Communication Alumni Newsletter
Winter 2012
Alumni Stories – Where are they Now?

From the Classroom to the Newsroom

Markus Brown ('11) recently landed a job at NBC Connecticut as a Production Assistant, working behind the scenes and performing a variety of different positions including: floor director, teleprompter operator, director, editing and technical director.

Although he had not had an internship at the West Hartford station prior to being hired, Brown says he was "introduced to the right people" by one of his instructors, Bruce Testa, a part-time faculty member in the School of Communication. Brown took three of his classes – Video Field Production, Non-Linear Editing and Advanced Non-Linear Editing – and credits Testa with helping him develop his production and editing skills.

"After taking his classes we talked about my job interests and, following his advice, I fine-tuned my resume," Brown says. "He passed it on to some contacts at NBC Connecticut and I got called in for an interview. They had an opening and I got hired. A piece of advice I would give to college students is to develop a good rapport with their professors because they can aid them in achieving their career goals."

In addition to his job, Brown is enrolled in the School of Communication's Master's Degree program. He hopes to continue to work in television as either a news or sports anchor or in post-production.

Social Networking Provides New Opportunities

When Amanda Backer Nelson ('04) graduated from the School of Communication, her dream was to get a job in advertising, and that's what she did within two weeks of walking down the aisle to pick up her diploma. But after eight years in the business, first working in interactive advertising at a New York agency and eventually rising to the position of account executive at Cronin and Co. in Glastonbury, she became intrigued with the idea of working more with social media and decided it was time to move on.

Nelson is now a community contact manager for Radian6, which provides advertisers, companies and brands the means to monitor and engage in social media. It's her job to keep abreast with what people are saying about Radian6 and to manage a team of 18 bloggers, all of whom are located in different parts of the world. While Amanda actually gets together with her Radian6 co-workers at quarterly meetings in Canada and annual meetings in San Francisco, for the most part it’s a virtual company and she works at home. On a typical day, she will perform a wide range of tasks, nearly all of them online.

Recently, for example, she started out the day by logging in to check out what people were saying about Radian6. (The company has about 50,000 followers between Twitter, Facebook
and Google, and averages about 200 mentions on those sites an hour.) Then she proofread three e-books, worked with a designer on infographics, had a team meeting via Skype and wrote and posted a blog, “Why Facebook is Like a Cup of Coffee.” (Check it out on the company’s website.) In addition, Amanda frequently travels to represent Radian6 at social media conferences and speak about community management.

It’s a job that seems to have no boundaries and provides lots of flexibility, which is just how Nelson likes it. Working from home has a lot of perks and will make life in a few months a lot easier. She and husband Tom (’04) are expecting their first child this April.

Ducey Shares Advertising Experience With Students

Susan Ducey (’92) captivated the students in Dr. Randy Jacobs’ Communication and Advertising course last November with an in-depth presentation on advertising agencies. She described in detail the process of making a television commercial from the initial client meeting to the final spot ready to be aired. Students enjoyed seeing sample storyboards, rough cuts and finished commercials for actual clients and hearing about the exotic locations where some of the spots were filmed.

Since graduating with an emphasis in advertising, Ducey worked for 10 years at Lowe Worldwide in New York as a producer, then moving on to Draft Worldwide, also in New York, where she was a senior producer. Now executive producer of Domestic and International Television Productions for DDB New York, Ducey produces global campaigns for international clients.

SoC Alums Shine

Stephen Busemeyer (’93), the breaking news editor at the Hartford Courant, received the American Society of News Editors’ 2011 Jesse Laventhol Award for Deadline News Reporting. The award was for the Courant's coverage of the August 2010 massacre at the Hartford Distributors' warehouse in Manchester, Conn.

The ASNE wrote that “the newspaper's reporting involved far more than getting it first. The Courant created a riveting narrative based on eyewitness and police accounts and then went on to unlock the story of what drove [Omar] Thornton to commit the worst mass murder in Hartford's history.”

The Courant's coverage of the shooting also won first place for breaking news in the annual New England Associated Press News Executives Association contest.

The Courant donated the $10,000 prize from the ASNE to a scholarship fund for the survivors of the eight HDI workers who were killed.

Ron Bishow (’00), Arnold Fucci (’03), and Matthew Parlapiano (’09) each received a 2011 Sports Emmy Award for Outstanding Daily Show for their work as part of the team that produces MLB Tonight. They are employed at the Major League Baseball Network as highlight producers for programs such as “MLB Tonight” and “Quick Pitch.”

October Alumni Reception Draws 60

Keith Arsenault (’10), Alexandria Hubbard (’10), Craig Byer (’09), Ashley Czapkowski (’10), and Jeremy Stanley (’11)

Attendance at the SoC Alumni
Reception continues to grow each year. This year, the School's fourth, was attended by more than 60 SoC alums. In addition to giving them a chance to catch up with old friends, the reception this year gave them a chance to check out what some of their former professors have been up to. Faculty poster presentations ranged from Elizabeth Burt’s slide show on the newspaper and magazine work of 19th Century naturalist John Muir to Roger Desmond’s poster describing his journalism class’s investigation of puppy mills.

Prof. Randy Jacobs explains his class’s research on audience analysis.

Hillyer 251 Lab Makes a Remarkable Comeback

It took a while for students taking classes in the Hillyer 251 lab last fall to figure out what was different about the room. It seemed bigger, but was actually a bit smaller. It seemed lighter … or cleaner … or was that a new paint job? The presentation technology was new and no longer froze up halfway through a lecture. And teachers were really happy when they realized they weren’t stubbing their toes anymore on the big wooden cabinet under the whiteboard – it had disappeared!

August 2011 -- Deconstruction

September 2011 -- Reconstructed Reality
Faculty Updates

Dr. Sundeep Muppidi Returns to the School of Communication

After spending the last two years as Secretary General of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) in Singapore, Dr. Sundeep Muppidi is back in his position as Associate Professor in the School of Communication. This spring, he returned to the classroom to teach a graduate course in communication research methods and undergraduate courses in television production and international communication. This last will be especially enriched given his recent experiences. We are excited to welcome him back.

AMIC is an international non-governmental organization dedicated to the development of media and communication expertise throughout the Asia-Pacific region. As the Secretary General (SG), Muppidi’s responsibility was to provide intellectual leadership and strategic direction in the planning and implementation of a structured program of activities, including research, publications, conferences and workshops.

As the SG, he also played a critical role in developing and maintaining an extensive network of international funding agencies and collaborative organizations that help sustain AMIC’s activities. As the public face of AMIC, he represented a membership from 30 countries, and often spoke as a leading voice of Asian media. He was also responsible for the overall management of the AMIC Secretariat and reported to a governing board elected by the membership.

Faculty Accomplishments

Professor Elizabeth Burt published an article titled “Shocking Atrocities in Colorado: Newspapers’ Responses to the Ludlow Massacre” in American Journalism, Summer 2011. She also published “From ‘True Woman’ to ‘New Woman’: A Visual Analysis of the Lydia Pinkham Animated Ads’ of 1890” in Journalism History, Winter 2012.

Professor Don Ellis is on sabbatical Spring 2012. During that time he will be completing a book that is under contract to Peter Lang publishers. The book is on deliberative communication and democratic forms of communication as they relate to ethno-political conflicts. He will also be a visiting professor at Ariel University in Israel, where he will teach a course based on his new book, deliver some public lectures and work with Ariel University faculty on research projects.

Professor Harvey Jassem was elected Secretary and Executive Board member of the Urban Communication Foundation Board of Directors.

Marilyn Pennell received a grant from the Harvard Travelers Club to do research for a documentary film in India. She also received a Faculty Summer Filmmakers Fellowship from the Kopkind Colony in Vermont (summer 2011).

SoC Faculty & Alums Present Papers at the Annual NCA New Orleans Convention

Dr. Jack Banks chaired a panel on “The Voice of Gender on Television Networks: Rich Diversity or Hegemonic Conformity?” Nancy Bressler (M ’11) presented on the panel and Dr. Lori Bindig (M ’05), who has gone on to earn a Ph.D., served as respondent.

Drs. Mark Cistulli and Randy Jacobs (with Jason Snyder of CCSU) presented a paper, “A Global Force for Branding: A Study of Attitudes, Intentions, the Military, and the Wars Overseas,” to the Mass Communication Division.

Dr. Robert Duran gave a paper (co-authored with former SoC faculty member Dr. Diane Prusank) reporting on a content analysis of parenting advice in Essence Magazine, focusing particularly on the role of the mother and advice about discipline.

Dr. Lynne Kelly received a “Top 4 Paper” award in the Communication Apprehension and Competence Division for her paper, “So Many Choices! The Impact of Reticence on Communication Channel Choice across Diverse Interpersonal Situations.” In addition to this and a paper she co-authored with Dr. Miller (see below), she gave one other paper she co-authored with Dr. Robert Duran, entitled “Narcissism or Openness? College Students’ Use of Facebook and Twitter.” Finally, she made a presentation on the use of skills training to help reticent speakers overcome speech anxiety.

Dr. Aimee Miller-Ott presented four papers. The first, “The Multivocality of Sense Making: An Exploration of the Discourses College-aged Daughters Voice in Talk about their Mothers,” was presented to the Family Communication Division. The second, which focused on the role of social support in young women’s communication about the genital HPV vaccine, was presented to the Health Communication Division. The third, “Face Concerns and Facework Strategies in Safe-sex Communication,” and a fourth, co-authored with Dr. Lynne Kelly, “Mean Girls in College: Communication of Female Relational Aggression in the College Environment,” were presented to the Interpersonal Communication Division. This last was based on a project supported by a WELFund grant.

Jessica Ruggles (‘10) presented a paper, co-authored with the Department of Psychology’s Dr. Mala Matacin, which examined fashion advertisements in Vogue before and after the feminist revolution of the 1970’s.

Dr. William Yousman (M ’99) was a panelist on a program examining various approaches to visual research.

If you have any news you’d like to share, if you’d like to be a guest speaker, or if you have internship opportunities for our students, please let us know. We enjoy hearing from you. To keep up with School of Communication happenings, you can also visit our website at http://uhavax.hartford.edu/cmm and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UofHSchoolofCommunication.

Please consider a gift to the Communication Students Special Opportunities Fund to help us cover the costs of professional extracurricular activities such as students presenting projects at annual conventions like the Public Relations Society of America and the Eastern Communication Association, participating in the American Advertising Federation’s National Student Advertising Competition, attendance at lectures and events, field trips to media outlets, etc.

To make a contribution to the fund, you can send a check payable to the University of Hartford, and in the memo section indicate Communication Students Special Opportunities
Fund, and mail c/o Crystal Waldo, Institutional Advancement, University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117. If you prefer to contribute to the fund online, go to www.hartford.edu, click on “Giving to U of H,” select “Make a Gift” and where it asks for “Designation,” select “Other” and indicate Communication Students Special Opportunities Fund.

Please consider a gift to the Special Opportunities Fund for Communication Students.