COMM UNO
Spring 2017
GET PLUGGED IN TO A BRIGHT FUTURE
practitioners, according to the U.S. social media savvy public relations demand for more creators, editors and in communication fields stem from the new jobs. The increased job openings to 2024, which will result in about 27,400 those in biological sciences, business, has earning potentials comparable to This profitable liberal arts degree and prepare for the workplace. teaching the skills essential to being hired communication also prepares students by addition to earning more, the study of in communication earn an average Students who hold a bachelor's degree, taking the first step toward earning CommUNO, join the “UNO School of Communication” page on Facebook or visit communication.unomaha.edu. Bright Future

By Kayla Eggenberg

Taking the first step toward earning a degree in communication will, quite literally, pay off in the future. Students who hold a bachelor's degree in communication earn an average of $2.4 million more than others in similar positions over their careers, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition to earning more, the study of communication also prepares students by teaching the skills essential to being hired and prepare for the workplace. This profitable liberal arts degree has earning potentials comparable to those in biological sciences, business, education and psychology. Media and communication occupations are projected to continue to grow 4 percent from 2014 to 2024, which will result in about 27,400 new jobs. The increased job openings in communication fields stem from the demand for more creators, editors and social media savvy public relations practitioners, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(Continued from page 2) Each student has the ability to tailor his or her communication studies to fit unique strengths and ambitions. The University of Nebraska at Omaha offers many areas of expertise within the communication major, including Journalism and Media Communication, with sequences Journalism, Public Relations/Advertising, and Creative Media. Communication Studies offers many sequences as well, including Corporate Training, Intercultural Communication and Diversity, Interpersonal Communication and Conflict Management, and Organizational Communication and Leadership among others.

Each year, Capstone Communication chooses a publication theme to showcase School of Communication activities and achievements of students, alumni and faculty. This year, the goal was to promote the versatility of a communication degree. Every year, I struggle with what to include and what to leave out when I write the annual Director's Report. If I had my way, I would mention everything and everybody, but my editors tell me, "Professor Reilly – keep it short!" So here it is – in all of its abridged glory – in all of its abridged glory.

Our outstanding students continue to rack up awards. Our PR and advertising students won multiple Paper Anvil Awards from PRSA. Our TV and radio students also won several local and regional awards. However, their big achievement was winning an unprecedented 10 awards from the national Broadcast Educators Association. Competing against nearly 1,500 other entries from 176 schools across the country, they won 10 awards, including four first-place trophies!

Once again, our incredible forensics team finished among the top five teams in the nation and was the top team in Nebraska, in 2016, for the third year in a row. Not an easy feat since four of the top 17 forensic programs in the nation reside in Nebraska.

We were awarded a $2 million grant from the U.S. State Department to help two Afghan universities, the University of Balkh and the University of Kabul, create Communication Studies departments. Our faculty traveled to Afghanistan, Dubai and India to meet with Afghan professors, introduce them to Communication Studies and begin what will be a multiple-year partnership. When the programs are up and running, we believe they will be the first Communication Studies departments in Asia.

We have begun a “School of Communication Presents” series of special events. This year they have included Debate Watch, Comedy Night, Best and Worst Super Bowl Ads, Women in Media panel, Night before Nationals and the High School Media Conference.

In January, we added a new professor – Dr. Roma Subramanian, who teaches primarily journalism and public relations classes. Roma will be part of the changing of the guard as two of our long-time professors, Dr. Teresa Lamsam and Dr. Dave Ogden, both retire this academic year. We continue to grow, change and adapt. Every year brings new challenges and new successes. I expect next year will be no different. However, you’ll have to wait for next year’s Director’s Report for all the details!
Keegan Korf embraces new technology while teaching

By Madison Shomaker

Advocate for digital citizenship, Keegan Korf at Omaha Public Schools. Photo by Ayu Haramura.

Starting as a journalism student, Keegan Korf, had no idea where her second concentration in English and Writing would take her. During her time at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Korf was an active member and co-director of the Omaha chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America. Through her education and extracurricular activity involvement, Korf gained real-world experience that earned her an advertising job at The Knot Magazine in Omaha after she graduated in 2008.

Although Korf felt fortunate enough to land a job after school, especially during a time when jobs weren’t readily available, she knew she didn’t want to stay in the PR and advertising world forever. "I could feel in my gut that education was where I wanted to be," Korf says. "I wanted to help people in a way other than how advertising let me." Korf spent the next year and a half of her life earning her graduate degree in teaching at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha. She completed her degree in 2011. Her first teaching job was at Platteview High School as a ninth-grade English and speech teacher.

It was her second year of teaching when Platteview introduced a new program that would change Korf’s career path, the 1 to 1 Ipad Technology Initiative. Students were given iPads as educational tools; this was when Korf discovered her passion for teaching with technology. Korf saw the benefits of teaching with technology. She also saw the students’ engagement increase and behavior issues decrease.

“The environment in my classroom was warm and comforting,” Korf says. “I loved watching the students grow and become more comfortable and confident in themselves.”

(Continued from page 4) Korf’s new teaching mindset involved embracing the constantly evolving world of technology. She wanted to adapt and stay current with technology-teaching trends.

Although Korf said she loved her teaching job at Platteview, she went on to teach at the Omaha Public Schools system, where she taught freshman English. Korf started working on the Microsoft Innovative Educator program during her second year of teaching at OPS. She joined the program to become a trainer for her staff and students. Korf knew she wanted to bring this information back to her school, so she went with a few other teachers from different schools to be trained in the MIE program.

Korf said she enjoyed helping her fellow staff and students with the technology shift in education. She became so impassioned within this new career field that she was open to finding a job that would let her further pursue technology and teaching.

That’s how Korf found herself in the position she has today, the lead teacher of digital citizenship for 52,000 kids at Common Sense Media, a part of Omaha Public Schools. Korf says: “Digital citizenship wasn’t a term that existed five or six years ago. There is an amount of education we need to provide to not only younger children but to people my age, about what it means to be a good online citizen, be conscious of the content you post online and how you represent yourself.”

Korf says that digital citizenship encompasses so much more than just cyber bullying, and also revolves around your digital footprint, like using social media and writing blog posts.

Korf asks her students, “What image are you creating for yourself on the internet?”

Korf asks her students, “What image are you creating for yourself on the internet?”

Korf says she loves her current job and the new opportunities it offers; however, she’ll never lose that part of her that loves teaching. “Whenever I lose sight or get stressed out about what I’m doing, you just have to remember, where am I going?” Korf says. “The whole point of this is to provide more opportunities for the students in this district. That’s what it’s all about.”

Career goal: Her ultimate goal is to work in human resources or training.

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**Student Profile**

Jaime Melton

By Anna Bunz

Photo by T2S Photography

Dream Job: Corporate Training

Hometown: Dickens, Nebraska

Degree: Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, Master of Arts in Communication

Major: Journalism

Concentration: News Editorial
Cynthia Todd has been working, since March 2016, as an NBCUniversal page, a coveted position in a program known among producers, stage managers and security; and oversaw the green rooms. Todd says that she has enjoyed working in different areas of the business while also learning technical skills throughout these rotations. “I’ve learned a lot,” Todd says, “everything from what goes into a live production of ‘TODAY,’ to how to set up informationals with people across the company.”

“It’s been a wild ride getting to the career she has now. After beginning her undergrad at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as a broadcasting major, she decided to transfer to the University of Nebraska at Omaha to enroll in the journalism program her sophomore year.”

“In my heart, journalism is my biggest passion. I love writing,” Todd says. Throughout her time as a page, Todd has worked with audience coordination for “The Tonight Show,” starring Jimmy Fallon, “Late Night With Seth Meyers” and “Saturday Night Live,” in addition to leading tours at NBCUniversal studios.

Each page has various rotations throughout his or her year at the program. Todd worked in CNBC Digital Strategy and Business Partnerships, NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment PR and “TODAY” show Green Room.

During “TODAY” shows, Todd brought guests to the studio for show teases and segments; facilitated communication among producers, stage managers and security; and oversaw the green rooms. Todd says that she has enjoyed working in different areas of the business while also learning technical skills throughout these rotations.

“I learned what kind of branding went behind making an artist marketable outside of the state they started out in,” Todd says. Her internship at CMT, Todd returned to Omaha to finish her senior year at UNO, graduating cum laude, a semester early with a bachelor’s degree in communication. She majored in journalism and media communication with a concentration in public relations and advertising.

Following graduation, she made her way back to Nashville to intern at the record label Republic Nashville, where she worked on international sales and branding for artists like Taylor Swift.

“In my heart, journalism is my biggest passion. I love writing,” Todd says. She says she enjoyed learning from the professors at UNO and felt as though they truly cared about her education.

“All the journalism classes at Omaha were great, the professors knew my name and really cared about and helped me,” she says. “UNO does a great job with its journalism program by integrating the marketing and public relations sides.”

“The page program has been the most rewarding experience,” Todd says. “The fact that I got accepted reiterated to me that everything I did in college was worth it and that hard work really does pay off.”
For more than 30 years, Cindy Gonzalez has fueled her passion for journalism as a print reporter working for the Omaha World-Herald. While such tools of the trade as social media and web reporting have changed the way she reports, she says her dedication to print journalism and being a beat reporter have never wavered.

Gonzalez says she’s proud to be a University of Nebraska at Omaha alumna and especially credits her work on The Gateway for starting her career. Before she graduated from UNO in 1986, with a Bachelor of Science in Communication, she held internships with KFAB radio and the Omaha World-Herald. That was her first step in the door to becoming a beat reporter.

Over the years, she has covered several beats, ranging from city hall to urban development. However, she says her current housing and commercial real estate beat has been the most rewarding because it’s enabled her to watch her hometown flourish.

Of all her accomplishments, Gonzalez says she is most proud of earning the Bob Dorr Award, given by her colleagues. Named after one of the Omaha World-Herald’s most accomplished reporters, the Dorr Award recognizes a reporter for his or her achievements in the field.

Gonzalez has also earned recognition for her reporting on immigration and minority issues. During her time on the immigration and demographics beat, she covered local stories on race relations and injustices in the community.

“The rewards, related to that beat, I really value because it’s about the change and injustice in our community,” Gonzalez says.

Gonzalez enjoys working with The Gateway to inspire students and help them understand that gaining the foundation and experience at a young age will help launch their careers.

“I plan on staying at the Blackstone Meatball for a while, and then hopefully move on to a sports writing job somewhere out of state,” Franco says.
Kevin Warneke brings fundraising knowledge to students

By Ryan Lance

Kevin Warneke says fundraising was never the career path he dreamed about while growing up in small-town Plainview, Nebraska. With his father owning the local newspaper, Warneke always imagined himself as a journalist. He thought being a reporter or an editor would be his entire life, but journalism would end up being just a pit-stop in his diverse career.

Warneke’s various careers have helped him develop the skills that led to his passion for fundraising. As a reporter for the Omaha World-Herald, Warneke learned how to write accurately and under deadlines.

“The two skills carry with you no matter what you do in life,” Warneke says.

Warneke later moved on to writing training manuals at Boys Town, which laid the foundation to work for organizations that help people.

Always a storyteller, Warneke moved from nonprofit to travel writing for Home & Away magazine. “That was an exciting job because I got to travel, and then write about it, and what job is better than that,” Warneke says.

Warneke entered the fundraising field when he became the chief executive officer at the Ronald McDonald House. Although he says he was initially challenged by asking for donations, this hands-on experience helping families in need gave Warneke the inspiration he needed.

“People are generous, and they want to support organizations that do good work,” Warneke says.

Warneke says it does not matter whether he acquires a donation for $1,000 or $1 million. What is rewarding is being part of an organization that uses donations for good work.

For students aspiring to work in the fundraising field, Warneke offers three pieces of advice. First, he stresses the importance of learning to write well and under a deadline.

Second, he encourages students to take communication courses to help develop their speech and presentation skills. Third, Warneke says students should seek out internships at nonprofits so they learn how systems operate and develop a passion for causes.

His diverse professional experiences have helped develop these skills. Warneke says he finds fundraising to be an incredible career because it allows him to help people. His work at the Steier Group has led him to assist in the creation of two new schools.

Warneke’s work also lets him travel across the Midwest. While travel can feel tedious at times, the end results always wind up being gratifying.

“If there is something you believe in strongly,” Warneke says, “you don’t have to apologize for asking for support.”

Warneke says people are generally charitable, especially if they believe their money is going to a good cause. For example, in 2015, Americans gave a record-breaking $373 billion to charity, according to Giving USA. This is the second year in a row that this record has been broken.

Through his work at the Ronald McDonald House, Warneke gained connections with Steier Group, a fundraising agency, where he has worked for the past six years as associate vice president.

“I had that connection 10 years ago, and it turned into a job,” Warneke says. “I kept in contact with the Steier Group, so it just proves that networking may pay off 10 years later.”

At Steier Group, he works to raise funds for various small nonprofits and schools that require assistance. Warneke says he loves his work at Steier Group because he gets to learn people’s stories and help them as they can continue their work helping others.

Warneke’s career experience is backed by his education. He holds a doctorate degree in leadership education and communication after earning a master of arts degree in communication and a bachelor’s degree in journalism. While working on his master’s degree at UNO, Warneke decided he wanted to teach, so he began to teach the News Writing and Reporting class for the School of Communication.

With changes in the field, students will have both new tools and challenges when they acquire internships and jobs in fundraising. Warneke says fundraisers should embrace technology and use it to reach people, but giving is different depending on the intended audience. Social media is the best choice for some, while others need a more hands-on approach.

“But the bottom line is you have to ask people,” Warneke says. “Whether that’s in person, through a text, or through an email or through Facebook. You still have to reach people and ask them for support. That’s the bottom line, you have to ask. Typically, you do not receive donations unless you ask.”

(Continued from page 10) His goal as an instructor is to help students conquer the common fears of interviewing and working under deadlines. Warneke says it does not matter whether he acquires a degree in leadership education and communication after earning a master of arts degree in communication and a bachelor’s degree in journalism.

Hayley Jurek

Dream Job: Fundraising Manager
Hometown: Omaha, Nebraska
Degree: Bachelor of Science in Communication
Major: Journalism and Media Communication
Concentration: PR and Advertising

“I need to be passionate about the work that I do and be completely involved in it. There are so many causes that are important to me, and in this field, I can make a big impact,” Jurek says.
Jasmyn Goodwin changes the way visitors see Omaha

By Angelina Mangiamelli

When Jasmyn Goodwin began her job at Visit Omaha 10 years ago, she and her boss made up the two-person marketing and communication team.

“The benefit of being in a team like that is you have the ability to build your team from the bottom up,” Goodwin says.

As a marketing and PR assistant, she was the marketing director’s right hand. However, Goodwin had bigger ideas, thinking 10 steps ahead of where was next.

Through her determination and mindful thinking, Goodwin used social media to reach target audiences in surrounding areas.

After a few years on the job, Goodwin decided to build a Facebook and Twitter page. At the time, Facebook wasn’t seen as a promotional tool but more of a platform to connect with friends.

At first, the director of marketing and the executive director didn’t think Facebook was a good use of time and would take away from Goodwin’s main job duties. However, she promised it wouldn’t take away from her work and asked if she could run the page. After much negotiation, they agreed.

Shortly after, the executive director attended a conference telling companies that you are missing out if you aren’t on social media. Managing social media proved too big a task for Goodwin’s position as a marketing assistant so she earned a promotion to social media manager.

Goodwin can definitely give herself credit for making digital strides and keeping Visit Omaha relevant in an electronically changing world. Goodwin used her new title to focus solely on social media and connect with the right audience. She launched on Instagram and Pinterest and started connecting people on LinkedIn.

“I loved shaping the way people saw our city or anything really,” Goodwin says. “Whether it’s to make a purchase or to get people fired up or excited about something, I use those skills to get people to come to Omaha.”

In addition to social media, Goodwin also handled Visit Omaha’s copywriting, advertising and commercials. She needed someone who could focus solely on social media. Goodwin earned another promotion to director of marketing and content and hired a new social media manager.

Through her determination and mindful thinking, Goodwin used social media to reach target audiences in surrounding areas.

The irony of Goodwin’s promoting Omaha, and loving this city as her home, is that she was raised in different states and countries. Goodwin’s father was in the Air Force, which led to frequent moves. She was born in Tampa, Florida, and attended high school in Granyme, Germany. Following her father’s transfer to Offutt Air Force base in Nebraska, Goodwin eventually enrolled at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

She pursued her degree in journalism and public relations and joined the Public Relations Student Society of America. Goodwin took night classes, interned for then Mayor Mike Fahey as a communications assistant and served as UNO PRSSA president. She also earned extra money working as a server on the weekends.

Goodwin says she credits her role as PRSSA president in gaining valuable skills such as multitasking, developing communication strategy and managing crisis through real-world experience.

Today, Goodwin still manages and develops the strategy of social media, but her social media manager handles the day-to-day operations and postings. She sets an overall goal for the year, and month-by-month the overall topics and themes change. (Continued on page 13)

“Today, we are shifting from promoting the destination to promoting the visitor experience,” Goodwin says. “It’s always some place different.”

Goodwin also looks for inspiration in the eyes of bloggers in the surrounding areas of Kansas City, Sioux Falls and Des Moines. Whatever event is happening in the metro, Goodwin researches blogs with good content and a large following and invites them to Omaha. She creates a package that includes hotel stay, restaurant gift certificates and passes to the event.

She uses this tool to engage the bloggers’ audience and connect them to Omaha. She says it is all about self-branding, and this is just another unique tool to do it. In addition to audiences talking about your brand, you want to keep updating content.

“It’s really important to constantly be turning out new content and new information to stay relevant so Google is constantly looking at your website,” Goodwin says.

Goodwin says the biggest change she has seen in the past 10 years is the development of the marketing team. The team has moved away from focusing on conventional sales to brand identity, marketing and leisure travel.

Goodwin says Visit Omaha also faces challenges on a national level. It isn’t that the brand, “Omaha,” has no image, or a negative reputation, it’s that Omaha doesn’t have a national perception. Another challenge is getting locals excited and seeing the importance of Omaha and what she and her staff do to promote it.

“Getting people to understand that we are a visiting destination has been an uphill battle,” Goodwin says. “When locals are excited, it invites more people in, and when more people are invited in, we can host more events.”

No matter what the challenge, Goodwin says she is willing to take on and change it. Goodwin has created a presence on social media with a following of more than 95,000 people on Facebook, almost 6,000 on Instagram and more than 14,000 on Twitter. She has the innovative ability to stay on top of trends and connect with viewers.

Goodwin says Visit Omaha’s goal for the future is working to build a stronger local presence.

“Our focus has been on building Omaha’s brand as a visitor destination on a national level,” Goodwin says. “It will be a process of educating locals on the importance of tourism and getting the entire community involved.”

Goodwin has a unique way of looking for inspiration and keeping Omaha up-to-date with what is happening. Every Friday afternoon, about the time when everyone is waiting to go home, she sends her social media manager out to do something fun. It is her job to collect stories, connect with the people of Omaha and create engaging content for readers and viewers.

“My job is to create something that is relatable and to think about how you want your brand to be,” Goodwin says. “The aim is to try to be relatable and share something that can help them.”

Dream job: Social Media Strategist
Hometown: Cedar Creek, Nebraska
Degree: Bachelor of Science in Communication
Major: Journalism and Media Communication
Concentration: PR and Advertising

“With how the world of social media is changing every day, it is important to have someone who specializes on the ins and outs of social media,” Flynn says.
Communication executive’s career marks historic moments in media

By: Mason Shumaker

Shortly after Kathy Olson declared her major in journalism at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1975, five burglars were arrested at the Democratic National Committee’s headquarters in Washington D.C.

The perpetrators were charged with attempted interception of telephone communications. Eventually, their crime ignited a political scandal that would escalate until the then-president of the United States, Richard Nixon, resigned.

Olson decided to study journalism because it was a practical way to make money as a writer. She never expected to be impassioned by the media, which played a key role in American history.

“I graduated from UNO in 1975, along with a class of journalists who were inspired by the Watergate scandal,” Olson says.

After Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein became household names with their coverage of the Watergate scandal, the duo fueled a spike in investigative journalism. Before Woodward and Bernstein made it mainstream, investigative journalism was a boutique style of reporting. Inspired by the duo, Olson was eager to find stories she could immerse herself in as a journalist.

Her first job in media was assistant editor at a newspaper in Glenwood, Iowa, a rural community. While a small-town newspaper may not sound quite so lucrative to some, Olson considered herself in a unique position to explore investigative journalism.

Eventually, Olson returned to school and earned her master’s degree at Oklahoma State. She spent time as an investigative reporter for The Sun, a Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper in Omaha, Nebraska, before Mutual of Omaha hired her as a copywriter.

Olson has built her career at Mutual of Omaha, switching her career path several times before becoming a company executive. She found herself in another unique position as a communication professional.

Mutual of Omaha has always strived for a fresh approach in the communication field. To continue expanding my knowledge and experience in the journalism and media communications field,” Ciurej says.

Olson says she is continuously inspired as the communication field continues to evolve. The omnipresence of social media means that consumers now expect dialogue with brands they invest in, and companies that don’t necessarily sell sentimental products are looking for new ways to engage the public.

“Most insurance companies don’t put as much effort into communication as Mutual of Omaha does,” Olson says.

In her current position as senior vice president of communications, public relations and account management, Olson manages daily public relations, media relations and associate communications. She also leads teams of writers and print designers, which she enjoys because it lets her use some of the skills she developed as a journalist.

What makes Olson’s position unique is that she is part of Mutual of Omaha’s leadership team. Outside of media, it’s “uncommon” for a communication professional to be a member on a company’s leadership team, she says.

Olson says Mutual of Omaha’s decision to include her on the leadership team is a step in the right direction toward the company’s long-term communication goals.

“You don’t see a lot of communication professionals on leadership teams in the Mutual of Omaha’s industry, but I think it’s important to bring communication to the table,” Olson says. “I hope more companies do so.”

Perhaps the most influential event in communication since Watergate is the phenomenon of media convergence, Olson says. Today, communication students at UNO learn about the importance of fluency in all forms of media such as print, photography, audio, video, social media and blogs. However, Olson suggests students resist the temptation to solely focus on the creative elements of their work.

“A lot of people who go into public relations or journalism are creative thinkers who want to do creative work,” Olson says. “Communication professionals need to develop a business mindset because, ultimately, they’re going to end up working for a business.”

She also recommends students appreciate the importance of business experience when working for major companies. Olson credits much of her success at Mutual of Omaha to her prior business experience, and she says it’s “crucial” for any communication professional in any corporate environment.

While a reporter’s role has changed dramatically since Watergate, to be successful, an innate sense of curiosity is essential. Olson says she isn’t sure what the future will bring, but she’s excited about the endless possibilities.
Like many college students, Heather Garth did not know what she wanted to do with her future. As a University of Nebraska at Omaha senior, she knew her interests lay in the fields of journalism, advertising and public relations, but she wasn’t sure where to go from there.

Fast-forward to today, and Garth says she enjoys her fast-paced lifestyle as an associate art director at Swanson Russell, where she has worked since February 2016.

As an associate art director, she works with copywriters, designers and the creative director to develop ideas for their clients. She develops creative strategy for campaigns, logos and brand identity.

A 2009 graduate, Garth has fond memories of her involvement in the Public Relations Student Society of America and Ad Club from her time at UNO. Garth says she believes the work she did for those groups truly helped shape her as a professional.

“I really liked being a part of PRSSA, we did real work for real clients and actually made stuff happen,” Garth says. “I think it really set me up for wanting to be successful in life.”

She discovered her love for the communication field after her older sister took her on a photoshoot in New York when she was 18 years old. When she saw the advertising agency, she knew where she belonged.

“I’ve always loved the communication field,” Garth says.

Garth says the real work she completed for PRSSA at UNO helped land her first job out of college as a public relations coordinator at Swanson Russell in 2010.

However, after less than a year working at Swanson Russell, Garth realized she wanted to be more creative in her professional career.

Realizing that the world of public relations wasn’t for her, she made the move to production artist within Swanson Russell, and quickly realized this was a better fit for her.

After working as a production artist for about a year, Garth yearned for more responsibility and to expand her horizons. She found herself extremely interested in the world of art and graphic design.

Her passion for design led her to the decision to earn a graduate degree at the University of Texas at Austin. At UT, one of the top advertising programs in the nation, Garth learned the tools necessary to work with clients and help them meet their creative needs.

“Just get started and enjoy it,” Garth says. “Constantly be in the evolution of learning, that has always proved really valuable to me.”

“That was one of the best experiences of my life,” Garth says. “Getting my master’s was really important.”

After graduating from UT, Garth decided to move back to her hometown of Omaha, Nebraska, with a renewed sense of confidence. After the grueling final project of her graduate career, Garth says she was sure of her work and was proud of the improvements she made creatively.

While she enjoyed her time in Texas, Garth wanted to return to Omaha. She soon found herself applying for the associate art director position at Swanson Russell.

“The process of figuring all the creative out is my favorite thing about this job,” Garth says. “It’s the most painful part of the process, but when you finally figure out what is perfect for that particular campaign, it’s priceless.”

Garth enjoys the creative atmosphere of an advertising agency because of the people she’s surrounded by on a daily basis.

“I think you have a lot more freedom to be yourself,” she says. “If you like to be yourself, more relaxed and more about the work, this is a great atmosphere.”

Garth says she’s glad her start in public relations brought her into the world of advertising agencies. She believes it takes time to reach your goals and that to earn a title, you must be diligent and work hard.

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“Just get started and enjoy it,” Garth says. “Constantly be in the evolution of learning, that has always proved really valuable to me.”

Dream Job: Ad Agency Creative Director
Hometown: Omaha, Nebraska, but originally from England. She moved here in 2004.
Degree: B.S. in Communication and Studio Art
Majors: Journalism and Media Communication and Graphic Design
Concentration: PR and Advertising

Ford says: “I would like to work in an agency, specifically doing graphic design. I’d like to stay in Omaha. I really love it here. I’d eventually like to be a creative director at an ad agency with a fun atmosphere.”

Heather Garth found her creative side at Swanson Russell. Photo by Bryce Kneeland.
DeMuth finds fulfillment in work for the heart

By Kylie Holman

Whether she is planning a fundraiser for a nonprofit or writing grant proposals, Stacy DeMuth uses communication as a mission in life.

DeMuth graduated in December 2007, with a degree in Journalism and Public Relations from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. After graduation, DeMuth started her career as an intern for Planit Omaha, where she gained important experience in event planning. She considered going into corporate PR after graduation but was encouraged by a mentor to accept a job for a nonprofit called Youth Emergency Services.

DeMuth ended up working at YES for 8 1/2 years. DeMuth started as its marketing coordinator. This was a new area for the company, so she did not have a team to assist her.

"In the nonprofit world, you have to wear a lot of hats," DeMuth says. "It’s really fun because you get to do so many things so it gives you a lot of experience."

Later, DeMuth became in charge of event planning for YES. During this time, she created the “Dance for a Chance” event, which raised $12,000 in its first year. This event continued yearly and earned up to $75,000.

In 2009, DeMuth became the development director at YES. Although she loved the creative freedom the position granted her, she decided to step down from the role after her first child was born. DeMuth moved into a part-time role in donor relations, which allowed her to balance her work at YES and her home life.

Nonprofit work allowed DeMuth to do what she loved while working for a cause she cared about. She was able to interact directly with many of the youth that came through the doors and always visits with them when she can.

“I need the touchy-feely part of a job,” DeMuth says. “It makes every day rewarding.” (Continued on Page 19)

In 2016, after her second child was born, DeMuth left her position at YES in August 2016 to look after her two children as a full-time mom. Taking a break from her career is definitely a change for DeMuth, but she loves spending time with her children.

DeMuth still tries to do consulting work on the side for nonprofits. She says that it keeps her up-to-date with what is happening in the field. She also writes grants for nonprofits, which was one of the many jobs she had at YES.

DeMuth plans on going back to working full time once her children are in school. While she remains open-minded, DeMuth believes that she will stay in the nonprofit sector.

DeMuth emphasizes the importance of remembering people and experiences. This includes maintaining contact with former co-workers and classmates, and also class speakers or internship partners.

“Harness the people you used to work with,” DeMuth says. “You never know. That old co-worker could give you your next opportunity.”

DeMuth takes immense pride in her work in communication. Combined with her nonprofit work, she is able to use her talents to tell stories she finds important. DeMuth says that the best part of her job is getting to watch the youth the nonprofit helped and being able to tell the community their stories.

“It gives me a good sense of giving back,” DeMuth says. “I’m helping others with what I do.”

By Allisha Anderson

“My dream job would probably be doing special events and marketing for any animal-related non-profit,” Chasek says.

Chasek says.
Subramanian brings her experience in science journalism to UNO

By Liz Stevens

Roma Subramanian grew up a diligent student in Mumbai, India. Her interest in journalism and biology led her to a career as a professor in Omaha, Nebraska.

From the beginning, she wanted to combine her passions for science and writing to study the field of science journalism. She came to the United States in 2005 to study science journalism at Texas A&M University.

She stumbled upon a position in science writing at Cactus Communication in Mumbai. She worked as a science journalist, editing articles and manuscripts from scientists whose primary language wasn’t English. As the editor, it was Subramanian’s job to make sure that the manuscripts flowed neatly and were grammatically correct.

The idea of interdisciplinary work, which is the combination of two different academic disciplines, has always been important to Subramanian. Her position at Cactus Communication allowed her to combine both scientific and journalistic practices.

“Being a science writer sparked Subramanian’s interest in science journalism. From her early days as a student, she was driven by her desire to connect her interests with the content that she was studying. Subramanian says. “I try to involve students in the conversation as much as possible.”

Her position as a science writer sparked Subramanian’s desire to go back to school and learn more about the field.

“Science communication is still a developing field in India, so I figured to learn more, I’d have to go abroad. I began researching schools, and I found a program at Texas A&M University,” Subramanian says.

During her master’s program in Texas, Subramanian was offered an assistantship for the office of communication and public relations. In the position, she helped the office produce a magazine that interviewed scientists. She also wrote news stories and press releases.

After she obtained her master’s degree in Science Journalism, she began a Ph.D. program at the University of Missouri. Subramanian graduated with her Ph.D. in journalism in December 2016 and came to the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where she teaches journalism and communication courses.

Subramanian decided to teach at UNO because the university shares many of her professional ideals. Most important, the university understands the importance of service learning, which is the combination of two different academic disciplines, has always been important to Subramanian. Her position at Cactus Communication allowed her to combine both scientific and journalistic practices.

“One aspect of teaching Communication Fundamentals is to help students see how specific aspects of their course work could potentially be used in their future career,” she says.

Subramanian’s job to make sure that the manuscripts flowed neatly and were grammatically correct.

The idea of interdisciplinary work, which is the combination of two different academic disciplines, has always been important to Subramanian. Her position at Cactus Communication allowed her to combine both scientific and journalistic practices.

“The idea of interdisciplinary work, which is the combination of two different academic disciplines, has always been important to Subramanian. Her position at Cactus Communication allowed her to combine both scientific and journalistic practices. She says. “I try to bring in examples from my life and my own experiences. Hopefully, try and build engagement that way.”

Subramanian says. “I try to involve students in the conversation as much as possible.”

Her interest in health communication is one of the factors that drove Subramanian to teach. Subramanian says she hopes to someday be able to share her interest in health communication with students by creating a course around that interest and guiding students through research.

Subramanian advocates engagement. Photo by Bryce Kneeland.

Life and work experience bring UNO teaching success

By Skylar Smith

As a University of Nebraska at Omaha student, Courtney Gillotte put in long hours to earn her master’s degree while also working full time as a trainer at First Data.

Although this juggling act proved challenging, Gillotte says she found the coursework so interesting she didn’t mind the long hours. Working as a trainer prepared her for her career and cemented her love of teaching.

Hard work and long hours paid off when Gillotte graduated, in 2000, with a master’s degree in communication. She returned to UNO in 2006 to teach speech communication courses.

Even after being at UNO for a decade, Gillotte says she still finds enjoyment and inspiration on campus.

“It’s something different every day, so it doesn’t ever feel like work to me,” Gillotte says. “Even when I’m grading papers, I really love it.”

While working at First Data, Gillotte took professional development courses with a focus on effective adult-learning principles. These courses greatly influenced her teaching style.

“I also had the benefit of amazing managers, mentors and professors who helped influence and shape my teaching style,” Gillotte says.

Gillotte now teaches a variety of classes including Small Group Communication, Advanced Public Speaking, Public Speaking Fundamentals, Speaking Confidently and Communication in Business and the Professions.

Gillotte says she enjoys knowing first-hand what students are experiencing.

“I enjoy helping students see how specific aspects of their course work could potentially be used in their future career,” she says.

One coarse Gillotte teaches is offered for students with high anxiety for public speaking. She says it is an extremely rewarding course for her to teach.

One aspect of teaching Public Speaking Fundamentals is working with students from diverse backgrounds.

“One is such a melting pot of students, and in my classes, it helps me get perspective,” Gillotte says. “When you get students from other cultures, you have to keep in mind they may do things differently, and it helps us see why we do things the way we do in a Western culture.”

Gillotte says she advises students to enjoy the journey. “Both in and outside of school. “It’s a fun time and at UNO there are so many opportunities for students,” she says.
Ogden looks forward to exploring the Rockies in retirement

By Angelina Mangiamelli

Dr. Dave Ogden is saying goodbye after teaching for 15 years at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. An avid hiker and runner, Ogden looks forward to spending more time in the Rocky Mountains in his retirement. He plans to climb one mountain in every range in Colorado.

After high school, Ogden landed at UNO, participated on the track and cross-country team and majored in criminal justice.

“I was fresh off the farm,” Ogden says. “I wanted to get off the farm and move to a big city. I had never been to Omaha before so I said, ‘Yeah, I want to go to school there,’ so I did.”

Ogden switched his major to broadcasting and eventually found a home at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

After spending 13 years at UNMC in public relations, Ogden decided to enter graduate school so he could build a teaching career. He graduated with his master’s in communication from UNO in 1990. After earning his degree, he began teaching broadcasting at Wayne State College. During that time, Ogden also wrote his dissertation in sports sociology and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Education.

After 11 years at Wayne State, Ogden returned to UNO to teach public relations and broadcasting courses. This was an offer he says he could not refuse because, during his time at Wayne State, he commuted to Omaha every weekend to see his family.

Ogden has seen a lot of changes during his 15 years at UNO.

He says the focus point of students has become more career-driven while they balance hectic schedules with work and school.

“I’ve watched the School of Communication build on what it has done, and seeing the program grow has been fun,” Ogden says.

Ogden considers the faculty in the School of Communication his “family.” He recalls the time six years ago when he had surgery for a benign brain tumor.

He says the faculty told him, “Don’t worry, we got you covered.”

Knowing his passion for baseball, every faculty member autographed a baseball and sent it to the hospital. Ogden says he still has the baseball and it’s in his “best collection of memorabilia.”

Ogden says faculty at UNO are unlike others he has worked with. They always keep in contact and all have the same goal in mind: to be student-centered.

Despite more free time to climb mountains, Ogden says he will miss the students the most. He says he hopes the faculty remembers his passion for students and teaching to continue a legacy of student focus.

“Recognize that you have some great students and enjoy every moment you can,” Ogden says. “Realize how fortunate you are to be here and able to teach these students.”

Imagine being a university student expected to produce a television news program to compete with local stations for viewers on a historic election night. Stakes are high, especially for University of Nebraska at Omaha students just starting their careers at The Omaha News.

Professor Chris Allen has supervised The Omaha News staff in its coverage of every gubernatorial, legislative and presidential election since 2004. The 2016 presidential race between candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton was historic for many reasons, but Allen says he initially worried about an unexpected historic moment for The Omaha News.

“We had less students than ever before, only eight,” Allen says. “We knew we would have to reach out to other classes for resources on election night, like writing, photography and social media.”

The Omaha News operates out of the journalism capstone courses. Allen gathered other School of Communication capstone students from PR and Advertising and Creative Media to build its staff and offer tangible professional experience covering the election.

“We needed everybody,” Allen says. “Even covering a single Senate election would have been a huge undertaking for just eight. Students and instructors from other classes were totally professional, and they did a great job.”

For every presidential race, Allen starts preparing The Omaha News coverage of election night months in advance, by doing extensive research on the candidates as soon as they are officially nominated. By the time students arrive, he has developed a professional newsroom and has already decided what to cover, which students will work on certain stories and how resources will be allocated.

After all the preparation, The Omaha News aired its live coverage on the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications channel for three hours on Election Night. Although the staff was satisfied with its coverage, it had a few surprises.

On the technical side, the program went according to plan, with no major audio or video issues. Matt Barros, the capstone graduate teaching assistant, produced the first hour with a script written days ahead of time.

Allen produced the rest of the program unscripted, however, he says, breaking news was surprisingly hard to come by on such an important night. Allen produced his portion unscripted because he expected breaking news about the various results, typically announced sometime toward the end of the broadcast. However, no major results were confirmed until much later after the broadcast.

“The outcome was a little bit of a surprise,” Allen says. “We were lucky enough to get an enormous amount of help from political science teachers who appeared on-air. Without their help, we probably could not have filled the entire program with content.”

Allen wrote two preemptive closing statements about the presidential race for the broadcast, one for each candidate if he or she won. However, with no confirmation about the presidential election results by the end of the broadcast, Allen had to write a new closing statement on the spot.

In 2018, The Omaha News election night broadcast will cover Nebraska votes for governor, Congress and the Senate. Although Allen is as passionate about the program as ever, he admits that he is not exactly counting the days until the next election.

“Oh obviously, election night is something that is always on my radar,” Allen says, “but I am still recovering from the last one.”
Election Activities

The University of Nebraska at Omaha hosted three DebateWatch events throughout the 2016 presidential campaign, where students could watch and discuss the presidential debates in a group environment. DebateWatch is a nonpartisan event supported by The Commission on Presidential Debates.

Approximately 230 students, faculty and members of the public attended the first DebateWatch event on Sept. 26, 2016 at the Milo Bail Student Center Ballroom. UNO held the other two DebateWatch events on Oct. 4 and Oct. 19, respectively, with the former for the vice presidential debate and the latter for the third presidential debate.

In addition to watching the debate live, viewers could tweet their reactions in real time using the hashtag #UNODW16 to engage in an online discussion.

Students in the Creative Media and PR and Advertising Journalism capstones collaborate on election night to deliver live broadcast updates through The Omaha News and social media. Students attended live rallies of local congressional races. Photos by Clarissa Romero and Hayley Janek.

UNO engages presidential politics on campus with DebateWatch

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In addition to watching the debate live, viewers could tweet their reactions in real time using the hashtag #UNODW16 to engage in an online discussion. Dr. Adam Tyma, graduate program chair, says that Twitter helped students interact with each other about the debate and become more informed.

Crisis Communication with Paul Critchlow

Most public relations professionals will experience at least one communication crisis during their career. So, there may be no better way to learn tips on how to best handle a crisis than from one who has had many experiences to share.

Paul Critchlow returned to his alma mater, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Oct. 26, to give a presentation on crisis management. More than 70 students, alumni and community members attended the event, sponsored by UNO’s chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America.

During Critchlow’s career, he led crisis teams for two national events: the terrorist attacks, on Sept. 11, 2001, that killed more than 2,600 people when the World Trade Center’s Twin Towers collapsed and the nuclear disaster at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania.

Critchlow, at the time of 9-11, senior vice president of communications and public affairs for Merrill Lynch, led his team away from the headquarters, adjacent to the World Trade Center. They ran through the streets to Critchlow’s brownstone in Greenwich Village and set up a temporary command center in his home.

He relied on his combat experience with the U.S. Army in Vietnam in the immediate aftermath of evacuating the building.

“Our priorities first were to account for all of our employees and second to get the business up and running for the clients,” Critchlow says.

Critchlow stressed the importance of staying calm when chaos surrounds you.

Critchlow stayed with Merrill Lynch through the Wall Street crisis and merger with Bank of America. He retired, in 2015, after a 30-year career as vice chairman of public markets.

Earlier in his career, Critchlow served as the press secretary to Pennsylvania Gov. Dick Thornburgh, at the time of the Three Mile Island’s partial nuclear meltdown, the most serious accident in U.S. commercial nuclear power plant history.

Although it was a small radioactive release, with no ill-health effects on the public, it completely changed emergency response planning, Critchlow says.

Critchlow says they were successful in their plan, although it was difficult with the negativity and severity of the situation.

“Don’t feed into what the media is saying,” Critchlow says. “It is your job to get the facts out and be truthful.”

Critchlow shared his four principles of crisis management.

One, assemble a crisis management team; two, get the facts out quickly; three, make a plan and stick to it; and four, tell the truth and be consistent. He stressed the importance of relying on your team.

“In a crisis, your team is everything,” Critchlow says.

By Angelina Mangiamelli

Alumnus Paul Critchlow shared his experience with major U.S. crises. Photo courtesy of Pfizer inc.
From Afghanistan to Omaha and back again, Ibrahimi finds success
By Allisha Anderson

Parwin Ibrahimi has found a "home" in Omaha, Nebraska, and at UNO. Photo by Hayley Jorek.

Parwin Ibrahimi says she always believed “there is no limit to your success. You just have to work for it.”

During her journey from war-torn Afghanistan to Omaha, Nebraska, Ibrahimi faced many challenges. Ibrahimi was born in the capital of Kabul, Afghanistan.

“Women often dressed in Western garb. Men and women went to university together,” Ibrahimi says. “They worked alongside of each other very comfortably.”

As a teenager, Ibrahimi says she and her friends would see movies, concerts and theater productions. With no clothing restrictions, Ibrahimi wore mini-skirts and other fashionable apparel. Ibrahimi’s life dramatically changed, in 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded her country.

The Soviets took control of Kabul and other major cities and highways. Mujahideen rebels flattened villages in one day, to deny their enemies safe places, which began a 10-year conflict.

Ibrahimi says that the country changed completely in a matter of weeks, with many buildings being repainted in the Soviet’s signature red.

Before the Soviet invasion, Ibrahimi worked as a part-time language instructor at the U.S. Embassy and attended Kabul University full time. She says the Soviets required police permission to keep working at the embassy.

“I was among millions of people who were being followed daily. My entire family were harassed and followed,” Ibrahimi says.

Educated Afghans were required to join the Communist Party.

“You were afraid to refuse in the fear of retaliation,” Ibrahimi says.

She describes being in a classroom where five people had joined the Communists. The mission of those who joined was to keep an eye on others and report those who refused to join the party. The Communists were armed and did not hesitate to use their guns, Ibrahimi says.

Ibrahimi’s family knew it needed to find a way out of the Soviet-controlled Afghanistan. One year after the invasion, when she was nine months pregnant with her first child, Ibrahimi and her husband, along with about 25 fellow Afghans, fled across the Afghan-Pakistani border.

The Ibrahimi’s first son was born 11 days after crossing the border. Nearly a year later, in September of 1981, they arrived in Nebraska with the help of a sister studying at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. (Continued on page 27)

The Ibrahimi family settled in Nebraska with only $350 in their pockets. Although the Ibrahimis qualified for government assistance, they refused to apply. Ibrahimi says it was not in their nature to receive anything unless they worked for it. She earned only $1.25 per hour at her first job at A-1 Direct Mail in Omaha, where she worked 40 hours a week.

Although Ibrahimi made a little more than minimum wage, it was not enough to support the family. Her husband worked two jobs to make ends meet, clocking between 60 and 70 hours a week. Following his shift at a gas station, Ibrahimi picked up her husband and took him to his dishwashing job at a local restaurant because the couple shared only one car. This continued for several years.

Along with financial struggles, the Ibrahimi family faced difficulties adjusting to Western culture. The language barrier, including American slang, proved difficult for the family.

“I remember digging into the dictionary to find out the actual meaning. There was not Google search at that time,” Ibrahimi says.

Ibrahimi later became a secretary at the University of Nebraska Medical Center before she assumed a position as office supervisor for the UNO admissions office.

After 16 years of service at UNO, Ibrahimi received a call from the U.S. Army notifying her of a severe shortage of female translators. She went through basic military training before her deployment to Afghanistan.

Originally, Ibrahimi took a six-month leave from UNO, but the need was so great, she stayed as a translator for nearly nine years.

“I found that job to be rewarding, so I continued to help and decided to go back,” Ibrahimi says.

Although Ibrahimi loved her job and had moved up several ranks, she still missed her home in Nebraska.

“Omaha has always been my home,” Ibrahimi says.

After her service, she returned to Nebraska and UNO, where she now works as staff assistant for the School of Communication.

Ibrahimi says an educational institute is the best place to work. She says she loves seeing "young, eager students running to their classes.”

She is also thankful for the faculty members she interacts with each day.

“Above all,” Ibrahimi says, “I am blessed with a wonderful boss and absolutely bright people in the department.”

Ibrahimi currently works in the Office of University Communications as a metrics and content management system associate.

Sophie Ibrahimi: Growing up Bi-cultural
By Allisha Anderson

Sophie Ibrahimi, daughter of immigrant Parwin Ibrahimi has been shaped by cultural experiences. Photo by Ayu Haramura.

Growing up around two different cultures is not something that everyone experiences. Sophia Ibrahimi, daughter of Parwin Ibrahimi, says this shaped her life in ways no one else could understand.

Ibrahimi’s parents emigrated from war-torn Afghanistan to the United States in the early 1980s and have worked tirelessly to build their lives in Omaha, Nebraska. Ibrahimi says she admires her mother for her work ethic and strength.

“She has a no-nonsense attitude that makes her extremely effective in everything she does,” Ibrahimi says.

Her family and love for the city of Omaha are what made Ibrahimi attend the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She graduated in May of 2011 with a Bachelor of Science in Communication and a concentration in Public Relations and Advertising.

Ibrahimi currently works in the Office of University Communications as a metrics and content management system associate.

Growing up around two different cultures is not something that everyone experiences. Sophia Ibrahimi, daughter of Parwin Ibrahimi, says this shaped her life in ways no one else could understand.
Grant continues to fuel training for Afghanistan instructors

By Bre Miller

In 2016, the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s School of Communication received a $2 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to work with instructors from Afghanistan to establish Speech Communication programs at Balkh University and Kabul University in Afghanistan.

Dr. Chris Allen, UNO professor and education director of the grant, says the purpose of the grant was to bring staff members of both universities to UNO for three weeks to observe and talk to UNO educators and learn about UNO’s Speech Communication program.

However, in the summer of 2016, USAID put a ban on all individuals traveling from Afghanistan to the U.S. Allen says this caused him to rethink how UNO was going to aid instructors from Balkh and Kabul universities.

Instead of traveling to Afghanistan, a number of out-of-country trips and workshops were scheduled, the first of which occurred in Dubai over UNO’s fall break in 2016. The initial plan was to fly in colleagues from Afghanistan. However, due to last-minute visa problems, Allen says only two instructors were able to go. This led to Allen creating a conference in New Delhi, India, for members of UNO, Balkh University and Kabul University to attend. The conference turned out to be an “enormous success,” he says.

Allen says: “It exceeded my wildest hopes in what we were able to accomplish. We had to take some of what we were planning for Dubai and put it into New Delhi, which pushed some of the original content for the New Delhi seminar out. So, we are planning to do another conference around Christmas break of this year.”

In addition to the out-of-country conferences taking place throughout the year, Allen says UNO instructors meet online once a month with educators from both Balkh and Kabul University to exchange information for the Afghan colleges to create a Communications Studies program.

In the fall of 2016, a committee led by Dr. Adam Tyma, graduate program chair, met to find new and creative ways to promote the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s School of Communication events and activities.

The result of the committee work was the creation of a MavSync portal to showcase and organize event flyers and news releases under the banner of “School of Communication Presents.” All of the School of Communication’s faculty, staff and students were invited to the portal to remain informed of upcoming events.

MavSync is a UNO website that provides access to all college and student involvement information for all of the university’s students.

In addition, the Public Relations and Advertising capstone course student-run agency, Capstone Communication, creates a Communications Studies program.

School of Communication Presents: Women in Media Panel

By Hayley Jurek

The University of Nebraska at Omaha’s School of Communication, on Nov. 30, hosted the Women in Media panel, which featured four prominent Omaha women in the media.

The panel consisted of Malorie Maddox, co-anchor for WOWT; Sarah Baker Hansen, Omaha World-Herald food critic; Gina Melton, KAT 103.7 Morning Show co-host; and Dr. Gail F. Baker, dean of the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media.

The panel discussed the unique difficulties that women face with careers in media. Certain issues such as criticisms of their physical appearance or unfair wage gaps have always existed for women in their careers, but modern media tools have brought even more difficulties.

“Be persistent, because people will tell you that you can’t do it,” Dr. Baker says. “You will learn that if you want to be successful, you can’t take no for an answer.”

All of the women in the panel agreed that having a support system is absolutely necessary. They lean on significant others, family and friends for support and inspiration to get them through the tough times.

The last piece of advice this panel gave was that integrity is everything. It’s important to always portray yourself in the best way possible. While sometimes difficult, it’s the key to a long and successful career.
School of Communication Presents:
Comedy Night

By Kris Krug

UNO professors Don Bowen and Cameron Logsdon perform at Comedy Night. Left to right: comedians Jim K., Cameron Logsdon, Nick Allen, Heather James, Don Bowen. Photo by Clarissa Romero.

University of Nebraska at Omaha students gathered in the Milo Bail Student Center on Jan. 25 for Comedy Night, which highlighted the hilarious side of speech communication.

Five standup comedians presented at the event, hosted by the School of Communication. There were performances by UNO professors, and part-time comedians Don Bowen and Cameron Logsdon, and area comedians Heather James, Nick Allen and Jim K.

Bowen, who hosted the event, says he wanted to show students a different side of speech communication. Bowen says he would love to see events like Comedy Night on a regular basis. While this was the first year of the event, Bowen hopes to make it annual.

“With everything so digital anymore, it’s even more important that you have that face-to-face moment,” James says. “Whether you’re in sales, corporate communication or anything.”

School of Communication Presents:
Best and Worst Super Bowl Commercials

By Mackenzie Millard

The University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Advertising Club, with partners Public Relations Student Society of America, MavPR and Capstone Communication, hosted the Best and Worst Super Bowl Commercials Event.

A panel of local communication and advertising professionals discussed the most impactful commercials that aired during that year’s Super Bowl.

This year, the event was also supported by the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media Cultural Enrichment Grant. 2017’s panel consisted of Sarah Bergeron, graphic designer at Empspace; Heather Garth, associate art director at Swanson Russell; Michael Johnson, senior copywriter at Bailey Lauerman; Dave Webster, chief creative officer of Webster; and Randa Zalman, CEO of Canary and Coal.

Bergeron, Garth and Zalman are all UNO alumnae.

The Best and Worst Event allows students, faculty and the public to gain insight from area professionals into what makes each ad successful or, in their opinion, unsuccessful.

School of Communication alumna sets sights for Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games

By Ryan Lance

Originally from Slovenia, Maja Mihalinec moved to Omaha to attend the University of Nebraska at Omaha to be a part of its track and field team and to join UNO’s award-winning PRSSA chapter. Mihalinec says that university’s track team and public relations courses were a perfect fit for her athletic aspirations and studies.

After graduation, Mihalinec moved back home to Slovenia to pursue a career as a professional athlete, with a goal to participate in the 2016 Rio Olympics. Through her hard work and dedication, she qualified and ran for her home country.

Mihalinec says the competition was unlike anything she has experienced before and is determined to continue her training, with her eyes set for Tokyo 2020.

UNO student stars on “Big Fan” show

By Angela Chicas

University of Nebraska at Omaha student Colt Paulsen says he had the experience of a lifetime proving he is Kim Kardashian’s biggest fan, by beating her in a trivia game.

Paulsen starred in ABC’s television show “Big Fan” that aired on Jan. 16. Paulsen won the competition by correctly answering the tiebreaker question, he says the skills he has gained in courses such as Media Writing and Media Storytelling helped him have confidence in his media skills.

“This has really driven me to continue to pursue my dreams,” Paulsen says. “In the future, I want to move to Los Angeles and work at E! News and report celebrity news.”

Capstone classes produce video for Durham Booth Manor

By Jordan Show

The School of Communication’s PR and Advertising Capstone and Creative Media Capstone teams came together during fall 2016 semester to create a promotional video for the Charles and Margre Durham Booth Manor; a housing area for senior citizens with low income.

Hayley Jurik, account executive for the project, says the team’s success is attributed to the constant communication between both teams and the Durham Manor’s staff. The PR and Advertising capstone, which operated as an agency doing pro-bono work for non-profits, focused on writing the script and organizing the film shoot, while the Creative Media capstone filmed and edited the video.

Due to the students’ immense planning, the filming finished seamlessly, Jurik says. Afterward, the capstone classes were straight to editing the footage and recording voice-over audio. After weeks of work and various drafts, the final video was completed and given to the Durham Booth Manor for its promotional use.

News Briefs

By Ryan Lance

Creative Media Capstone student James Zander and PR and Advertising capstone students Ryan Lance and Andrew Weber edit the Durham Booth Manor promotional video. Photo by Hayley Jurik.

News Briefs

By Angela Chicas

By Mackenzie Millard

The University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Advertising Club, with partners Public Relations Student Society of America, MavPR and Capstone Communication, hosted the Best and Worst Super Bowl Commercials Event.

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Bergeron, Garth and Zalman are all UNO alumnae.

The Best and Worst Event allows students, faculty and the public to gain insight from area professionals into what makes each ad successful or, in their opinion, unsuccessful.
School of Communication:  
Top Graduate Students

By Liz Stevens

The University of Nebraska at Omaha’s School of Communication top graduate student awards are reserved for students who produce or demonstrate top-level projects, theses, class work and teaching abilities.

Dr. Adam Tyma, graduate program chair, says, many graduate students in the School of Communication possess the motivation and skill needed to be successful in the graduate program. Many hard-working students are nominated for each award every year.

“I am always impressed by our graduate students,” Tyma says. “I really am, the vast majority of them are working full time and sometimes going to school full time.”

Once professors have nominated students, committees of impartial communication professors discuss and examine each nominee’s work.

“All four of our people for the awards this year are exemplary, and to have known them is a pleasure and an honor,” Tyma says.

Amy Freshman received the award for top project. Along with her graduate degree, she earned a certificate in human resources and training, Dr. Karen Dwyer, human resources and training graduate certificate program chair, says.

Freshmen’s project was titled “The Power of Facilitation.” Freshman developed a training manual and workshop designed to help people improve their facilitation techniques and build an effective team.

Alice Fanari received the award for top graduate student. Fanari started the graduate program a semester early. Tyma says Fanari is a great example of what it takes to thrive in a graduate program because she is always ready to go and take on a challenge.

QueenTara Pimentel received the award for top graduate teaching assistant. Pimentel currently teaches Argumentation and Debate and is a coach for UNO’s forensics team. Tyma says Pimentel took her training and ranking as a forensics competitor to the classroom to inspire her students.

The award for top thesis was given to Oluseyi Adegbola, who is currently teaching as a Ph.D. student at Texas Tech University.

““I want to have the drive that they have,” Tyma says, “because it is inspiring.”

Graduate students Alice Fanari (l) and Amy Freshman are among the top graduate students. Not pictured, QueenTara Pimentel and Oluseyi Adegbola. Photo by Liz Stevens.
Joshua Wagner will graduate in May 2017 from the University of Nebraska at Omaha with a double major, a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication.

Wagner is the recipient of the Outstanding Communication Studies student award for 2017. He was nominated by professors Barb Pickering and Joy Chao, with an official letter from Assistant Director of the School of Communication Paige Toller for his work ethic and passion for the field.

“The teacher who nominated me has many students whom she could have nominated for such an award, yet, she chose me,” Wagner says. “This lets me know that I have worked hard to get where I am, though at times it doesn’t feel like I have worked hard enough or accomplished enough.”

Wagner graduates with a variety of experience in both the communication and political science fields. He has worked as a peer academic leader in the Thompson Learning Community and a business development intern in the Omaha area. His hard work through his education is finally paying off as graduation approaches, and he says, he looks forward to what the future will hold after graduation.

“While education, on its own, is a worthwhile endeavor, it is often a thankless and unnoticed pursuit, which can be difficult,” Wagner says. “Recognition of such effort is not only a validation of all that I have worked for, but also gives me a morale boost that will allow me to make it the rest of the way through my studies.”

Tierra M,A,Yah will not only be receiving her Bachelor of Science in Communication degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, but also taking home the Top Journalism and Media Communication Student Award from UNO’s School of Communication.

With a major in Journalism and Media Communication and a concentration in journalism, M,A,Yah was also honored with induction into the Kappa Tau Alpha national honor society in journalism and mass communication.

“Being presented with this award makes me very emotional,” M,A,Yah says. “As a first-generation college student, simply graduating will mean a lot to me, but doing it with such a huge honor is even more special.”

M,A,Yah has gained an expertise in the communication field through her work with Fox 42 KPTM, The Omaha News, The Gateway newspaper and the variety of courses she took throughout college.

“Through receiving this award, I would like to be remembered for always giving my absolute best effort and never giving up hope, as cliché as that may sound,” M,A,Yah says. “There were several times when I was unsure if I would be able to attend college, so graduating on time with grades and an award that reflect my commitment to my education is very meaningful to me.”
Mav Radio

MavRadio, the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s student-run radio station, is thriving. With more than 10 members on staff it is always producing new, award-winning content.

In 2017, 10 MavRadio staff members won a total of seven awards at the National Broadcast Education Association’s college television and radio awards. Winners are:

• Noah Sullinger, Justin Iedelman and Justin Doering in first place for Best Play-by-Play Talent for UNO Baseball vs. Oral Roberts
• Gonzalo Avalos in first place for Sound Engineering and Production
• Cale DeWispelear in second place and Marii Vaughan in third place for Best Comedy or Drama
• James Zanders and Zachary Padilla in third place for Best Music Video
• Lyle Kwiatkowski received the Award of Excellence for Best Promo or Commercial
• Andy Prescott received the Award of Excellence for Best Radio Feature Reporting

“The seven awards mark the highest number MavRadio has ever received at this competition and they will only go up from here,” says Jodeanne Brownlee, MavRadio adviser.

Noah Sullinger, UNO student and MavRadio general manager, says the station has grown exponentially over the last few years.

Sullinger was the sports director during the 2015 to 2016 school year and earned the general manager position by showing incredible professionalism, Brownlee says.

Recent changes to the station, Sullinger says, include the addition of more play-by-play sports flippers for upcoming meetings and events. They also plan monthly meetings, manage social media accounts and brainstorm fundraiser ideas.

“Mav Club allows students to build on their resumes and portfolios,” says Melodae Morris, UNO professor and Ad Club adviser.

Becoming a member of Ad Club means students also become members of the American Advertising Federation of Omaha.

Ad Club

The Advertising Club at University of Nebraska at Omaha encourages students to explore local networking opportunities and build their professional portfolios.

Students can be involved in both on- and off-campus activities. Ad Club has hosted several events such as the Best and Worst Super Bowl Commercials and local advertising agency tours.

Students involved in Ad Club also have the opportunity to work on graphic design projects by creating postcards and action, a top 100 music selection and the more than doubling of the MavRadio staff and contributors.

“There is no ceiling for the station, especially if the students continue to expand the station as they have,” Sullinger says.

Students involved with the station have the opportunity to gain experience in everything from selling advertisements, producing radio shows and calling play-by-plays of Maverick sports. This experience allows students to easily land radio jobs upon graduation, he says.

“The students are dedicated,” Brownlee says. They all work together to create professional broadcasts. Every broadcast is streamed live at MavRadio.fm and through the TuneIn App.

Maverick PR

Maverick PR is a student-run public relations firm at the University of Nebraska at Omaha where students are given the opportunity to obtain real-world experience in public relations. Students are able to work within the school, as well as off-campus with nonprofits and local small businesses.

“The real-world experience you get through Maverick PR you can’t get in a classroom,” says Erin Hockinson, Maverick PR firm director.

Maverick PR offers experience in all aspects of public relations. Students are able to work on research plans, fundraisers, news releases, social media strategies and design pieces.

To be a part of Maverick PR, students must have a junior or senior standing and a minimum of 3.0 GPA. Students are also able to use Maverick PR for Applied Journalism credit.

“You have to apply for it like an internship. You have to show some pieces of your writing and design work,” Hockinson says.

The experiences students gain through Maverick PR help in applying for public relations positions after graduation.

Hockinson says her biggest accomplishment during her involvement in Maverick PR has been working with “The Genius of Warren Buffett.”

“Just having that recognizable name ‘Warren Buffett’ on my resume is an accomplishment because immediately people see that and they can associate it with someone,” Hockinson says.
**MavForensics**

**By Ryan Lance**

The University of Nebraska at Omaha’s nationally ranked competitive speech and performing arts team, MavForensics, is dedicated to giving students unique experiences through public speech.

This allows them to develop research skills and critical thinking, along with excellent public speaking. Students are given the opportunity to create their own personal pieces, based on subjects and issues that are important to them.

MavForensics students travel across Nebraska and the entire country, where they compete in tournaments on other college campuses. Lecturer and director of forensics, Abbie Syrek, says they are not only able to develop their own skills through their multiple competitions, but learn from other students.

Each student can write and compete in such areas as informative, persuasive, extemporaneous and after-dinner speeches. Students can also compete with performance arts pieces through oral interpretations of literature, such as poetry, drama and prose.

MavForensics is the highest-rated forensics team in Nebraska, and one of the top teams in the country, placing 6th in the 2017 National Individual Events Tournament.

The team is open for all UNO students, with auditions being held every summer. Students who join MavForensics are also able to apply for unique scholarships. MavForensics is funded through donations that help cover travel expenses and student registration at tournaments.

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.