Takings 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.

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, Parvin Iribahin, 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, 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 MaxRadio.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.
- The School of Communication’s Abbie Syrek, MaxForensics director, was named the winner of UNO’s 2016 Excellence in Teaching Award.
- MaxForensics, the competitive speech team, continued its winning ways by earning top honors at the Nebraska State Tournament for the second year in a row. Once again, the team finished second nationally in the nation’s most prestigious forensics tournament, Hell Froze Over. With only one senior, the team expected a rebuilding year. However, bolstered by an ambitious and talented crop of eight freshmen, the team set its sights on another top five finish in the national tournament in Florida.
- Dr. Bruce Johansen won the 2016 Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Award, a system-wide honor within the University of Nebraska.
- Dr. Hugh Reilly 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 and Marlin 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.
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.”

“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 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.

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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.”

UNO graduate advocates for stronger nonprofit infrastructure

by Melanie Lucks

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 journalist 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.

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

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

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

by Kelly Bost

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.”

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.

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.

“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.”

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

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 the training hubs 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.

“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.
Melodae Morris brings vast experience into the classroom

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 showed 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 KFEO, 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.”

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.

“These 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 was 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 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 shoveling a cow through a straw.”

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

“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.”

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.

Melodae Morris brings experience into the classroom (continued from page 8)

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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.

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“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 sensibly used 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 9)
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 ofencyclopedia 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,” 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 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 resumes, 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 student.

“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.”

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.”
Hilt says reporting skills remain essential as technology changes

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 newscast are more intense 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, eliciting 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. Sherrie Wilson advocates lifelong learning

Since earning her master’s degree and graduating from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, 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.

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

While in India, Wilson was also able to teach at the annual High School Media Conference.

“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.

“Learning is a lifelong endeavor. It’s what you do affectively to advance in your career, you have to be flexible and keep learning.”

Wilson says.
Shaughnessy encourages students to explore politics

**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.”

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 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.

“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 prefer being a part of the individual’s growth and development.”

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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.

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

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.

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“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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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.

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

“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 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 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
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.”

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.

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

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.
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 overemphasized 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.”

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 MaxForesights at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

During his undergraduate years at UNO, he joined the MaxForesights 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 MaxForesights 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 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

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

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

“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.”

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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.”

“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.

“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 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.”

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 skills.”

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

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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 reporting 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.”

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 Amees 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.”
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.

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

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.

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 show 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 right story.
Students and alumni discuss Super Bowl 50: Best and Worst Commercials Event

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.

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 Teafoad

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, Clara 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 Dimlage

American Advertising Federation Omaha Scholarship
Sophie Ford, Chloe Kuehner and Mackenzie Millard

Fred & Mary Jo Peterson Communications Scholarship
David Familietti

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 F. and Juliette L. Cowdin Communication Scholarship
Allega Hartlin

Albers Internship Scholarship
Justin Idelman (Fall 2015), Kayla Eggenberg (Spring 2016)

Nebraska PRSA Scholarship
Bryonna Johnson
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’ heart and his doctor’s advice then told him he could continue his chemotherapy treatments and recovery periods, Barros’ spirit never wavered. He worked every summer with his father. His 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 for 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.

Barros was just not enough.

One day, positive feelings and thoughts endured physical and emotional pain. “I fought like hell,” he says.

Radio has always captivated Matthew Barros’ heart and attention.

“When my cutest 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. His dad loved listening to talk radio on the way to the job site, throughout the morning and on the way home.

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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 degree 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.
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 journalism and media communication.

“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.”

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.

“PRSSA provides 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.

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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.”

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

From Italy to Omaha, Fanari fulfills her Dream

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.

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

by Mason Shumaker

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.

“[A]s 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 family’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-Linarez, 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.

Heffman and Abbie Perry, freshman communication studies majors, 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 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.”

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 atmosphere, 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.”

**MavRadio**

**MavRadio gives UNO campus a voice**

by Skylor 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
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.

MavFilmakers
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 Ficenec, to the Omaha Film Festival.

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.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

School of Communication
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

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.

MaverickPR

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 May 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 Metro 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.