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Merging Media:
Journalism and
Electronic Media
& Communications

Robert Peaslee
and Global Lens:
Bringing Culture
to Lubbock

Amanda
Robinson:
Climbing Career
Connections

A publication for alumni and friends of the Texas Tech University College of Media & Communication • Summer 2012



New Building

New Name



photo by Benjamin Jarvis

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by Emily Pellegrini

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From Student Editor Kate Yingling Hector

Welcome to another school year and another carefully crafted issue of the *Mass Communicator*. As you may have noticed, the College of Mass Communications is going through some big changes.

The first change on the docket is the move to a new building. In this issue, you can read more about the newly renovated Business Administration Building that our college will call home this fall. To go along with the big move, the College of Mass Communications will become the College of Media & Communication. Conveniently, this publication will remain the 'MC.' You can read more about the name change on page 22. Last but not least of all the changes is the merging of two previously separate departments: Journalism and Electronic Media & Communications will both fall under electronic media. This story can be found on page 16.

Despite all these changes, in this issue you will find most things are business-as-usual. The college hosted two distinguished lectures during the spring semester. You can read about the Buessler lecture on page 4 and Steve Honley's lecture online. We are featuring superstar alumna Amanda Robinson, and her whirlwind path to the top of her field and her dream position with Edleman in New York City on page 10.

College of Mass Communications instructors continue to go above and beyond in teaching and research. A team of professors worked together on a very successful health communications campaign, used in a hospital in Rhode Island. Robert Wernsman received two awards for outstanding teaching this year. A writer for the *Mass Communicator* sat down with him about his nearly 20 years at Texas Tech.

We are proud to feature an outstanding staff member in Andrew Byrne. We also bring you Sara Krueger's story about an exciting internship opportunity she earned through Twitter. Take a trip with a story about the esteemed Global Lens Film Series on page 12. Photography instructor Jerod Foster is featured on page 26, discussing his view on photography and his new book "Storytellers."

The 'MC' will be under an entirely new student staff next semester, but our fearless leader Kippra Hopper will whip them into shape in no time. I have greatly enjoyed my time as editor. I joined the esteemed ranks of Texas Tech's Mass Communications alumni this May, and I greatly look forward to finding the next issue in my mailbox.



Jerry C. Hudson

From Dean Jerry C. Hudson

Resignation of President Bailey—On July 5, 2012, we learned that President Guy Bailey had accepted an offer from the University of Alabama to be its president. President Bailey has been a major asset to the university and the college. We will miss his leadership and guidance. We are a better university today than when he began his presidency in 2008. However, I assure you that the university and college will continue to grow and prosper under new leadership. I have confidence that the chancellor and the Board of Regents will find a very qualified president who will work to achieve our goal of becoming an AAU university. Until a permanent president is selected, Dr. Lawrence Schovanec, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, will serve as the interim president.

College Changes—I have mentioned in previous columns that we have changed the name of the college to the College of Media & Communication. We also have combined the departments of Journalism and Electronic Media & Communication into one department – The Department of Journalism & Electronic Media. The Texas Tech Board of Regents approved the changes at its May meeting. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved our requests for these changes in July. Therefore, the changes are official.

Thanks—Since September 2011, many of you have made significant contributions to our scholarship endowments, funds for excellence, and planned gifts. During the past four years, the college has averaged more than \$1 million in contributions and planned gifts. When we became a college in 2004, our goal was to double our scholarship endowments by 2010. With your help, we were successful. In 2010, we set a goal of again doubling our 2010 endowments by 2015. I think you will assist us in achieving this goal through additional contributions and planned gifts. Thank you for your loyalty to the college and to Texas Tech University.

Celebration—By the time you read this column, we will have moved into our \$25 million, newly renovated building. We are planning a major celebration on the evening of Nov. 9. I invite you to join us as we dedicate the new facilities with guest speakers, a champagne toast, and a tour of the building. You will find a schedule of events for that weekend below. Please join us.

Because we are making numerous changes this year in the college, I encourage you to make frequent visits to the college website www.mcom.ttu.edu for updated information and news. I hope to see you in November.

Fall Events —

September 14 – 15: Family Weekend, Red Raiders vs. University of New Mexico

- New building tours, September 14, 2 – 4 p.m.
- New building tours, September 15, 10 a.m. – Noon

October 12 – 13: Homecoming, Red Raiders vs. West Virginia University

- New building tours, October 12, 2 – 4 p.m.
- New building tours, October 13, 10 – Noon

November 8: Career Fair, 1 – 5 p.m., Frazier Alumni Pavilion

November 9:

- Mass Communications National Advisory Board Meeting, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Hall of Fame Luncheon, 11:30 – 1 p.m. McKenzie-Merket Alumni Center
- Building dedication and tours, 6 – 8 p.m.

November 10:

- Outstanding Alumni Breakfast, 8 a.m. McKenzie-Merket Alumni Center



Kevin Stoker

From Associate Dean Kevin Stoker

The College of Media & Communication will welcome eight new faculty members this fall, including a new Marshall and Sharlene Formby Regents Professor, three assistant professors, one visiting assistant professor, and three professors of practice.

Erik Bucy, Ph.D., the new Regents Professor in Strategic Communication, comes to Texas Tech after a two-year stint in the industry. Bucy is vice president of research for SmithGeiger LLC in California, a market research company with offices in Los Angeles and New York. He has predominantly worked with media clients and hopes to maintain strong ties to the industry as a Regents Professor. Bucy spent 13 years in the Department of Telecommunications at Indiana University. He is an internationally known researcher in political communication, having published numerous articles in top journals and co-authored an award-winning 2009 book, “Image Bite Politics: News and the Visual Framing of Elections,” published by Oxford University Press. Bucy earned his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland in 1998.

New Assistant Professors of Advertising include: Rebecca Ortiz, Ph.D., from the University of North Carolina; Melanie Sarge, Ph.D., from Ohio State University; and Melissa Gottlieb, Ph.D., from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Joining the college as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Public Relations is Sun Young Lee, Ph.D., of the University of North Carolina.

The two new Professors of Practice are Jerod Foster in Journalism and Electronic Media, and Kent Lowry in Advertising. Foster and Lowry are completing their doctoral degrees in the College of Media & Communication. Another hired Professor of Practice in PR is Jo Grant, who comes to the university with 30 years of experience in the health care industry. The new position of Professor of Practice is designed to attract industry veterans whose primary focus is to teach skills classes, work with industry, and mentor students and student organizations.

From Associate Dean Coy Callison

It's onward and upward for the college graduate program as we move into our new digs across campus this fall. We have continued to grow both the M.A. and the Ph.D. programs, and we will have record enrollments in August 2012.

The numbers are truly impressive. In the fall of 2008, we enrolled a total of 15 M.A. students and 21 Ph.D. students. Now four years later, our fall numbers will reflect a total enrollment of 50 M.A. students and 41 Ph.D. students. That is a 233 percent increase in M.A. numbers; a 95 percent increase in the Ph.D. program.

And even more impressive, this has been quality growth—our average GRE scores and undergraduate GPAs scores are at an all-time high. A few other impressive numbers: For 2011-2012, we distributed \$116,756 in scholarships to graduate students. Also in the last 12 months, we have graduated six Ph.D. students and 21 M.A. students.

Likewise our students continue to present research papers at conferences across the globe, publish in prestigious academic journals, win awards, and perhaps most importantly, land great jobs in industry and in academe. All of these accomplishments continue to help us raise our profile, which should lead to even more qualified students.

Two other recruiting tools that I constantly hear about from students who apply to study here are the Center for Communications Research and the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication. After walking through the new building last week as the construction was wrapping up on the Center for Communications Research, it is difficult for me to imagine better communication research facilities anywhere in the world. Students that want to get their hands on state-of-the-art research tools are going to have to place us on their short lists.

Likewise, Kent Wilkinson, Ph.D., and director of the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication-affiliated students and faculty continue to bear our banners into new cultural contexts. Now that the institute is going to have a much more visible presence in the new building, I really expect that it will draw even more attention.

So again, another year of positive news and another set of high expectations for the graduate program. That seems to be a common theme across the College of Media & Communication right now—and that makes for good times here in Lubbock.



Coy Callison

From Development Officer Memory Bennett

Legacy is important in all stages of life. Maybe you have benefited from your parents or grandparents or even a friend. I know I have benefited greatly from the legacies of my parents, grandparents and friends. Professionally I have benefited from the legacy of my predecessors as well as other faculty and staff of this college.

Students within our college greatly benefit from the legacies of alumni and friends every semester. They receive benefits from professors who taught them and other students who befriended them. And many of our students receive a financial legacy through generous gifts from alumni and friends of the college. Scholarships provide much needed support for students and aid them in their quest for higher education. The legacy that people leave, whether through a planned gift or scholarship endowment, creates an important impact on the future of the student. We receive letters from students receiving scholarships every year. It is amazing to see the amount of gratitude these students have toward the donor and the legacy they chose to give to them. Without the support of alumni and friends we certainly could not have reached the heights we have so far. It helps the college not only to thrive but also to attract new students to our programs. And with continued support, we will reach even higher goals and continue to be a competitive and thriving college.

We have many wonderful things happening at the college and university. We have a new name to fit our programs, we have a beautiful building we now call home, and we have several events planned this fall to celebrate these two accomplishments. We appreciate your help in getting to these new levels, and thank you for your continued support of our college and programs.



Memory Bennett



Media, Mentors and the Truth

by Kate Yingling Hector
photo by Riannon Rowley

A letter of thanks can be found in the history of the College of Mass Communications, written by Billy Ross. Written shortly after Robert Montemayor received his Pulitzer Prize, Montemayor wrote a letter to Ross. A portion of the letter read: “Well, the little old boy from Tahoka, Texas, finally got it done. I can’t possibly convey to you and the members of your department what the Pulitzer Prize has done for me. I am still floating above the clouds. Obviously, it is a tremendous personal achievement, and will forever be a source of professional gratification. It is what a journalist dreams about from the first day in a journalism class. While it may be a personal triumph for me, I would also like to share the award with all of you who guided me, trained me and put up with me for years. Thank all of you, I am beaming with pride and if any of your students should ever insinuate that small town people can’t possibly make it big time. Tell them that ain’t true. The big city slickers don’t do things any better than the country bumpkins from Tahoka. Believe me.”

Texas Tech’s College of Mass Communications hosted the 2012 Cathryn Anne Hansen Buesseler Lectureship in February this year. The featured speaker was alumnus Robert Montemayor, Pulitzer Prize winner and director of Rutgers’ Latin Information Network.

Robert Montemayor was part of a *Los Angeles Times* team that was awarded the 1984 Pulitzer Prize for Meritorious Public Service for a comprehensive 21-part series of stories published in 1983 about Latinos in Southern California. Montemayor earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism in 1975 from the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech University.

Journalist, veteran marketing executive, consultant, author, and college professor, Montemayor has more than 35 years of media experience. Currently, Montemayor is a journalism instructor in Rutgers University’s School of Communication and Information in New Brunswick, N.J. He is also the director of the Latino Information Network at Rutgers, a project launched in the summer of 2010 to create a database of Latino-related research and stories that will feed a website focusing on the ever-growing, diverse Latino communities within the United States.

Montemayor was editor of Texas Tech’s campus newspaper, the *University Daily*, now the *Daily Toreador*, during the 1974-1975 school year. Montemayor is remembered as editor for his masthead, “The purpose of this newspaper is to raise constructive hell.” Bill Dean was the faculty adviser of the newspaper at the time, Dean said, “Sometimes he raised constructive hell, mostly he just raised hell.”

In the summer of 1975, he took a job with the *Dallas Times Herald* as a staff writer. His most important body of work involved reporting and writing numerous stories involving the alleged civil rights violations of Mexican-Americans in Texas — most killed while in police custody. Montemayor was a member of reporting teams that twice were nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1977 and 1978, and one which earned a George Polk Award in 1978 for its coverage of these civil rights cases.

**“The big city slickers
don’t do things
any better than the
country bumpkins
from Tahoka.
Believe me.”
—Robert Montemayor**

Montemayor joined the *Los Angeles Times* in November 1978 as a staff writer based in San Diego, Calif. The work of Montemayor and the *Times* team, which was awarded the 1984 Pulitzer Prize, was later published as a book. Montemayor co-authored the lead story in the series, as well as three other stories and was the most prolific staff writer involved in the project.

In 1986, Montemayor graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a Master of Business Administration degree in marketing. During the next 22 years, he held a number of executive media and marketing management posts, working in mid- to upper-level managerial assignments at companies such as Dow Jones Inc., the McGraw-Hill Companies, and VNU Business Media. He has worked in virtually all aspects of media, including editorial, advertising, marketing, distribution, direct marketing in all forms, including consumer- and business-to-business marketing, and in the development and management of customer databases. He managed business operations in the United States and internationally. He is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese.

In 2004, Montemayor was the primary author of the book, “Right Before Our Eyes: Latinos Past, Present and Future,” a 160-page treatment focusing on the economic, political and social impact of the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in the United States.

In his lecture, Montemayor spoke about “Media, Mentors and the Truth,” and he rattled off many statistics about media and the changing world. He focused on the extreme growth of the Internet and mobile phones and India and China rising as global powers. Montemayor said with so much dissonance and data to sort through, it is more important than ever to “remain resolute to the codes and principles of journalism.”

Montemayor said when he first arrived at Texas Tech when he was 18 and read the Society of Professional Journalism’s code of ethics it was an epiphany for him. “I instantly said to myself, this is how I want to live my life. This fits me like a glove.” From then on Montemayor was dedicated to nuts and bolts fundamentals.

Montemayor attributes his success to his many mentors over the years. He gave particular thanks to the lectureship series namesake, “Cathy” Buesseler. Montemayor was a student in Buesseler’s magazine writing class. He sold the first thing he ever wrote for Buesseler and said he thought, “Huh, I can get paid for sitting on my butt in an air-conditioned office and not have to work out in the field, this is OK.”

Montemayor said he is not sure what Buesseler saw in him, but Cathy and her husband Dr. John Buesseler spent a great deal of time with Montemayor.

“They became sort of like my second set of parents. They were educators for me, but they were also mentors. We would have these discussions over dinner at their house, and I was this wild-haired maniac talking trash. Here were these people very calm and collected, but we could argue into the night and they would basically coach me on how to position it and how not to position it. And I listened. They knew how to nudge me so I would know which way to go. And that relationship has lasted more than 40 years.”

“Most of all I want to give my love out to my queen, Catheryn Buesseler,” Montemayor said with tears in his eyes, pausing to gather himself. It is a special relationship, I love that woman. She had me at ‘I am your magazine writing teacher’ after that it was all good.” **mc**

(Kate Yingling Hector is a May 2012 public relations graduate from Harker Heights, Texas. Riannon Rowley is a senior electronic media & communications major from El Paso, Texas.)

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Substantiation. Courtesy.

CLEAR Communication.

by Erica L. Pauda, photos by Trace Thomas and Riannon Rowley



“The patient will be clear as to what their plan of care is.”—Trent Seltzer



“I’m very much interested in communication with healthcare providers, not just with individuals who are looking for health information.”—Liz Gardner



“Doctors and nurses were not communicating.”—Shannon Bichard



“Communication in everyday life can be a tad different while working in a hospital.”—Coy Callison

part about communicating how this care is going to solve problems.”

The training program was developed by Dr. Brian Zinc, chief of emergency medicine, Sweeney, and Adam Rojeck, R.N., and nurse educator. The purpose of bringing in the Texas Tech researchers were to find better ways to keep the communication instilled in hospital employees, so that good communication is not something they have to think about. They will just communicate better.

“Better communication leads to better results,” says Callison.

Trent Seltzer, Ph.D., public relations department chairperson in mass communications at Texas Tech, was brought into the project because of his public relations background.

“This had an internal PR component to it,” Seltzer said. “I was interested in getting more involved. That’s what initially attracted me to the project was having some ability to contribute.”

The mass communications team’s part in the training was to teach the employees how to apply their communication skills in practice.

“The patient will be clear as to what their plan of care is,” Seltzer says.

Sweeney came up with training classes in ways of teaching employees different ways of communicating.

“She’s the one who designed the actual training the nurses, doctors, and residents go through,” Seltzer said. “The training focuses on increasing the effectiveness of communication between doctors and nurses.”

Liz Gardner, Ph.D., Texas Tech assistant professor of public relations, helped come up with different ways to help employees remember what to say.

Working toward communicating better with patients is something that Dr. Lynn Sweeney, assistant professor of emergency medicine at Brown University in Rhode Island, strives to instill within her employees.

“We decided to come up with the idea of a communications training program,” Sweeney said. “It was our chair’s idea, Dr. Brian Zinc, to collaborate with Texas Tech.”

The project started when Kevin Stoker, Ph.D., associate dean for faculty affairs in Texas Tech’s College of Mass Communications, just happened to be flying on an airplane discussing his profession with a Rhode Island researcher sitting next to him. As a result, Texas Tech University, as well as four researchers in the mass communications college, were asked to help sustain a communication training program among doctors, nurses and patients at Anderson Rhode Island Hospital.

Coy Callison, Ph.D., associate dean for graduate studies in mass communications at Texas Tech, is one of the main researchers helping to create Project CLEAR.

Communication in everyday life can be a tad different while working in a hospital.

“At times, physicians may get so focused on providing the actual, tactical service, that they overlook the communication portion of it,” Callison said. “Project CLEAR is simply a means of reminding physicians that there are two sides of that coin. There’s the tactical part of providing care, and there’s also the

“I’m very much interested in communication with healthcare providers, not just with individuals who are looking for health information,” she said.

She said that different ways exist to sustain the program after training. One way could just be an occasional e-mail telling employees that they are doing a good job, or employees could have a click message pen to remind them of things to say. Employees will have ways to remember what to say.

“Every employee has reminders of what they learned in training attached to their chest,” Gardner said. “If they need a reminder, all they have to do is look down and read.”

The messages might tell the doctor or physician to ask patients if they are OK with what they have just said, or the message also could tell them how their body language should be. The message may even give them certain sentences to say when showing grief to patients, whatever health care issues they are experiencing.

The project needed a combination of branding, which is how Shannon Bichard, Ph.D., professor in advertising, came into play.

The program is all about clarity: Not just with better relationships, but clear communication among the groups.

“Doctors and nurses were not communicating,” Bichard said.

As she was at the hospital, she saw that apparently the communication needed to be more focused among the staff members.

Bichard’s job was to focus branding efforts on the information to the employees. She would refresh their memories with doing activities, as well as with interacting with an attending physician.

“Give people recognition if they notice someone else being clear,” Bichard said.

Being that the project is only one year in progress, the results have been quite successful. Each researcher believes that the project was more successful because of the research done before addressing the training.


At this point, the research team still is working to sustain the project.

“We will be involved for the next couple of years,” Callison said.

Researchers in the College of Mass Communications will continue to head in the positive direction as they will collect more data and monitor the program’s progress.

“It becomes a way that you do communication,” Callison said. **mc**

(Erica L. Pauda is a senior journalism major from Lubbock, Texas. Trace Thomas is a May 2012 public relations graduate from Levelland, Texas. Riannon Rowley is a senior electronic media & communications major from El Paso, Texas.)

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Digital Design

by Kelsey Turnipseed and Kate Yingling Hector, photo by Riannon Rowley, illustration by Benjamin Jarvis

Andrew Byrne likes cars, peanut butter, art, and all things technological. His love for electronic media started in high school when he was the historian for his senior class. That year he took a lot of photographs and made a DVD for his senior class.

“That’s what got me started on my career path,” Byrne said.

After going to school in California, he decided Texas Tech University had a better degree plan for him. He valued the ability to tailor an Electronic Media & Communications degree to focus on photography, video, animation, and web design, so Byrne enrolled at Texas Tech.

“EMC was diverse, it gave me the freedom to do what I wanted,” Byrne said.

He has always had a passion for art; one of his favorite classes he took as an undergraduate was an art design class. During his time as a student, he was awarded first place in the Electronic Media & Communications Student Showcase for the Individual Multimedia Category. He was accepted as a member of Kappa Tau Alpha, a national honor society that recognizes academic excellence and promotes scholarship in journalism and mass communication. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Texas Tech in 2010 with an Electronic Media & Communications degree and a minor in Spanish.

After being approached by faculty, Byrne decided it would be beneficial to get his master’s degree. During graduate school, he was the web design graduate assistant for the College of Mass Communications.

“It was a unique position that doesn’t come around often,” he said.

Melissa Wofford, college design specialist and instructor, works closely with Byrne and said he is an integral member of the mass communications design team.

“He works diligently to keep the college website, electronic publications and social media content updated and engaging,” Wofford said. “Drew is extremely conscientious. I can count on him to complete his work and I can trust that he thinks critically about each assignment, consider what additional features would benefit the project and to bring to light any questions we need to consider before producing the final project.”

Byrne also helped publish the *Mass Communicator* and *Tech ImPRESSions* to the web. Instead of writing a thesis, he did a final project that included designing a new website for the returning KTXT-FM radio station.

“Working on the new website for KTXT was quite an experience,” he said.

When Byrne initially finished the mock-up, he was ecstatic. Unfortunately over the winter break, KTXT decided to go in a different direction.

“It was pretty crushing to have my design torn to shreds so fast, but I guess there was a lot of miscommunication during the planning stages of the website, and nobody really knew what they wanted until it was too late,” Byrne said.

After the year in school, he received his Master of Arts in Mass Communications in December 2011.

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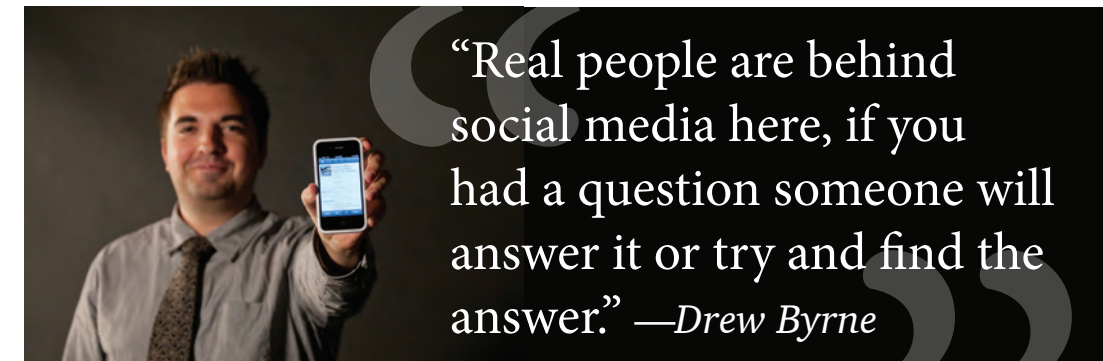
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Byrne got his ideal job right out of college. He accepted the Web Design Specialist position at the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech, where Byrne maintains and updates the college’s web site. He also monitors and updates the college’s Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages. Byrne also remains responsible for the web design of the college’s magazines. The Fall 2011 issue of *Tech imPRESSions* was awarded the 2012 Clarion Award for Online Media by The Association for Women in Communications. Clarion Awards honor excellence in more than 100 categories across all communications disciplines.

“Real people are behind social media here, if you had a question someone will answer it or try and find the answer,” Byrne said.

Wofford said Byrne has made a positive impact on the college’s social media since he started working for the college full time.

“As he came on as a full-time employee, he also took over the college’s social media outlets and has grown significantly in that arena,” Wofford said. “For example, he has streamlined our outlets by eliminating duplicate accounts. We had a laugh over the day he had to fax Twitter to eliminate inactive college accounts.”

Recently Byrne created a Facebook event called “Throwback Thursday.” Every Thursday Byrne posts old college photos and followers are asked to guess who appears in the photos. Wofford said the event has been a success. “It has been a fun project and he plans to continue to post them until we move to our new building in the fall,” Wofford said.

Following the college’s social media feeds is beneficial to both students and alumni. Byrne posts articles and current information relevant to College of Mass Communications social media followers. He also creates and sends out several e-newsletters for the College of Mass Communications. He continues to create and design the online editions of the *Tech ImPRESSions* and the *Mass Communicator*. Byrne is currently working on designing a multimedia kit to send out to prospective students.

In addition to his responsibilities on the technical side of the college, Byrne also just finished his first semester teaching a Principles of Digital Media Production class.

“Teaching was never something I really considered doing. Several family members teach in elementary schools, so I already knew how stressful of a job it could be,” Byrne said.

On Byrne’s first day teaching, a candidate for an Electronic Media & Communications professor position was completing part of his interview process. The EMC faculty attended the class to observe the candidate teach the second half of Byrne’s class, but the interviewee wasn’t the only one feeling additional pressure.

“My first day was downright terrifying. I basically had the entire EMC faculty observing my very first day of teaching.”

Wofford said although she and Byrne teach different classes in different departments, the conversations they have had convey Byrne’s passion for teaching.

“I know he cares a great deal for his student’s success and comprehension,” Wofford said. “Drew was recently elected as a staff senator. His desire to serve Texas Tech through this organization is indicative of his ambition to grow and to support Texas Tech and the college.”

When thoughts of making a career of teaching came up, he said, “Dr. Todd Chambers has always said he hopes I get bitten by the ‘teaching bug’ and stick with it for good, but I haven’t been bitten yet, there is no telling what tomorrow brings.” **mc**

(Kelsey Turnipseed is a senior electronic media & communications major from Lubbock, Texas. Kate Yingling Hector is a May 2012 public relations graduate from Harker Heights, Texas. Riannon Rowley is a senior electronic media & communications major from El Paso, Texas. Benjamin Jarvis is a junior electronic media & communications major from McKinney, Texas.)

Climbing Career Connections

by Holly Kitten, photo courtesy Amanda Robinson



When Amanda Robinson graduated with a public relations degree in August 2010, all she knew was she wanted to live in Colorado.

And she did. For a little while anyway.

After interning with the United States Olympic Committee in Colorado Springs for six months, Robinson was offered a job with USA Gymnastics in Indianapolis, Ind. So, off she went.

Then, in April this year, Robinson moved to New York City after accepting a job with Edelman – the public relations powerhouse and *Adweek's* PR Agency of the Year.

Needless to say, Robinson has come a long way in a short amount of time, and it surprises nobody more than Robinson herself. “I remember filling out a survey before graduation and having no clue where I was going or what I was doing,” she said, “There’s no way I could’ve plotted out this career path in advance.”

Climbing the ladder was not all easy, though. Robinson said she felt the pressure of graduation because she was running out of options in her search for a Colorado job.

“Everyone tells you ‘It’s all about who you know,’” she said. “but at 22 years old and fresh out of college, I didn’t really know anyone.”

Or so she thought, until she spoke with Mass Communications Dean Jerry Hudson about her situation. She explained how she knew she was pursuing the right field of work, being in public relations, but just wasn’t sure of where to go from there. He responded that he knew a man named “Bob” in Colorado, and that Bob knew a lot of people. Hudson gave Robinson “Bob’s” phone number, so she could contact the man for some advice.

Not knowing much about who Bob was or who he worked for, Robinson made the call in hopes of a job lead. What she heard on the other end of the line surprised her.

“The operator said, ‘U.S. Olympic Committee,’” she said, “and I almost hung up, thinking I had the wrong phone number.”

But, the number was the right one. Bob Condron, was then director for media and public relations for the U.S. Olympic Committee. Condron suggested Robinson apply for an internship position with the organization, which she did. By January 2011, Robinson was settled in Colorado Springs, and she began her job as a communications intern.

Robinson’s work ethic was quickly put to the test though when two of her fellow employees were let go, and another quit. She said a lot of their work was placed in her lap.

“I really had to up my game and prove to the rest of the staff that I could handle it,” Robinson said. “I knew I had to show them that I was going to do the best I could with the resources I had.”

Condron said at the U.S. Olympic Committee, the staff counts on the interns to be part of the working team, and he was impressed with the way Robinson performed under the stress of the extra demands placed upon her.

“She just jumped into that situation,” he said, “and did it well, and did it quietly.”

Robinson said she continued to work hard, and by May, she began looking for another job, knowing her internship time frame was coming to an end. Once again, Condron approached her and advised she apply for a position with USA Gymnastics.

Five interviews later, Robinson was hired as the new media relations coordinator, where she acted as the liaison among the media and the coaches and athletes with USA Gymnastics. She said her job was unique in the fact that she was able to build relationships with the gymnasts, many of whom would travel to London to represent the country during the 2012 Olympic Games.

“Not many people can flip open a magazine or turn on the TV and point out an athlete they know personally,” she said. “Knowing I’ve been part of these athletes’ lives during some of the most crucial moments of their careers in leading up to the games is more than I could ever ask for.”

“My path was formed just by the small decisions that I didn’t realize that were that big, but those decisions end up being huge.”

—Amanda Robinson

Robinson ran to the salon where Wieber was still enjoying a pedicure. She grabbed Wieber and told the world-class gymnast they were going to have to run the eight blocks back to the hotel in order to make the press conference on time.

So, off into the streets of Manhattan they ran – Robinson with her heels in hand, and Wieber still in her pedicure flip-flops.

“We just laughed the whole time,” Robinson said. “And just thinking that I was running down the street with a potential Olympian – even though I was stressed at the time – I knew I would look back on that and laugh. That was pretty cool.”

Robinson built relationships with more than just the athletes though. She also networked with top-tier media outlets, sports directors, editors and reporters, and made an extra effort to stay in contact with a select few.

Robinson said she considers those connections to be her “back-pocket” contacts because she knows the media are people she can keep in contact with, no matter where she goes in her career.

“Having a few names and numbers that you know you can depend on makes all the difference in the world in public relations,” Robinson said. “Whether you are in a bind or just want to bounce a few story ideas around, it’s nice to know you have people that will pick up your call.”

Robinson refers to Hudson and Condron as being two of those people.

Making connections like that was a big reason she scored her new job with Edelman, Robinson said. She was in New York for an event, and someone she had worked with in the past suggested she meet with a professional in the PR industry while she was in the city. So, with an hour to spare in her schedule, she met on the rooftop of the Edelman building with the woman who would soon become her boss.

The woman took all of 20 minutes to contact Robinson to ask if she could return the following day for an interview – and without hesitation – Robinson

made sure she was there. And the following week, after one interview, Robinson was offered an account executive position at MATTER, Edelman’s Sports and Entertainment Marketing Department.

“If you get the chance to make it in New York,” she said, “you have to take it – it’s the ticket to the PR big leagues. And if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere.”

As a Texas Tech University alumnus, past employer, and current friend of Robinson, Condron said he was thrilled for Robinson’s achievements.

“That is just awesome,” he said. “Here’s a Texas Tech girl going to New York City. I love the sound of that. She’s going to be great.”

Through Edelman, Robinson will still get to work with the Olympic movement, as well as the NFL, PGA, NASCAR, and the New York City Marathon, just to name a few.

Lee Johnson, the vice president of marketing at USA Gymnastics, said he will miss Robinson, but he cannot help but be excited for her.

“For her to be able to come here and do a great job and to be able to move on and go do something like she’s doing in New York City speaks volumes about the kind of work ethic she has, and the kind of person she is. It will be great for her career.”

From Colorado to New York, Robinson has made many connections, but she said none of them would have been possible without the first connections she made in the Texas Tech College of Mass Communications.

Whether it is a professor, colleague, classmate or friend, Robinson said she knows there always will be someone from the College of Mass Communications to support her.

“It’s building the relationships with people that you know will have your back no matter what,” she said. “It matters in the long run.”

After all, had she not talked to Dean Hudson about finding a job in Colorado, Robinson said she would be nowhere near New York now.

“None of that would have ever happened,” she said. “My path was formed just by the small decisions that I didn’t realize that were that big, but those decisions end up being huge.” mc

(Holly Kitten is a senior journalism major from Lubbock, Texas.)

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GLOBAL LENS: BRINGING CULTURE TO LUBBOCK

by Trace Thomas, photo by Riannon Rowley

IT IS NOT EVERY DAY

that someone can experience a different culture in Lubbock, especially for free, but the Global Lens does its best to do just that.

Global Lens is a film series that is curated on an annual basis by an organization called the Global Film Initiative, a non-profit based out of San Francisco, Calif. Susan Weeks Coulter, who is the board chair, founded the organization in 2002. Its mission is to promote cross-cultural understanding through the medium of cinema. It is the only traveling feature-length narrative film series of its kind in the world. The Global Film Initiative holds an annual competition every year that film makers from around the world submit their work. Out of that, an advisory board made up of film makers from around the world picks 10 films. Associate Professor Robert Peaslee Ph.D., first brought the Global Lens film series to the College of Mass Communications four years ago.

“All these films are from outside of what we would call the west, North America and Western Europe basically,” Peaslee said. “The idea is to get an audience here in the United States.”

For the 10 chosen films, the initiative helps market and distribute to the different institutions that host the series. They open the series every year at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Global Lens has screenings in 44 U.S. states and one U.S. territory. There are more than 60 institutional and theatrical screening partners. Texas Tech is the only university in Texas that shows the films.

“This is the third year we hosted the whole series and the first year we showed three films, so four years total,” Peaslee said. Peaslee first heard of Global Lens as a doctoral student at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

“I really like what they are doing,” Peaslee said, “so when I got here I just started looking around for some money.”

The Institute for Hispanic and International Communication, directed by Kent Wilkinson, Ph.D., and the Cross Cultural Advancement Center have been sponsors since the beginning. This year the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts and the Flatland Film series have become sponsors. All the sponsors take part in sharing the cost for bringing the films in.

“It doesn’t cost a lot of money but it does cost a little to bring the films here,” Peaslee said, “I started knocking on some doors for sponsorship.”

Associate Professor Jimmie Reeves, Ph.D., remembered when Global Lens sent out a number of e-mails soliciting interests among faculty of Texas Tech to put on this film series.

“To be honest I saw it and thought, no way is it too much work,” Reeves said, “but Dr. Peaslee got on the faculty. He was young and didn’t have any common sense at the time and didn’t realize what he was getting into.”

Another component of the Global Lens screening that not every other institution does is a panel that follows each of the films. The panel consists of three or four faculty from across campus that helps put context behind the film. The panel gives the audience a little more background to what they have seen. Peaslee usually tries to have a mix of faculty that will provide the audience with lots of different angles on the film at any given time. Peaslee said that just a few criteria would lead him to ask someone to be on a panel.

“Sometimes if they just have a general knowledge of film, if they have some geographic understanding of where the film is located, sometimes it is over language, and finally if somebody has expertise on a particular thematic concern of the film,” Peaslee said. “For example if the film is about suicide or a trouble family relationship I may have someone from psychology come or human development and family studies come in.”

Most of the faculty members have served more than once. Reeves has served on the panel more than nine times. Reeves explained how he usually prepares for the panel.

“I always try to watch the film as close to the screen as possible,” Reeves said. “I usually find something general to talk about, what students can get out of Global Lens as a whole, and something specific to talk about, what someone could get out of the particular movie.”

Senior Electronic Media & Communications student Alison Morris went to multiple screenings this year. She explained that the panels would help her understand the themes and symbols presented in the films.

“I didn’t know what some of the films were about and having a panel of experts giving me a detailed analysis really made the experience,” Morris said.

The feedback from the faculty and staff from the College of Mass Communications has been overwhelmingly positive.

“I certainly get a lot of positive feedback over the quality of the films and the overall presence of people from the community because they do not get to see anything like this in the Tinseltown or Movies 16 because there are not a lot of screens devoted to American independent films, let alone foreign films.”

Opening night this year brought in close to 100 viewers for the screening. Global Lens usually draws anywhere from 40 to 60 people to a screening. The audience usually consists of students seeking extra credit. Peaslee said most students’ reactions are mixed.

“A lot of the films are kind of difficult, and that is the point, to experience film as something that can be complex or challenging or difficult rather than simply escapist and enjoyable which is what we get on a weekly basis in the movie theaters,” Peaslee said. “That said, I think most students appreciate it once they go. Generally they find that they might not want to do it all the time, going to a movie that presents these ways of seeing the world or imagining what film could be; they see it as an educational experience.”

Morris, who originally went to the screenings to gain extra credit for a class, described her opinions of the films she saw as being unlike anything else she had seen. She described the content as rough, but beautifully crafted so that it transcended a normal viewing experience.

“The films were so intense and raw and enthralling, I felt like I was experiencing deeply personal stories from people who have gone through horrendous tragedies and struggles,” Morris said. “The movies were shot and told in such an artistic and often symbolic way that they really made you feel things.”

Peaslee describes the movies as being character-driven. “Instead of overtly telling you a story they tend to challenge you to think about what you are seeing while you are seeing it to sort of be emotionally involved on that level,” Peaslee said.

Morris explained the educational importance the films had on her as she said the films allowed her to be placed in the conflict of these stories.

“The films made me really think and care,” Morris said, “it was like learning about war and genocide from a tragically human standpoint. It made me truly understand suffering.”

With an overall successful year, Global Lens is on track to return in years to come.

“I think there is a lot of support to keep doing it and there is full support to keep going as long as we can,” Peaslee said. “It is just a matter of finding the money each year.”

Reeves believes that as long as Peaslee is at Texas Tech, Global Lens will be at Texas Tech.

“I worry that once [Peaslee] leaves it may not survive his departure,” Reeves said. “I do not see it as being endangered at this point.”

In the end, Peaslee just hopes to bring people who love movies together.

“Part of (Global Lens) is building a community of people who are interested in international film who can then find other ways to contribute to that sort of thing,” Peaslee said. **mc**

(Trace Thomas is a May 2012 public relations graduate from Levelland, Texas. Riannon Rowley is a senior electronic media & communications major from El Paso, Texas.)

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140 Characters = 1,700 Miles

by Sara Krueger, photo by Tarryn Lambert

One day I was sitting on my couch in Lubbock, Texas, reading Tweets, and a month later, I was on a plane to San Francisco to participate in the opportunity of a lifetime. On a Friday in early December, I scrolled through my Twitter feed like I had done thousands of times before. I came across a public relations professionals' Friday-follow list and followed everyone whose bio stated they worked in a field related to public relations. I am interested in seeing the day-to-day life of people in the communications field, so this is something I do frequently.

An e-mail notification let me know that Courtney Taylor, a corporate development and strategic alliances consultant, followed me. Looking for an opportunity to connect with Taylor, I asked her for public relations advice via Twitter. Instead of advice, I received a message asking if I was interested in interning with her consulting group. I did what any eager undergraduate would do and sent her my resume. A few days later, Taylor announced on Twitter that she would moderate a panel at the Intersection Event at Pixar Studios. The Intersection is an event that brings together influential people across many different

industries to discuss how innovation can create beneficial social changes. With hopes of continuing our conversation, I sent her a congratulatory message. Her response was a suggestion that I accompany her to the event and get hands-on public relations experience.

The date of the event fell a week before I was due back in Lubbock for the Spring semester. Everything seemed to be falling into place for this trip to happen. The next step was planning.

I spent my Christmas break planning my trip to the West coast. Taylor put me in contact with her travel agent and helped me to get a pass to the Intersection Event. Prior to leaving for San Francisco, I conducted research on Taylor's panel members. Susan Sarandon, Paul Rieckhoff, and Lauren Bush were the subjects of my research. Learning about the charitable backgrounds of these celebrities was exciting, but I was a little nervous knowing that what I was doing would impact the panel session.

I was very fortunate to have my mom along for the ride. The morning of January 12, we headed from Dallas to San Francisco. We spent the first day wandering around Fisherman's Wharf and the rest of San Francisco. On day two, I dove right into the role of public relations professional. Taylor notified me that she needed a few more topics researched to frame her questions. Thank goodness for free wireless Internet. I sat in my hotel's lobby for three hours compiling and organizing information on the new topics. My work for the day was done, so my mom and I ventured out into the city one last time. Later that night Taylor sent a driver to our hotel to take us from San Francisco to Berkeley, Calif., which is closer to Pixar Studios.

My anticipation about the next day made sleeping a difficult task. I was excited to finally meet the woman who so graciously gave me this opportunity, to visit Pixar Studios, and to listen to speakers who were leaders in their industries. I arrived at Pixar before the sun was up to help set up coat checks for the guests. My morning was spent as a volunteer, which was fun because I

met some interesting people close to my age. Many of the people I met were intrigued by Texas and curious if the show "Friday Night Lights" was real. The two people working coat checks with me were great at networking, and I learned a lot by watching them interact with the guests.

The caliber of people I was among at the Intersection Event amazed me. Executives from companies like Google, Pixar and Disney; professors from Harvard; actors, and nonprofit leaders made up the list of attendees. Every student I met came from an Ivy League university, so I enjoyed spreading Texas Tech's name to such a prestigious crowd. A networking event was on the morning schedule, and the volunteers were invited to participate. I met a world-renowned marine biologist, Yahoo's VP of Design, a corporate communications team member from Disney, video game developers, staff from Stanford's media team, and a legal adviser for All American Heavyweights. After the networking event, Taylor was due to arrive, and the panels began.

I met Taylor and her friend, actress Nanci Chambers, at the front door and escorted them to seats I saved for them in the Pixar Theater. Taylor and I immediately got to work observing the moderators and taking notes on the things she wanted to replicate for her panel. We took a short break to watch an unreleased Pixar short-film in the real Pixar Theater. Pixar does not offer tours, so the number of people who get the opportunity to watch a film in the company's theater is extremely small. Another exciting thing about visiting Pixar was standing in front of the organization's six Academy Awards. I am still in awe at seeing an Academy Award in person. The next event on the schedule was lunch, but for the public relations people it meant work time.

Taylor and I found a conference room and spent lunch-hour making final preparations. We organized her moderator cards, and she reviewed a few main questions she planned to ask each panel speaker. My duties during the panel were to walk to the stage, queue a 30-minute mark, and bring a gift for the speakers to the stage. Technically, one could say I was on stage with Susan Sarandon. I enjoyed learning how to moderate a panel by watching Taylor. We spent the remainder of the afternoon speaking with other attendees and watching the panels that followed Taylor's. After the event ended, we took pictures with some movie-character statues, then her driver, Dan, took us back to the hotel.

The day after the event was my last in the Bay Area. My mom and I explored Berkeley, and then headed to the San Francisco airport. Upon arriving back in Texas, I reflected on a few things I learned from my experience. These lessons include: be one step ahead of where you are expected to be; reach out to people who are doing what you want to do because they may be willing to help you; and taking chances is a great way to find which path is right for you. **mc**

(Sara Krueger is a senior public relations major from Fort Worth, Texas. Tarryn Lambert is 2011 visual communications and public relations graduate from Austin, Texas.)

"Every student I met came from an Ivy League university, so I enjoyed spreading Texas Tech's name among such a prestigious crowd."
—Sara Krueger

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In addition to a new building, a new name, and a new degree plan, the College of Mass Communications also is merging the Department of Journalism and the Department of Electronic Media & Communications.

Todd Chambers Ph.D., the department chairperson of electronic media & communications, said this idea originated about a year ago, and has been approved for implementation on Sept. 1. The change had to be approved by the university and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Chambers said when the idea originated, faculty from both departments participated and the merger was approved.

“Everyone was on board from the get-go,” said Chambers. “There is excitement about it. I think it really does bring a lot of unique opportunities for us to brand and market ourselves in a unique way.”

Randy Reddick Ph.D., the chairperson of the Department of Journalism, said a lot of similarities exist between the two merging departments.

“It’s a complex set of things,” Reddick said. “one of which is there is an overlap between what we teach and skills involved.”

Chambers said he also agrees that journalism and electronic media & communications share a lot of common goals.

“One of the big goals is storytelling,” Chambers said. “For electronic media we want to train students to turn their stories into visual storytelling, that’s our mission. For the journalism department, they want their students to be responsible for being accurate storytellers.”

Reddick said prospective mass communications students have asked what the difference is between journalism and electronic media communications.

“We in journalism deal with news,” Reddick said, “with fact. Electronic media is not limited to fact. They can go into fiction.”

He said years ago tension existed between the two majors about how features and documentaries were to be taught. “Journalism wanted to focus more on the values of journalism,” Reddick said, “and the values of writing, and being accurate, and fair.”

Reddick said he believes in the future the merge will benefit some of the advanced courses because more faculty can teach the features and documentaries course.

“These degrees we are providing within the College of Mass Communications, these are not designed necessarily just for the short-term, these are designed to help the students long-term.”
— Todd Chambers

“We will have coordinated efforts all under one hat,” he said, “it will be a better class, it will make more often, and will be readily available to more students.”

Chambers said he believes students will benefit from the merger and electronic media communications majors still will be electronic media communications majors, and journalism majors still will be journalism majors. The change is only administrative, he said, noting that he is excited to work with new and old faculty as well creating a new curriculum.

“Just the merger itself, new things are going to come out of it,” Chambers said, “when you get an intellectual spark and curiosity and with these forces colliding, we will think, ‘I never thought about it that way, let’s try it.’”

Chambers and Reddick agree that a lot of positive change will come with the merger but people feel uncertainty with every change.

“I don’t want a student to suffer because we aren’t moving quickly enough,” Chambers said.

Chambers said he will be the chairperson for the newly merged department, and Reddick will advance in being the administrator for the technical side in the new building because of Reddick’s technological knowledge.

Both Reddick and Chambers said they are excited for the change and the future, and mainly, the opportunities the change will have in store for the students.

“These degrees we are providing within the College of Mass Communications are not designed necessarily just for the short-term, these are designed to help the students long-term,” Chambers said. **mc**

(Rachel Shackelford is a senior public relations major from Austin, Texas.)

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by Rachel Shackelford



Robert Wernsman has been teaching in the College of Mass Communications for nearly 20 years, most of that time has been spent teaching one of the college's most famous courses, News Writing. The course is required of most majors who have to pass before they can move onto the rest of their course work, but before even entering the class each student must pass the equally famous Grammar Spelling and Punctuation test. Wernsman recently was recognized for his excellence in teaching with two awards. The first award is the University Student Housing Professing Excellence Award, nominated and chosen by students. The second is the President's Excellence in Teaching Award, which came from a nomination within the college.

I sat down with Wernsman to discuss his awards and his experience teaching News Writing all these years.

Q: You see just about every student that goes through the college of mass comm, what is that like?

A: Very nearly, and once they get through News Writing they seem to like me pretty well.

Q: How does it feel to have such a, you could say famous, reputation for news writing? People are a little scared of it.

A: I try to look upon it as an advantage. Students typically don't come in laggardly. They know, they are on notice from the start. One of the things I have noticed however, is part of its reputation is the timing in the program. Because a great number of PR students then will go into PR campaigns before they graduate. And then advertising people would go into ad campaigns. Journalism students go into reporting and advanced reporting. What I hear is that students find the campaigns classes to be far more challenging than News Writing. But, once they are done with campaigns they leave. They graduate and they are gone, they aren't around to tell everyone the horror stories about the campaigns class. But they are always around to tell people about News Writing. But it adds to students' satisfaction, if they know from the beginning this is one tough class, and they escape with success. Then suddenly it elevates their confidence even more.

Q: I think one of the reasons students are so nervous about it, is because of the really scary low grades at first. News Writing has a unique grading structure, how does the chance to resubmit and improve affect the class?

A: Well, I don't even know where that came about originally. When I began teaching this class, nearly 20 years ago, one thing I always realized was that the learning occurs when you revise, and correct what was wrong, and see what positive results should be. And then you have something to emulate with the next one. I believe that this class would be hugely unfair if assignments from the beginning were at the same value level as the assignments at the end. I don't think it would account for the learning curve that has to occur. I am really pretty proud of the way it is set up because students can stumble and fall at first, and we expect them to. By the end of the semester, how many crutches do they need? And if they still need to be propped up at the end, then probably best for them to come on back and try it again.

We have tweaked this class over the years. We didn't always have two non-counting papers at the beginning. At one point it was one, and it was much more massive and way too big of a job to tackle for the initial students. Having the two pieces seems a little more manageable, approachable and conquerable.

“I have to say, I consider myself the luckiest person on this campus, to get to do what I get to do. “

—Robert Wernsman

Q: How has the class changed over the years? Technology and journalism have changed, how has that been reflected in the class?

A: Probably the least change in this class has been technology, because it is still really about word usage, punctuation, clarity and accuracy. It has changed by some assignments that started out as an option, but once we saw how beneficial they were, became a requirement.

The whole notion of the thematic final project is part of the evolution of this class. It used to be that final projects were topics nominated by the students and then we gave approval, and therefore we had students scattered in what they were covering. There was a real range of quality as a result. Of course we know that it is very demanding, one of the things we realized was that if we were to bring in a key person to help set the tone, then they would have at least one expert. And then they would have at least one expert. A final project that is just a bunch of student opinion that may not be intelligent in the first place really isn't productive. So by bringing those two key people to interview for News 4 and then News 5, it makes it easier for students because we give them a source. That gives them a starting point, some students will interview the expert we bring in, and then interview other people and decide not to even use the expert, which is fine with us, if what they have is quality enough to surpass what we bring to them.

There is also something very distinctive about students who make those choices, because they don't have to have that one-on-one. Generally what happens, there will be a handful who chose not to meet with us. They just put in the box and run. There is a reason for that; usually there is a reason that they don't want to face us, because they haven't devoted the time it takes.

Q: Since the implementation of the thematic final project, how are the themes chosen each semester?

A: Just the past couple years have been health and wellness related. The themes are far, far ranging. We began because of the connection with the Texas Tech Vietnam Archive. The very first semester we did this, I believe there were 120 students, they had to find and profile a Vietnam veteran. Then it went to personal finance and student credit card debt; we did adoption one semester. Every student either profiled someone who had been adopted or had adopted, or worked with an agency. Really it is less a pattern of the subject and more of how can we find a relevant topic that would help educate our students in areas well beyond areas of punctuation and grammar.

It is the social benefits of it, we did disabilities last semester. Of course that is pretty wide ranging, students becoming familiar with and dealing with wheelchairs or crutches or blindness, any number of things. I like to think it makes our students more humanistic, but I don't tell them that. I don't tell them there is an ulterior motive here. In the future we are planning on doing bullying, issues that have relevance in their life one way or another.

Q: What is the most beneficial part of News Writing for students?

A: Probably the greatest part of this class that is so quiet and understated is the benefit students get from learning to interview strangers. Life is full of that, and once you are able to arrange and sit down for an interview with someone you have never met, carry on a conversation and have them want you to come back and talk some more, they have progressed. I don't know what other class you can get that sort of experience in this college. And I would very much wish that every student in the college had this experience even though not everyone is required to take News Writing anymore.

I'm not an academic by my education, but it has always befuddled me that anyone would be teaching a writing class that follows this writing class, who would not be aware of what this class offers and demands. Every department does things their own way, but I sure wish that the interviewing of live sources would continue.

I once had a very good English major take News Writing, and he enjoyed it very much. And then he came back the next semester, just to ask me, 'why doesn't English teach writing how you teach writing?' I said, 'I don't know anything about how English teaches writing, and I can't judge, but this is what we find works the best.'

Q: What are some stories of students that stick out in all the semesters you have taught News Writing?

A: I had quite a student situation not too long ago where a student just made no progress throughout the semester. Grading News 4 was like grading News A, all the same stupid mistakes it was a waste of my time and we were all spinning wheels, it was very frustrating. Then, when he nearly lost his life and went into rehab for his addictions, he came back and took the class the very next semester. And succeeded and did very well and got an A. He sent me an e-mail and said, 'The first semester I took this class, I came to your class with vomit on my shirt and it was mine. The second semester I took this class, I came to class with vomit on my shirt, but it was my daughters. Everything had changed.'

He went from being an addict, alcoholic, user to now 18 months clean and has a child, and has his life. Actually he was a guest for our class this semester, because we were dealing with alcoholism and addiction. He was a real live prospect for that. Then speaking of stories, we had a student here named Faith Penn. That sheet there, was her list for the spelling test. She is blind, and she said, 'Yes, Mr. Wernsman. You can tell them, even a blind woman can pass this test.' She studied this list of words, and she took the GSP with someone reading the questions and choices to her. And she did very well. It was the first time I had ever dealt with someone who was blind. That was really satisfactory for me, and she was thrilled. I did have help from a previous student who had taken News Writing the semester before. She was a student employee here in this building. I would grade all the papers the same, I didn't know which one was Faith's, so when I would finish, I would realize, 'Okay, all these marks I've written on here, she can't read.' But then our student worker would sit down with her with what I had written and what had to be changed, and Faith would change it on her computer. So the whole process worked out very well.

Faith graduated a couple years ago, and so last semester we did disabilities. And one of our students was slightly sight impaired, but just slightly. Because of her familiarity, she chose blindness as the subject of her project and she went over to the office in the library. She asked a woman about a copy of such and such book. And Faith says, 'Chancy, is that you?' And Faith Penn happened to be there. Faith was Chancy's camp counselor six years before, and that is where you start to see all these connections coming around. And that is just a microcosm of what Bill Dean knows, because he's got generations of students that he has taught.

Q: All the years you have been here and you have stuck with News Writing for a long time, why is that?

A: I have to say, I consider myself the luckiest person on this campus, to get to do what I get to do. And have a minimum of interference from anyone. I don't know that anyone in this building really wants to teach this class. I don't know that they want to take this load.

Early, early on, I taught Advanced Reporting for a couple of semesters, but that wasn't my fit. And there are students who say, I wish you taught other classes. But of course, you can only teach so many. If I am going to teach something else, I'm going to have to give up News Writing. And I one time, I only taught News Writing and I taught four sections. Then when Principles of Journalism came into my picture in 2004, I was reduced in the number of labs I had. There has been the opportunity to teach a more advanced reporting, but frankly, I was never personally an advanced reporter. I was a reporter, but I became an editor before I got years and years of reporting experience. And that is why, in my estimation, not that I get to make these decisions, someone like Pete Brewton, who is far more advanced as an investigative reporter is much better at those higher levels. You almost have to be an editor to teach News Writing. It is a lot of editing, and you really have to teach the nuances and the little stuff.

What it all comes down to, I think, is weed pulling. When you look at a weedy yard, generally there will be a big old weed and you just ignore it and ignore it. Finally, you pull it out and you realize, it wasn't as big as you thought. Because when you pulled it out, there are four more, smaller weeds, and when you pull those you realize each of those has four. And when you pull those out, suddenly, your flowers can blossom.

Q: How does it feel to have your time here recognized by these awards?

A: I am indebted to Jerry Hudson and others in this college who have allowed me to do this. I wouldn't have won any awards if they didn't employ me here. I would be remiss not to mention my wife's support, because I always know that's there. And for someone who doesn't have a Ph.D. to carve out a 20-year teaching career at a major university is not typical. That is why I think I'm blessed. I told three students yesterday, and I will carry this to my grave: The awards are fine, but yesterday three students stopped by, who are no longer in my classes. They were just touching base, they didn't know anything about this award. They were just telling me about where they were and where they've gone, and where they are going. And I thought, I'll probably lose that medallion, but I am not going to forget those interactions with the students. That is the award. **mc**

(Kate Yingling Hector is a May 2012 public relations graduate from Harker Heights, Texas. Trace Thomas is a senior public relations major from Levelland, Texas.)

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View a chronicle of News Writing instructors in the online edition of this story. Visit www.mcom.ttu.edu and click Student Publications > The MC. Click on the News Writing story in the online table of contents.

“I'll probably lose that medallion, but I am not going to forget those interactions with the students. That is the award.”

—Robert Wernsman

In the Fall of 2012, the College of Mass Communications will move into the refurbished Business Administration Building, with a new name to match the new building. The college now will be called the College of Media & Communication.

“College of Mass of Communications is a little outdated,” Founding Dean Jerry Hudson said, but he believes the new name will, “reflect more accurately the media aspect of the college.”

Kevin Stoker, Ph.D., associate dean of faculty in the college, led the committee for the college’s name change. Stoker said that mass communications no longer describes what the college does anymore. “Media is the most profound thing that we do,” he said. Stoker believes that the new name provides a focus for the college.

The process for the name change was by no means quick. As leader of the name change committee, Stoker said that the college came up with about three different names. In order for College of Media & Communication to be approved, the decision first was passed by faculty, and then by the Academic Council. The regents addressed and approved the new name at their next meeting in May, said Hudson. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board was the last to approve the name. The process finished in July, and the new name will take effect Sept. 1.

Ian Scott is president of the Dean’s Student Council, a group started in 2009 by Hudson that meets monthly to provide feedback to the dean about what the students in the college think. Scott commented about the new name, saying, “I think it’s great,” he said. Scott also said that because media and mass communication are changing so rapidly, the new name is a reflection of these changes.

Throughout the entire name change process, the big question seemed to be, “What do we, as the College of Mass Communications, do?”

Hudson talked about the trend toward converging media in recent years, as well as the start of new media, such as social media.

“Media is still what we do,” Hudson said.

New Building New Name

by Emily Pellegrini
photos by Trace Thomas

Many people confuse mass communications with speech or journalism, but the college offers more than just speech and journalism classes. This confusion further emphasized the need for a new and more current name.

Stoker also said that one of the college’s main focuses is on media, but more than just digital media. The college focuses on all forms of media. Stoker said that while media dominates what the college does, most of the college’s degrees still deal with some form of communication, one reason why both are represented in the new name.

Stoker said that he was “impressed with how willing everyone was to change names and improve the college.”

Scott believes the new name will be beneficial, saying that the change will “garish more attention for the college,” and show the progression and direction of the college.

Hudson said the college is “looking forward to the new name.” He understands that the new name will take some time to get used to. The name change may be a little expensive, “But with the acronym the same, some money can be saved,” he said laughing.

Hudson also said that in anticipation for the move, the name may already be “College of Media & Communication” in the college’s computer system and that students should look for the new name during registration.

“People will probably refer to us for a few years as mass communications,” Hudson said, “but it will catch on.” **mc**

(Emily Pellegrini is a junior journalism major from Moores Hill, Ind. Trace Thomas is a senior public relations major from Levelland, Texas.)

1 and 2. The Cathy and David Swofford Television Studio 3. The Helen Devitt Jones Lecture Hall 4. KTXI-FM Studios 5. Student Media Reception Desk 6. Tiered classroom in the basement.



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Student Media & KTXT-FM

by Kimberly Atkins, floor plans courtesy of Texas Tech Facilities Planning and Construction

From decades-old workspaces to newly renovated facilities, the Student Media Department and KTXT-FM radio station will move to the new Media & Communication Building, previously the Rawls College of Business. The move will take place between the Summer II and Fall semesters.

Along with improved working environments, Student Media and KTXT-FM gain a stronger presence in the new location. The new student media workspace will be in the former Business Administration Rotunda, and the KTXT-FM studios will be on the third floor of the building, in a high traffic area.

Director of Student Media Susan Peterson said the staff wanted to be in a fairly central location to be more visible and to make going from class to work more convenient for the mass communications students who work for the *Daily Toreador* newspaper and the *La Ventana* yearbook. Peterson said more than 80 percent of the student staff members are mass communications majors, so the new workspace will make work and school more fluid for the students.

Outside the Student Media Office, a large screen will display the front cover of the *Daily Toreador*, announcements for the college, and information about upcoming events. Features editor and summer editor of the *Daily Toreador*, Cassidy Ketron, said she hopes the increased visibility will bring in new reporters.

"The thing that I'm probably most excited about is we won't be so isolated," Ketron said. "It's almost like we're a clique just because we're in a different building and it's not as welcoming as it would be if we were in the building and they could walk by everyday and see inside the office."

Founding Dean of the College of Mass Communications Jerry Hudson said the location of the student media newsroom creates a beneficial situation for the college and the publications.

"Our goal is to get more students involved," Hudson said. "Their goal is to get more students involved. So that's going to be the win-win situation."

After the students working for the *Daily Toreador* knew about the move to the new building, Hudson said they began to visualize how they would use the space and brought ideas to the architects working on the project. Hudson said the real benefit is that the new facilities will be constructed in a manner to help the college and the *Daily Toreador*.

"We've gotten to have a little bit of a part," Ketron said. "That's kind of been cool -- being able to actually be a part of it and not being told, 'This is what you're getting.'"

In the old building, Hudson said student staff accommodated their goals in the space and yet had little money for renovation.

"All our stuff is old and it's kind of ratty and gross," Ketron said. "We're looking forward to being somewhere that's new."

Ketron said the move is bittersweet for alumni who worked for the *Daily Toreador* because the current workspace holds mementos from the former staff, such as inspirational, funny quotes written on the walls.

"I think they'll still appreciate the fact that there's a lot more College of Mass Communications students now," Ketron said, "and that's always good to have more students and more people in student media."

According to the mass communication's website, the college intends to host a celebratory event in November, and a 50+2 year anniversary celebration for the student radio station KTXT-FM in April 2013. The station currently runs out of the basement of the Mass Communications Building from a single studio. In the new building, KTXT-FM will operate from four studios and several offices.

General Manager of the KTXT-FM station, Derrick Ginter, said the new location will showcase the activities of KTXT-FM and will foster a more collaborative environment among faculty, staff, students, and the station.

"It will enable us to do a lot more, once we are properly equipped in our new home," Ginter said.

Production Director Colin Niebergall said the new station facilities will attract interest from more students, enabling KTXT-FM to incorporate more student programming and reach a wider audience. He said the expansion creates valuable opportunities for students.

"Although we are student-run," Niebergall said, "we want our students to come out having the feeling, 'I worked at a real radio station; I'm confident.'"

Ginter and Niebergall said alumni of KTXT-FM will be impressed at how far the station has come over the years.

"I think it will be interesting for alumni of KTXT-FM to see the new building," Niebergall said, "and to see it's come from one studio that used to be in the Student Media Building to four brand new state-of-the-art studios with a news booth and office, more like a real radio station."

The alumni who took their experiences at the station and went on to do bigger and better things have the chance to give back to the college so that other students can have similar opportunities, Ginter said. He said alumni could donate to have rooms and the KTXT-FM studio named after somebody as well as fund the music acquisition process and equipment purchases.

The new facility gives the College of Mass Communications opportunities for more research space, classrooms and labs, Dean Hudson said. The building space will increase from 78,000 to 120,000 square feet and includes: 140 faculty and staff offices, 24 classrooms, 5 seminar rooms, 13,000 square feet designated to faculty and student research, 2,000 square feet for student organizations, and 14 video and computer labs.

Although the faculty and staff did not anticipate the move two years ago, they were trying to figure out how to grow and now have all the opportunities in the world to do so, Hudson said.

"It certainly gives us the message that the administration is pleased with what we are doing," he said.

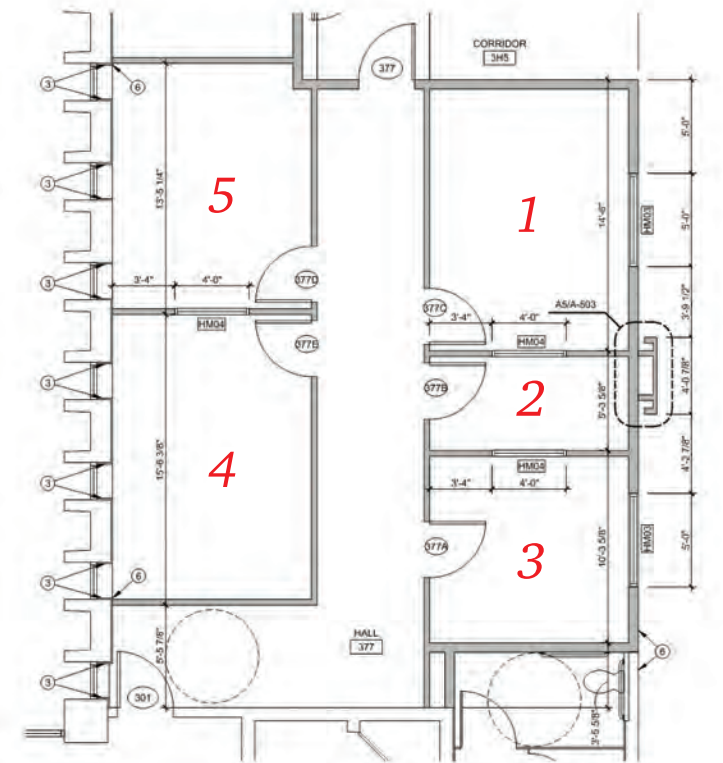
"For them to realize that we needed some expanding space and to give us that opportunity," he said, "speaks for their respect for what we're doing and how we're progressing." **mc**

(Kimberly Atkins is a May 2012 public relations graduate from Austin, Texas.)

"I think it will be interesting for alumni of KTXT-FM to see the new building and to see it's come from one studio that used to be in the Student Media Building to four brand new state-of-the-art studios with a news booth and office, more like a real radio station."

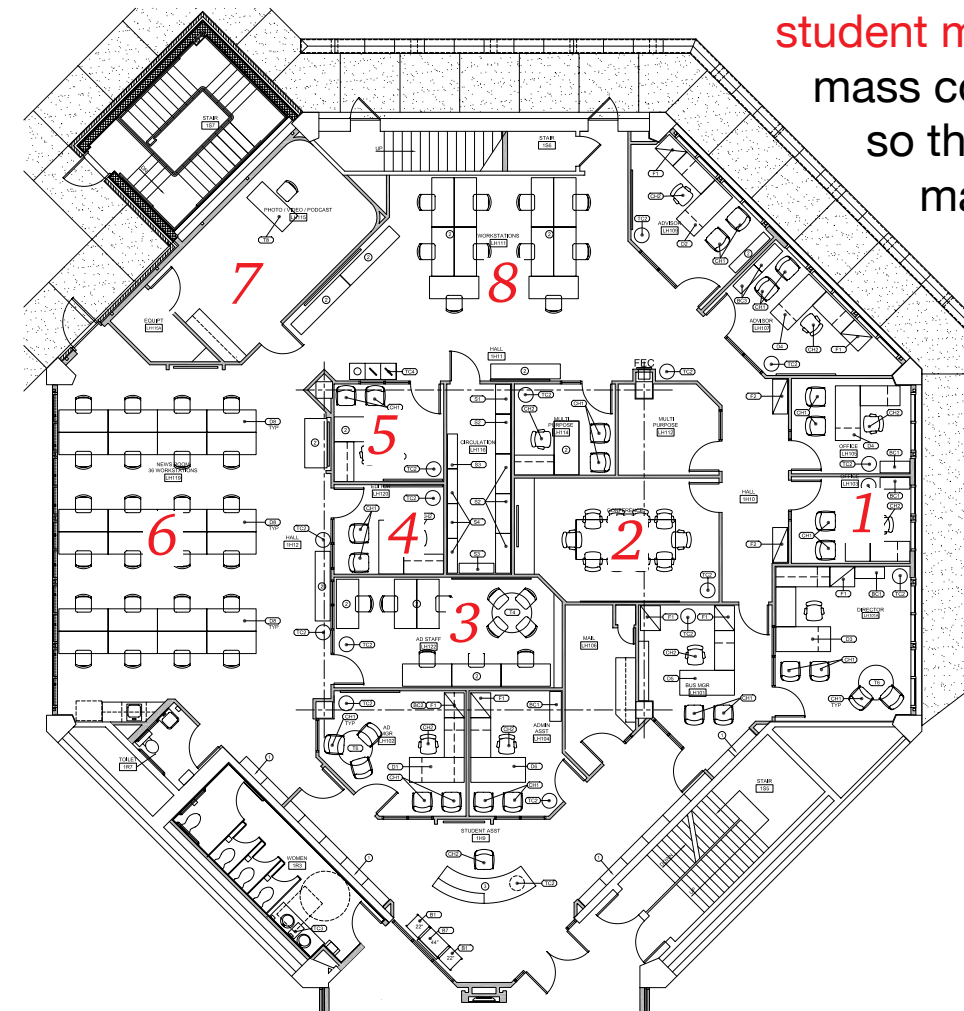
—Colin Niebergall

1. Interview
2. Newsbooth
3. KTXT main studio
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More than 80 percent of the student media staff members are mass communications majors, so the new workspace will make work and school more fluid for the students.

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A True Storyteller Through the Lens

by Stephanie Derkowski, photo by Trace Thomas



Once a child living on a cattle ranch in Paradise, Texas, now an internationally published author and photographer, Jerod Foster is an inspiration to us all that pursuing your dreams can become a reality.

Foster's book "Storytellers" was just a far thought in his mind two years ago, but thanks to social media, Foster came into contact with Ed Wait, an acquisitions editor for the publishing company Peachpit, who wanted to give Foster the opportunity of a lifetime.

Foster said at the time he always had thought about publishing a book of his own, seeing much of the book industry from co-owning a publishing house with Wyman Meinzer, the state photographer of Texas. Foster accepted Wait's offer and began the journey of creating a book.

A Ph.D. student and graduate part-time photography instructor in the College of Mass Communications, Foster related his ideas for the book to teaching his students.

"What I try to do in my classroom is not only teach students how to push buttons, but also, to inform them about why we push a button a certain way, why we frame up pictures a certain way," Foster said. "The why behind a lot of this stuff is photography, and that's the idea behind 'Storytellers.'"

Foster said in the photography book industry, publishers have concentrated on the how-to and the vision areas of photography. Foster hopes to generate a new aspect and create a buzzword in the industry, and he calls the concept storytelling.

In the summer of 2011, Foster traveled to Spain to teach Texas Tech students a travel photography course. There, he took shots for his book, and at the beginning of June went directly from Spain to Scotland where Foster began writing his book.

Foster's brother, Seth, met up with him in Scotland, and together they traveled throughout the beautiful land for 15 days.

"I'd wake up in the morning, go shoot, come back, do a little writing, go out and shoot, visit with people," Foster said. "I wanted to fulfill that romantic kind of being an author, so I went somewhere."

Beginning in June and finishing in October, Foster completed the writing for "Storytellers," and the book was published in December 2011.

Nearly 175 of Foster's photographs were published in his book, and they are a collection of photos he has taken throughout his career as a photographer.

From the portrait of a cowboy in a field, to a 70-year-old triathlete on a dock, and many others, Foster said most of the images in his book are from assignments he has done working as a freelance editorial photographer and owning a photography business.

Professional eyes all over the world see "Storytellers," from across Europe to China, and Foster said the first review of his book came from London.

Professors from across the nation have asked him if the book can be adopted into the classroom. Foster said the book is not specifically for the classroom but can be used on an academic level. Foster plans to incorporate his book into the visual storytelling course he teaches at Texas Tech.

Foster teaches many photography classes, but the class he said he is most enthusiastic to teach is the same class he said changed his life.

As an undergraduate agricultural communications major at Texas Tech, Foster said after graduation he planned on going to law school, until he enrolled in the photography course in Junction, Texas, taught by Meinzer. Foster said the summer after the class, he decided to earn his master's degree, instead of going to law school, to be able to further his education, while having more time to pursue his photography interest.

Now Foster teaches the Junction photography class to Texas Tech students during the summers. Foster said he has assisted Meinzer in teaching the course for the past few years, and now he teaches the course on his own.

Foster said his accomplishments and relationships in photography all began with his friend, Meinzer, and the Junction photography class.

"We prided ourselves on giving the students a chance to photograph right alongside somebody that's doing it all the time," Foster said.

Foster has many achievements to be proud of in his life so far, but the one he said stands out to him most is the birth of a daughter.

In October of 2011, Foster and his wife were introduced to the newest member of their family, Eva Korynn.

Foster said in his book he stresses the importance of the family photographer, and said family photographs are the most important photos any photographer will ever take, whether they are a hobbyist or professional.

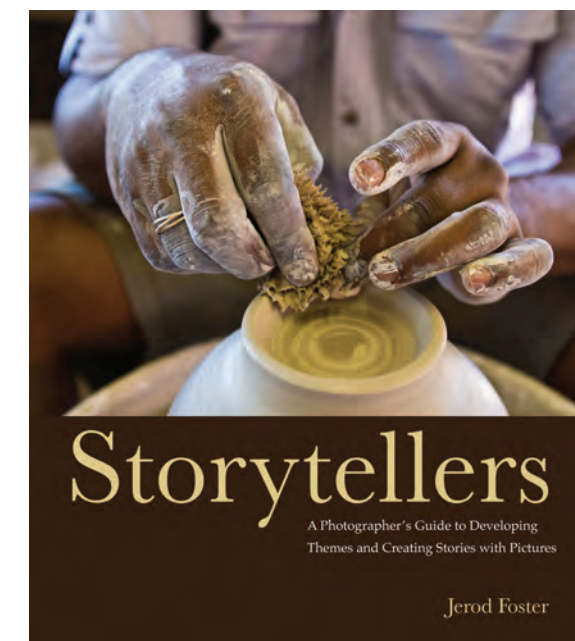
"I try to take a lot of candid shots of Eva, and I'm able to do it in a different way than say a lot of people are, because I can bring a lot of other photographic experiences into the mix," Foster said. "So I'm able to, hopefully, tell her story a little bit more compellingly."

From his daughter to his many life experiences, Foster not only writes about how to tell stories in a photographic way, but also, he applies the messages he writes about in "Storytellers" into his daily life. [mc](#)

(Stephanie Derkowski is a senior public relations major from Longview, Texas. Trace Thomas is a senior public relations major from Levelland, Texas.)

"What I try to do in my classroom is not only teach students how to push buttons, but also, to inform them about why we push a button a certain way, why we frame up pictures a certain way. The why behind a lot of this stuff is photography, and that's the idea behind 'Storytellers.'"

—Jerod Foster



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Because when the causes we care about most match up with the great things happening here at Texas Tech, it's an incredible opportunity for us to leave a legacy to this place we love.

Share the vision.

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