What’s inside...

- SoC Engages with Coming School of Medicine
- Acting & Production Class Spans Colleges
- Film Students Win National PSA Competition
- Alumnus Appointed to Media Initiative in West Africa
As we work on the final details of this annual newsletter and prepare to “put it to bed,” I am distracted today by the buzz of activities on campus. In Miller Plaza tents are being raised to accommodate the Pizza with the Profs lunch tomorrow, a key event in Freshmen Welcome Week. In Sprau Tower (featured on our cover) our second floor is undergoing some remodeling and office cleanup. Our TA mentors are finalizing preparations for Graduate Assistant training to start tomorrow. In short, we are in a time of transition from one school year to the next.

To celebrate that transition this newsletter includes highlights of the activities and accomplishments of the students, faculty, and alumni of the School of Communication from the past year. We also preview some of the coming year’s activities and some plans for our future sustainability as a School.

As you review this communicator, I believe that you will agree that the SoC sustains its reputation for excellence. The high quality of our faculty and their research is recognized on campus and within our disciplines, nationally and internationally. We also are sustaining our reputation as a department of outstanding teachers who care about students and their development as competent communicators and caring citizens. These qualities define us and result in our continued status as one of the largest departments on campus; indeed we exceed the size of some WMU colleges.

During the past year, the university as a whole, Academic Affairs, and the College of Arts and Sciences have all approved strategic plans. Each department now is charged with developing a strategic plan that aligns with the overarching initiatives of the college and the university. The SoC will engage in this most important activity beginning this fall and through the coming academic year. Our focus will be on sustainability, reputation, and opportunity. We look forward to sharing our plan with you in the near future.

Leigh Ford
School of Communication alumnus Michele Serbenski, who received her M.A. in organizational communication, has been named director of planning and performance excellence with the Western Michigan University School of Medicine, and will serve as a member of the senior leadership team for the medical school.

Key responsibilities of Serbenski’s role include strategy development and execution as well as preparation for the School’s upcoming accreditation prior to its launch in fall 2014.

Serbenski’s background includes extensive work in planning, performance improvement, organizational development and customer service. Prior to returning to her role in the WMU School of Medicine, she served for 17 years in performance excellence and organizational learning as a member of the executive team at Bronson Healthcare Group in Kalamazoo. Among her many accomplishments at Bronson was her leadership with many of the successful initiatives that led to the hospital’s 2005 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Her previous experience also includes work in organizational communication with the Whirlpool Corporation.

WMU’s School of Medicine has been in the planning phases for three years, and fundraising, accreditation work and curriculum development for the School are well under way. The School is a privately funded initiative housed at WMU and expects to welcome its first class in fall 2014. In March 2012, the University announced a foundational gift of $100 million for the medical school from anonymous donors. For more information, please visit w mich.edu/medicine.

Innovation in Health Care Systems: Dearing to Speak in Spring

On March 18, 2013, the School of Communication will host Dr. James W. Dearing for our third annual Communication and Community Distinguished Lecture Series. Dr. Dearing studies how to strategically use innovation diffusion to accelerate the spread of evidence-based practices, programs, and policies, particularly in healthcare organizations and medical training.

Dr. Dearing is a senior scientist at the Institute for Health Research, the director of the Cancer Communication Research Center, and co-director of the Center for Health Dissemination and Implementation Research at Kaiser Permanente Colorado.

Previously, he served as Professor of Communication and Director of Graduate Studies in the School of Communication Studies at Ohio University.

SoC Faculty Focus on Curriculum

Drs. Julie Apker and Leah Omillion-Hodges were selected to serve on the School of Medicine’s Profession of Medicine Subcommittee in the Communication Workgroup.

The workgroup is part of a concerted effort to integrate instruction in the medical humanities with scientific medical courses. Drs. Apker and Omillion-Hodges will recommend strategies, staff, and resources to that end.
Steven V. Roberts presented the second annual Communication and Community Distinguished Lecture on April 2, 2012, in the Kirsch Auditorium of the Fetzer Center.

His lecture, titled, “Politics, Democracy, and the Fourth Estate: The Role of the Media in Campaign 2012,” attracted more than 200 Western students, faculty, and community members.

Audience members, including many journalism students, had the opportunity to ask questions about Roberts’ career, the upcoming election, and journalistic integrity. A private reception to honor Mr. Roberts followed, where faculty and alumni also had a chance to learn from his experience.

Roberts has been a journalist for more than 45 years, covering some of the major events of our time, including eleven presidential election campaigns. Roberts spent 25 years at the New York Times where he rose to assignments as bureau chief in Los Angeles and Athens, and as Congressional and White House correspondent. A senior writer at U.S. News for seven years, he specialized in national politics and foreign policy.

Today, he appears as a political analyst on the ABC radio network and is a substitute host on NPR’s Diane Rehm Show. Roberts and his wife, TV journalist Cokie Roberts, write a nationally syndicated newspaper column that was named one of the ten most popular columns in America by Media Matters.

Since 1997 he has been the Shapiro Professor of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University. The recipient of several awards for his reporting and for his teaching, Roberts also is a best selling author. His books include “From This Day Forward,” co-written with his wife, a childhood memoir entitled “My Fathers’ Houses,” and his most recent book, “From Every End of This Earth,” about the immigrant experience in the United States.

It was our honor to host Mr. Roberts, and we wish to extend a sincere thank-you for his wisdom, his insight, and his humor.
Steinke Named CAS Gender Scholar

The College of Arts and Sciences Women’s Caucus honored Dr. Jocelyn Steinke with the 2012 Gender Scholar Award for her research this spring. With over $789,000 of funding from the National Science Foundation, Dr. Steinke’s interdisciplinary research explores the significance of gender in media representations of scientists, assessing their impact on adolescent girls’ career aspirations.

On April 11, Dr. Steinke presented her research in a talk titled, “A Lab of Her Own: Gender, Science, and Media.” This presentation attracted faculty and students, as Dr. Steinke had the opportunity to transfer her passion for the subject to other campus community members.

Dr. Steinke’s effort to teach critical thinking about gender stereotypes in science, engineering, and technology are showcased online for teachers, parents, and students at www.stereotypestompers.com.

Article of the Year!

Dr. Stacey Wieland received the Article of the Year award from Management Communication Quarterly for her paper entitled “Ideal Selves as Resources for the Situated Practice of Identity.”

Each year Sage Publications, publishers of this respected journal, presents the Article of the Year Award to the most significant paper published in the preceding volume as assessed by the Award Committee. Selection for this honor signifies the high level of esteem a scholar’s work holds among peers in the MCQ readership. Recognition of Dr. Wieland’s award appeared in the May 2012, MCQ Newsletter.

Fulbright Specialist

Dr. Richard Gershon was granted a Fulbright Specialist award to spend the fall 2011 semester at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain.

Dr. Gershon taught one accelerated course for undergraduate students focusing on media management and telecommunications and one accelerated course for graduate students focused on digital media and innovation.

Upcoming Speaking Engagements

• On October 25, the School of Communication will co-sponsor a public lecture featuring TV commentator, Washington Post columnist and Georgetown University Professor E. J. Dionne. Dionne recently published “Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent.”

• Dr. Joseph Walther, Professor of Communication and Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media at Michigan State University, will join us as our visiting scholar from October 31 to November 2. Dr. Walther developed the Social Information Processing Theory of Computer Mediated Communication, and his current research focuses on Web 2.0 interfaces as multiple sources of influence, and intercultural dynamics in online groups.
Innovations in the Classroom

JRN Class Explored Community’s Perceptions

This spring, Professor Sue Ellen Christian’s JRN 4100: Specialized Reporting class had the unique opportunity to address a real-world national news event that affected the greater Kalamazoo community. In the wake of Trayvon Martin’s tragic death in February, Prof. Christian’s class began discussing the media portrayals of Trayvon’s case, which led them to conversations about the meaning of a hoodie. By the end of the semester, what began as a class discussion materialized into a photojournalism exhibit in the June 1 Art Hop.

Students hit the streets and began asking Kalamazoo-area residents what they believed to be the meaning of a hoodie. The class collected perceptions and portraits from their interviewees both on and off campus. They gathered over 20 photos with accompanying remarks.

With the permission of those interviewed, the students assembled their photojournalism in an exhibit entitled “Kalamazoo-Area Portraits: Thoughts on the Hoodie, Post-Trayvon.” The exhibit debuted at the Barnabee Gallery in the Powell Library, in the Douglass Community Association building, and was on display through the summer.

Assignments like these engage students in a unique way. As they participate in critical thinking, and they invite those around them to do the same, higher education extends its reach beyond the classroom and into the greater community.

If you wish to view the photos and their accompanying comments, please visit WMU’s Journalism website at www.journalismatwmu.com.

Dr. Propp Awarded for Curriculum Innovation

Dr. Kathleen Propp received one of three College of Arts and Sciences awards for Faculty Achievement in Teaching at a college-wide reception on March 21.

In addition to being honored for her outstanding teaching in both graduate and undergraduate classrooms, Dr. Propp was recognized for her curriculum innovations in online instruction and service learning.

In 2011-2012, Dr. Propp creatively utilized technology to facilitate an online section of Public Speaking and inspired students in a section of Group Problem Solving to raise over $1,900 for a local nonprofit organization (see p. 8 for full story).

Real World Connections Forged in New Course Collaboration

More and more, the performing arts are using multimedia technology in performances, and the music industry, similar to other media and pop culture industries, relies on new technology for producing, recording and distributing work. With this concept in mind, several faculty from the Fine Arts, Theatre, Dance and Communication programs have been discussing ways to collaborate with the common theme of digital media.

This past year, Theatre Department Chair Joan Herrington approached Dr. Jennifer Machiorlatti of the SoC about scheduling THEA 4430: Acting for the Camera and COM 4570: Advanced Video Production at the same time so that the classes could work together. The instructor for THEA 4430 was Assis-
InnovatIon in the Classroom

Continued from pg. 5

tant Professor of Theatre and Director of Voice and Movement, Elizabeth Terrel, while Dr. Machiorlatti served as the instructor for COM 4570.

The class consisted of 20 theatre students and 16 communication students. Combining their skills, they worked in collaboration producing short skit comedy, commercials, experimental narratives and fiction narratives—all written by WMU students. The acting students learned about camera auditioning, as well as on camera performance. They were on set for long hours bringing the creative stories/projects of Film, Video and Media Studies (FVMS) students alive. Alternatively, the FVMS students specialized in certain areas—producing, directing, director of photography, editing or special effects—so that they would have more experience in a focused area of production.

“The industry is very specialized...if you're a camera operator, that is your craft and your art. If you are a producer, you focus is running the entire production, from scheduling to budgets to daily reports. The goal was to provide an opportunity for COM students to work with professionally trained actors rather than convincing a roommate to be in their film, as well as providing a space for learning and practicing high professional standards,” said Machiorlatti. When asked about the success of the course, she added “I think it worked well, despite the stresses of our busy production schedules. It felt like I was running a production company with over 30 employees... but I'm really proud of student collaboration and the amazing results of the productions.”

For many of the Theatre and FVMS students, this was their last semester. So while many are onto new projects and post graduate careers, each had a unique opportunity for creative collaboration, professional development, high standards and work practices because of this interdisciplinary course.

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New Faculty
This fall, we welcome Annette Hamel to our faculty. Ms. Hamel earned a M.B.A. from Lake Superior State University and a M.A. from Ohio University, where her Ph.D. studies are in progress. As a Faculty Specialist, she will teach classes in Organizational Communication, Communication Theory, and Leadership. Ms. Hamel’s research interests include studies of the academy as a workplace and also examinations of the rhetoric of diversity.

CSCA 2013
We congratulate Dr. Chad Edwards, First Vice President of the Central States Communication Association, as he plans the 2013 convention in Kansas City, Mo. Reflecting Dr. Edwards’ research interests, the convention theme is “Communicating the Possible.”

International Travel
Drs. Autumn and Chad Edwards traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, to present research at the International Conference on Communication, Media, Technology and Design (ICCMTD) held May 9-11, 2012. Dr. Autumn Edwards, who is on the founding editorial board of the journal published by ICCMTD, said of the experience: “It was enriching to exchange scholarship with researchers and teachers who were mainly from the Middle East and Eastern Europe.”

Associate Professor Sue Ellen Christian also traveled abroad this summer to Passau, Germany. Christian participated in a month-long faculty exchange program with Passau University in June, for which she was selected from among a pool of applicants. This was the second consecutive year that a SoC faculty member was selected for the Passau exchange.

Lipkin Wins Best Screenplay at Buffalo Niagara Film Festival
Dr. Steve Lipkin’s screenplay, “Betrayals,” won the Grand Jury Award for Best Screenplay at the Buffalo Niagara Film Festival in fall 2011. But the success of his screenplay did not end there. “Betrayals” had a good year at several other festivals and competitions, including:

- Semi-finalist, 2011 Creative Screenwriting Magazine’s Script Expo Competition
- Finalist, “Table Read My Screenplay” Competition, Sundance Film Festival
- Finalist, American Screenwriting Challenge at the Sacramento International Film Festival

Betrayal sets the cost of trust for three French teenagers when a collaborator tells the Nazis where people from their town are hiding.

Borden Makes Plans for New London Program
In spring 2013, Dr. Sandra Borden will spend her sabbatical developing the School of Communication’s first study abroad program in London, England. According to Dr. Borden, “the basic idea is to offer an intensive, comparative introduction to the ways in which the U.K. and the U.S. have dealt with freedom of expression, partisanship, professionalism, and public service in the media.”

Dr. Borden was inspired to pursue comparative studies in her research, and now in her teaching, as a result of her faculty exchange with Passau University in 2010. “Some of the key questions I hope to explore in my own theorizing about media ethics and with my study abroad students were questions I first encountered talking to colleagues in Germany... the British experience offers a closer analogue to the U.S. experience than Germany does, while still providing some interesting points of contrast to consider when thinking about media freedom and responsibility,” shared Dr. Borden.

Dr. Borden will use spring and summer 2013 to recruit a university partner in London and make arrangements for lodging, field experiences, and guest lectures.

Passau professors are honored by their inclusion in the annual Corpus Christi procession through the streets of Passau city. Prof. Sue Ellen Christian was asked to represent WMU in the procession.
Communication in the Community

Students Embrace Service Learning

Group Problem Solving Class Organizes Fundraiser to Benefit Ministry with Community

Group Problem Solving students took to the ice and organized a Skate to Donate fundraiser to benefit Ministry with Community on Sunday, Dec. 4 at Lawson Ice Arena on Western’s campus.

For a minimal $5 donation, participants snacked on cookies and hot cocoa, skated with the WMU Hockey team, and took photos with Buster Bronco. Guided by Dr. Kathleen Propp, this fundraiser generated nearly $1,900 for the chosen organization, and gave the students a unique opportunity to engage the community and strengthen their problem solving skills.

Classmember Alaina Bresnahan said of the process, “After all of the hard work and all-nighters, presenting our Ministry with Community liaison with a check made it all worth it.”

Ministry with Community is a Kalamazoo nonprofit that provides food, daytime shelter, and other services to people in Kalamazoo struggling with homelessness, poverty, mental illness and other challenges.

#COM1000 Student Combines Assignments to @MakeaDifference

Communication student Caitie Rowe delivered 683 pounds of food to Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes on April 5 for her Community Learning Project in COM 1000: Communication and Community Engagement.

Each semester, COM 1000 students complete five hours of volunteer service and write a reaction paper connecting their experience to topics discussed in class. Caitie also volunteers regularly at The Med Joint, where she solicited the help of her fellow volunteers with the Loaves and Fishes food drive.

Another COM 1000 assignment requires students to tweet about class concepts and current events relevant to communication. Through this assignment Caitie was able to use Twitter to promote her food drive to classmates and to the nonprofit’s supporters. She indeed went above and beyond the required five hours of service.

PR Class Spreads the Word about WMU’s Office of Service Learning

COM 3500 students developed a public relations campaign to help spread the word about WMU’s Office of Service Learning this spring, according to their professor Dr. Leah Omillion-Hodges. Shawn Tenny, WMU’s Service-Learning coordinator, met with the class during the first week of the semester to discuss her needs and challenges. Students then worked in “agencies” in order to create innovative, cost-effective solutions for the Office of Service Learning.

Dr. Omillion-Hodges chose this approach for several reasons. In order to break into the competitive public relations field, students need comprehensive portfolios demonstrating their technical and creative skills. Additionally, employing a client allows students to work on professionalism. Last but certainly not least important, students were able to use their burgeoning PR skills to give back to the WMU community in a meaningful, enduring way.

At the end of the semester, students signed up for 15 minute meetings with Tenny to pitch their campaigns. The pitches were recorded for review by President Dunn and Provost Green as well. The client was so impressed with the students’ work that she plans to implement elements from each campaign.
Advanced Degree Program

The Accelerated Degree Program (ADP) is intended for undergraduate seniors interested in earning a Master of Arts degree in Communication. Students have the unique opportunity to begin graduate coursework—during their senior year—which will count towards both their undergraduate and graduate programs. This program offers a number of advantages including savings on tuition and a head start on graduate coursework.

Outstanding undergraduate students in the School of Communication who are accepted into the ADP program begin accumulating credits towards completion of a master’s degree. Now, two years after the program’s inception, our first graduating class of ADP students are completing their M.A.s and entering the workplace or continuing education.

Several of these exceptional students are highlighted below. Those who are graduating reflect on their experience, and those entering the program share their excitement and some of the reasons why they decided to take advantage of this opportunity.

The day I received my acceptance letter in the mail was the happiest day of my life to that point. I called my mother and my fiancé and sobbed on the phone as I told them I had been accepted and that in two years I would have a master’s degree. I was thrilled.

Ashley (Tremble) Kilbourn, M.A. ’12

Adding the ADP program to my senior year was definitely a humbling experience. Although I was a good student throughout my undergraduate career, I learned quickly that I had to change my way of thinking and studying in order to succeed. I knew in graduate school that my peers were working just as hard, if not harder, to actually earn their grades. The work ethic I learned from my classmates will probably be one of the greatest take-aways from this experience.

Candice (Kinsey) Stegink, M.A. ’12

I loved the discussion based questions and I wasn’t treated like an undergraduate—I was on the same level with the “real” graduate students.

Natalie Faculak

The rewards of doing this program have been immense. I’ve grown so much in my writing, cognitive skills, eloquence, and most importantly in confidence in my abilities. This awesome new program has allowed me to spend five years at WMU and emerge with a master’s degree and a slew of other accomplishments under my belt.

Raquel Hellenga, M.A. ’12

I’m excited to start this new chapter in my life and challenge myself in ways that I have never before. Hard work got me here and I know that continuing the hard work will pay off in the future as well.

Dana Borzea

I’m very excited to work more closely with the professors and graduate students! I have always had positive experiences with the School of Communication faculty, and I am thrilled that I will get to work more closely with them than I typically would as an undergraduate.

Deirdre Zerilli
FVMS Students Awarded Top Honors in National PSA Competition

William Granaderos and Cassandra Stagner, Film Video and Media Studies (FVMS) students, took top honors in the “For Press Freedom” video contest sponsored by CNN, Reporters Without Borders and the Ford Foundation this spring.

CNN’s Anderson Cooper and Mark Whitaker, along with several other international journalists and human rights defenders chose the winning PSA. Wil and Cassie were flown to New York City to participate in the many activities on World Press Freedom Day, May 3, 2012, including the airing of their video on CNN.

The students also had tea with Oscar nominated director Danfung Dennis and attended a meeting at the United Nations. Wil said, “it was simply amazing.” Both are grateful for the opportunity and excited to see where their passion for filmmaking will take them.

Please follow this link to view the winning PSA.

Sixty-Four of the Best and Brightest Inducted into National Honor Society

On April 13 the School of Communication celebrated student academic excellence during the annual awards and Lambda Pi Eta (LPE) induction ceremony. Dr. Leigh Ford, School of Communication director, presented certificates of recognition to scholarship winners (see next column).

Dr. Heather Addison, LPE advisor, and the LPE executive board then inducted 64 School of Communication students into the honor society. Faculty congratulated recipients and joined family and friends in a celebratory lunch.

Established by the National Communication Association, Lambda Pi Eta is a communication honor society for undergraduate students. Eligibility for this prestigious society is based on completion of 60 credits of coursework, with 12 credits in communication, and a 3.25 GPA in all communication courses. Inductees are awarded a Lambda Pi Eta pin and honor cord. Only the top five percent of the more than 1,000 students enrolled in one of seven majors and three minors offered by the School are selected for this honor.

STUDENTS RECEIVE ACADEMIC HONORS

The School of Communication announces the recipients of its 2011-2012 scholarships and academic awards. On April 13, students were honored at a ceremony in the Bernhard Center. Communication students who have achieved excellence in the classroom and in campus and community activities were recognized as follows:

School of Communication Scholars
Trey Mitchell, Lindsay Stone, Nathan Swords, Benjamin Szwalbofski

Northouse Excellence in Classroom Leadership
Kyle Geda, Sydney Kearns, Alexa Kus, Daniel LaFond, Laura VanVoorhis

Burke Scholarship
Alyssa Trager, Holly Deal

WMUK Scholarship in Radio
Allison Friedman, Michael Rux

Michigan Press Association Milliman Scholar
Erin Gignac

CAS International Study Scholarship
Krystalle Double

Carl E. Lee and MAB Foundation Scholarship
Abigail Siekmann
Student Awards & Honors

Presidential Scholar in Communication

Erin Gignac, a double major in journalism and American public policy, received the 2011-2012 Presidential Scholar in Communication award in March.

The Editor-in-Chief of WMU’s student-run newspaper, the Western Herald, Erin maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA in her journalism classes. She also worked as a news intern at Fox 11 News in Green Bay, Wis., and was one of 10 Michigan students to receive the Michigan Press Association Community Journalism scholarship in Fall 2011.

As a student of public policy, Erin held an internship with Kalamazoo City Commissioner Don Cooney, was nominated by the Political Science faculty to receive the Tim Hurttgam Memorial Prize, and received an American Business Women’s Association scholarship through a recommendation from State Rep. Sean McCann.

Erin has worked at Western Michigan University Libraries, been active in the Western Student Association and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and played on the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 intramural flag football championship team, in addition to being involved in community service on and off campus. Following December 2012 graduation, Erin plans to pursue a career as a multimedia journalist with specialized areas in politics, the environment and personality profiles.

Graduate Students Among the Best in Teaching and Research

Emily Beard and Stephen Spates were among 52 graduate students honored at the Graduate College Honors Convocation in April.

Stephen Spates, a Spring 2012 graduate of the M.A. program, received an All-University Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award for his research concerning the communication of opinion leadership. This is the fourth year in a row that a communication student has received this award.

Emily Beard, a Summer 2012 graduate, received a Department Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award.

Stephen will join the University of Tennessee in September to begin his Ph.D. program, and Emily will begin her M.A. in Educational Leadership at WMU this fall.

Intern Joins the ‘Academy’

Alyssa Scavini, a film, video, and media studies major and 2012 graduate was selected for the highly competitive Academy of Television Arts & Sciences summer internship program, based in Los Angeles, CA. The Academy (ATAS) is comprised of television professionals and produces the Emmy Awards each year.

The TV Academy Foundation’s summer Student Internship Program gives college students in-depth exposure to professional television production during an eight-week summer period, and has been hailed for more than a decade as one of the top ten internships in the country. Alyssa was selected for placement in Live Event Production, which will include working with producers during pre-production planning and live event broadcast. Alyssa has been notified that she will intern on the the Creative Arts Emmy Awards with the Foundation and SJ2 Entertainment.

Nominating faculty mentor Dr. Jennifer Machiorlatti states, “this is a really competitive internship, requiring a rigorous application, video resume and interview. Alyssa had the perfect combination of skills and competencies – a high GPA, excellent extra curricular activities such as our senior lab assistant program, and professional community internships. I don’t know if she understands yet – but the doors to the Los Angeles entertainment industry just opened for her. Through her course work and internship initiative, she is well-prepared for this internship. I know that Alyssa will represent WMU with the highest integrity and professionalism.”
Joseph Edward Colucci
B.S. '79

Joseph Colucci started his own business, Joe Colucci and Associates Inc. in 2011. His company delivers world-class “business development and sales training” which helps build strong functional sales staffs and organizations. Joe’s extensive experience with operating and directing sales, marketing and management teams stems from his work with manufacturers, franchises, financial services and distributors throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Europe.

Joe Colucci started his career in the advertising industry at Kenyon and Eckhardt in 1980. His responsibility was to assist Chrysler Corporation in the building of newspaper, radio and TV advertising for the Dealer Groups throughout the United States. In 1983, he joined Chrysler Corporation as a District Sales Manager. In the next decade Joe was promoted to five different sales markets. In 1993, he became a Regional Sales Manager and then in 2000 he was promoted to the National Sales Manager position at Chrysler Corporation.

In 2004, Joe took his talents to Ford Motor Company as their National Sales Director. In 2007, he and a few other investors purchased a division of Ford Motor Company where he served as Vice President of Business Development for this privately held company. Under his leadership, the company designed and implemented national brands, one of which was Motor Trend. This effort involved him in creating the 21st Century Selling Process. Joe credits the core communication education from WMU as key to his status as a nationally recognized speaker for his industry.

Dr. Nancy Greer-Williams is the Assistant Director for Research and Practice Improvement at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at UAMS. Nancy earned her doctorate in Higher Education Administration from WMU in 2004. In 2011, she received an MPH in Public Health and a PCHC in Health Education & Promotion from Benedictine University.

Nancy’s career experience spans education, research and public health. In 2004, she became program director for the Howard University HUSEM program in Washington DC. The goal of this National Science Foundation program was to encourage minority STEM majors to pursue graduate degrees. In 2006, she became dean and assistant professor in the Department of Human and Social Sciences at Arkansas Baptist College. In 2008, Nancy transitioned from higher education administration into a career focused on public health issues. Through a collaboration between UAMS and University of Wisconsin-Madison, she completed a post-doctoral fellowship with a concentration on health disparities. During her fellowship Nancy studied the complex relationship of obesity and metabolic syndrome and its effect on breast cancer mortality in African-American women. Her mentored research activities included developing educational interventions for minority residents of the Arkansas Delta region and investigating cancer health disparities in communities.

Her current research program involves the primary sub-populations of Southwest Arkansas, investigating the cultural factors that impact health behavior. The goal is to develop a community health disparity model that can be adapted for each sub-population. Integrating her past experience and present public health career, Nancy also continues to mentor and develop students in public health through the INBRE Scholars program.

Nancy Greer-Williams
B.S. '97, M.A. ‘01
Mary Jane Mapes
B.S. '69, M.A. '70

Mary Jane Mapes founded Mary Jane Mapes & Associates, a communication consulting firm in 1986, and for twenty-five years Mary Jane has been helping organizations develop their people. In 2002, Mary Jane changed the name of her organization to The Aligned Leader Institute to better reflect the work of her organization: leadership development and executive coaching.

Mary Jane is in demand for her skills as a professional speaker, seminar leader, and executive coach both nationally and internationally. In addition, Mary Jane is the author of numerous CDs, learning albums and two books, The Art of Fielding Questions with Finesse, and her newest book titled, You CAN Teach a Pig to Sing – Create a Great Relationship...with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere.

She has been the recipient of several major awards in her career. In 1993, Mary Jane received the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation granted by the National Speakers Association and the Global Speakers Federation for excellence in speaking. Today she is one of only 215 women in the world to have earned this designation. In 1996, she received the prestigious Charles Leadership Award granted by the Michigan Chapter of the National Speakers Association for outstanding leadership. She is one of only three people to have ever received this award.

She has served as past president of the National Speakers Association, Michigan Chapter; past president of her local chapter of American Society for Training and Development (ASTD); and is the current President of the Professional and Executive Association of Kalamazoo (PEAK), an organization of female entrepreneurs and female business executives. Mary Jane also is an active member of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), and the ASTD. She is actively engaged in service to her church and a number of local service organizations.

T.R. Reid
B.A. ‘84

T.R. Reid is a strategic communications consultant based near Austin, Texas. He works with companies large and small in a variety of industries, including aviation, electric generation and propulsion, and brownfield redevelopment.

T.R. began his career as a communications professional in Kalamazoo at The Upjohn Company (now part of Pfizer Inc.). Then he moved on to public-relations manager for the Whirlpool Corporation in Benton Harbor. He then advanced to Dell Corporation in Austin, Texas.

In his 13 years with Dell, T.R. rose to vice president of Global Communications—responsible for corporate, employee and business-unit communications—as the company grew from $8 billion to $60 billion in revenue. Based in Singapore for three years, he built and directed the company’s communications function in Asia-Pacific and Japan, playing a principal role in significantly broadening and enhancing

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Greg Taylor
B.A. '87

Greg Taylor is co-owner of Phoenix Properties, LLC, a successful 30-year-old commercial real estate firm based in Kalamazoo. Phoenix Properties has expertise in the ownership, development, financing, management and leasing of commercial/investment real estate and currently owns or manages a portfolio of properties worth in excess of $200 million.

Mr. Taylor started his career as an intern for Phoenix Properties while an undergraduate at WMU. After graduation Greg spent four years as an Associate Broker with Kalamazoo based Kersten-Morris Real Estate & Leasing Co. specializing in the development, leasing and sale of commercial properties throughout southwest Michigan. In 1991, Greg joined National City Corporation as its Manager of Real Estate Transactions.

In 1998, Greg returned to Phoenix Properties as its Director of Leasing and Acquisitions and soon became a partner in the firm. Today Greg has exclusive responsibility for all commercial properties within the Phoenix portfolio. He remains involved in acquisition, disposition, development and consulting activities for Phoenix Properties. These projects have included multiple commercial projects such as several luxury student housing developments that serve the students of WMU. Phoenix Properties’ current projects include development of a 200,000 square foot, mixed-use, space in downtown Kalamazoo known as “The Exchange.” This project will be an 8-story high-rise building and will include retail, office, and living spaces.

Greg has served on several local boards and is active with the Friends of WMU Political Action Committee, other volunteer boards at Western Michigan University, and multiple volunteer boards in the Kalamazoo area. He is also active in the Kalamazoo Rotary Club as well as many other local organizations.

Alumni Highlights & News

Amber Krycka, B.A. ’10, was hired as an anchor and reporter by KNOP News 2-NBC in North Platte, Nebraska.

Nick Miller, B.A. ’08, joined the NFL’s Minnesota Vikings as Facilities Assistant. While at WMU, Nick interned at the Bronco Review, where he says his career path began.


Coreen Geary, B.A. ’93; M.A. ’95 was promoted to Communications Specialist II with Bronson Healthcare Group.

Amy O’Connor, M.A. ’98, was elected to the position of Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Communication at North Dakota State University.

Raquel Hellenga, B.A. ’11; M.A. ’12, was hired as Communications Specialist at Southwest Michigan First.
Christopher Tremblay, B.A. ’94; M.A. ’99, was promoted to Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Christopher will provide strategic leadership and management to the offices of Admissions and Orientation and Financial Aid and Scholarships in order to meet and maintain the university’s undergraduate enrollment goals.

Stephanie Slingerland, M.A. ’07, has been promoted to Senior Manager, Corporate Communications at Kellogg Company.

Dr. Angela Mensah, M.A. ’06, recently contributed to a book titled “Still Searching for Our Mothers’ Gardens,” which explores how women of color navigate the tenure track at predominately white institutions of higher learning.

Dr. Norman Mintle, M.A. ’76, was selected as dean of the School of Communication at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

Kirstin Olmstead, B.A. ’03, is working as the Marketing and Communications Specialist in the University of Michigan International Institute. The Institute hosted a New Media/Social Change symposium featuring several leading scholars in November.

Tell Us Your Story!  The School of Communication wants to know what you’ve been up to since graduation! Tell us your story, including degree and graduation year at leigh.ford@wmich.edu

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Breanne Walker, B.A. ’08, a Department of the Army Civilian Contractor in Public Affairs, visited the SoC in November to speak to classes about the opportunities available as civilian workers in the Army.

Cassie Foss, B.A. ’09, was honored by The South Carolina Press Association for her feature writing and beat reporting in The Island Packet. Cassie is now reporting for the Wilmington, N.C. Star News.

Jim Mulcrone, B.A. ’76; M.A. ’82, was promoted to Director of Research Services at Maritz Research, a marketing research company that employs consultants worldwide.

Candace Beeke, B.A. ’99, is currently working as the Editor of the Houston Business Journal.

Michael Glassco, M.A. ’06, received his Ph.D. in Mass Communications from the University of Iowa.

Nwulu Joins Advancing Public Service Media Initiatives in West Africa

This July, Dr. Paul Nwulu, M.A. ’94, became the new program officer for the Advancing Public Service Media initiatives in West Africa sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

The Advancing Public Service Media initiative will support grantees to better engage with media to attain scale and impact. In particular, it will support anti-corruption and transparency work in the Promoting Transparent, Effective, and Accountable Government initiative and sexuality and reproductive health education/information dissemination in the Foundation’s Youth Sexuality, Reproductive Health, and Rights initiative. In addition, the portfolio will stimulate and fund the creation of high-quality content that supports and deepens the impact of the two initiatives. Select access and related media policy issues (including funding of public service content/media) will also be championed through these grant efforts.

Dr. Nwulu at last year’s Alumni Academy induction ceremony

Dr. Nwulu at last year’s Alumni Academy induction ceremony

“Morris Davenport, B.A. ’79, senior vice president and general manager of ESPN Radio, was one of three recipients of WMU’s Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011.”

“A Good Man”


“A Good Man” chronicles acclaimed African-American choreographer Bill T. Jones and his company for two years as they create a new dance/theater work about the legacy of Abraham Lincoln. Co-produced by Kartemquin Films, Media Process Group and American Masters, the film is a fascinating look at the creative process of one of America’s great artists.

Slant Magazine said of the film, “A remarkable testament to the creative process...a film about artistic vision and how it’s communicated.”
Thank You

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How Has Your Support Helped?
We are very grateful for the support of our many loyal alumni and our faculty, emeriti and friends.
These are just some of the activities these generous donations supported in the past year:

• We awarded 4 student scholarships of $250 each from the Peter and Laurel Northouse Leadership Scholarship Endowment.
• Our Presidential Scholar received a scholarship of $500 from the Lindsau Presidential Scholar Fund and 5 students received $250 each as School of Communication Scholars from the 1,000@$1000 fund.
• Three faculty members received additional support for International travel to Germany and to Turkey from the George and Louise Robeck Endowed Fund.
• A journalism professor received additional support for the development of a course website on environmental reporting.
• Donor funds supported all the preparations, travel, and associated expenses for the Communication and Community Distinguished Lecture Series, this year featuring Steve Roberts.
• The Clifford Media Center Endowed Fund supported the purchase of additional seating for editing labs and additional software and upgrades for editing labs.
• Upgrades for faculty computers and travel support for graduate students to present research at regional and national conferences were made possible this year by donor contributions to the School of Communication.
What’s Next?

We continually look for ways to advance the research and instructional goals of the School of Communication to meet the needs of our faculty and students in the 21st Century (our second century!). Just a few of the ways you can help us achieve those goals are described here. Our future plans include:

Open Editing/Project Collaboration Lab

**NEED:** The demand for lab space is increasing across the School of Communication curriculum. FVMS and journalism students typically need access to editing facilities in labs, of course. However, more and more of our PR and organizational communication students are required to learn simple editing skills as part of the presentational components of their courses. COM 1000 students also produce short videos as part of the skill component of that class. Our current labs are scheduled fairly tightly and are rarely available for “open” hours for student access to work on team projects. Opening this space would also increase our lab options for scheduling classes.

**GOAL:** Remodel two small media labs in Brown Hall into one larger open editing lab via the removal of a wall currently separating the two rooms and the reconfiguration of the room layout to accommodate collaborative work. Upgrade computers for the proposed Open lab plus furniture, instructional bunker, data projector (Total project costs $75,000)

Graduate Research and Travel Fund

**NEED:** Graduate students increasingly conduct research and then travel to regional and national conferences to present their work. The School has limited funding available to support these students.

**GOAL:** Increase the Charles Brown Fund to a minimum of $20,000

Student Scholarships

**NEED:** As the costs of college increase, students are always looking for scholarships to assist them in meeting their expenses. In addition, several of our scholarships rewarded academic excellence and/or leadership and communication skills.

**GOAL:** Our goal has two parts: first, continue growth in funding for existing scholarship funds. Second, develop additional scholarships such as a scholarship that assists first generation college students or a scholarship fund targeted to freshmen who compete in the WMU Medallion competition. It takes a minimum of $10,000 to generate sufficient funds to award a scholarship. If you would like to help, please contact Dr. Leigh Ford.

Rhodes/Doran Director’s Fund or Gifts to the School of Communication

**NEED:** Each year in the School we face budgetary limitations. We are good stewards of the funds we have but often must delay a project or deny an activity or a student/faculty project because we have insufficient funds in our regular budget. The funds generated by the Rhodes/Doran endowment or those generated by direct gifts to the School may be used at the discretion of the Director of the School of Communication. These “multipurpose” monies provide support for just a few of the activities noted previously.

**GOAL:** Continue the growth of these funds

Please contact us if you’d like to talk about the ways you can get involved in the School and help us meet these goals.

Support the WMU School of Communication

Two ways to contribute. Please:

- [Click here](#) to make a gift,
- Or fill out the form below and send it with your contribution to:

Western Michigan University,
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1903 W. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5318

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- Communication Graduate
- Friend of the School of Communication
- Other

Contributions to the Western Michigan University Foundation are tax deductible. You will receive a receipt for your contribution.