

# COMMONS

Spring 2016





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Photo by Mason Shumaker

## From the Editor's Desk

*Caleb Foote*

Caleb Foote

Taking a trip through time, CommUNO looks back at the University of Nebraska at Omaha's School of Communication within the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media, celebrating 10 years.

This special issue of CommUNO highlights many accomplishments throughout the past year with our alumni and school.

As our 10th academic year within CFAM closes, we celebrate the great accomplishments of the School of Communication alumni such as Rose Ann Shannon, KETV news director, and our students, faculty and staff.

MaverickPR, UNO's student-run public relations firm, produced recent issues of CommUNO magazine. However, the 2016 issue is produced by the new student-run Capstone Communication agency, a part of the PR and advertising capstone course.

Without the help of our contributing editor, Dr. Janet Davis, professor emeritus at Truman State University, and the unwavering support of advisers Karen Weber and Melodae Morris, this issue would not have come together.

Together with the student team, we've created a magazine we hope you will enjoy reading as much as we've enjoyed the experience of making it happen.

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Photo by Kimberly Bailey

# Hugh Reilly

## From the Director's Chair

the chapter's president until her graduation in December, earned the PRSSA National Golden Key Award for excellence. Ostrom, the current chapter president, earned the Ron Culp National Mentor Scholarship.

- The reporters and producers of **MavRadio.fm** earned four of a potential six Nebraska Broadcasters Association Awards in the college category during the 2015 Pinnacle Awards Banquet in August. **Dan Downs, Marin Krause, Kenneth Vela** and **Michael Lucas** all took home first-place awards.

Every year seems to go by a little faster than the year before. Maybe it's because I'm getting older or maybe because so many things are happening each year.

**Mary Gum**, our longtime administrative assistant, retired this January. Mary has been the heart and soul of the School of Communication for more than 17 years. She will be sorely missed! Her replacement, Parwin Ibrahim, began working for us in mid-February, and we look forward to having her as part of the team for many years to come.

**Dr. Sherice Gearhart** is also leaving us at the end of the semester. She will return to her alma mater, Texas Tech University. She has been a great addition to our faculty, and we wish her well in her exciting new opportunity.

We have many sensational accomplishments to showcase since my last director's column. Here are some of the highlights:

- For the third time in the last seven years, UNO's **PRSSA** chapter, has been named the nation's top chapter. UNO seniors **Angela Eastep** and **Trent Ostrom** also received individual recognition at this year's conference. Eastep,

**Gearhart** traveled to the Hart of the West powwow in Los Angeles to collect data for their project "Finding the impact zone: Testing health news for the Native American audience." The prestigious Waterhouse Family Institute sponsored the research.

- Dr. Karen Dwyer** wrote a chapter in a new book by Atkins-Sayer & Yook, "Communicating Advice: Peer Tutoring Across Campus." Dwyer's chapter, "Helping Students Conquer Anxiety in the Session," focuses on how peer tutoring centers can help students conquer their speech anxiety.
- Dr. Karen Dwyer** and **Marlina Davidson's** research article "Is Public Speaking Really More Feared than Death?" on the prevalence of reported public speaking fear or anxiety, was cited in the Aug. 3 edition of the New Yorker Magazine in the article "Can't Go On! What's behind stage fright?"
- UNO TV's B.J. Huchtemann** won a Lifetime Achievement Award for Music at the 10th Annual Omaha Entertainment & Arts Awards.

All in all, it has been another terrific year for the **School of Communication!** I look forward to what next year will bring us. I know the talent and hard work of our students and the excellence of our faculty will bring us new accomplishments, new awards and new milestones to share.

Johansen was the keynote speaker at an international conference hosted by Acharya Nagarjuna University in India. He spoke on "What Has Been Will Be: Native American Contributions to Democracy, Feminism, Gender Fluidity and Environmentalism."

- Dr. Teresa Lamsam** and **Dr. Sherice**

*Hugh Reilly*

Hugh Reilly  
Director, School of Communication

### On the Cover



Spring Capstone Communication students show their personal style.

Cover photo by Hayley Jurek

## UNO graduate advocates for stronger nonprofit infrastructure

by Melanie Lucks



Alumna Anne Meysenburg, director of community investment at the Omaha Community Foundation, helps fund and support local nonprofit organizations.

Students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha know the struggles of working and going to school full time all too well. Anne Meysenburg proves that all of the long hours of hard work and exhaustion students put in during college pays off.

As a first-generation college student, Meysenburg started the journey to her career as a journalism major at UNO and later studied nonprofit management. She has served as executive director for the Kent Bellows Studio and Live Well Omaha.

In her current position as director of community investment at the Omaha Community Foundation, she helps fund and support local nonprofit organizations.

Meysenburg says nonprofits are the fabric of communities and the success of a nonprofit starts with a healthy infrastructure.

**“My advice is to slow down and to think about what you want to do because this is the time in your life where you can really do that.”**

“We have to look at what a supportive ecosystem for a nonprofit looks like in our community and how we can help provide that support,” Meysenburg says.

“Whether OFC facilitates that or other service providers in the community, we try to help them succeed.”

Meysenburg has joined her passion for the arts, community and nonprofit into a career. Her biggest piece of advice for current students is to take their time getting through school to explore their interests.

“I think I would have studied a lot of other things if I hadn’t been so fixated on getting out,” she says. “My advice is to slow down and to think about what you want to do because this is the time in your life where you can really do that.”

Meysenburg also attributes her success to taking advantage of every opportunity.

“I always thought about the next opportunity,” she says. “I didn’t have a solid career path in mind, and I never would have had this position if I wasn’t open to opportunities.”

Now serving as president on the board of the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands, Meysenburg sees racial disparity as a big problem in Omaha that she would like to help more nonprofits tackle.

“We have a very affluent community, and a lot of people who are very comfortable. When you separate out some of our minority populations, we are not equitable,” says Meysenburg. “We have one of the highest populations of kids living in poverty in our community, and we have low unemployment communitywide, but when you segment it out, African-Americans and Latinos are hit hardest in terms of unemployment.”

Meysenburg’s goal is to aid organizations’ ecosystems that help those communities and provide support to them so that they can eventually expand. Meysenburg says she loves her current position and has no desire to leave. Her big vision for the next

**“I really believe in power to make change for the better.”**

few years includes evolving her career and helping as many nonprofit organizations as she can.

“I really believe in power to make change for the better,” Meysenburg says. “I ultimately feel like if I can support any sort of environment to make those nonprofits thrive, then I should do everything in my power to do that.”

## Kristin Donovan’s love of sports turns into career

by Misty Flowers

A student athlete in high school, Kristin Donovan, developed a passion for sports.

Donovan played basketball and softball in high school, but she always knew she wanted to be a journalist. With both her parents working in the field, journalism is in her blood.

Her love of sports helped her land a position as a copy editor for the Omaha World-Herald’s sports department. “I was first intrigued by the writing aspect, then the storytelling,” Donovan says. “From there, I saw how important spreading that information is.”

After graduating from Central High School in Omaha, Donovan began her studies in journalism at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She attributes much of her success to the experiences she had as a student.

I took as many journalism classes as I could,” Donovan says. “I know this may sound cliché, but the teachers I had in the School of Communication were awesome. I always knew if I needed help with something, they would put whatever they were doing aside to help me.”

**“I know this may sound cliché, but the teachers I had in the School of Communication were awesome.”**

After college, Donovan found a way to incorporate both her love of sports and journalism into her daily life. Donovan says on the copy desk, no two days are

alike. On weekends, she serves as night copy editor, editing stories from high school volleyball to college basketball. “Every night is different, and it varies from day to day,” Donovan says.

Her main job is to set up the page layouts and to make sure all games are lined up. A typical night runs from 3 p.m. until the story and scores are all in by midnight. However, for special events, she stays in the newsroom until 1 a.m.

The night editor also reads all the stories before sending them to the copy desk editor who then writes the headlines and captions.

From Donovan’s perspective, one of the most important aspects of a journalist’s life is to be well-rounded.

**“You know, have a bit of background in everything so you can build on your story when it comes to you.”**

“Expand your horizons. Along with journalism classes, I took things such as geography,” she says “You know, have a bit of background in everything so you can build on your story when it comes to you.”

One of the most important aspects of Donovan’s education was completing an internship.

“Internships were key to me perfecting my craft,” Donovan says. “Not many



Photo submitted

Kristin Donovan continues her love of sports as a copy editor for the Omaha World-Herald.

students can say that their college makes you do internships, which is a great benefit.”

Today, Donovan helps hire and train interns for the Omaha World-Herald. When looking for an intern, she welcomes anyone who is interested.

“You never know what a person can bring to the table,” she says.

**“You never know what a person can bring to the table.”**

Donovan says she strongly believes in letting people get their feet wet in sports journalism.

“Be a part of the media and information process,” she says. “You need to have a little experience. Having experience will get you much further than if you come to the table with nothing at all.”

Donovan is passionate about getting information out to the public, but she prefers to remain behind the scenes.

“I like the production side of things,” Donovan says. “I like being in the background and seeing everything come together.”





Photo submitted

Stephanie Buck begins her career at Wal-Mart.

To most people, Wal-Mart is a weekday grocery run, a last-minute impulse buy or a people-watcher's paradise.

To Stephanie Buck, Wal-Mart is home.

As senior manager of talent delivery for the company, Buck administers and oversees the Omaha training hub facility for assistant managers. Buck plays an integral role in ensuring that what is being taught at the facility is reflected in the stores of Wal-Mart managers throughout the region.

"It's wonderful to see somebody come in and they're really learning — they're a sponge," Buck says. "And to see them grow and develop and take shape — that's one of the most incredibly rewarding things."

Between observing training, building regional relationships and conducting store tours, Buck is considered field support for one of Wal-Mart's 24 training hubs across the country. She credits her position in the company to her education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

"Particularly without my master's, there's no way I would have had any of the positions that I ended up grabbing in my professional career," Buck says.

## Master's degree gives alumna an edge in landing senior Wal-Mart position

by Kelly Bast

Wal-Mart wanted someone with a strong communication education background, and Buck's master's degree flagged executives' attention during the hiring process.

**"But with my master's it has helped set me apart because I understand how people learn, the classroom dynamic and how curriculum should be designed for maximum retention."**

"You might be really good at presentations or in the classroom, which is so important," Buck says. "But with my master's, it has helped set me apart because I understand how people learn, the classroom dynamic and how curriculum should be designed for maximum retention."

With the versatility of her undergraduate degree, Buck says she felt "prepared to do anything." Her graduate studies took her basic skills further by placing more emphasis on organization and how communication works within a hierarchy.

Buck is the newest member of the Wal-Mart team, having held her current position for less than a year. With no previous job experience at Wal-Mart, she's what the company refers to as an "external."

"We all know Wal-Mart, but there's so much more to know. That's one of the biggest challenges, just trying to learn," Buck says.

In an environment that is constantly

changing, Buck says even the most tenured employee of 15 years — who has grown with the company and "done it all" — probably still finds it challenging to grasp every facet of the Wal-Mart brand.

"I always make a joke that unless they were born in aisle six, they're not internal," Buck says. "We're all external."

In her spare time, Buck teaches part time as an adjunct professor at UNO — her go-to courses being Public Speaking and Interviewing. Reminiscing on her time spent at the university, Buck says she is grateful for the supportive teachers and advisers who led her to where she is today.

"Without a shadow of a doubt for my master's, it would be Karen Dwyer -- 100 percent. I still look up to her to this day," Buck says. "She has been a great mentor, ally and has turned into more of a friend as the years have progressed. She was probably one of the most formidable people in my career."

Looking forward, Buck sees herself staying in the corporate setting. She is considering pursuing a Master of Business Administration and aspires to move into an executive position with Wal-Mart. For now, her goal is to groom facilitators to be world class.

"When somebody thinks of Starbucks, generally Starbucks is seen as having a fantastic training program," Buck says. "At Wal-Mart, we want to have the same pedigree."

## Rose Ann Shannon earns Lifetime Achievement award

by Mary Catherine O'Brien and Madison Shomaker

**"Her integrity is without question, and she has built one of the strongest, if not the strongest, news organizations in Nebraska," Ogden says.**

Rose Ann Shannon began her career as an intern at KMTV while still a student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. At the time, women were scarce in the newsroom. In fact, when KMTV hired her after the internship, she was the only female reporter-photographer at that station.

But that didn't stop her from forging a 40-year career as a broadcast journalist.

In 1986, Shannon joined KETV, Omaha's ABC's affiliate, as an assignment manager. KETV promoted her to assistant news director in 1992. A year later, the station appointed her as its first female news director, a role she serves to this day.

Shannon has built a career that earns her national recognition. Under her leadership, the KETV staff received the Edward R. Murrow Award for Overall Excellence in small-market media twice, most recently in October 2015. In the same year, the Omaha Press Club recognized Shannon with the Foundation's Career Achievement Award and inducted her into its Hall of Fame.

The 1973 UNO graduate's latest honor is the School of Communication's 2016

Lifetime Achievement Award.

Shannon recalls her early years in the newsroom where viewers would call into the station complaining about the sound of a woman's voice on the air. They were used to a primarily male-based news team.

However, Shannon says her colleagues always treated her with respect and she never felt any discrimination. "I never felt like the newsroom was a discriminatory place, everyone has always been very nice to me."

Dr. Eileen Wirth, Creighton University professor, says she recalls bonding with Shannon while being on the same story assignments.

"Rose Ann was, in my view, the pioneer for women in local TV news," Wirth says.

"She set out to show her all-male KMTV newsroom that a woman could be trusted to cover any story as well as the best journalists in Omaha — and she did," Wirth says.

Shannon also credits the support she received from her broadcasting professors at UNO who gave her the



Photo submitted

extra push to achieve her dreams.

"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for UNO," Shannon says. "I met so many people within my personal and professional life through the university."

Shannon has spent her entire career in Omaha covering stories that devastated the community such as the 1975 tornado and the 2007 shooting in Von Maur at Westroads Mall.

"The tornado on 72<sup>nd</sup> Street was one of the most costly tornadoes in U.S. history," Shannon says. "So many people were safe because they had warning. It just shows that news can really save lives."

Shannon says technology has dramatically changed the news industry.

"Graphics and high definition have made our news product more visually appealing and frankly more fun to produce," Shannon says. "But with all of the changes, one thing remains the same. We're still here to tell good stories, to inform and enlighten... and to do it objectively, fairly and accurately."

Continued page 9

# Melodae Morris brings vast experience into the classroom

by Caleb Foote

As a child, Melodae Morris spent her summers with her great-grandmother who gave her a Big Chief tablet to write about her day and draw a picture to accompany it. She immediately fell in love with writing.

She turned that love into a career in communication that has spanned jobs in broadcasting, advertising, public relations, marketing, human resources and higher education.

Morris learned early on to take advantage of every opportunity. As a student majoring in broadcasting at Northwest Missouri State University, she covered the Republican National Convention in Kansas City. She recalls running into President Gerald Ford when she shoved a microphone in his face. Ford waved the Secret Service away and allowed her to interview him.

“I really don’t remember what I asked him, but I returned to campus with audio and I was a hero,” Morris says. “These kind of experiences make you grow up fast.”

After her radio news internship at KMA, in Shenandoah, Iowa, she worked for the station as the first female news anchor. That year, she garnered a state broadcasting award for a news feature about Iowa travel and tourism.

A year later, she won a state-wide award for her news writing and reporting for KFEQ, in St. Joseph, Missouri. She was the second female newscaster at that station.

“In those days, there weren’t many women on the air in news,” Morris says. “It is a stark contrast to what you see today.”

**“Teaching is what I was meant to do,” Morris says. “Every day of my life, I feel blessed to be here among the students and faculty of UNO.”**



Photo by Caleb Foote

At the time, Morris and her husband, were both in broadcasting and moved across the country, where she took an off-air job managing traffic for WINA and station-automation for WQMC, in Charlottesville, Virginia.

After starting a family, they moved to Omaha. Morris again took an off-air job in traffic and was one of the first seven people hired to get KPTM-TV, a Fox affiliate, up and running.

“Those were wild and wooly days, full of long hours and learning something new about working with national and local-regional advertising agencies by the minute,” Morris says.

Later, she worked at KMTV in sales, giving her experience in media buying. One of her major accomplishments came when she helped land the Shopko account when the company came to Omaha.

After stints as a news reporter and radio announcer for stations across the Midwest, Morris joined the corporate world at First Data Resources. In less than a year with the company, she became employment manager.

“I got a job in the employment office because I could interview people for jobs,” Morris says. “I use this as an example in my classes to illustrate how communication is applicable to many types of careers.”

Later, she would become communication and employee relations manager, managing three publications for 5,000 employees in Omaha and across the U.S.

Morris brings her diverse experience into the classroom as a School of Communication faculty member at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

She first honed her teaching skills at Vital Learning Corp., an international training company. Morris trained affiliated companies on the company’s programs and learned instructional design to create new programs.

Her major accomplishment there was designing “Winning through Customer Service-New Edition,” which won a national new training product award.

She also succeeded in leading a project to convert classroom-based programs with full-motion video to the Internet.

“This was a major feat. When we rolled out the Internet-based programs, they were among the first online training programs in the country,” Morris says. “In those days, having video online was like shoving a cow through a straw.”

As a company vice president, Morris handled human resources, product development, marketing, public

## Rose Ann Shannon earns Lifetime Achievement Award

(Continued from page 7)

One of Shannon’s roles as news director is to hire new talent. “One of my greatest accomplishments is the unique ability to hire great people who go on to accomplish great things in both Omaha and across the country,” she says.

Through the years, Shannon has served as a role model and mentor to interns, reporters and anchors.

**“One of my greatest accomplishments is the unique ability to hire great people who go on to accomplish great things in both Omaha and across the country.”**

Crediting Shannon as a pioneer in Nebraska journalism, Dr. Dave Ogden, professor at UNO, says Shannon is also a role model for aspiring journalists.

“Her integrity is without question, and she has built one of the strongest, if not the strongest, news organizations in Nebraska,” Ogden says. “She has unselfishly given her time to speak to our students and to serve as a professional adviser for individual students.”

However, while many regard Shannon as a strong mentor, she says one of her greatest regrets is not keeping in touch with her own mentors.

“I haven’t stayed in touch with some very important people in my life, mentors who are the reason I’ve had any success, colleagues who shared their talent and humor with me and people who put themselves on the line to tell me their stories,” Shannon says. “I could have done a better job of nurturing those relationships. Those folks meant a lot to me, and some of them have no idea. I should have made more time for that.”

Throughout her career, Shannon has championed the First Amendment rights of journalists. In her work with Media Nebraska, a group of news organizations that address First Amendment rights, she fought for the use of news cameras in Nebraska court rooms.

Whether working as a photographer, reporter, assignment editor or news director, her passion for the news has never wavered.

“I enjoy being in news because you can really be a force that impacts people’s lives,” Shannon says. “We’re practically in everyone’s homes. We play a role in people’s lives.”

## Melodae Morris brings experience into the classroom

(continued from page 8)

relations and sales operations. The job eventually required frequent travel.

“It seemed like I was traveling more than I was home,” Morris says.

Being the only woman on the executive team, Morris says she worked hard to prove her worth. The other executives golfed regularly together, so Morris bought a set of golf clubs and took lessons so she could join them.

The year 2001 proved a pivotal point in her life.

Morris suffered the loss of her mother from an acute form of leukemia in April. The continued frequent traveling took a toll. She recalls flying home from a trip to Philadelphia shortly before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

“That could have been me,” Morris says. “This made me think, if I died today, would I want it to read on my headstone, ‘She was a great vice president.’ Or do I want something more meaningful?”

She decided to leave the high pressure of the corporate world and take a job in the nonprofit sector as marketing and communications director for Clarkson College. She also earned her accreditation in public relations and decided to pursue her Master of Arts degree in communication at UNO.

A month after graduating in December 2004, she began teaching Media Writing at UNO as an adjunct professor, while maintaining her full-time job.

She continued to teach part time for nearly a decade until accepting a temporary full-time position in 2013.

Two years later, Morris applied to be a permanent full-time instructor.

Morris proved to be the best candidate.

“She blew our doors off,” says Hugh Reilly, School of Communication director. “She’s just incredible.”

Morris teaches Media Writing, PR and Advertising Design, and Capstone I and II. She has also taught Principles of Creative Advertising, Internship and Career Prep and serves as the faculty adviser for the Ad Club.

“Teaching is what I was meant to do,” Morris says. “Every day of my life, I feel blessed to be here among the students and faculty of UNO.”



## Communication executive cares about students

by Zakeila Williams

As a child, Andy Williams knew he wanted to be a writer. His love for storytelling carried on throughout his career from sports reporter to public relations director.

Today, Williams brings his experience into the classroom teaching Media Writing at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His real-world experience has shaped his teaching style. “I am a tough editor, but a fair grader,” Williams says.

Williams says he tries to prepare his students for the level of accuracy editors expect. He pushes his students to write precisely, yet colorful enough to capture readers.

Through his career, Williams says being a strong writer has played an essential role. That’s why he encourages students to get as much writing experience as possible. Classroom experience can get only students so far, Williams says. Real-life experience is important for students including getting involved on campus and in the community.

“Write as much as you can, anything you can, get as much experience as you can, write for The Gateway or a local magazine,” Williams says.

Not only does constant writing sharpen students’ skills and build their portfolio, it also allows students to find out if writing is their true passion.

“If writing is the passion in your life, do not be afraid to listen. Good writers are extremely curious, and they know how to be quiet and listen,” Williams says.

Williams further developed his own passion for writing while earning his bachelor’s degree in journalism at Oklahoma State University. Williams wrote for the student newspaper

**“Write as much as you can, anything you can, get as much experience as you can, write for The Gateway or a local magazine,” Williams says.**

and later interned at his hometown newspaper.

After graduation, Williams built a successful career as a news and sports writer for the Tulsa Tribune in Oklahoma and later for the Star-Telegram in Fort Worth, Texas.

However, while Williams’ journalism career dealt with facts, he was not without his faith that also led him to explore the ministry as a second career.

“I was working with teenagers part time at my church and took mission trips to Mexico,” Williams says. “At the time, I was drawn very strongly to ministry as a second career.”

After earning a master’s degree in theology from South Western Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, Williams devoted the next decade to the ministry.

Williams says such “wide and varied experience has shaped his leadership style, communication and outlook on life.”

While he remained active in church mission and humanitarian efforts, Williams returned to the communication field as a public relations executive. Williams spent nearly seven years as director of consumer marketing for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska.

He led a high-performance team responsible for the company’s advertising, public relations, media



Andy Williams, an adjunct professor, teaches students the art of precision writing in Media Writing. Photo by Kimberly Bailey

consumer marketing, digital marketing, external communications and special communications projects such as the new health care law.

“It was health insurance,” Williams says, “but we made it fun.”

While at Blue Cross Blue Shield, Williams earned his accreditation in public relations and served as professional adviser for MaverickPR, UNO’s student-run firm, until fall 2015. In this role, Williams advised students on strategy and execution of clients’ tactics. He also assisted students with their resumés, portfolios and interview preparations.

“He has such a broad range of experience in media relations, social media and PR and marketing strategy,” says Karen Weber, MaverickPR faculty adviser. “He is a wonderful mentor and just an email or phone call away whenever students need help.”

After a one-year stint as vice president of business development and strategy at Napkin, a local animated video marketing firm, Williams has returned to health care as director of marketing and communication at Nebraska Health Network.

Throughout his diverse career, Williams says he most values the relationships he has built.

“At the end of the day, it’s not so much about what you’ve done, “ Williams says, “but who you have done it with and the state of those connections years later.”

## Mary Gum looks back at her 26 years at UNO

by Melanie Lucks

Mary Gum recalls the days of having only one computer to type out tests or look up a student’s schedule.

“We did a lot more typing back then,” Gum says. “I would get stacks of old tests that were 3 inches tall, and another stack of restaurant napkins, recipe cards and other miscellaneous pieces of paper with test questions on them.”

Gum, who served as a secretary and staff assistant for the University of Nebraska at Omaha since 1989, retired in January after serving both the Department of Sociology and the School of Communication.

Gum never earned her college degree, but took 23 credits of sign language at Metropolitan Community College because she found it fascinating. She says she was shocked to land the job at UNO with little experience.

“It was an eye-opening experience to see how everything ran at the university level,” she says.

A decade later, Gum transferred to the

Department of Communication and has worked in the department ever since.

During her time, she has seen the Communication Department grow into the School of Communication, the Milo Bail Student Center remodeled three times and has many memories of the transition.

She recalls one morning when she heard a loud banging noise above her desk and thought it was construction workers.

“I thought the ceiling was going to collapse onto my desk. It turned out to just be a student doing a speech on clogging,” she says, laughing.

Gum has fond memories of working with the staff over the years. She recalled one professor from the department of sociology, who gave the same test year after year. He would add in a new question each semester or switch the order from time to time, and she was responsible for typing the tests out.

Most of the changes over the years dealt with technology. “Looking back at when I started in sociology,” she says, “We had one computer solely dedicated to the entire department, and it was an ancient thing.”

**“Sometimes, you’ll use those lessons in different ways than you’ve been taught, so you just have to keep an open mind,” she says. “I’m still learning every day.”**

Gum looks back at her 26 years at the university with nothing but smiles. She says she will miss her job, but she will mostly miss the people.

“We don’t have a large turnover, so you really get to know these people,” she says.

Her favorite part about working at UNO is that no two days are alike. She says she’s going to miss the variety but is looking forward to her retirement. In her free time, she loves to read, quilt and sew.

“I have a lot of UFOs,” she says. “That’s unfinished objects floating around my house.”

Gum says she will also miss working with the students Her advice to graduating seniors is simple: College teaches students lessons, but life teaches students how to use them.

“Sometimes you’ll use those lessons in different ways than you’ve been taught, so you just have to keep an open mind,” she says. “I’m still learning every day.”



Mary Gum, a pillar for the School of the Communication administrative services, retired in January. Photo by Melanie Lucks



# Hilt says reporting skills remain essential as technology changes

by Shev Sayed

Since beginning his undergraduate studies at the University of Kansas, Dr. Michael Hilt, associate dean of the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, has seen nearly three decades of technological advancements.

Hilt's career began in western Missouri and eastern Kansas. He worked in radio and television news organizations before beginning his master's degree at the University of Kansas. He later earned a doctorate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

He wanted to increase his opportunities in the field so, while pursuing graduate studies, he continued working in broadcasting.

Throughout his career in radio and TV, Hilt has witnessed how technology has changed the industry.

"Technology is a driving force in the growth of the School of Communication," Hilt says.

Technical advances have broadened the horizon for students.

"The progression from FM to HD radio presents an opportunity for student radio," Hilt says. "This gives radio students an outlet beyond their website."

**"Technology is a driving force in the growth of the School of Communication," Hilt says.**

The partnership between UNO and The Knowledge Network allows TV students to show their work on cable and live streaming.

"This has provided vehicles for students to get their work out, see their work and get feedback," Hilt says.

Advances in technology have helped students gain professional experience. The students develop portfolio material that better prepares them to enter the job market.

"Students need to use college to gain all the experience they can," Hilt says.

The capstone course introduced in fall 2015 enhances students' experience before graduation.

The demands of today's newsroom are greater than in the past. Previously, reporters had a niche medium, but today journalists supply content to all media, adapting stories to print, web, audio and video.

Reporters must package one story for their primary affiliate and then package another for a secondary affiliate.

More newscasts are being added to a reporter's daily schedule, which means more diversified work.

However, the essentials of reporting have stood the test of time in Hilt's 27 years of teaching. The abilities to prepare for an interview, elicit full responses and adapt content to multiple media are essential.

"The system will always change," Hilt says. "You'll always have to learn the new system. But the essentials will always be needed."

In the future, Hilt says journalists may need to learn the skills necessary to operate new equipment. But employers will not want to teach them how to report.

"As a university, we want students to graduate with the ability to report," Hilt says. "But also with diverse experiences enhancing their ability as journalists."



Dr. Michael Hilt, left, associate dean of the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, teaches one of the new capstone courses and prepares students to deliver newscasts. Student Justin Idelman is at the right.

Photo by Hayley Jurek

# Sherrie Wilson advocates lifelong learning

by Brooke Criswell

Dr. Sherrie Wilson has advanced her career in journalism from working as a reporter and editor at daily newspapers to taking what she learned in the field to the classroom at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

"I had always loved writing, and I read a lot of literature, but I grew up in a small Minnesota town and didn't have a lot of journalism experience," Wilson says. "My guidance counselor suggested I major in journalism."

At college, she considered studying math until her calculus class met at 7 a.m. five days a week. Then, she decided to follow her true passion and majored in journalism and English.

In her 30s, as a reporter and later as an editor, Wilson found her schedule was becoming a "grind."

"I worked many, many hours a week," Wilson says. "I was looking for a challenge, but I enjoyed journalism. I always thought I might like teaching."

Wilson confirmed she wanted to teach at a college level at Iowa State University where she pursued a master's degree and had a teaching assistantship.

"I found I liked research and other things that go along with working on your Ph.D.," Wilson says. She went to the University of Minnesota to earn her Ph.D.

Wilson joined the UNO School of Communication faculty in 1996 teaching News Editing and Mass Media Ethics, among other classes.

As her teaching career progressed, Wilson assumed more supervisory roles as an academic adviser, Media Writing coordinator, internship coordinator and division coordinator of Journalism and Media Communication.

"A lot of what I do right now involves

one on one with students," Wilson says. "I enjoy getting to know them better on a level outside of the classroom."

Through her work as an adviser, she says she also hopes to have some influence on students' career choices.

"It's rewarding to see them grow. It's fun to watch students mature and get to know them as people," Wilson says.

To unwind from school and work, Wilson says she enjoys spending time with her three "fat" cats, Midnight, Pouncer and Snickers.

"They are almost like my children, and they live pampered lives," Wilson says. Her other passion is baseball. Growing up in Minnesota, she has always been a Twins fan. However, living in Omaha for 20 years, she also roots for another Midwest team, the Kansas City Royals.

Family is also very important to her. Wilson enjoys time with her three sisters immensely. Although the sisters live in different states, once or twice a year they decide on a city, like Chicago or Toronto, travel there and do "sister things."

"We just pick a city and go out and enjoy each other," Wilson says.

Wilson's travels took her abroad in 2013, when she joined a group of UNO professors on a journey to India. The group taught Afghan professors how to teach journalism and keep up to date with technology causing changes in curriculum.

"It was amazing relating to people from another culture like that," Wilson says. "The culture is just so different than U.S."

She has also traveled to Ireland on a tour led by Hugh Reilly, School of Communication director.



Students Mackenzie Millard, Brianna Olson and Kasie Wilcox work with Dr. Sherrie Wilson on the annual High School Media Conference.

Photo by Melodae Morris

"I was more or less a tourist, so visiting the sites was really fun," Wilson says.

Through her academic career, Wilson has kept up on trends changing the media.

"I like to think of myself as a professor and a journalist," Wilson says. With all her experiences, in school and out, Wilson says the biggest lesson she has learned is to enjoy the present and be happy surrounded by family and friends.

"The little things are important, the conversations you have and learning to appreciate life," Wilson says. "You always think it'll be better down the road, but you might as well enjoy what you're doing now."

Wilson wants students to know that learning is a lifelong endeavor.

**"It's rewarding to see them grow. It's fun to watch students mature and get to know them as people," Wilson says.**

"If I decided I was going to stop learning, I would still be doing everything on a typewriter," Wilson says. "Whether you go back to school or train in the workplace, you are going to be learning in your life, and if you want to advance in your career, you have to be flexible and keep learning."

# Shaughnessy encourages students to explore politics

by Jenna Schlautman

Rita Shaughnessy took a leap at the age of 38 to begin her undergraduate degree at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

After graduation, Shaughnessy spent one year working for an advertising agency.

“I was still unsure what I wanted to do. I just knew I wanted to continue my education,” Shaughnessy says. “I knew I enjoyed political communication and business consulting, I just did not know which direction I wanted to pursue.”

**“Treating each student with a great sense of dignity is my ultimate goal.”**

Shaughnessy decided to pursue a Master of Arts degree in communication at UNO. She also worked as a graduate teaching assistant, which sparked her interest in pursuing teaching as a career. Today, Shaughnessy teaches communication studies courses in the School of Communication.

“I fell in love with seeing students reaching their full potential,” Shaughnessy says.

During one of the highlights of Shaughnessy’s career, she and five other UNO professors traveled to China in 2001. They taught public speaking fundamentals to Chinese college students.

“The students were very thirsty to learn,” Shaughnessy says. “And because of that, they were able to learn very rapidly throughout our time visiting.”

Today, Shaughnessy continues to build her career teaching students at UNO and personnel at Offutt Air Force Base.

Every other year in October, Shaughnessy looks forward to an event that fuels her passion for politics.

The League of Women Voters, UNO Service Learning, her Honors Public Speaking Fundamentals class and girls from several Omaha area high schools participate in the Running and Winning Workshop at the Thompson Alumni Center.

UNO honors students facilitate the event that features female politicians past and present, while the young girls “create a political campaign,” Shaughnessy says.

At its conclusion, Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell, UNO dean of graduate studies and associate vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, and two other judges, announce a winner.



Photo by Jenna Schlautman

Rita Shaughnessy fuels her passion by teaching Fundamentals of Public Speaking in the School of Communication.

“The aim of the service learning opportunity is to get students, present and future, thinking about running for office some day,” Shaughnessy says. “Or to participate some way in the political process. It is also a great opportunity for young students to take a tour of the campus and encourage enrollment after high school by being able to see the great things offered at the university.”

Shaughnessy uses her opportunities at UNO to continue making positive impacts to ensure success to her students.

“My teaching philosophy has always been focused on the success of my students,” Shaughnessy says. “Treating each student with a great sense of dignity is my ultimate goal.”

“I prefer promotion of a person rather than product,” Shaughnessy says.

**“I fell in love with seeing students reaching their full potential,” Shaughnessy says.**



Photo by Mark Dail

“The Omaha News,” a UNO student-produced newscast, was the only local media outlet providing live coverage of the Iowa Caucus.

# CFAM celebrates its 10-year anniversary: School of Communication Linked by Creative Expression

by Caleb Foote and Kelsey Johnson

A decade ago, 13 units within the University of Nebraska at Omaha, linked by a common thread of creative expression, formed the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media.

Before 2006, the School of Communication resided in the College of Arts and Sciences.

“For us, just moving from Arts and Sciences to CFAM, there was a culture change, in terms of adapting to the new college,” says Hugh Reilly, director of the School of Communication. “But the great thing for us was we were on the ground floor. We got to have a lot of say in what the bylaws were going to be, along with our new colleagues.”

The creation of CFAM also strengthened the relationship between the School of Communication and UNO Television. The school has always needed to be integrated, says Dr. Chris Allen, general manager of UNO Television.

“I think what this 10-year anniversary and restructuring has done is help everyone see where they can intersect and put our strengths together to build a stronger program,” says Noelle Blood, communications specialist for CFAM.

Collaboration is an integral part of CFAM’s mission. “They do [work together], and it really is a dream come true,” says Dr. Gail Baker, dean of CFAM. “We’ve got theatre working with forensics, we’ve got radio and television working with theatre, we’ve got people in communication teaching on this side of the house. “We’ve tried to take down as many walls as possible and give students and faculty the opportunity to interact and see the wonderful things going on across the college.”

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**CFAM celebrates its 10-year anniversary: School of Communication Linked by Creative Expression**

*(Continued from page 15)*

The 2008 election of President Barack Obama was one of the best examples of collaboration.

“The Omaha News” produced 4 1/2 hours of television airtime.

Allen says it was an “exhilarating” night and a great feat for CFAM.

“I told the students the night we went off the air that in the years I’d been a reporter and a teacher,” Allen says, “that night was the highlight of my career.”

The decade marked change and growth for all the departments within CFAM. However, the change with the most impact came in 2015 when CFAM received approval to create two other schools, the School of the Arts and the School of Music.



Photo by Marin Krause

Matt Barros, left, and Noah Sullinger, right, broadcast live from a Mav hockey event.



Photo submitted

For the fourth time in the last six years, the MavForensics team finishes its season in the top 5. L to R: Abbie Herbert receives second place in Dramatic Interpretation; Catie Zaleski finishes third in Dramatic Interpretation; and Abby Hoffman and Catie Zaleski garnered third place for Duo Interpretation. More on the entire team and all of the awards on page 26.

“That really creates a different identity for the college because we’ve got three separate schools, all very, very strong,” Baker says. “While we had strong academic operations before, we just had smaller units. The biggest difference now is that we see the schools as equal parts.”

Another major change in the past decade is the integration of UNO Television into the School of Communication during spring 2015. The types of “physical structure,” such as UNO



Photo courtesy UNO University Communications

Dr. Paige Toller’s Small Group Communication class discusses one of its projects.

Television joining the School of Communication, are extremely significant to the school, Reilly says.

“We are just now really beginning to explore some of the possibilities. working across the disciplines, across communication, theater, music, writer’s workshop, art and art history,” Allen says. “We’re now learning how to create some synergies. There are visionaries in place who are willing to explore those kinds of things and help us move forward.”

The way the School of Communication operates has an advantage over larger schools, Baker says.

“We can move more quickly, and we can adapt more quickly over really big schools like Missouri and Florida,” Baker says. “We’ve got one of the best social media experts in the country on our faculty, a strong public relations operation and a fabulous forensics team.”

Baker also praised faculty in speech, rhetoric and creative media as part of the School of Communication’s strengths. “So we’re



Photo by Rashad Khachab

Students in the journalism capstone course work behind the camera in production of “The Omaha News.”

looking at the tea leaves and trying to figure out where we can best fit in,” Baker says.

Allen says the faculty’s flexibility and willingness to look at curriculum and make difficult, but necessary, changes is part of

*Continued on page 18*



Photo by Skylar Smith

Capstone Communication student Madison Shomaker designs the logo for client “The Omaha News.”



Photo by Kayla Eggenberg

Senior Kelly Bast and Cody Fenske discuss layout for The Gateway.



Photo courtesy UNO University Communications

J.R. Kantor (background) and Amber Lewis broadcast live on MavRadio.



(Continued from page 17)

the school's strength. "It's not easy to do," Allen says, "but we have a faculty willing to do it when necessary."

CFAM planned a year-long celebration of the 10th anniversary that embraces the faculty, students and the community. The celebration kicked off with an Aug. 27 reception for faculty, donors and friends of the college. A student from every unit gave a performance or presentation that showcased his or her work.

Throughout the academic year, CFAM has promoted other special events from each school as part of the year-long celebration, culminating in two performances by Karrin Allyson, alumna and Grammy-nominated jazz artist.

CFAM is also celebrating its graduates with a special silver cord at the spring commencement.

"The 10th year is the tin anniversary, so we just decided it'd be cute to get something to say 'if you graduate in the 10th year, you get a special cord,'" Blood says.

For Reilly, seeing students graduate and go on to pursue great careers is something the School of Communication can be very proud of. "I see a bright future, but we need to stay relevant and ahead of the curve."



Photo courtesy UNO University Communications

CFAM Dean Gail Baker speaks at the 10th anniversary celebration in August.

Baker agrees. "So who knows? I could not sit and tell you what the next 10 years look like. We are Mavericks, and we will take that unbeaten path."

Photos continued page 20



Photo courtesy UNO University Communications

From left, Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, Dr. Sherice Gearhart, and Dr. Matt Germonprez, meet in the Social Media Lab to discuss strategy.

# Ten years of prestigious awards: Johansen's NU research award brings sweep for School of Communication

by Mason Shumaker

"We have good people, good attitudes, good students and student groups. We always have and they've become even better over time," Johansen says.



Photo by Paige Toller

Bruce Johansen, School of Communication professor, and Abbie Syrek, director of MavForensics, celebrate their awards with faculty at the March School meeting. See Syrek's story on page 26.

Despite his reluctance to apply, Dr. Bruce Johansen says he is honored to be the 2016 recipient of the University of Nebraska Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Award. The award is system-wide within all four campuses, University of Nebraska at Omaha, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska at Kearney and University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Hugh Reilly, director of the School of Communication, says he pushed Johansen to submit an application for the award.

"I have such respect and admiration for Bruce," Reilly says. "I think it would be a travesty if he didn't have the award. The man has published around 45 books—not counting all of the articles and conferences that he's attended or headlined."

Johansen's win means the School of Communication is the first school in the University of Nebraska system to win three system-wide education

awards. Johansen refers to the awards as "the trifecta."

In 2006, Dr. Karen Dwyer professor, earned the system-wide teaching award. The following year, the School of Communication received the 2009 system-wide Departmental Teaching Award.

Reilly says that the School of Communication is the only unit in the University of Nebraska system that has won all three system-wide awards.

Department directors or chairs selected nominees for the 2016 Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Award, and Reilly says he immediately considered Johansen.

"We have some really top-notch researchers in the School of Communication," Reilly says. "But nobody has the publishing record that Bruce does."

Since 1979, Johansen has authored or co-authored 45 books, mostly

discussing Native American history and environmental issues, such as climate change. Johansen admits that, although he is passionate about his work, writing books is "grueling."

Each book takes between two to five years to research, write and publish, but Johansen refrains from thinking about his "depressing" hourly wages.

"I don't keep track of how many hours I'm working, unless I'm asked to," Johansen says. "You might make \$5,000 off a book after 5,000 hours of work."

Johansen says the work he has published has afforded him some interesting opportunities as a writer, including his first instance of academic notoriety across the country.

"You haven't lived until you've been smacked on Rush Limbaugh's radio show," Johansen says.

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CFAM celebrates its 10-year anniversary:  
School of Communication Linked by  
Creative Expression  
(Continued from page 19)



Photo courtesy of UNO University Communications

Graduate students discuss their work in the Quantitative Research Seminar course.



Photo courtesy of UNO University Communications

Lauren Harrahill, graduate teaching assistant, produces "The Omaha News" during the live coverage of the Iowa caucus.

## Johansen's NU research award brings sweep for School of Communication

(Continued from page 19)

Many popular right-wing radio hosts accused Johansen of publishing propaganda, ignoring an accepted premise. However, angry radio hosts only did Johansen a favor.

"All the right-wing talking heads piled on, and their vehement denials reached large audiences that I didn't have," Johansen says. "They oversimplified and overdramatized the idea and spread it around. It caused an enormous national debate over multicultural education."

Johansen responded to his critics in several nationally syndicated publications, including the Wall Street Journal and major academic journals and acquired his first academic specialty.

Despite a decade as a Seattle Times reporter, his Ph.D. and a strong academic publishing record, Johansen

says his early days in academia proved frustrating. Johansen says two personal characteristics worked against him.

"Obviously, I stutter. Lots of people assume that I can't teach, but I'm actually not too bad at it," Johansen says. "Another thing is that I don't stay in one field, which is more accepted now. I'm in the School of Communication because I'm still a journalist, but in a more in-depth way, I research different academic fields."

Johansen applied at five universities before joining the School of Communication faculty in 1982. He says he enjoys the work environment within the school.

"We have good people, good attitudes, good students, good student groups. We always have, and they've become even better over time," Johansen says.

"We've hired good people. It's unusual because I was interviewed at schools where everybody hated everybody else."

Reilly says he feels a similar sentiment when he says he's recalling another faculty member, Abbie Syrek, who recently won the 2016 UNO Excellence in Teaching Award (see Syrek's story on page 26).

Johansen is grateful that Reilly nominated him for the 2016 Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Award and he says, "It's just as much of a win for Hugh as it is for me."

# Logsdon uses passion for performance to create conversation

by Rashad Khachab

Performing is not just a fair-weather hobby for Cameron Logsdon. The college speech coach, slam poet, comedian and actor always knew he wanted to perform.

"It starts when you are a kid or the class clown or when the teacher asks who wants to read and you are always the first person to raise your hand," Logsdon says. "Speaking in front of people and having the opportunity to share my thoughts is something I was always interested in."

Logsdon started his career in competitive speech during high school where he fueled his passion for public speaking and performing. The love for competitive speaking led his high school coach to introduce him to the director of MavForensics at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

During his undergraduate years at UNO, he joined the MavForensics team. As a student competitor, he won UNO's first national championship in 2010, a feat he repeated the following year. Today, as an instructor in the School of Communication and assistant MavForensics coach, Logsdon continues to perform and educate audiences.

In the spring of, 2015, Logsdon gave a TED talk titled "Teen Dads: the Reality Show We Need." The talk focused on the importance of showing the issues of teen pregnancy and, more specifically, about the lack of support for teen fathers. Logsdon shared his personal experience as a teen father and how that led him into mentorship.

Logsdon says whether you are a teen father or a freshman lost on campus,

people need role models. Whenever the opportunity arises, you should help as a mentor or friend.

"We need to be more adamant about pursuing opportunities to help people," Logsdon says. "There are a lot of things institutionally that you cannot combat, but there are so many things on a personal level that we can work against every single day."

As an artist across many platforms, Logsdon chooses comedy as his favorite art form. He attributes this to everyone's ability to laugh.

When creating his routines, he uses topics that keep the audience engaged and interested - starting his performances with something personal and ending on a high note.

Logsdon often uses his life as material for his performances.

"I talk about my son a lot; he is the most hilarious thing to me. What it is like to



Photo by Rashad Khachab

Logsdon and MavForensics student Collin Hames, discuss an upcoming presentation.

teach public speaking and reflections on past experiences," Logsdon says. "I do a lot of impressions, so I usually find a way to work those in as well."

Logsdon tries to perform a couple times a month across the Omaha area and his performances haven't gone unnoticed.

Logsdon was accepted to NBC's Late Night Writer's Workshop where he'll spend a week in New York City. The first performer from Nebraska and one of six selected from a pool of 1,000 applicants, Logsdon says he's able to learn and connect with comedy writers, show runners and other mentors from "The Tonight Show," "Late Night" and other programs.

"Comedy opens myself up to speak to more people and connect to more people. Comedy fosters more conversation," Logsdon says. "Everybody knows laughter, everybody appreciates a story, and everybody appreciates a joke."



# Manley directs live event video at Baxter Arena

by Don Bowen

Phil Manley, 27, may have landed his dream job as the live event video director for the Baxter Arena.

“My specialty is live TV production,” Manley says. Live TV production aspects of instant replay and switching camera shots “on the fly” aren’t just for network television anymore.

Event venues, such as Baxter Arena, have similar equipment to give people who attend events, like UNO hockey games, a better experience than what was possible before, Manley says.

Manley’s love for live video production started at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Beginning as a part-time computer science major in 2007, he didn’t change his major to broadcasting with a new media concentration until he started working at UNO TV.

“I started working there and realized that I liked it,” he says. “That was my turning point.”

This change felt more like what Manley wanted as a career.

“I think what I loved about computer science was all of those components,” he says. “That’s what drove me here.”



Photo by Susan Payne

Phil Manley, video producer for the Baxter Arena, aims to make hockey games more exciting for fans.

One of the most exciting events for the Baxter Arena was the 2015-2016 hockey season.

“It’s kind of appropriate that Air Force was the first opponent in Baxter Arena,” Manley says. “They were the first opponent for our hockey team. It’s fitting that they’re the same team to start this legacy.”

“It’s exciting for an alumnus to be in such a pivotal position in UNO’s new Baxter Arena,” says Hugh Reilly, director of the School of Communication.

“We love when an alum gets this kind of opportunity,” Reilly says. “We hope that the efforts of our faculty who trained him for this career had an impact. We’re proud of him. We’re proud when any of our students get an opportunity like this.”

However, this isn’t Manley’s first big job. In February 2014, less than one year after graduating from UNO, he directed some events during the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

Before working at Baxter Arena, Manley worked as a video production freelancer. Among his jobs, he did video for the Metropolitan Entertainment and Convention Authority, a non-profit organization that operates CenturyLink Center Omaha and TD Ameritrade Park Omaha. At TD Ameritrade Park, in recent summers, he worked in video production during the College World Series.

Now, Manley says he’s excited to be a part of Baxter Arena’s premiere season.

“This is part of what UNO is trying to do,” he says. “A university is also a business and has a brand. This is great for UNO. It also helps athletics. It’s a place for UNO athletics to call home. This gives UNO a big tool that it didn’t have before.”

**“We love when an alum gets this kind of opportunity,” Reilly says. “We hope that the efforts of our faculty who trained him for this career had an impact. We’re proud of him.”**

# Public Relations and advertising capstone course forms agency

by Jesus Alarcón



Photo by Skylar Smith

Kelsey Johnson, spring 2016 Capstone Communication director, works on a website plan for one of the student-run agency’s clients.

To give students more real-world experience, the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s School of Communication created the Capstone I and II courses in fall 2015.

Specific capstone classes exist for journalism, creative media, and public relations and advertising.

During fall 2015, the capstone course for PR and advertising branded itself as Capstone Communication, a student-run agency.

The two C’s in the agency’s logo are “intended to depict the connection between students and clients in the community,” says Shev Sayed, the fall 2015 agency director, who created the logo.

Capstone is a great opportunity for students, Sayed says, because it helps students “to identify and exercise their gifts.”

Karen Weber and Melodae Morris teach the PR and advertising Capstone I and II courses.

“We designed this course to give all students a better opportunity to make themselves more marketable by building their portfolios,” Weber says, “which is essential to make themselves competitive in the job market.”

Currently, Capstone Communication serves nonprofit clients that include The Truth Heals, a nonprofit advocacy group for fatherless youth; CommUNO, the School of Communication alumni magazine; “The Omaha News,” the student-run news program; The Gateway, the campus newspaper; and the Omaha Police Department.

Capstone Communication students receive instruction on leadership, brand strategy, creative planning and execution, integrated marketing, media relations, copy writing

and editing, social media and search-engine optimization.

Clients visit Capstone Communication, or agency students go to client locations where they work with clients on tactics.

“These experiences give the students an opportunity to demonstrate and expand their skills in an agency setting focused on creative teamwork and meeting deadlines,” Morris says. “They can add the finished product to their portfolios.”

Kelsey Johnson, the spring 2016 director, says she appreciates the opportunity to lead her peers.

“Having the opportunity to be the director for capstone,” Johnson says, “has helped me evolve my leadership skills and helped me grow as a person.”





# Gearhart and Lamsam Research Native American Healthcare

by Susan Payne



Photo by Dr. Sherice Gearhart

Native Americans fill out questionnaires to help advance health news reporting.

At the Hart of the West powwow in Los Angeles, two University of Nebraska at Omaha School of Communication faculty members witnessed a breakthrough in advancing health news reporting for Native Americans.

Despite unseasonably hot weather, hundreds of powwow attendees volunteered their time on Sept. 26 and 27 to participate in research.

During the two-day event, Dr. Sherice Gearhart and Dr. Teresa Trumbly Lamsam collected data under the sponsorship of the Native Health News Alliance and the American Indian Cancer Foundation. Each day, up to 5,000 people in attendance were asked to read a health news story and complete a questionnaire.

Gearhart and Lamsam are working to identify ways to get population-specific health information to Native Americans. The goal is to provide information that leads to a commitment toward a healthier lifestyle.

The powwow helped to collect data for Gearhart and Lamsam's research project "Finding the impact zone: Testing health news for the Native American audience," fully funded by a grant from the Waterhouse Family Institute at Villanova University.

Gearhart says they had no idea what to expect, but it was important to communicate their purpose and intentions. A culture of mistrust was apparent in some," Gearhart says, explaining the reluctance of some respondents. "Once the authentic, real goal was understood, the willingness to participate increased."

Lamsam says the misuse of Native Americans as research subjects has led to mistrust of academia. Tribes are actively protective of their information.

By creating allies and communicating the project's goal, Gearhart and Lamsam left the powwow with enough data to analyze four outcomes in the next step of their research:

- How the respondents felt about stories covering health issues that disproportionately affect Native Americans.
- How willing respondents would be to read similar stories.
- How much knowledge respondents retained from stories.
- What solutions respondents supported to improve Native health issues.

"They were very happy to see that someone was concerned about their population and the health epidemics they face," Gearhart says. "And wanted to do something about it."

# MavForensics Places Fifth in the Nation

For the fourth time in the last six years, the MavForensics team capped off its season with a top-five finish in national forensic competition in April.

Despite having one of the smaller teams in the top 20, Abbie Syrek, director of MavForensics says, the team completed its season by taking home the fifth place trophy in back-to-back years. The team includes 11 underclassmen and three upper classmen (with just one senior).

*"It was a staggering, humbling year for us and a sign of bright things to come with such a young, talented squad," Syrek says.*

Three other teams from Nebraska were in the top 20, with Doane College placing 16th, Hastings College placing 15th, and University of Nebraska-Lincoln placing ninth. That marks the most schools in the top 20 from any one state in the nation and makes the MavForensics' state championship back in February "that much more meaningful," Syrek says.

The team was led by senior Catie Zaleski, who finished the sixth overall speaker in the entire nation. Zaleski and duo partner, freshman Abby Hoffman, placed third overall at the tournament in Duo Interpretation. Zaleski also placed third in Dramatic Interpretation, with junior Abbie Herbert taking home second in the same event and placing in quarterfinals in After Dinner Speaking. Zaleski also advanced her Program of Oral Interpretation to semifinals (top 12 in the nation) and her Poetry Interpretation to quarterfinals (top 24 in the nation). Hoffman took her Prose Interpretation to semifinals and her

Dramatic Interpretation to quarterfinals. Sophomore Dominic Hernandez made semifinals in both Prose Interpretation and Program of Oral Interpretation and quarterfinals in Poetry Interpretation. Sophomore T'eyrr Bynum made quarterfinals in both Dramatic Interpretation and Poetry Interpretation. Freshman Ameres Groves made quarterfinals in Program of Oral Interpretation.

In addition to the competitive success, Zaleski also became only the fourth "All-American" in MavForensics' history. Syrek says All-Americans are awarded based on three criteria: competitive success, academic excellence, and service to the community. The selection is made by a national committee, who found Zaleski's application among the best in the nation, awarding her a slot on the coveted team.

Cameron Logsdon, assistant director of MavForensics, won the Outstanding New Coach Award, presented to a recipient for excellence in their first five years of coaching. Syrek previously won the same award in 2011. Only two schools in the country have had two coaches who received this award, Kansas State University and now the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Syrek says this was one of the most successful years for MavForensics.

*"This is the 10th year of the current coaching staff, and while they're all special," Syrek says, "this year was one of the most impressive to me."*



From left to right, top row to bottom row: Top Row: Coach Natalie Schneider-Brooks, sophomore Dominic Hernandez, freshman Ameres Groves, freshman Allegra Hardin, Coach Cole Evans, Coach Trae Graham, Coach Ryan Syrek; Second Row: Coach Cameron Logsdon, freshman Abby Hoffman, freshman Cesar Ariel Magana-Linare, freshman Abbie Perry, junior Julia Quigley, Coach QueenTara Pimentel; Third Row: sophomore T'eyrr Bynum, senior Catie Zaleski, sophomore Dylan Morris, Coach Abbie Syrek, Coach Karlee Currin; Fourth Row: freshman Whitney Hansen, freshman Sarah Maul, freshman Emilee Sloan, junior Abbie Herbert.



## Abbie Syrek wins UNO's Excellence in Teaching Award

by Skylar Smith

Abbie Syrek, MavForensics director, recently won UNO's 2016 Excellence in Teaching Award.

Dr. Paige Toller, assistant director for the School of Communication, nominated her. This award is given out once a year to a UNO faculty member.

Hugh Reilly, director of the School of Communication, says Syrek was nominated for her enthusiasm, passion and all the hard work she puts into preparing for her classes. "So well deserved," Reilly says.



Photo submitted  
Abbie Syrek, center with no cap, poses with the MavForensics staff and spring 2015 graduates on UNO's north campus.

## School of Communication and International Studies earn second grant

by Caleb Foote

The University of Nebraska at Omaha's School of Communication and International Studies have earned a second grant to work with Afghanistan educators.

The new \$2 million grant from USAID contracted through FHI-360 allows faculty to partner with Kabul University and begin work with Balkh University. Allen says the grant will allow aiding the universities in "capacity building" to work with the faculty on numerous levels.

Currently, the School of Communication and International Studies are planning to return with a group of faculty in April 2016.

"We have to make sure that we don't dictate to them what we're going to teach them," Allen says. "We want to learn from them what they want from us."

Dr. Chris Allen, professor and general manager of UNO Television, says the School of Communication and International Studies first cooperated in 2010 to earn a \$1.2 million grant.

The grant was used to purchase computers, textbooks and translations for the Kabul University and allowed UNO faculty to travel to Afghanistan.



## Lipschultz earns Omaha Press Club Educator of the Year award

by Skylar Smith



Photo submitted  
Professor Jeremy Lipschultz is named the 2016 Journalism Educator of the Year.

Lipschultz, who teaches such courses as Social Media Measurement and Management and Communication Law and Policy, oversees the Social Media Lab in the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center. One of his noteworthy projects supervised students who planned and executed the successful #Milk4Kids campaign for Omaha area food banks and the Hunger Collaborative.

Lipschultz served as director of the School of Communication for a **decade**. He also teaches graduate theory and method courses has advised more than 25 Master of Arts theses and sits on Information Technology Ph.D. committees.

As editorial board member for several leading academic journals and law reviews, he has written articles and books on topics such as free expression and the Internet, media crime coverage, broadcast indecency and the impact of aging baby boomers. He also blogs on media and business issues for the Huffington Post and contributes to ChicagoNow.

For **two years**, Lipschultz served as the ethics chair for PRSA Nebraska and is a senior fellow in the Center for Collaboration Science.

For **eight years**, he has been the reviews editor for Journalism & Mass Communication Educator. He is also a frequent source for local, national and international news media stories about social media communication.

The Omaha Press Club named Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, Isaacson professor, the 2016 Journalism Educator of the Year.

A nationally recognized expert in social media, Lipschultz is the author of the groundbreaking book "Social Media Communication: Concepts, Practices, Data, Law and Ethics."

## Students provide live coverage of Iowa Caucuses

by Joe Franco

"The Omaha News" reporters provided live coverage of the Iowa caucuses in January. The news shows airs regularly on Wednesdays from 4 to 4:30 p.m. on the Knowledge Network. Broadcasts are replayed every Thursday at 2 p.m. on NETV2.

"The Omaha News" will cover the elections in November.

Melissa Ring and Cody Tromler work together on an interview for an Iowa Caucus night story.



Photo courtesy UNO University Communications



## Students and alumni discuss Super Bowl 50: Best and Worst Commercials Event



Photo by Caleb Foote

Front row L-R: **Sophie Ford**, Ad Club president, and **Kristin Webb**, UNO alumni and brand/communications manager, Emspace. Back row, L-R: **Kelsey Johnson**, MaverickPR assistant director and PRSSA recruitment director; **Steve Armbruster**, creative director/partner, Redstone; **Sean Johnson**, UNO alumnus and senior account manager, SKAR; **Jackie Miller**, UNO alumna and chief marketing officer, Bozell; and **Rich Claussen**, EVP/general manager Bailey Lauerman-Lincoln.

The UNO Advertising Club, UNO PRSSA and MaverickPR collaborated with the Alumni Association and the School of Communication to showcase the Super Bowl 50-Best and Worst Commercials event Jan. 10 at the Community Engagement Center, featuring area advertising and public relations professionals discussing their picks for the best and worst commercials. Approximately 40 students, faculty and staff watched commercials and participated in the discussion with the panelists.

## Students help plan High School Media Conference

Senior Kasie Wilcox (photo right) designs informational fliers for the annual High School Media Conference. Wilcox was one of three practicum students working with Dr. Sherrie Wilson and professor Melodae Morris on the conference that took place April 5.

Nearly 300 students from more than 20 area high schools attended.

Students compete for awards in areas of print and broadcast categories. The conference is a culmination of the competition experience.



Photo by Melodae Morris

# School of Communication Scholarships for the 2016-2017 school year

### John F. Davis Scholarship

Carrie Bartholomew and Sophie Ford

### Panko Roberts/Presidents Memorial Scholarship

Jessica Teaford

### Paul N. Williams Scholarships

Monica Preciado Murguia

### Floyd Kalber Scholarship

Gabriel Christensen

### Virginia Allen McIntire Memorial Scholarship

Erin Hockinson, Lyle Kwiatkowski, Colt Paulsen, Maren Rincon and Shannon Smith

### Joe Henry Baker Memorial Scholarship

Emily Sloan

### Gunnar Horn Communication Scholarship

Savannah Behrends, Hannah Delzell, Ciara Watson, Matthew Kunneman and Mackenzie Millard

### Hartman Memorial Talent and Gunnar Horn Talent Scholarships

Kamrin Baker and Matt Kirkle

### Paul & Fern Borge Communications Scholarship

Amanda Anderson

### Sue Francke Memorial Scholarship

Madison Shomaker

### Kim Jones Scholarship

Zachary Dinslage

### American Advertising Federation Omaha Scholarship

Sophie Ford, Chloe Kuehner and Mackenzie Millard

### Fred & Mary Jo Peterson Communications Scholarship

David Familetti

### UNO Emeritus Speech Faculty School of Communications Scholarship

Morgan Edwards

### UNO Forensic Scholarship

Ameres Groves

### Richard F. Palmquist Nebraska Broadcasters Association Scholarship

Patrick Donelan

### Marcus Family Scholarship

Andrew Nelson

### Helene Quigley Memorial Scholarship

Lindsay Ciurej

### Raf Czarnecki Memorial Scholarship

Jared Kennedy

### Paisley Family Scholarship

Kayla Eggenberg

### Hugh P. and Juliette L. Cowdin Communication Scholarship

Allegra Hardin

### Albers Internship Scholarship

Justin Idelman (Fall 2015),  
Kayla Eggenberg (Spring 2016)

### Nebraska PRSA Scholarship

Bryonna Johnson



## Broadcasting puts Barros on the path to success

by Sara Atkins

Radio has always captivated Matthew Barros' heart and attention.

"Some of my earliest childhood memories are in the back seat of my mom's minivan, listening to whatever was on, or listening to Dodger games with my dad," Barros says.

Ever since childhood, Barros knew he wanted to become involved in the media.

"From a very young age, my dad instilled a lot of work ethic in me," Barros says. As a 15-year-old, he began working every summer with his father. My dad loved listening to talk radio on the way to the job site, throughout the morning and on the way home."

After graduating from Mission Viejo High School in California, Barros attended Saddleback Community College in California, where he earned most of his associate's degree. However, he dropped out of college because, he says, he had no clear vision of his future.

Barros, now 34, worked several jobs in search of a sign that would give him guidance on his career. Over the years, he worked as a server, bartender and in sales. Each job gave him more confidence to take a step in the right direction.

In 2008, Barros faced the fight of his life when he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He became one of more than 72,000 cases diagnosed annually, according to the American Cancer Society.

Through the endless days and nights, chemotherapy treatments and recovery periods, Barros' spirit never wavered. "I fought like hell," he says.

Throughout his treatments, Barros endured physical and emotional pain. One day, positive feelings and thoughts were just not enough.



Photo by Sara Atkins

Matt Barros, general manager of MavRadio, works hard to build awareness of the station.

Barros recalls the night the chemo treatment nearly overcame his will to survive.

"I was sitting in my living room, by myself, with my cat, and I honestly felt like I wanted to die," Barros says. "I literally felt like death. I couldn't move, I was paralyzed on the couch, and I just remember feeling sick in my stomach and a weird radiating headache... just the weakest I've ever felt."

With only his cat as a witness, Barros says he came out of temporary paralysis with his faith stronger than ever. He gathered the courage to pursue two dreams: to become involved in local politics or have his own nationally syndicated radio show.

Barros enrolled at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in summer 2014 after transferring from the University of Georgia. He moved to Omaha to be closer to his wife's family, to find a more stable work environment and to finish treatments.

Barros, who holds a bachelor of science in political science, will earn his second bachelor's degree in broadcasting this May.

Before he graduates, Barros will be honored as the **2016 Outstanding JMC student**.

Barros, the MavRadio general manager, leads his peers in the operation of the station. "I'm not in it for the money, I'm here because I love it," Barros says.

Jodeane Brownlee, MavRadio faculty adviser, says Barros has been one of the more "exuberant personalities from day one."

"What I see in Matt is that he is a fighter. He knows what he is fighting for," Brownlee says. "One day he came into my class and said, 'Teach me everything you know.' He was very proactive, interested, enthusiastic and passionate about learning everything about the industry."

During his time at UNO, Barros has won various awards and recognitions. In spring 2015, Barros earned second place at the Broadcast Education Association Festival for Media Arts national contest. He performed a dramatic interpretation of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado." He also received a John Davis Omaha Press Club scholarship and the Abe Voron Scholarship, a national award given to 13 students. Barros was one of two winners from the state of Nebraska.

During Barros' final semester, he also serves as an anchor for "The Omaha News." "I want to influence people," he says. "I want to influence people to think the way I think."

## Kelly Bast puts creativity in everything she does

by Angelina Mangiamelli

When Kelly Bast began her college career, she was unsure what she wanted to do. At Millard North High School, she worked for the school newspaper as an editorial cartoonist. But she had no intention of pursuing a journalism major.

**"I remember saying, 'I will never interview people,'"** Bast says.

She admits to being shy, and stepping out of her comfort zone wasn't something that appealed to her. However, during her sophomore year at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, she declared a journalism and media communication major. After taking PR and Advertising Design, Bast knew right away she had found her passion.

Working in graphic design allows Bast to explore her creativity. She has gained much experience serving as creative director for PRSSA. She also serves as design editor at The Gateway, creating page layout of copy and photos. In addition, Bast works as a social media intern at the UNO Alumni Association.

However, the role that has tested her leadership skills the most is serving as director of MaverickPR, the UNO student-run PR firm. Bast gives credit to MaverickPR for her preparation to succeed in life after graduation. She has been involved with the firm for one year, and in that time, she has worked her way up from account associate to director. She manages all account work, reviewing tactics and supervising other students.

Working directly with clients such as Eppley Airfield and the Omaha Police Department has given her the opportunity to learn how to put her skills to the test. "It's almost like you find a way to rise to the challenge if you're dedicated and open to constantly learning as you go," Bast says.

One of the highlights of her time at UNO is participating in a study abroad program. In fall of 2015, Bast spent four months in Lima, Peru, studying at the Universidad Del Pacifico, completing her Spanish minor. This is where Bast says she started to step out of her shell and learn to be more open and outgoing.

"Peru was a culture shock," Bast says, "but it completely changed my life and made me understand the world is so big."



Photo by Hayley Jurek

Kelly Bast gains professional experience through MaverickPR, PRSSA and The Gateway.

Bast, an honors student, plans to return to Peru after graduation in May to connect with her friends. She's not sure where her career path will take her, but says she definitely wants a job where she can explore her creativity. A small advertising firm where she could work in a team setting would be a good fit. Bast says she wants a work environment where people don't hold back and give 100 percent of their creative minds to their work.

Finding your passion is key, Bast says, whether declaring or finding a dream job.

"My advice for students unsure of what to do: throw yourself out there and take those risks," Bast says. "Just go for it, get involved, learn more about yourself and what you want to do."



## Brown finds nonprofit passion through MaverickPR

by Kelsey Johnson

Maria Brown, now in her dream job, wasn't sure she wanted to go into public relations and advertising. When she came to the University of Nebraska at Omaha out of high school, she didn't declare a major right away. Always interested in journalism, Brown joined the student newspaper and speech team in high school.

After taking one communication class her first semester and a few education courses, she decided to consider the School of Communication.

Then, Brown met with adviser Karen Weber and declared her major in journalism and media communication with an emphasis in PR and advertising. She became active in UNO PRSSA where she served as communications director.

She enjoyed participating in PRSSA's community service. She grew up in the Greek Orthodox Church, which fueled her passion for serving others.

Her involvement in the chapter led to applying to join MaverickPR, the student-run firm, where she worked her way up from account associate to director. Everything since then has pushed her to go further. "I haven't just grown professionally," Brown says. "I've grown as a person, as well."

Through her performance in school and her practical experience in MaverickPR and PRSSA, Brown landed her dream internship in nonprofit in January 2015 at the Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands. By May, she moved into a part-time position and became full time in December after graduation with a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication. Brown says she loves to see the change she is making in the kids' lives.

"I am able to see the lives I am changing every day," Brown says. "The kids are happy to be at the club, and it literally warms my heart knowing that I am part of a really great organization."



Maria Brown, 2015 director of MaverickPR, enjoys public relations for nonprofit organizations.

As a communications and administrative assistant, Brown works specifically on special events and fundraising. She can't wait to see what's in store next.

"It's crazy to think this is just the beginning," Brown says. "Yeah, I had a job right after graduation, but how long am I going to be there? What's the next opportunity? That's what I'm thinking about now."

When looking back on her time at UNO, Brown says the best advice she could give is to get involved. Whether it is UNO PRSSA, MaverickPR, MavRadio or UNO TV, experience matters.

"Do something that will get you real experience so you can put that on your résumé," Brown says. "You will get noticed by employers because you took a step further than just attending classes. You got involved in something and were successful."

## PRSSA president takes advantage of every opportunity

Trent Ostrom, University of Nebraska at Omaha senior and PRSSA chapter president, received the Ron Culp scholarship for mentorship in Atlanta during the 2015 National PRSSA Conference.

The scholarship honors a student entering senior year at an accredited university. Worth \$1,000, it rewards the recipient for mentoring others and promoting public relations as a career choice.

"It was a special moment because at the same award ceremony our UNO chapter won most outstanding chapter," Ostrom says.

Ostrom entered UNO in the fall of 2012, unsure of the direction he wanted to go.

As a sophomore, Ostrom enrolled in Principles of Public Relations, where he discovered the world of PR and began learning its strategies.

"I was sold on the PRSSA pitch during class one day and it all started from there," Ostrom says. "PRSSA delivers a rare opportunity to collect hands-on experience and I was fascinated."

After joining PRSSA, Ostrom quickly moved up the ranks. He has held four different positions: assistant recruitment director, co-service director, recruitment director and chapter president.

Hoping to continue the success of UNO's PRSSA, Ostrom mentors current and future members.



Trent Ostrom, PRSSA president, works with Kelly Bast, PRSSA creative director.

By Nick Biddlecombe

"My number one priority as chapter president is giving our members excellent résumé experience," Ostrom says. "I like to offer a lot of opportunities so our members can build a diverse experience for their résumé."

Ostrom says he has enjoyed many wonderful moments with PRSSA.

"The awards we won were great," Ostrom says. "But my favorite part was definitely being able to travel on behalf of PRSSA and all the friendships made not only within our own chapter at UNO but with students across the country that I wouldn't have met otherwise."

During Ostrom's time with PRSSA, he has traveled to Washington D.C., Portland, Oregon, Atlanta, and New York City for professional development events.

Besides being a full-time student and chapter president, Ostrom serves as an account executive for MaverickPR. He is also an instructional design intern for Valmont Industries in Valley, Nebraska.

After graduation in May 2016, Ostrom sees a bright future ahead and says he hopes to build a career with Valmont.

"The current division I'm working with at Valmont is only three years old," Ostrom says. "I hope to grow and expand with this division in the years to come."



# Random choice leads to Ad Club president

by Emily Speck

Randomly choosing journalism as her major with a concentration in public relations and advertising, Sophie Ford worked her way from Ad Club member to president.

Ford chose her major after completing her general studies requirements, and taking a PR and advertising design course. From that class, she cultivated her interest in branding and layout.

Soon, Ford discovered Ad Club.

“I was looking for a way to get involved more in my major but didn’t have a lot of free time,” Ford says. “Ad Club was a low commitment with meeting one evening a month.”

Ford says she was asked to campaign for secretary of the Ad Club in spring 2015.

“There were only a few of us left that weren’t graduating, so it wasn’t difficult to land the position,” Ford says.

Over the summer, Ford advanced to vice president/creative director.

“At the beginning of this semester, our past president ended up with a scheduling conflict, so I just jumped up the ranks,” Ford says. “At the time I was the only officer not graduating next year. So it’s a little earlier than expected, but it’s still exciting to have that main leadership role.”

As the new president of Ad Club, Ford sees growth in Ad Club’s future.

“We’re really focusing on growth,” Ford says. “The bigger we are, the more opportunities we have.”

Ad Club has offered Ford many professional opportunities. Ford says she has grown closer to Ad Club faculty adviser Melodae Morris.

“I view her as a mentor and someone I can go to for professional advice, which wouldn’t have happened if I had never joined Ad

Club,” Ford says. “Also, I’ve gotten to network with many area professionals just by contacting them to speak for meetings or introducing them at meetings.”

Ford expects to graduate in spring 2018 after getting a second major in graphic design.

“After graduating, I hope to work in either an advertising or design agency here in Omaha,” Ford says. “I did just learn a lot about in-house design work at Meet the Pros, so that sounds really interesting, too.”



Photo submitted

Sophie Ford assumes leadership role as Ad Club president.

# From Italy to Omaha, Fanari fulfills her Dream

by Jesus Alarcón

Alice Fanari, born and raised on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia in Italy, works as an ambassador for the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

In this role, she participates in special events, orientation and campus visits for high school and transfer students. Fanari says she enjoys presenting a positive image of the UNO campus community.

Fanari has excelled in her studies at UNO, earning the Communication Studies Outstanding Student Award in 2016. Currently pursuing her Master of Arts degree in Communication, Fanari graduated from UNO with a BA in communication in December 2015.

**“I love the campus. When you see American movies, you wonder whether life is the same in real life,” Fanari says. “I know that coming to UNO, I’m living my American fairytale dream.”**

Fanari, 22, attended high school through a study abroad exchange program for a year in Papillion, Nebraska. She then returned to Italy where she received her diploma.

Fanari says she “fell in love” with the American culture and knew she was meant to remain in the U.S.

In November 2012, Fanari returned to the U.S., attended Metropolitan Community College until her acceptance at UNO. She says one of the best things about college in the U.S. is the campus life.

“I love my job because I love the diversity of people who I get to interact with,” Fanari says. “I love listening to their



Photo by Hayley Jurek

Alice Fanari earns the Communication Studies Outstanding Student Award in 2016.

background stories because I get to know them in a personal way and make those connections.”

While Fanari enjoys an active social life, she’s always remained focused on her studies, earning several scholarships for academic excellence. She earned School of Communication and UNO Advantage scholarships.

She says her greatest academic achievement to date is the opportunity to present her senior research thesis on a competitive panel at the Central States Undergraduate Research Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

“This is the first time I get to present something that I’ve produced,” Fanari says. “It is something that I’m very proud of.”



# MavForensics

## New MavForensics members fall in love with competitive speech culture

Since 2010, Abbie Syrek, MavForensics' coach at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, has dedicated time to shepherd the team into its national ranking.

Although the spring 2016 first-year team members anticipated the fiercely competitive environment of MavForensics, they were pleasantly surprised to encounter the family-like culture.

"You look at the team, and we're obviously a family," says freshman Abby Hoffman, a secondary education, language arts and deaf education major.

"But then you go out into the speech world, across the nation, and everyone just accepts you and takes you in," Hoffman says. "It's such a big, welcoming bunch of people that it makes me smile every time I think about it. I love being able to have those connections."

The eight team members say they fell in love with different aspects of the competitive speech program.

Ameres Groves, a freshman business administration major, has followed in his brother's footsteps as a college competitor. Groves says he enjoys listening to passionate speakers communicate valuable messages.

"Some are speaking for themselves and some are speaking for others," Groves says. "I think that is so powerful. It is very different from high school speech."

Cesar Ariel Magnana-Linares, a Latino major and Latin-American studies major, says being part of the MavForensics team has taught him valuable lessons.

Whitney Hansen, a freshman secondary education major, says the contrast between high school and collegiate competition is notable.

"As people age and spend more time in an activity, they're bound to get better," Hansen says.

Hansen says she was surprised to hear new ideas and the intensity of the issues involved in college competition.

Hoffman and Abbie Perry, freshman communication studies major, say they were encouraged by early success at competitions.

"Being able to do multiple events, and being successful with them has been really cool," Perry says. "That's why I'm excited to see how the entire team does."

Sarah Maul, a pre-speech language pathology major, admits coming to UNO

by Mason Shumaker

after attending high school with only 89 other students forced her to adapt to a new environment.

"Coming into a team, that is nationally recognized as a prominent force, was really interesting and such a different dynamic," Maul says.

Allegra Hardin, communication studies major, says being competitive requires hours of meticulous research every week.

"I expected the work load to be exactly what it was, which is great because I'm a worker who likes to be busy," Hardin says.

Hardin appreciates all aspects of competitive speech, but says she enjoys "informative speaking" the most.

"I love informing people that elephants can't get cancer because it gets so hyped," Hardin says. "I just love it. It's my favorite thing."

While a few members prefer poetry, Maul says her favorite is after-dinner speaking.

"ADS is just a lot of fun, and the energy is high paced," Maul says. "It's a place where you can just let loose and do whatever you want to."

The team members appreciate investigating issues or perspectives usually ignored or silenced.

Emilee Sloan, a communication studies major, never competed before college. However, with a background in theater, Sloan says she enjoys using elements of theatrical performance to make persuasive arguments.

"Whenever you can get up in front of a room and just speak your story, or draw attention to a story that has been silenced," Sloan says. "That's powerful and that builds self confidence."



MavForensics students prepare for their next competition.

Photo by Mason Shumaker

# MavRadio

## MavRadio gives UNO campus a voice

by Skylar Smith

MavRadio, the University of Nebraska at Omaha's student radio station, gives students real-world radio experience that has led to state recognition.

### In August 2015, MavRadio won four Nebraska Broadcasters Association Awards:

- Michael Lucas earned gold for Best News Story that detailed the way students celebrate Earth Day.

- Marin Krause earned first place in Best News Story for her report on the history of the Wilson & Washburn pub in Omaha's Old Market.

- Dan Downs earned gold for Best Promotional Spot Announcement for his 60-second Haunted Heartland Production.

- Kenneth Vela earned first place for Best Sports Story with his report on UNO hockey fans and the Frozen Four.

In addition, Matt Barros, general manager, won three awards from the Broadcast Education Association.

When Barros joined MavRadio, he envisioned expanding student involvement.

A part of UNO since 1986, MavRadio began a promotional campaign to

improve brand recognition in 2013.

Barros says he would like MavRadio to be more popular with the student body. One way MavRadio aims to satisfy a diverse audience is by offering new programming such as "Free Range Fridays."

**"Everywhere you go on campus, you should be an earshot away from MavRadio," Barros says. "I want MavRadio to give students a feeling of campus community."**

The station also holds special events to better engage the UNO community, featuring "Haunted Heartland" in the fall and "Earth Day" in the spring.

Broadcasts are streamed on MavRadio.fm for the convenience of listeners, through the TuneIn App and, coming soon, MavRadio's own app.

MavRadio also gives students the opportunity to work as a team.

MavRadio offers students closeness and support in a family-like



Photo by Skylar Smith

MavRadio members (from left to right) Justin Idelman, Noah Sullinger, Matt Barros, Dan Downs, Marin Krause, Alex Abler gain real-world experience and show their personalities on air every day on the station.

atopmsphere, says Jodeane Brownlee, faculty adviser.

"The dedication and heart of the staff come through showing nothing shy of passion," she says.

Staff members like Noah Sullinger, sports director, "make this such a great place to work and gain experience," Barros says.

Sullinger manages coverage of UNO athletics, ensuring all of the broadcasters and producers are ready for games.

"Sullinger has done a great job with professionalism and dedication," Barros says.

Brownlee says she is always impressed by the students' motivation and work ethic. Their work in MavRadio has led to more students getting jobs in the industry after graduation.

"Even though it's bittersweet when they graduate," Brownlee says, "it's still a very proud moment for me and I'm very excited for them."



# Ad Club

by Emily Speck

- Increased membership during the fall and spring 2016 semesters.
- Planned and executed “Superbowl 50-Best and Worst Commercials” panel in collaboration with UNO PRSSA, MaverickPR, the UNO Alumni Association and the School of Communication.
- Attended American Advertising Federation “Meet the Pros” event.
- Brought in area advertising, public relations, graphic design professionals for three different events.
- Sponsored advertising agency tours for members.
- Participated in CFAM Admit event.
- Seniors, Brooke Criswell, Caleb Foote, Sophie Ford and Kelsey Johnson were inducted into Alpha Delta Sigma, the professional honor society sponsored by the AAF.



Photo by Melodae Morris  
Ad Club members attend the American Advertising Federation Omaha’s “Meet the Pros” event in February. Student registration was made possible through the generosity of alumnus Paul Critchlow. Front row left to right: Mackenzie Millard; Sophie Ford, president; Kerrigan Flynn; Kelsey Johnson; Caleb Foote, secretary. Back row left to

# MavFilmmakers

by Joe Franco

- Founded in fall 2014 by Mason Shumaker, president.
- Established to discuss film, network with other filmmakers and produce a movie each semester.
- Submitted the film “Your Turn” to Scream in the Dark Film Festival in 2015.
- Submitted the movie “In The Dark,” produced by May 2015 graduate Jim Ficenece, to the Omaha Film Festival.



Photo by Joe Franco

MavFilmmakers president Mason Shumaker reviews his collection of favorite films.

# UNO PRSSA

by Caleb Foote

- Won the 2015 F.H. Teahan award for Outstanding Chapter for the third time in seven years out of more than 344 chapters nationwide.
- Received the PRSSA National Golden Key Award for leadership by Angela Eastep, 2015 president.
- Celebrated the \$1,000 Ron Culp Scholarship for Mentorship awarded to Trent Ostrom, spring 2016 president.
- Earned “Star Chapter” designation out of only 20 chapters nationwide.
- Planned and executed ninth annual Santa Paws fundraiser, which raised \$1,100 for Hearts United for Animals, a no-kill shelter.
- Planned and executed “Say Yes to a Pack” drive for Youth Emergency Services, which collected hygiene products, socks, warmers, gently used jeans and hoodies. The chapter also purchased 108 knapsacks for at-risk and homeless youth.
- Volunteered at the Ultra Chic Boutique to raise money for the Lydia House, a shelter for women and children.
- Volunteered at “Heat the Streets-Walk for Warmth” walk/run to help families in need pay their utility bills.



Photo by Kimberly Bailey

UNO PRSSA wins Outstanding Chapter at the 2015 National Conference in Atlanta.



Photo by Hayley Jurek

Waverle Monroe, a senior broadcasting major and kidney transplant recipient, shares her story at the UNO PRSSA organ donor awareness event.



# MaverickPR



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The School of Communication provides a student-centered, dynamic environment designed to elevate, empower and engage students to become skilled, ethical citizens and professionals who can excel in diverse local and global communities.



Photo by Susan Payne

The summer 2015 MaverickPR team poses for a photo at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center at UNO.

- Promoted the appearance of internationally-acclaimed author John Grisham at the first annual Marion Marsh Writers Lecture Series April 21 at the Baxter Arena.
- Created a magazine for Eppley Airfield to commemorate the preventative work during 2011 Missouri River flood.
- Assisted with media outreach and social media for the 2016 Claussen-Leahy Mav Run at Baxter Arena.
- Planned and executed strategy to promote the Genius of Warren Buffett Executive MBA course, Philanthropy Summit, Value Investor Conference and the Omaha Value Dinner.
- Created new brand and media outreach for the Metrc Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless.
- Developed and executed brand strategy for Marco LeRoc, CEPF, author of “Screw College Debt.”
- Created new branding materials for Sozo Coffeehouse.
- Planned and executed social media strategy for Forever A Husker.



Photo by Susan Payne

MaverickPR account executives (from left to right) Trent Ostrom, Kelly Bast, Susan Payne, Kelsey Johnson and Jessica Teaford visited New York City this spring to learn best practices from Burson-Marsteller, Edelman and Bank of America Merrill Lynch. The visit was made possible in large part to the generosity of alumnus Paul Critchlow.

