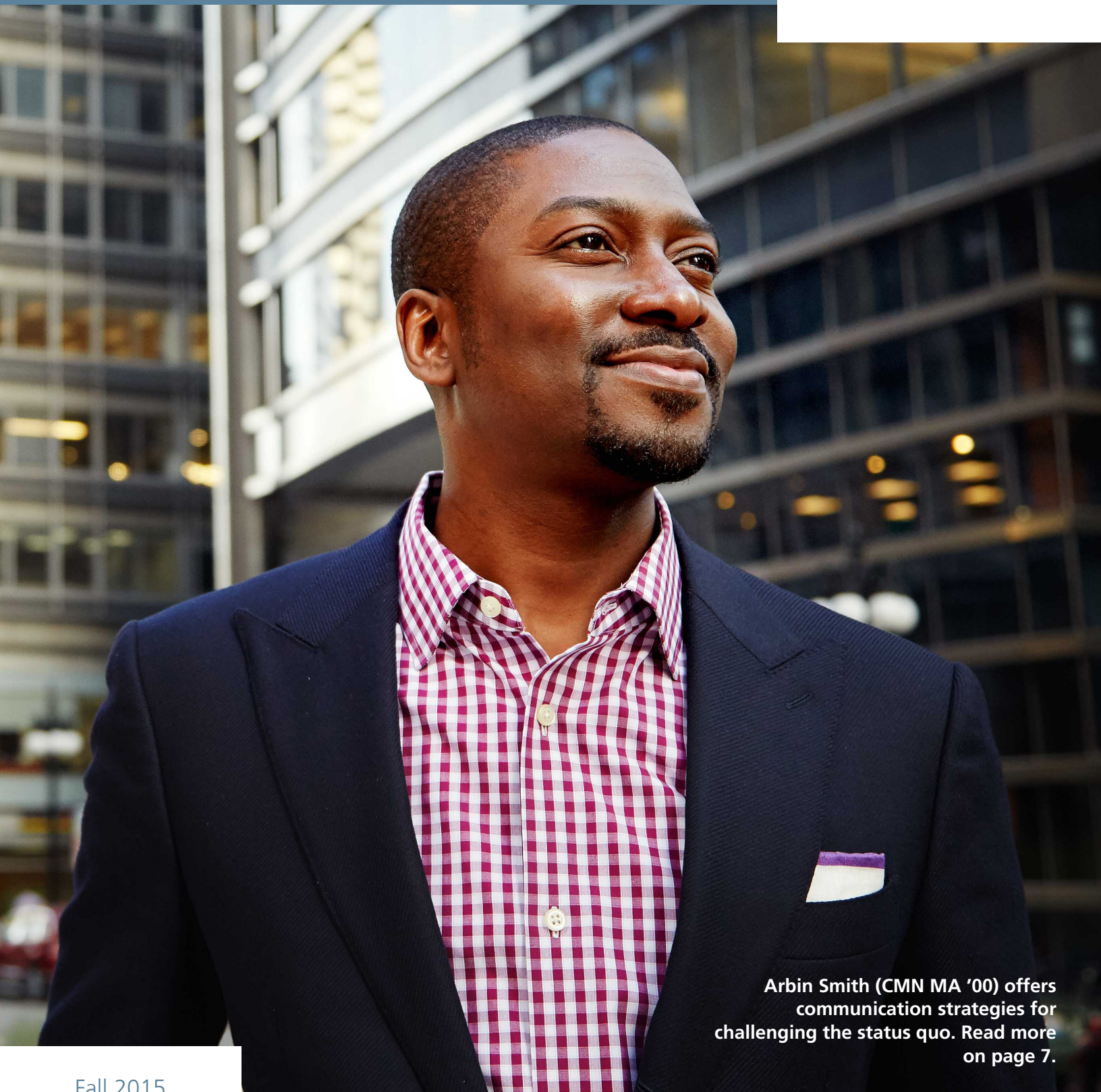


# CONVERSATIONS

A publication for College of Communication alumni



Arbin Smith (CMN MA '00) offers communication strategies for challenging the status quo. Read more on page 7.

Fall 2015

## IN THIS ISSUE

3 | College has national appeal 4 | Day in the life of an MSNBC producer 6 | Lessons from "Seinfeld"





# INNOVATION WITH INTENTION

BY DEAN SALMA GHANEM

CONVERSATIONS

We welcome your story ideas, questions and comments. Please contact Jamie Sokolik at (312) 362-1139 or [jsokolik@depaul.edu](mailto:jsokolik@depaul.edu).

**Office of Alumni Relations**  
[alumni.depaul.edu](http://alumni.depaul.edu)  
(800) 437-1898

**College of Communication**  
[communication.depaul.edu](http://communication.depaul.edu)  
[communication@depaul.edu](mailto:communication@depaul.edu)  
(312) 362-8600

**Editor**  
Jamie Sokolik

**Art Director**  
Francis Paola Lea

**Designers**  
Francis Paola Lea  
Rachel Mondragon

Stay connected to DePaul through our online communities, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. Visit [alumni.depaul.edu](http://alumni.depaul.edu) to sign up today.



December is the midpoint in our academic year—the perfect time to reflect on what we’ve done, where we’ve been and what’s coming next. As a college, we continually strive for innovation. Along with our recent digital innovations, our course offerings also employ inventive techniques to impart knowledge and skill. For example, learn on page 6 how Instructor Kelli Marshall uses “Seinfeld” as the foundation for a course that explores script writing, structure and the historical aspects of popular culture.

In September, DePaul was honored as the sole Illinois university to rank on U.S. News and World Report’s 2015 list of Top 25 Most Innovative Universities, and the College of Communication is a big part of that recognition. Therefore, it’s no surprise that we attract students from around the country. On page 3, find out how our national appeal is steadily growing. Communication graduates put their education to use across the nation, as well. Follow a week in the life of alumna Kat McCullough (CMN ’05), an MSNBC producer for the “Melissa Harris-Perry” show in New York, on page 4.

Students and faculty have been busy this year racking up awards and honors and making meaningful contributions to the field. In Accolades, you’ll see but a small selection of recent activity since our last issue.

Whether you have graduated and are in the Chicagoland area, or you’re out exploring the world, please make sure to connect with us and share the innovative things you’re doing. Feel free to contact me at [communication@depaul.edu](mailto:communication@depaul.edu).

# COMMUNICATORS FROM COAST TO COAST



From Arizona to Ohio, California to Connecticut, nearly 50 percent of currently enrolled students have traveled from 40 states around the country to learn, grow and thrive at the College of Communication. Why do they leave home and make the trek to Chicago? Out-of-state students Jane Mallett, Carly Oosten and Dan Pawlowski say it’s because the college experience and education are unmatched.



**Jane Mallett**, public relations and advertising major, Sammamish, Wash.: “I wanted to be in a big city, and I knew I wanted to go into communication. When I started to research universities, I found that DePaul had a well-respected program, and I was raised Catholic, so I thought the largest Catholic university in the country would have a good foundation for me. Once I started classes, I found so many more reasons to love the program. My professors knew me and were invested in my education, I found that the networking opportunities were incredible and I was encouraged to study abroad, which I did, in Rome, Italy. My hometown is a little quieter and more calming, and there are more opportunities for hiking and skiing and things like that. I do miss that. But when I’m home, you’ll see me sporting a Cubs hat. I love telling people I go to school in Chicago. I definitely feel like I have an advantage because I went to DePaul.”



**Carly Oosten**, communication and media major, Tranquility, New Jersey: “I moved around a lot as a kid for my mom’s job. Looking back, it’s the best thing that could have happened to me, but at the time it was hard. I went from Waukegan, Iowa, to Detroit—it was a culture shock. But if I had stayed in Iowa, I don’t think I would have considered moving to Chicago. When I was looking at schools, I saw how interconnected the College of Communication is with the profession, and I now see that is due in part to how involved the faculty are with the Chicago communications community. They are always willing to help us succeed—in school and after. I learned to be independent, to find my own drive and develop new skills. It’s invigorating and stimulating. Chicago is a beautiful city and a wonderful place to learn and grow.”



**Dan Pawlowski**, communication and media major, North Reading, Mass.: “I’d been to Chicago a few times. I have family here, and I always thought it was an amazing place to be. So, I decided on the city first, and then when I looked into DePaul and the communication program, I knew I’d found the right place. I want to go into sports communication, and I don’t think I could have found a better school for it. The sports industry in Chicago is incredible, and in the College of Communication, you can do whatever you put your mind to. I’ve worked at Radio DePaul doing play-by-plays and as a sports talk host for the past four years, and I can’t imagine getting this kind of experience and guidance anywhere else. My professors have actually worked in the field doing what I want to do. It’s a huge advantage to have that firsthand knowledge and perspective in the classroom. It’s an incredibly unique college experience.”



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MSNBC PRODUCER KAT McCULLOUGH



Many people dream of a career in television, but for Kat McCullough (CMN '05), that dream is a reality. Below is a snapshot of a week in her life (Sept. 9-13) as a segment and booking producer for “Melissa Harris-Perry,” a panel-discussion show filmed in New York that explores current issues in politics, culture, race and more. The MSNBC program airs Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-noon ET.



## WEDNESDAY, 10 A.M.

My week begins on Wednesday with our pitch meeting, during which the entire staff brainstorms topics to cover. Among this week’s segments is “Fear and Voting,” which will take a look at how negative campaigns can lead to lower voter turnout, as well as a discussion about Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.



## WEDNESDAY, 1 P.M.

After the meeting, we plan our two hours of TV on “The Board,” which is kind of the master plan for each show and has all the tasks we need to complete before airing. Of course, we have to be really flexible as stories break throughout the week. For example, we were supposed to have a segment called “G.O.A.T.,” or “Greatest of All Time,” about Serena Williams because we were positive she would win the U.S. Open. When she didn’t, we literally had to go back to “The Board.” Hope we didn’t jinx her! To us, she’s still the greatest.



## THURSDAY/FRIDAY, 2:30 P.M.

Lunchtime! I always eat at my desk. I’m not sure which we have more of, toys or books! After lunch, it’s time to start putting together my segment for the week. The executive producer assigns the segments, but if we are especially interested in a certain topic, he’s usually amenable. For the next few days, I’ll be researching, writing and putting together “elements”—graphics, video and other media that will help illustrate the segment. When I’m writing, I have to have music to get in the focus zone.

## SATURDAY/SUNDAY, 6:30 A.M.

Saturday and Sunday are show days, and we arrive extremely early to get everything ready. The home base for NBC Studios and NBCUniversal is 30 Rockefeller Center, or “30 Rock.” It’s an incredible place to work. I especially love it during the holidays when the Christmas tree is up on Rockefeller Plaza.



## SATURDAY/SUNDAY, 9 A.M.

It’s almost show time! Before we air, we print out lists of elements for our host, Melissa Harris-Perry, to review. We also go over the segment details, and I help greet the guests, get them into hair and makeup, and make sure they’re mic’d and on set at the right time. We’ve had a ton of notable guests over the years, including Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), film director Ava DuVernay and attorneys general Loretta Lynch and Eric Holder.

After everyone is in place and ready to go, I head to the big newsroom to wait for my segment. It’s always freezing in there, so I keep a Snuggie on hand!



## SATURDAY/SUNDAY, 10 A.M.-NOON

When my segment is up, I head into the control room. This week, it was about teens who were arrested for sending nude selfies. Last week, I produced a segment on how businessman and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump continually references China and the fluctuating Chinese currency. I now know more random trivia on the yuan/renminbi currency than I ever thought I’d need!

While in the control room, I help the line producer and director find the elements to put in the rundown, which is basically a schedule for the show. Each video, sound clip, picture or full-screen graphic is supposed to air according to cues in the script. Also, depending on the direction of the discussion Melissa is having with our guests, we might need elements we hadn’t planned on, so we try to brainstorm what those could be. For example, if Melissa is discussing Republican presidential candidate Carly Fiorina, the conversation might turn to Donald Trump, so we would want video of him in the rundown.

## SATURDAY/SUNDAY, NOON

As soon as one show ends, we start preparing for the next. It’s tiring work and a continuous cycle, but I absolutely love it!



# LESSONS FROM *Seinfeld*

What makes a TV show work? What makes it fail? How do you put together a show that will capture the attention of audiences everywhere? Media and cinema studies students ask themselves these questions every day, and one class answers in a completely unique, sometimes ridiculous, often insightful way. Instructor Kelli Marshall offers the popular “Seinfeld” class, during which students explore the show’s masterful combination of the absurdly silly with the truly poignant, its mass appeal and its narrative genius.

“‘Seinfeld’ really lends itself to an entire course because it had such a huge impact on TV history and culture,” Marshall says. “Students not only learn about TV done well, but also about issues of the 1990s and why this show worked in that context.”

The 2015-16 freshmen were one-year-olds when the widely viewed series finale aired 17 years ago, so discussing how the antics of Jerry Seinfeld (himself), Elaine Benes (Julia Louis-Dreyfus), George Costanza (Jason Alexander) and Cosmo Kramer (Michael

Richards) comically reflected current events can be a challenge. For example, the students might have heard about the O.J. Simpson murder trial, but without a little research, they often don’t connect the character of Jackie Chiles (Phil Morris), a lawyer Kramer works with in seasons seven, eight and nine, with Simpson’s attorney, Johnnie Cochran.

“I give the students handouts preceding each screening with a list of topics to research,” Marshall says. “Without it, many of them don’t understand the pop culture references, and without that, they can’t understand the weight of the statement.”

Engaging activities also help inform the students. In April 2013, Marshall had Mark Metcalf—The Maestro in season seven—Skype in to talk with the class about working on a sitcom and to answer the students’ questions. Nash Sanderson (CMN ‘15), currently a comedy writer and performer with Second City and The iO Theater, had never seen an episode before enrolling in Marshall’s class but says that the ingenious writing style helped him feel connected to the material.

“Many issues dealt with in the series are not specific to any one generation,” Sanderson says. “They cross lines, which is why I think the show was successful in the first place.”

This observation was not wasted on Sanderson. He says he has applied the lessons learned in the class about script writing and plot formation and feels that his own writing has improved since studying the series.

“Seeing how the writers take story lines that seem weird and out of place but eventually wrap together so masterfully—taking disparate threads and tying them together in a satisfying way—I’ve applied that in my own writing,” he says. “When students first sign up, they might think it will just be a fun class—and it is. But you’ll also think critically and work hard. You come out with a great understanding and appreciation of how comedy is written and how it works in the framework of a television show. It’s really a great class.”

## ALUMNI ADVICE WITH CONSULTANT ARBIN SMITH

Arbin Smith (CMN MA ‘00) is an expert in taking the uncomfortable and making it comfortable. As a consultant for Deloitte, Smith works with educational medical centers and community hospitals during their transition from paper to electronic records, which is not an easy evolution for hospitals with thousands of records or for the people who have been doing their jobs in a certain way for years. Smith acts as liaison for the doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, allaying their fears, answering their questions and strategizing ways to make the tricky transition more bearable. He asks questions, listens to their concerns and then proactively and collaboratively finds solutions.

“We’re implementing an automated system, but companies are not purely automated,” Smith says. “I find out how we can integrate the system and the people effectively.”

It’s a daunting undertaking, but it’s a process that Smith has all but perfected in his 10 years on the job. He enjoys being part of making U.S. health care as efficient and effective as possible and helping people communicate and understand. His master’s in organizational communication prepared him well for the process.

“My DePaul degree really differentiates me from others,” he says. “The perspective I bring is different from that of my colleagues. We have to crisply articulate what these changes mean for the individuals and the jobs they do. My degree program helped me synthesize very complex information into assertive and meaningful messages that help the people who matter.”



### CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO BY ASKING “WHY?”

Why can’t we change the model? Why does this have to be this way? Why can’t we bend the cost curve? Why? Don’t accept things as they are because that’s how they’ve always been. Instead, try to find a way to do it differently. When you ask “Why?” you begin to release your capacity to think creatively.

### GET COMFORTABLE WITH BEING UNCOMFORTABLE

It’s easy to fall into patterns. You find the things that make you comfortable, and you stick with them. That’s human nature. But in today’s world, true innovators get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Complacency usually leads to a slow decline. Take advantage of as many instances and opportunities as you can to make yourself uncomfortable. That’s how you grow.

### NETWORK WITH INTENTION

With the advent of social media, networking channels today are unmatched. Every relationship you have, every person that you know, it all connects you to something else. When you network, be intentional about it. It’s not just about the name, rank, serial number, the “Here’s my name and here’s what I do.” Really try to make yourself memorable and create a connection.

### APPRECIATE EACH AND EVERY DAY, AND ACCOUNT FOR EVERYTHING

Don’t get too high on the wins, and don’t get too low on the losses. Find that equilibrium, and celebrate each day. Sometimes things will go according to plan; sometimes they won’t. Regardless, stay the course.



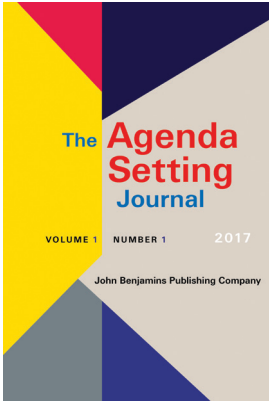


Assistant Professor Jason Martin received the 2015 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Mass Communication Research Award. He will receive a \$10,000 grant from the organization to fund his proposal “Get Your Game Frame Off My Obamacare: The Cognitive, Affective, and Attitudinal Effects of Health Care Legislation News Coverage on Young Adults.”

Assistant Professor Rajul Jain was awarded a 2015 Arthur W. Page Center Legacy Scholars Grant. The \$10,000 grant will help fund her study “Distinguishing Real from Fake: How Consumers Evaluate Authenticity of Corporate Social Responsibility Programs and What It Means for the Bottom Line.”



Professor Carolyn Bronstein was named associate dean of enrollment for the College of Communication. The public relations and advertising professor also was awarded a fellowship with the inaugural class of the AEJMC Institute for Diverse Leadership in Journalism and Communication. The institute strives to increase racial, gender and ethnic diversity in senior-level positions in journalism and communication education.



Journalism student Rachel Hinton received a 2015 Equal Voice Fellowship and Scholarship from the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Only six people were selected out of 60 applicants nationwide. Hinton’s project focuses on how Chicago neighborhoods are affected by redlining, the practice of denying services to residents of certain areas based on the racial or ethnic makeup of the community.

Dean Salma Ghanem is founder and editor of The Agenda Setting Journal, which focuses on the theoretical developments and applications of agenda-setting theory and is the first theory-based journal in the communication discipline. Agenda-setting theory is the most popular theory in mass communication and traditionally describes the ability of the media to affect the public’s view on the importance of current issues. More recently, the theory has been applied in other industries, such as business, politics and finance.

College of Communication students Quiana Hughes, Lizmarie Santiago and Natalie Mayen, and alumna Kameran Chambers (CMN ’14), were awarded scholarships from The LAGRANT Foundation, which strives to help increase the number of ethnic minorities in advertising, marketing and public relations.



Associate Professor Matt Ragas received the 2015 DePaul Excellence in Teaching Award for the College of Communication. Ragas also moderated a conversation on Sept. 17 at the New York Institute of Technology on the role of financial journalism in the 21st century. Panelists included The New York Times editor-at-large and CNBC reporter and host Andrew Ross Sorkin, the Financial Times’ U.S. managing editor Gillian Tett, and Wall Street Journal columnist Jason Zweig. Ragas and Assistant Professor Hai Tran, in partnership with Gorkana, a media intelligence provider, have conducted a national survey of financial journalists for three of the last four years, making Ragas uniquely qualified to moderate the discussion.



Assistant Professor Maria De Moya participated in the Plank Center Educator Fellowship program, which aims to expose educators to new professional communication techniques and to create an exchange of information among fellows from universities across the country. As part of the program, the public relations professor spent two weeks at Florida Power & Light Co. (FPL) in Juno Beach, where she shadowed the company’s community relations, public affairs and social media teams.

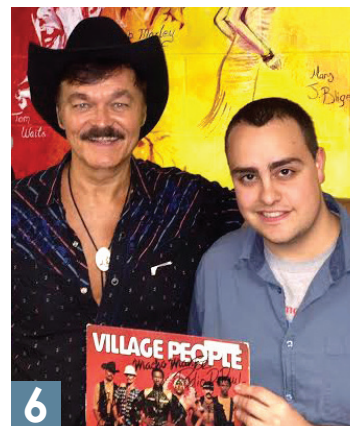




# BIG DREAMS AND BIG ACTIONS



GLOBALGIRL MEDIA



## Around the College

**1** President and general manager of CBS 2 Chicago Martha Wilke (CMN '86) hosted a reception for the college on May 14 to celebrate employers who partner with DePaul to provide internships for communication students. Alumni shared their experiences with the partners, as well as college faculty and staff, and explained how their internships affected their career paths and led to full-time positions. Companies in attendance included Edelman, Leo Burnett, CNA and Modern Luxury magazine. If you are interested in providing internships for College of Communication students, please contact internship program director Graciela Kenig at (312) 362-7988 or [gkenig@depaul.edu](mailto:gkenig@depaul.edu).

**2** This past summer, the College of Communication hosted the GlobalGirl Media (GGM) seven-week intensive digital journalism training program. GGM is a nonprofit organization that strives to empower underserved high school girls through media, leadership and journalism training. The program helps trainees develop strong self-image, self-esteem and confidence that drives success in school, work and community. The girls were introduced to journalistic concepts, digital equipment and media literacy skills, and took field trips to Tribune Tower and The Field Museum.

**3** The Polycom Room is now open for use in the Daley Building. The room is equipped with Polycom high-performance technology, including audio-video teleconferencing equipment with a high-resolution camera. Professors will use the equipment for activities such as conference-calling guest speakers from around the world, conducting meetings from different locations and combining classes on different campuses.

**4** In July, Dean Salma Ghanem traveled to Huaqiao University in Quanzhou, China, with Driehaus College of Business Professor Patrick Murphy to explore possible collaboration opportunities.

While there, Ghanem gave a presentation on the DePaul College of Communication to students in the Huaqiao College of Communication.

**5** In August, the college hosted Burcu Simsek, assistant professor and vice dean of communication sciences at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey. During her time with the college, Simsek explored the narratives of Turkish women immigrants who are living in Chicago. Simsek previously performed similar research in Melbourne, Australia, and plans to compare the findings from each city.

**6** Media and cinema studies student Derek Peters interviewed Randy Jones, the original Village People cowboy, for Radio DePaul on Aug. 17. Peters and Jones covered a wide array of topics, including gay rights, stereotyping and embracing opportunity. Peters says he learned a great deal from the experience. "Randy spoke at length about the power of the microphone and how those of us who speak into them have the choice to either positively or negatively affect the audience," he said. "He sees being in the public eye as not only a pleasure, but a responsibility. Media professionals should consciously consider this every time they go on-air. I know I will."

**7** The first of a series of continuing education courses the college will host throughout the year took place Nov. 7-8. Instructor Ken Krimstein led the two-day workshop on cultivating a creative portfolio. Additional workshops will be offered in the winter on measurement and analytics and in the spring on communication and issues management. DePaul alumni will receive a 15 percent Demon Discount. For more information, email [cperegistration@depaul.edu](mailto:cperegistration@depaul.edu).

To say public relations student MaLeah Peterson has set goals for herself is something of an understatement.

"I want to live in five different places by the time I'm 33," she says, explaining that 33 will afford her roughly two years per city, giving her time to learn about the differences in culture and the public relations markets in each. "I'm thinking New York, San Francisco, Atlanta, somewhere international and then one I haven't planned yet."

Her ambitious travel goals are representative of her general outlook on life—she's got big dreams, and she's not afraid to take chances to achieve them. It's one of the reasons Peterson decided to attend the College of Communication; she found this quality mirrored within the school and the professors.

"When I talk to my friends at other schools, I realize how different DePaul is," she says. "My classes are both interesting and applicable to life after college. The College of Communication goes above and beyond to show us how to apply our knowledge to the world."

Peterson serves on the executive board of the Public Relations Student Society of America and is double majoring in public relations and advertising and communication and media, while also pursuing a minor in marketing. She's held several

internships, including her current yearlong position with FleishmanHillard as the Alfred Fleishman Diversity Fellow.

"During the application process for the fellowship, they asked me what I think diversity is, and I told them that to me it's more than skin deep," she says. "It's also how you think. Everyone is coming from a different perspective, and that's a good thing. DePaul taught me that, and I believe it was that line of thinking that helped me secure the position."

Ultimately, Peterson would like to use the skills she learned at DePaul in the corporate social responsibility realm. She feels ready to enter the professional world when she graduates.

"Going to school in Chicago means you have to grow up, and that's a huge advantage," she says. "Prospective employers know that DePaul students have a mature outlook and that our professors have ensured we've worked within the Chicago communication community throughout our education. It puts us a step ahead of everyone else. I feel like I'm already on the right track."

**Want to support more outstanding students like MaLeah Peterson? Visit [giving.depaul.edu](http://giving.depaul.edu) to learn more.**

## SUPPORT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

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

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

**Fund for DePaul**  
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](http://alumni.depaul.edu/newsletter) to make your gift now.



# The DePaulia Celebrates 100th Volume

The start of the 2015-16 school year was also the beginning of The DePaulia's 100th volume. Former and current staff of The DePaulia came together on Oct. 16, during Alumni Weekend 2015, to celebrate the landmark occasion at Cortelyou Commons. Below are photos from the event, where current staff gave a presentation and alumni had a chance to connect with current students and reconnect with old friends.

