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 Buesseler 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.
From Dean Jerry C. Hudson

The College of Media & Communication will welcome eight new faculty members this fall, including a new Marchionne 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 at 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., from the University of Maryland. Lee will devote her time to research and service in the college and coordinate the new Asian American studies program.

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 list.

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 Center for Communications Research and the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication-affiliated students and faculty continue to bear our banners into new cultural contexts. Now that the Center for Communications Research and the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication-affiliated students and faculty continue to bear our banners into new cultural contexts. Now that the Center for Communications Research and the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication-affiliated students and faculty continue to bear our banners into new cultural contexts. Now that the Center for Communications Research and the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication-affiliated students and faculty continue to bear our banners into new cultural contexts.

From Associate Dean Coy Callison

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. Many of our students receive a financial legacy through generous gifts from alumni and friends of the college. Scholarships and endowed professorships are two examples. 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 Center for Communications Research and the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication-affiliated students and faculty continue to bear our banners into new cultural contexts. Now that the Center for Communications Research and the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication-affiliated students and faculty continue to bear our banners into new cultural contexts. Now that the Center for Communications Research and the Institute for Hispanic and International Communication-affiliated students and faculty continue to bear our banners into new cultural contexts.

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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 management 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 lecture 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, “ Hüh, I can get paid for sitting on my butt in an air-conditioned office and not have to work at my house, and I was this wild-haired manic 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 toudge 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 first day in a journalism class. While it may seem 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 toudge me so I would know which way to go. And that relationship has lasted more than 40 years.”

To learn more about our Lectureship series, visit www.mcom.ttu.edu and click Alumni > Lectureships.

Media, Mentors and the Truth

by Kate Yingling Hector
photo by Riannon Bowley

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.

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.

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There’s the tactical part of providing care, and there’s also the portion of it, Callison said. “Project CLEAR is simply a means of reminding physicians that there are two sides of that coin. “The training program was developed by Dr. Brian Zinc, chief of emergency medicine, Sweeney, and Adam Bielak, R.N., and nurse educator. The purpose of bringing in the Texas Tech researchers was 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. “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 it.” 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. (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.)
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.

“Thanks to the encouragement of my teacher, I decided to pursue photography as a major,” 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 rewarded for the 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. After the year in school, he received his Master of Arts in Mass Communications in December 2011.

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“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 TTXT/FM radio station.

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

When Byrne initially finished the mock-up, he was ecstatic. Unfortunately over the winter break, TTXT 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.

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

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.

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“Real people are behind social media here, if you had a question someone will answer it or try and find the answer.” —Drew Byrne
I could've plotted out this career path before graduation and having 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 surprised 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. “Everybody 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.”

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 Condon, then director for media and public relations for the U.S. Olympic Committee, Condon suggested Robinson apply for an internship position with the organization, which she did. By January 2011, Robinson was placed 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.”

Condon sat 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, Condon 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.”

Working with the athletes during competitions and in the mixed zones was always a great experience, Robinson said, but some of her favorite memories were interacting with them outside the gym. She can remember having one such adventure with Jordyn Wieber, member of the gold medal-winning US Women’s Gymnastics team at the 2012 Summer Olympics. Wieber was a finalist for the AAI Sullivan Award, and Robinson accompanied the athlete to New York for the ceremony.

While they were there, Robinson set up an interview for Wieber with the Today Show’s Ann Curry. Afterwards, the Today Show scheduled a hair styling session for Wieber, along with a manicure and pedicure, for the award banquet that evening.

While Wieber had her nails done, Robinson made sure things were ready at the hotel for a press conference about Wieber’s nomination for the award. Suddenly, with only 15 minutes left until the press conference was scheduled to begin, Robinson realized one thing that was not ready: Wieber’s phone number, as she could contact the man for some advice.

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.

“Just laughed the whole time,” Robinson said. “And just thinking it 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 press conferences,” Robinson said. “Whether you are in a bind or just want to bounce a few story ideas around, it’s nice to know you know people who can pick up your call.”

Robinson refers to Hudson and Condon 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 MATTIR, 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 employee and current friend of Robinson, Condon said he was thrilled for Robinson’s achievements.

“That’s the idea,” 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 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 connection she made in the Texas Tech College of Mass Communications. When she was a professor, colleague, classmate or friend, Robinson said she knew there always would be someone from the College of Mass Communications to support her.

“It’s building the relationships with people that will help 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 have been nowhere near New York City. “None of that would have ever happened,” she said. “That first 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

(Holly Kitten is a senior journalism major from Lubbock, Texas.)
IT IS NOT EVERY DAY that someone can experience a different culture in Lubbock, especially for free, but the Global Lens film series offers exactly 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 in North America and Western Europe. 

The series is curated by an advisory board made up of film makers from around the world. The advisory board is responsible for selecting 10 films every year. The film series was first introduced to the College of Mass Communications four years ago. The College of Mass Communications has been overwhelmingly positive about the Global Lens film series. "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 local movie theaters," Peaslee said. "Get a fair amount of people from the community because they do not get to see anything like this in the Timewell movie theaters." Peaslee said that the film series is "absolutely great." The independent film series is not only a great addition to the Lubbock community, but it also provides an opportunity for the students to experience a different culture.

The film series is not only a great addition to the Lubbock community, but it also provides an opportunity for the students to experience a different culture. "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." The films have a lasting impact on the students who watch them. "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." Reeves believes that as long as Peaslee is at Texas Tech, Global Lens will be at Texas Tech. "They are interested in international film who can then find other ways to contribute to that sort of thing." In the end, Peaslee just hopes to bring people who love movies together.

"It is not easy to get an audience here in the United States.

"The idea is to get an audience here in the United States.

"If you choose 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. It has screenings in 44 U.S. states and one U.S. territory. Global Lens has screenings in 44 U.S. states and one U.S. territory.

"There are more than 60 institutional and theatrical screening partners. There are more than 60 institutional and theatrical screening partners. "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." Reeves believes that as long as Peaslee is at Texas Tech, Global Lens will be at Texas Tech. "They are interested in international film who can then find other ways to contribute to that sort of thing." 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," Reeves said. "It is not easy to get an audience here in the United States.

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On 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 professional’s Friday-follower 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 communication 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 Riedhoff, 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.

It 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 explored 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 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.)
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. “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.

“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 will still 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.”

—Todd Chambers

“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

(Rachel Shackelford is a senior public relations major from Austin, Texas.)
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.
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 intelligible in the first place really isn’t productive. So by bringing in a key person 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 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 crunches 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 to them, you have really 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 best.’

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 didn’t happen 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. Faith is just a microcosm of what Bill Dean knows, because he’s got generations of students that he has taught.

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 through 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 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 addition. 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 social benefits of it, we did disabilities last semester. Of course there is an ulterior motive. I don’t tell them that.

Q: What makes the thematic final project in News Writing so important?
A: 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 crunches 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: How does the implementation of the thematic final project make your students more humanistic?
A: Because they haven’t devoted the time it takes.

Q: What does the thematic final project allow students to do?
A: It allows them to do what I consider myself a journalism major from Levelland, Texas.)

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 got 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 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 am 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. I got my masters in 19 years and 40 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. But finally, you pull it out and you realize, it wasn’t as big as you thought. Because after you pull it out, there are four more, smaller weeds, and when you pull those you realize each of those is four. And when you pull those out, suddenly, your flowers can blossom.

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

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 “garner 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.”

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

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

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—Colin Niebergall

1. Interview
2. Newsbooth
3. KTXT main studio
4. Production
5. Podcast

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.
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 story telling.

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 his writing and photography book.

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 his photos and others’ “storytellers” into his daily life.

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

$500,000 or More
Dorothy A. Bowles, Ph.D.
Phil and Victoria Price
Toni Wallingford

$200,000 — $499,999
L.R.C. (Rick) and Ginger Francis
Mary Faye Green
Jerry and Sue Hudson

$100,000 — $199,999
Michelle and Dale Turner
Chris Wallace

$50,000 — $99,999
Trish Brown Joyner
Marie Parkinson, J.D.
USD

Lubbock Avalanche-Journal

In Memory of Kelsey Kidd

Estate of Samuel O. Montgomery

Sharleen Formby Rhoads
Phil and Victoria Price

Jerry and Sue Hudson
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