ready to receive an anti-HIV microbicide being developed elsewhere in Africa that has recently shown great promise against the disease.

Self-sufficiency is the ultimate goal, Mastin says. "We're going to the funding agencies as experts, but the leaders are the women themselves. Ideally, we want these efforts to be independent from us within three to five years."

Steans matching grant will double your gift to scholarships

Noted Chicago philanthropist and longtime DePaul supporter Harrison I. Steans and the Steans family have committed \$1 million in the form of a challenge grant to encourage the university community to support scholarships.

The gift was announced at the spring launch of the university's \$250 million Many Dreams, One Mission Campaign, a primary goal of which is to raise \$100 million in new scholarship support.

"DePaul students are an inspiring group of people," Steans said. "In fact, they are the inspiration for this fundraising campaign. Each comes with his or her own dream, and DePaul's mission, as it has been since the university's founding, is to help fulfill those dreams."

For each dollar you give to any DePaul scholarship fund (up to \$10,000), the Steans family will contribute the same amount to the Steans Family Endowed Undergraduate Scholarship Fund, which provides financial support to students across the university, including those in the College of Communication. The Steans Challenge for Scholarships ends Dec. 31, 2010.

The Steans Challenge for Scholarships

"Many of the students in the College of Communication rely on some form of financial aid, and that's true across the university," said Dean Jacqueline Taylor. "Our goal for the campaign is to raise \$2 million in scholarships. Even a small contribution to the College of Communication's general scholarship fund during the Steans Challenge for Scholarships can have a big impact."

To make your gift today, please go to our secure online giving form at www.campaign.depaul.edu/steanschallenge.

College celebrates new Latino program with student photo exhibit

The College of Communication kicked off its new Latino media and communication program with "Origins: A Photographic Journey to the Latino Roots" on Thursday, Sept. 30. The exhibition showcased digital photography and essays by students from DePaul and the Universidad Panamericana in Mexico City related to Mexican culture and the cultural identity of Mexican immigrants in Chicago.

Cristina Benitez, director of the new Latino media and communication program, said, "This reception highlighting the photojournalism of DePaul and Universidad Panamericana students was the perfect way to kick off this important new initiative at DePaul."

The "Origins" exhibition is one of four special events that will be held during the 2010-11 academic year to highlight Latino people and culture as part of the program's inaugural year. Students, faculty, parents, communication professionals for Chicago Latino communities, and representatives from the Mexican consulate came together for an evening of celebration that included food, music and a film of the students from both universities describing their experiences.

Dean Jacqueline Taylor said the program includes partnerships with a number of Latin American universities and will offer an undergraduate minor as well as undergraduate and graduate concentrations. The program teaches students to think critically about all aspects of media and communication, with a particular focus on Latino media and communities, and how to create communication strategies that effectively reach the Latino population.



Student work was showcased at the "Origins: A Photographic Journey to the Latino Roots" exhibit.

Introducing the college's new faculty members

Student enrollment in the College of Communication has grown 74 percent since the school became one of DePaul's official colleges in 2007. To continue its mission to provide the growing student body with a wide selection of areas of study, the College of Communication has hired five new tenure-track professors.

"It is always really exciting to bring new faculty of this caliber into the college because they bring cutting-edge knowledge and a tremendous infusion of energy and talent into the classroom and into the curriculum," Dean Jacqueline Taylor says.

Matthew Ragas comes to DePaul from the University of Florida, Gainesville, where he researched the relationship between the news media and corporate public relations efforts. Ragas helped start two online financial



publications and wrote a book on branding and another on e-business. He is teaching Principles of Public Relations and Digital Public Relations for the fall quarter.

"One thing I am excited about is using Chicago as a classroom," Ragas says. "Even for my intro class,

I have a really top-notch panel of practitioners coming [to speak to the students]."

Jon Mills, a former PR account executive, is also new to the public relations faculty. Mills' expertise is in sports communication and non-traditional marketing. In addition to an undergraduate intro class, he is teaching a graduate course



that blends the academic and practical sides of sports marketing.

"DePaul has everything I was looking for professionally," Mills says. "The aspirations that students have really excite me."



Kelly Chu joins the college as an assistant professor of advertising. Chu worked for an ad agency in Taiwan before coming to the U.S. to pursue her master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Texas at Austin. She is teaching Principles of Advertising and Integrated Communications and will teach a new course called Digital PR and Advertising this winter.

Hai Tran completed his Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he researched the intersection of online journalism and international communication. He is teaching International Reporting and a course on reporting in converged newsrooms for graduate students.

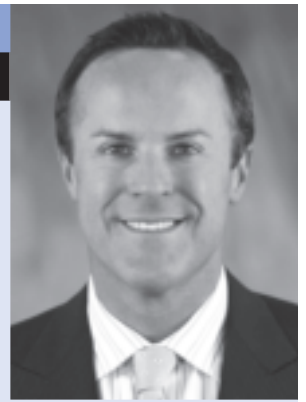
"Students in my classes are encouraged to discuss, question, and develop a critical understanding of journalistic issues," Tran says.

Michael DeAngelis has been teaching at DePaul's School for New Learning since the 1990s and moved to the College of Communication to focus more closely on his research and teaching interests in international film and Hollywood stars and fan culture. DeAngelis is teaching undergraduate classes on film and video analysis and the history of cinema.



Commencement:

Award-winning journalist and author Maria Hinojosa received an honorary degree from the College of Communication during the June 13 commencement ceremony. Hinojosa is host and managing editor of NPR's "Latino USA," senior correspondent for PBS' "Now" newsmagazine and host of her own talk show, "One on One," from WGBH/LaPlaza. Hinojosa is shown here with the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., president of the university, and Jacqueline Taylor, the dean of the college.



Seeds for sports director's career were planted at DePaul

Residence:

Phoenix

Occupation:

Ring is sports director of KTVK-TV news in Phoenix. He anchors sports for the 5, 6 and 9 p.m. newscasts and serves as managing editor for all sports stories that appear on KTVK. The job mostly consists of covering the Cardinals, Diamondbacks, Coyotes, Suns and Arizona State University.

Education:

After graduating from St. Viator High School in 1986, he earned his undergraduate degree in communication from DePaul in 1991. He says he also earned an “unofficial” degree from the DePaul Sports Information office “where I spent thousands of hours making contacts and planting the seeds for my career.”

Vital stats:

Prior to arriving in Phoenix, Ring spent eight years as a broadcaster in Denver. Before that, he worked as a Heat and Marlins broadcaster in Miami. He began his on-air career in Green Bay, Wis., where he hosted “The Brett Favre Show,” among other duties. He also has worked as a sideline reporter for the NFL on Fox and hosted a nationally televised weekly baseball week-in-review show on FSN.

What I like best about my job is:

“Aside from the obvious answer that I get to watch sports and then talk about it for a living, I really enjoy the unknown each day brings. You never know what’s going to happen in sports from the time you wake up until the time you hit the air, so you always have to be prepared. Each and every day is different from the last.”

The biggest challenge I face in my job is:

“In this day and age, nobody needs to wait for the local news anymore to get their information. Everyone’s cell phones can tell them all they need to know. My challenge is to still give viewers a reason to tune in. I try to do that by offering perspective, opinion and humor. Sportscasts have to be informing and entertaining, otherwise you’re dead.”

My College of Communication experience helped me by:

“Aside from the who, what, where, when and why of journalism, the College of Communication really helped me cultivate my writing skills. But, honestly, one of the greatest aspects of my college education was DePaul’s location. I was able to intern at WGN-TV in the summer of 1989. While most students would have to return to school in the fall, I was able to stay on since I was going to school right down the street. That eventually led to a paid producing job at WGN, and I held that position for several years before beginning my on-air career in Green Bay. I can honestly say that had I gone to, say, a Big Ten school, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

The words I live by are:

“If your life was a movie, would the audience like the main character?”

Class project included in book: An examination of the health risks of microtechnology by graduate students in the Environmental Health Reporting course taught by Marla Donato has been included in Project Censored's "Censored 2011: The Top Censored Stories of 2009–2010." Published in September, the book covers underreported news stories often ignored by corporate media. The DePaul project was voted in the top 25 of 350 entries by national and international judges. To purchase a copy of the book, visit the Project Censored website at projectcensored.org.



Show taped in college's theatre: DePaul University was chosen as the location to tape "Broadway in Chicago Backstage: Shrek the Musical," a program aired exclusively on Comcast. The program was taped July 19 before a live audience that included DePaul students, staff and faculty in the College of Communication's lower-level theatre. DePaul students also were invited to ask the cast questions about the show. "It was a great experience hosting the 'Broadway in Chicago Backstage: Shrek the Musical' program here at DePaul," said Dean Jacqueline Taylor. "Our students saw first-hand what it entails to put together a program like this. We look forward to developing our partnership with Broadway in Chicago through internships and other educational opportunities for DePaul students." Hosted by Paul Lisnek, anchor of "Newsmakers" and theatre correspondent for "Prime Time Chicago," the 30-minute program included interviews with composer Jeanine Tesori and cast members Eric Petersen (Shrek), Haven Burton (Princess Fiona) and Alan Mingo Jr. (Donkey).

Student team wins McDonald's competition: Students from DePaul and Valparaiso universities participated in a public relations campaign competition sponsored by McDonald's that called for both student teams to design and activate their own communications campaigns with the intent of selling the most Frappés at a store near their universities. DePaul's contingent, known as The DePaul SuPReme Ambassadors, won the competition and captured the \$1,500 cash prize. The campaign was designed to raise

awareness of the McDonald's Owners of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana's (MOCNI) rollout of its new blended ice drink. "The campaign challenged undergraduate marketing, advertising and public relations majors to create, plan and execute a McCafé Frappé launch campaign on their respective campuses," said Ron Lofton, MOCNI president. "McDonald's is committed to education and the future of our youth, and the MOCNI Campus Frappé Competition is a great opportunity for students to gain real-world experience while showcasing their talents."

DePaul PRSSA teams place in Starbucks competition:

Two teams from DePaul's chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) placed in the however-you-want-it Starbucks Frappuccino Blended Beverage campaign. Team Tall took first prize, while Team Grande placed third. The public relations case study campaign competition challenged students to promote the new however-you-want-it Frappuccino Blended Beverages and the related Frappuccino Blended Beverage Happy Hour events held in May at a Starbucks location near their college campuses. Fifteen teams of PRSSA members, college students with an interest in public relations, entered the competition. "While executing our campaign, I learned a lot about working with a team," said student Rebecca Heitz. "We relied on each other throughout the entire process, and without each of our individual efforts, we would not have been successful. This experience taught me, it is so easy to get caught up in the college mentality of 'you getting ahead,' but really it's about what an impact you can make together."

Mastin picked for fellowship: Associate Professor Teresa Mastin was selected as one of five professors nationwide to participate in the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations' Fellowship for Educators Program this summer. As part of the program, she spent an "action-packed" two weeks at Ketchum's Chicago office, where she participated in workshops and team meetings. "I ended my two weeks at Ketchum with a deep appreciation for a culture that attracts and nurtures smart, inquisitive, dedicated people who clearly have a passion for their clients and rising to the opportunities and challenges they face," Mastin said. The fellowship program aims to expose professors to the current day-to-day operations of public relations agencies and corporate PR departments, as well as create an exchange of information and ideas that will enhance the professional development of both the educators and the practitioners.

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Conversations

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The ability to work with big-name clients and “significant B2C interaction” have been the most rewarding aspects of working as a global search analyst for Starcom Media Vest Group, says Holly Hiatt (B.A. '10), who majored in communication studies. “I’ve learned how to be more analytical overall and enjoy the relationship between Web activity and success for a business,” she says.



Westfall

In addition to Stangeland and Eriksen, others who have landed in broadcast or online journalism include Leah Westfall (B.A. '08, M.A. '09), content editor at Fastweb.com, which helps students pay for school. Part of her bailiwick is interviewing students who have won scholarships through Fastweb's “Winners Circle.”

“That’s a joy to see people whom we’ve actually helped. They can take a breath, and it [paying for college] will be OK,” Westfall says. “I love the fact that I can use my degree, and I write something every single day.”

Jenn Sullivan (M.A. '10), a journalism graduate who is a writer for WGN-TV, says she’s straddling both broadcast and online writing, typical of the world of convergence in which 21st century journalists live.

“I love taking what I learned at DePaul and applying it to both media,” she says. “I love the vivacious energy that emanates through the newsroom. It’s so exciting. You go into work every day, and you have no idea what’s going to be thrown at you.”