



# MEEK SCHOOL

JOURNALISM AND NEW MEDIA

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
FARLEY HALL, UNIVERSITY, MS 38677

## **Meek School of Journalism and New Media Will Norton, Jr., Professor and Dean Annual Report 2010-11**

### **Undergraduate Program**

The Meek School of Journalism and New Media has begun to see results of a tremendous amount of hard work from the previous year.

Perhaps the most significant development for the school was its re-accreditation by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Accreditation came after an exhaustive self-study process and an intense site-team visit. The school successfully met eight of the nine standards for accreditation and has a plan in development for achieving full compliance with the assessment standard.

Through the accreditation process, our school significantly changed its curriculum to keep up with current journalism practices. Now, many students and faculty members have embraced the critically important multimedia instruction that is necessary to succeed in the field of journalism.

From a curricular standpoint, the Meek School has changed dramatically, and the curricular revisions have resulted in other changes.

- All journalism students now take a multimedia core: Jour 102, which introduces students to storytelling across platforms; Jour 271, which emphasizes reporting skills across platforms; and Jour 375, which provides a foundation in video and still photography. In addition, the faculty voted to require that all students entering the school in the fall of 2011 or later must take Jour 500, which will create a multimedia capstone experience.
- Students entering the fall of 2011 or later also will take a course about diversity. As future journalists who must cover a broad range of audiences, students are required to take a class with an intense focus on one aspect of diversity. Moreover, a diversity component is in all course syllabi.
- As a way to meet the challenge of keeping up with technological changes in journalism, for the fall of 2011 and beyond, students will be required to purchase laptops loaded with appropriate software before taking sophomore-level courses.
- The school has begun the process of implementing a new integrated marketing communication degree, which was approved in the fall by the IHL. Administrators and faculty met with potential students at satellite campuses and on the Ole Miss campus in recruiting efforts for the new program. The Meek

School has been partnering with Outreach to create Summer College programs for interested high school students, and the faculty have been developing strategies to make it as easy as possible for current journalism students to switch to the new degree program if they wish.

- As part of the new IMC degree, the Meek School will begin to teach courses via distance learning. Our two introductory courses – IMC 204 and IMC 205 will be offered to the DeSoto, Tupelo, Grenada, Booneville and Ole Miss campuses simultaneously in the fall of 2011. Our goal is to begin offering more classes via distance learning, particularly at the graduate level, by the end of the next academic year.
- The faculty have increased interaction between the Student Media Center and Farley Hall with a series of courses being taught at the SMC, which then result in content getting published on Newswatch, Rebel Radio and in *The Daily Mississippian*. This has had the significance of offering important publication experience for more students and strengthening the ties between the SMC & Farley.
- In the fall and spring semesters, noted magazine publisher Bob Guccione, Jr. was on campus teaching courses in magazine and feature writing. This is part of the school's ongoing commitment to bring professionals into the classroom to share knowledge and networking opportunities with the students.
- We had a tremendous opportunity to offer a May intersession class, taught by Ole Miss alumnus Shepard Smith. The course brought the Fox Report to campus on May 16 and offered students in the Meek School an amazing experience to report under Shep's tutelage in Mississippi and for a week at Fox News in New York the following week. The Associated Press television writer David Bauder wrote an article about the class.

The Meek School is experiencing the results of strengthening its program in the types of awards student journalists are winning.

- *The Roads of Broken Dreams*, the product of a depth reporting class, was honored with the 2011 Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for College Print. The project told the story of the Delta's efforts to reinvent itself in the face of difficult odds. A documentary produced in conjunction with the award-winning magazine is nearing completion, and a second year of the project is underway with an entirely new group of students.
- For the first time in many years, our students placed in the Hearst College Journalism Awards competition. The Hearst Awards are given only to students of accredited schools and is considered the gold standard for college journalism competitions. The Meek School of Journalism and New Media had the following results for the Hearst Journalism Awards Program: Broadcasting, 27th; Photojournalism, 23; Writing, 18; Overall, 26th. The overall score is an accumulation of points in the broadcasting, photojournalism and writing categories. The Hearst Journalism Awards Program is presented annually under the auspices of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC) with full-funding by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. The program's mission is to encourage and support excellence in journalism and journalism education in America's colleges and universities.
- The Meek School students took home multiple awards in the Society of Professional

- Journalists' Mark of Excellence Awards regional conference. Those receiving regional awards are eligible for national recognition. National awards will be made at the SPJ convention in New Orleans in September.
- Meek School students continued a tradition of doing well at the Southeastern Conference Journalism competition. In February, Alex McDaniel was named College Journalist of the Year by the Southeast Journalism Conference, the first Ole Miss student ever to be honored by the organization, which has members from eight Southeastern states. At the same conference, University of Mississippi students were named Grand Champions of the conference for their deadline performance in on-site journalism competitions. Students took home individual prizes for their print, broad-cast and advertising work.
  - Several students also were honored by the regional Society of Professional Journalists for their work in 2010, including several first places in print and broadcast categories. *The Daily Mississippian* was named third-best all-around college daily newspaper in the Region 12 SPJ contest.
  - Advertising and creative services students at Student Media won several awards in the Mississippi Press Association contest for advertising, announced in Fall Semester. The school hosted multiple events on campus that offered students unique learning opportunities outside the classroom.
  - The Magazine Innovation Center hosted its first annual ACT Experience, which brought publishers from throughout the nation (and a few other nations) to Oxford for an intensive discussion of directions for the publishing industry. Students actively participated in the talks and learned from interactive sessions.
  - Representatives from nearly every television station in Mississippi came to campus during Journalism Week to meet one-on-one with our best broadcast journalism students and to offer insights on the broadcast industry in an Overby Center presentation.
  - Robin Street, an instructor, and public relations students put together a week of diversity-themed activities called, "Diversity Rocks." They promoted the celebration of difference with a writing and photography contest and a series of videos. They touched on topics including race relations, sexual orientation and religious differences. All of the events and activities were open to the public and the entire Ole Miss campus.

The Meek School hosted its first self-contained graduation ceremony for the more than 140 eligible graduates at the Ford Center. As each graduate walked across the stage, a brief bio about him or her was read to the audience. The guest speaker was former CBS News anchor Dan Rather who delivered a moving message about the importance of journalism today – a fitting end to an exceptional academic year for the school.

### **Graduate Program**

The graduate program admitted 10 students for the academic year. Five students held assistantships each semester, and one was awarded a summer research stipend by the Graduate School.

Graduate faculty continue to refine the master's program to meet changing demands in the journalism industry by designing a 36-hour, non-thesis track in Integrated Marketing

Communications, approved by the Graduate Council. The track is designed to complement the undergraduate IMC degree. These courses will be offered during the fall of 2011. Indeed, plans exist to offer courses to students attending class at American University in Kosovo. The IMC track also is an integral part of the school's initiative with American University in Pristina, Kosovo.

Graduate faculty approved the proposal after reviewing the Kosovo curriculum. The proposal calls for distance learning and the admission of Kosovo students to the School of Journalism and New Media master's program.

The graduate faculty provided students with an option to take all four electives in the school as opposed to a two-two split, and allowing students to walk in the May graduation if the thesis chair believes the candidate will successfully defend the thesis before the end of the summer term.

Faculty continued to monitor student learning through an assessment process focused on the program's four core classes (history, law, research and theory) and the thesis. The data will be reviewed and submitted before the university's Oct. 15 deadline.

### **Student Media Center**

In Spring 2010, we scheduled a section of Journalism 480, Advanced Broadcasting was scheduled at the Student Media Center. The objective was to have classroom students interact more closely with the NewsWatch staff.

In Fall 2010, four classes were scheduled at the Student Media Center: three sections of Jour 377 Advanced Reporting, and one section of Jour 480. In Spring 2011, six classes were offered at the Student Media Center: four sections of Advanced Reporting and two sections of Jour 480. All were successfully integrated into the student media operation, using the conference room for lectures and new computers, purchased in Summer 2010, for the lab work.

Students in advanced journalism classes produced articles for *The Daily Mississippian*, and news segments for NewsWatch and for theDMonline.com. The classes were taught by Dr. Nancy Dupont; Dr. Kristi Swain; Professor Deb Wenger; Professor Ellen Meacham; and Student Media Center Director Patricia Thompson.

Dr. Mark Dolan worked with the yearbook staff to produce video content to accompany print articles. One of the magazine classes taught by Dr. Samir Husni worked on an expanded orientation guide with the Student Media Center advertising staff. Student Media Center Broadcast Manager Stephen Goforth taught several Journalism courses at Farley Hall.

In Spring 2011, a May Intersession course co-taught by Professor Wenger and Shepard Smith used the Student Media Center facilities for the first week of the class, and produced coverage of the Mississippi floods and tornadoes for theDMonline.com website.

Other Noteworthy Developments:

On July 1, 2010, the printing of *The Daily Mississippian* was outsourced to Signature Offset, after a competitive bidding process for the contract.

In May 2011, the editorial and advertising staffs collaborated to produce a glossy, 36-page orientation guide for incoming freshmen.

The director of the Student Media Center served on the steering committee for the

Centennial Celebration of the campus newspaper, scheduled for summer 2011. She has been instrumental in producing a 160-page souvenir publication for the event.

### **Mississippi Scholastic Press Association**

During the last five years, MSPA has doubled its active membership status, now including more than 70 school publication staffs.

The fall regional workshops at Ole Miss and in Oak Grove brought more than 350 students and advisers who were trained in desktop publishing, writing, yearbook, photography and broadcasting. The emphasis was to equip new staffs to produce publications of excellence and maintain a high level of staff organization.

The annual convention April 1 offered more than 300 students and advisers 70 sessions in all areas of journalism. Staffs expanded their skills in magazine, yearbook, newspaper, online, new media and broadcast categories. Speakers from all over Mississippi included professionals, instructors, advisers, and Ole Miss students who have been recognized in their fields.

Critiques, brainstorming sessions, hands-on desktop publishing labs, photo sessions, writing labs, advertising classes and publication development were only a few of the sessions offered during the day.

More than 350 awards were presented to students based on mail-in competition sent during February. Also, staffs who entered the carry-in competition, which included work done after the mail-in deadline, received more than 75 awards.

The Mississippi Press Association, the Meek School of Journalism and New Media, and MSPA work together to sponsor the MPA/Ole Miss Summer Journalism Workshop for Advisers and Students June 16-18. Thirty students and eight advisers signed up for the camp. Nationally recognized instructors taught sessions in yearbook, writing, desktop publishing and photography.

MSPA Director Beth Fitts encourages advisers to attend regional and national conventions with their staffs. She helps advisers with convention travel details and attends each convention where she teaches sessions, judges contest entries, provides critiques for newspaper staffs, recruits and serves as on administrative committees. Fitts is the director of the Mississippi Journalism Education Association and is on the Executive Board of the Southern Scholastic Press Association.

### **Development**

As of the end of May, the Meek School has garnered \$94,173 in gifts from donors giving less than \$25,000, compared to \$64,427 for all of FY 2010. Of that total, \$8,380 has come through phonathon (\$7,262), mail (\$3,350) and email (\$730) solicitations, compared to \$3,120 in FY 2010. In 2011, 102 donors have made 139 gifts of less than \$25,000 to the school, versus 98 donors for 61 gifts for the entire previous fiscal year.

- Secured \$119,173 in FY11, down from \$175, 391 in FY10. However it was a 69% increase in participation from 55 to 93 donors.
- 86% increase in first time donors from 14 to 26;
- 59% increase in the number of gifts received from 88 to 140.
- In FY11, more than \$18K in new gifts was secured to support the 42 existing endowments.

- Established the Thomas Family Scholarship; first scholarship endowment to assist students pursuing degrees in Integrated Marketing Communication.
- Established a relationship with a donor who will make in-kind donations that are expected to save the school more than \$10K in expenses. He printed the DM centennial program and will print future depth reports.
- Conducted more than 120 visits with Journalism alumni during the FY10 year. Discussed potential scholarship opportunities with more than a dozen alumni.
- Two scholarships at the \$25,000 level have been proposed. Both donors have agreed to the commitment; expect one proposal to be signed in July and the other in FY12 after previous commitments are met.
- Projects in progress: Donor giving kit and Gerald Forbes Society – Annual giving Society.