



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 2011-12**

Undergraduate Program

One of the more important developments in the school for the 2011-2012 academic year was the hiring and arrival of several new faculty members.

Cynthia Joyce came to the Meek School from MSNBC/NBC Nightly News where she oversaw the Web presence for Nightly News. In her brief time at Ole Miss she has written for the *Washington Post*, ramped up the social media presences of the Student Media Center and devised a way of showcasing student work on the Meek School website.

Darren Sanefski was hired from Syracuse University, where he taught design after a long career at the Syracuse *Post-Standard*. He has been instrumental in implementing design courses in our new Integrated Marketing Communications degree program and has worked with the Student Media Center to improve its design efforts.

Scott Fiene has 20 years of experience in developing and implementing marketing programs for a number of Fortune 500 companies and was Vice President of Principal Financial Group. He taught as an adjunct at the College of Business at Drake and has taken a significant leadership role in the IMC degree program, particularly at the undergraduate level.

Mikki Harris, an award-winning photojournalist who has worked at *USAToday*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and other national publications, will join the faculty in the fall of 2012. She recently taught at Morehouse College. Ms. Harris traveled to Belize and assisted in the creation of the *M-Powered* magazine with students.

This was an extraordinary year for students in terms of participation in extracurricular journalism and IMC activities.

The Department of Journalism took students on reporting trips to Mississippi newspapers during the 1970s and '80s. This was the first year for such a trip to a Mississippi television station.

Under the direction of veteran journalist Bill Rose, about 30 students – most of them freshmen and sophomores – had dozens of stories and even more photos published as a result of three separate two-day reporting trips to *The Brookhaven Daily Leader*, the *Enterprise-Journal* in McComb and *The South Reporter* in Holly Springs.

Six broadcast journalism students accompanied professors Deb Wenger and Nancy

Dupont on a one-day reporting trip to WTVA-TV in Tupelo. The students produced five stories for newscasts that day and three web stories for the station's online site. Two students were invited to interview for jobs in the aftermath of the trip.

Bill Rose's supervision of the award-winning depth reports continued for a third year with a focus on the 2011 flood of the Mississippi River and its aftermath. Nine students gave up their spring breaks and weekends to report stories from Memphis to New Orleans, and they wrote and edited 23 stories and graphics.

The main essay concludes that the Corps and its flood works did a magnificent job. Not one acre flooded that was not designed or expected to serve as a floodway, despite the biggest flood in recorded history. However, the flood also did more than \$1 billion worth of damage to floodworks that are being repaired in preparation for the next flood. The 2011 flood revealed alarming weaknesses in the levees. The good thing is that the flood identified the weakest locations, and they are now being rebuilt.

Samir Husni's magazine courses produced two editions of the *MS Observer* publication. This year he partnered with Brad Schultz to produce video magazine shows as well. The first program already has been broadcast on Mississippi Public Television, with the second show soon to be completed.

Journalism students also accompanied Professor Patricia Thompson, director of the Student Media Center, to Belize in January. They spent two weeks in Belize, and returned to campus to produce a five-part TV series, which aired on NewsWatch, and *M-Powered*, a 50-page magazine. The reporting focused on Ole Miss faculty and students engaged in the university's San Mateo Empowerment Project.

A pilot program for students interested in working as television news producers will begin this summer. Deb Wenger is supervising students interning at all four commercial TV stations in Jackson. The goal is to expand the program throughout the state and make it a year-round internship program.

The new Integrated Marketing Communications program also enhanced student experience. Under the direction of Scott Fiene, departments and organizations that turned to the school for help with IMC needs were matched with appropriate students. Meek School students went to work for the Ford Center for Performing Arts, the Oxford Parks Commission, the Gateway Festival and other entities.

The IMC degree program, which launched in 2011, now has more than 100 undergraduate students and continues to grow.

Many students received awards this year. For example, at the Mississippi Associated Press Broadcasters Association, NewsWatch won Best NewsCast, and students won awards in the Best News Report, Best Feature, Best Sports Report and Best Weathercast categories.

Robin Street and 14 students created, planned and implemented the Diversity Rocks PR campaign to promote acceptance of diverse publics with an emphasis on anti-bullying. They won Best in Show in the Public Relations Association of Mississippi PRISM awards, Best in Show in Southern Public Relations Federation Lantern awards and were second in the national Public Relations Society of America Silver Anvil Awards.

A student who participated in one of the depth reports mentioned earlier, Marianna Breland, a senior from Forest, received fifth place in enterprise reporting in the Hearst Awards, the most prestigious competition in college journalism.

The 2011 *The Ole Miss* was honored with a Silver Crown from the Columbia Scholastic

Press Association, ranking among the top college yearbooks in the nation.

At the Southeast Journalism Conference in February, Meek School students were named Grand Champions of the conference for their deadline performance in on-site journalism competitions. This was the second year in a row that Ole Miss students won that title.

Meek School junior Austin McAfee was selected as a finalist in the Serbin Communications 32nd Annual College & High School Photography Contest. Austin's photo will be published in Best of College & High School Photography 2012.

Faculty continue to present and publish important scholarly work, as well as represent the school at state, national and international levels.

Mark Dolan's work on the black press and minority media resulted in a panel, "Creating Community and Economic Progress in Blacks' Westward Expansion," at the American Journalism Historians Association in October. He also co-authored an article on televised depictions of looting with Dr. Kirk Johnson of African American Studies in the *Howard Journal of Communications* and published a paper through the National Association of African American Studies, "Media and Integration: A Case Study of Rolling Stone," in this organization's 2012 monograph series.

Kathleen Wickham presented "It was an Old Boys Club back then: Three Female Journalists of the Civil Rights Era," at the Joint Journalism and Communication History Conference, John Jay College, CUNY, NYC and has published "Murder in Mississippi: The Unresolved Case of *Agence French-Presse's* Paul Guihard," *Journalism History*, Summer 2011.

Samir Husni's ACT Experience Conference through the Magazine Innovation Center featured some of the biggest names in the industry. Husni is routinely quoted on media issues nationally and internationally, including a flap over a *TIME* Magazine cover on breastfeeding. Husni's quotes were featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, NPR and the *Charlotte Observer* to name a few.

Nancy Dupont is the newly elected head of the Mississippi Associated Press Broadcasters Association and, for the second year, she coordinated a visit to Ole Miss by representatives from nearly all of the state's broadcast outlets. The event led to several internships and job offers, as well as invaluable advice to students.

After a period of intense curricular change, the Meek School now is refining courses and adjusting to technological developments at a more comfortable pace.

Several faculty members are developing online versions of courses, which will allow those based elsewhere in the state to achieve a minor in journalism without having to come to the Oxford campus.

The school is revising its laptop requirement in a way that will provide students more choices in the type of computer they purchase, but the new software programs mean more faculty training will be needed.

The next round of curricular changes involves creating a cohort model at the graduate level and adjusting/expanding the offerings for the new IMC degree. Work on these two initiatives will take place this coming fall.

The Student Media Center continues to grow as a source of classroom/lab space and experience for our students. Students enrolled in print, broadcast and multimedia courses at the Student Media Center provided content for *The Daily Mississippian*, NewsWatch and websites.

The Student Media Center began restructuring and rewriting job descriptions. Job

searches were launched for a creative services manager, a part-time *Daily Mississippian* circulation manager and a business/radio manager.

Graduate

The graduate program admitted four students for fall 2011 and three in spring 2012. Eight were continuing students. Five students held assistantships each semester, and one was awarded a summer research stipend by the Graduate School. Three students graduated this academic year.

Seventeen students have been admitted for fall 2012. Seven are planning to pursue the journalism track, and 10 plan to enroll in the Integrated Marketing Communications program. One student has been awarded an Honors Fellowship by the Graduate School. The new Integrated Marketing Communications track, a 36-hour degree program, was implemented during fall 2011 with eight students enrolled in IMC classes. IMC graduate courses also will be offered to Southhaven and Tupelo students through distance learning. The president of American University in Kosovo (AUK) visited the Meek School of Journalism and New Media to discuss the possibility of faculty teaching graduate IMC and Journalism courses at AUK. A committee worked out a plan of course offerings, and the Meek School Dean has continued discussions with AUK and is exploring the possibility of arrangements between the Meek School and Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia and the Nelson Mandela Institute in South Africa.

The Meek School continues to recruit students from other nations. This year students were enrolled from China and Macedonia, and M.A. candidates accepted for fall include individuals from China, South Korea and India. Moreover, four minority students are in the M.A. program this year, and six have been accepted for fall 2012.

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.

Development

In FY 2012, the Meek School showed an increase of 48 percent in giving from \$103,508 in FY11 to \$153,895. Of the \$153,895 in gifts received, \$78,895 were gifts of less than \$25. Compared with FY11, the Meek School experienced an increase of 200 percent in major gifts. Of the \$78,895 of gifts that were less than 25K, \$6,215 came through the phone-a-thon and \$3,110 came through direct mailing and email solicitations, totaling \$9,325 (an increase of 30 percent from the \$7,125 during FY11. Additionally, 105 donors made gifts to the Meek School, and 36 were first-time donors -- a 24 percent increase from 29 donors who were first time donors last year when there were 80 donors.

Highlights for the year:

- \$153,895 donated, an increase of 48 percent from previous year;
- Increased the number of gifts from 109 to 154 from the previous year;
- Increased first-time donors from 29 to 36 from previous year;
- Concluded pledge of the \$100K Thomas Family Scholarship for IMC; first scholarship endowment to assist students pursuing degrees in Integrated Marketing Communication;

- Established a \$100K planned gift endowment; \$88K designated for the Depth Report;
- Commitment made for a \$40K planned gift to the Meek School;
- Established the Susan Puckett family scholarship valued at \$25K;
- Conducted more than 140 visits with Journalism alumni during the FY12 year;
- Two scholarships at the \$25,000 level have been proposed;
- Projects in the works: Development of a donor giving kit and establishing of the Gerald Forbes Society – Annual giving Society.

Overby Center

Programs at the Overby Center for the academic year:

- Who Will Bail Out America? with Paul Ingrassia, a Pulitzer Prize winner and Reuters executive;
- Remembering 9/11 Through Media Eyes with a panel of journalists discussing security constraints and changed emphasis in news coverage;
- From USA Today to the Freedom Forum with journalism visionary Al Neuharth and other major newspaper figures;
- Opening The Closed Society, a tribute to the late Ole Miss history professor, James W. Silver;
- A Conversation With The Governor featuring Haley Barbour;
- ESPN News with editors and writers of the giant sports network;
- Mississippi Innocence, showing the award-winning documentary, followed by a panel discussion;
- Saving Political History with Ole Miss archivists;
- Election Post-Mortem with analysts considering the results of the 2011 Mississippi election;
- The Producers with Ole Miss graduates who've excelled in television and film productions;
- Present At The Creation with early GOP leaders in Mississippi;
- RFK In The Delta with Marian Wright Edelman and others involved in Bobby Kennedy's famous 1967 trip;
- A Force In Their Community with small town Mississippi editors;
- Working In The Minority with Democratic leaders reduced to minority in state legislature;
- Endangered Species with independent book store owners talking of surviving against Internet;
- Public Relations Power with Ole Miss graduates who succeed in PR;
- What Is History Losing with scholars contemplating what reduction of letter-writing means;
- A Conversation With Roger Wicker with the US senator from Mississippi;
- The Chinese Connection with Chinese-Americans discussing their community in Mississippi and;
- The Lobbyists with Ole Miss alums talking of their work in Washington.