Cheney awarded top honor

BY BETSY HATCH

Erika Seydel Cheney (B.S. 1994) of Indianapolis, a journalism and political science graduate, was one of seven graduates to receive the 2002 Graduate of the Year Award from the Ball State Alumni Association.

The GOLD award honors alumni who have shown personal and professional achievement, community involvement and commitment to Ball State within the first 10 years of graduation. Recipients are those who have established their promise and potential for outstanding endeavors by becoming involved in different aspects of life after college.

“The idea is to recognize people who are doing good things early in their careers so they will continue to make contributions later on,” said Ed Shipley, executive director of Alumni Programs.

Cheney, now a stay-at-home mom with her newborn daughter, Dale, served as director of the office of business and legislative relations for the Indiana Department of Environmental Management since 1998. Prior to that, Cheney served as special assistant to both Lieutenant Governors Joe Kernan and Frank O’Bannon. Besides coordinating volunteer efforts for the lieutenant governor’s office, Cheney has remained active in the community by volunteering as a reading tutor at Indianapolis Public Schools 42, serving as a mentor to an eighth grade student, and serving as a member of the Ball State Legal Assistance Studies Advisory Committee. She is also a member of the Indianapolis North Central Delta Zeta Chapter where she serves as an officer.

Curriculum changes offer more opportunity

BY JENNIFER GRAVEL

Broadcast, print and radio are not necessarily separate entities anymore. The journalism faculty is aware of this and has spent more than four years researching the industry’s changing needs and brainstorming educational ideals to create a set of programs reflecting the merging aspects of the field. The goal is to offer students all the knowledge possible to keep up with the technological changes.

The new curriculum unveiled this fall is designed to offer students practical experience in the variety of journalistic disciplines. Professionals in the industry recognize a need for professionals to be more well-rounded than ever before.

“Most media outlets are looking at media convergence,” said Dan Waechter, faculty adviser and assistant professor of journalism.

Students, as professionals, must be comfortable writing for more than one form of media and able to work with new technology that has become a part of the industry.

“Storytelling is what we do,” said Waechter.

Trip to Brazil builds international friendships

BY KELLY B. EVERLING

Entering her Brazilian hotel room for an International Tourism Conference, LuAnn Tanzilli (M.A. 1996) was greeted with exotic flowers and beautifully wrapped packages. Carefully unwrapping the bright ribbons, she unmasked a wrapped box of chocolates. Another package revealed a T-shirt while yet another basket overflowed with fresh fruit.

Responsible for International and Group Sales for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Tanzilli encounters many interesting people on her trips abroad. But none, she admits, are as warm and welcoming as the Brazilians.

“From the moment that I arrived in Recife, [Brazil] I felt right at home,” Tanzilli said. “The hospitality that the Brazilians show is unlike anything I’ve ever seen.”

Working for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for over 10 years, Tanzilli has hosted many groups, both international and domestic. Although normally accustomed to coordinating and hosting groups, Tanzilli

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Gibbs ends search for a ‘better text’

BY JENNY LESSELFBAUM AND JENNIFER PEEK

Cheryl Gibbs (M.A. 1999) believes she found her journalism classes at Earlham College in Richmond, Ind. She felt something was missing from all the books she had read and used in class.

This led her and a colleague to write “Getting the Whole Story: Reporting and Writing the News,” published by Guilford press in September.

As an assistant professor of journalism, Gibbs said there are a lot of introductory reporting textbooks that do a great job in focusing on the right news values, such as accurate news reporting and writing skills. In her book, Gibbs believes not only the role of journalists, but also the role of journalists in their community.

“We try to rock some of the unquestioned assumptions about journalism,” Gibbs said.

Gibbs said journalists are in a position to increase or diffuse tension within the community, depending on how they frame their stories.

“You can be the most skilled story writer who doesn’t understand the role of journalism in society,” she said.

“What about cooperation and consensus and resolution? Journalists are not mere conveyors of bad news. They can pick and choose their sources and quotes. They pick what information to include or omit. They decide how to frame the story.”

Some of the chapters in her book are titled: The Journalist’s Role in Society, Community as the Context for News, Journalists’ Rights and Responsibilities and Framing News Stories.

According to a news release by Earlham College, Gibbs describes the flaw of the time-honored practice of teaching the reporter to get “both sides” of the story. It presumes, she said, that there are only two sides to a story.

As a result, Gibbs said stories represent only the most extreme and contrary views on issues.

However, if news reporting can portray the many ways in which people are divided by culture, race, class and even by their own political views, the public might be able to understand and even enjoy hearing each other’s points of view.

Butorac works with high-profile clients

BY JENNIFER GRAVEL

Capturing media attention for Starbucks, adidas and London Fog – that is how Laura Butorac (M.A. 1999) spends her days.

After graduating from Ball State with a master’s degree in public relations, Butorac worked in Indianapolis for a short time before deciding to “go for it in Seattle.” She applied with three agencies on the west coast and has been working in Seattle for three years with Edelman, an international public relations agency.

As a senior account executive, Butorac has gained status as a mid-level employee. The office has 75 to 80 people who focus on consumer product promotions for Seahawks Stadium and Microsoft Xbox. “Working with high-profile clients is exciting and challenging,” said Butorac. She was hired to work with the Experience Music Project, which involved MTV and VH1. When that project ended, she promoted Microsoft hardware for a year and a half. Currently, as much as 80 percent of her time is dedicated to promotion for Starbucks national coffee chain.

As a conduit between her clients and the media, Butorac’s role is to get media attention for her clients. This includes getting the client’s product discussed in the pages of magazines, newspapers, television, radio and online outlets.

Butorac said she writes media pitches and plans upcoming PR plans “to generate positive exposure with her clients’ target audiences.”

“Creativity and writing are vital to agency work,” said Butorac. “And understanding your client’s bottom line is fundamental.”

The client must see the value in public relations activities, and knowing their goals is essential, said Butorac. In terms of consumer products, if the public is to be part of the upper string, it must have a positive impact on the bottom line.

“Gathering media coverage is definitely a tool, but driving sales, store traffic and other quantifiables is what really makes an impression,” Butorac said.

ALUMNI NOTES

CLASS OF ‘54

Donald Charles Lacy: A member of both the Scottsburg High School Class of ‘54 and the Southwestern PA Class of ‘54, Lacy began a printing career in his hometown of Tazewell, Tennessee. He is a 25-year veteran of the Tazewell Sun-Telegraph and has since been self-employed as an independent newspaper consultant. Lacy is active in his community, serving as a member of the Tazewell Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Board of Directors of the Tazewell Tornadoes Booster Club and a member of the Tazewell High School Alumni Association.

CLASS OF ‘56

James R. Howard: Retired from Gary Post-Tribune and the Indiana Department of Corrections.

CLASS OF ‘61

Jayne (Decker) Sullivan: Retired after teaching 37 years in Logansport, Ind., two years in Munster, Ind. and one year for Canton Schools in Fulton, Ind. Husband, Dale, is also a retired teacher working 39 years at Logansport High School teaching art and coaching track and cross-country.

CLASS OF ’62

Phil McFarren: Retired from USX (a U.S. Steel Corporation) after 25 years, and is now owner of The McFarren Group.

CLASS OF ’63

Jan Clark: Named the Indiana Sportswriter of the Year for 2001 by the Indiana Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association.

CLASS OF ’67

David C. Stout: Retired from Ball State after 34 years. He now works in the news department for Sabre Radio Group (WLBC, WJFN, WERK, The Hawk, WJND and WHHU) as a newscaster. He anchors an hour-long daily newscast on WHHU NewsTalk AM 1240 from 5-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and also does news broadcasts for the other Sabre radio stations.

CLASS OF ’79

Shawn McGee Kahle: Became president of the Detroit Science Center in April and still remains a member of the Board of Directors.

Peter DiPrimio: Won two awards in 2002 in the United States Basketball Writers Association Contest. Received first place for Game News Sport Coverage and fourth place for moderate length feature story.

Craig A. Petters: Returned to sportswriting after 13 years out of the field. Responsible for four suburban weekly newspaper sports sections in the Rochester, N.Y. area. Started out as stringer in Sept. 2001 and was hired full time in December.

CLASS OF ’80

Tom McLaughlin: Recently accepted a new position as Great Lakes Region Marketing Manager – responsible for executive marketing and production plans for Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin.

Tracy Warner: Recently won first place for editorial writing, newspapers of more than 50,000 circulation, from the Illinois Associated Press Managing Editors 2002
BY JENNIFER YEADON

In high school, Pete DiPrimio (B.S. 1981) knew he wanted to be a writer. He carried that passion into college at Ball State, where he wrote for the Daily News when he wasn't busy wrestling.

His love of sports coupled with his love for writing led him to become a successful sportswriter at the Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel and the winner of two awards from the United States Basketball Writers Association.

DiPrimio won first place forSpot News Game Coverage in theUSBWA contest. The article, written in March 2001, was about the hiring of Mike Davis as the permanent coach of the Indiana University basketball team. He won fourth place for Moderate Length Feature with an article detailing the much-debated firing of IU coach Bob Knight. He felt his stories stood out because of “the topics.”

“Bob Knight remains one of the most compelling figures in sports,” he said. “His firing was in intrigue, passion and conflict. All I did was try not to screw it up.”

The awards for theUSBWA contest are given out every year during the Final Four. Winning the awards was quite a surprise to DiPrimio. He did not find out until a journalist from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch told him during one of the games.

“A lot of people win awards. Sometimes you get lucky. Sometimes inspiration strikes in a big way. But the key is doing it well all the time,” DiPrimio said.

Although he wants to continue writing, DiPrimio has another goal.

“Like many writers, I would like to branch out into fiction,” he said. “I have had one short story published, and am working on a novel. I am certain about when or if it will ever get published.”

BY YASHENIA SMALLS

Alumna attributes success to adaptive technologies

Anybody could say computer technology is the wave of the future, but what about those who can’t see, those who can’t even move a mouse? Nicki Washburn (B.S. 1995), a graduate of Ball State’s journalism and public relations programs, can attest to how necessary technology is for such people.

She has retinopathy of prematurity – in her case, a condition in which an eye abnormality stemming from birth complications led to blindness. Despite her condition, she currently works as a disability resource assistant in Marion County.

But she doesn’t see her condition as an obstacle. “I don’t really think of it as overcoming,” she said. “I had to learn how to do things differently. It’s just the way things are.”

Part of doing things differently is using helpful technologies like Zoom Text and closed-circuit television software, both of which enlarge images on a computer screen.

She credits Ball State for preparing her for work with these tools.

“Going to Ball State certainly helped,” she said. “I was introduced to a lot of technology and learned how to use the computer with adaptive technology.”

Washburn worked for customer service at Bank One after leaving Ball State. When her department was eliminated, she decided to try something different – a job where she would be able to do more human services work. This led to an administrative assistant position at Goodwill Industries, where she helped with their newsletter. She also met with companies and groups to introduce services within WorkOne, an organization that helps people find jobs.

As a disability resource assistant, Washburn trains her staff on disability awareness and etiquette. She also works directly with Marion County’s WorkOne offices to ensure that all sites are accessible to people with disabilities. In coping with her visual impairment, she has learned a lot about herself. “I think I’m still learning,” she said. “I don’t think of myself any differently than I think of others.”

Washburn said WorkOne services are valuable to people with disabilities. “It’s helpful for people to know what resources are available around [their] community,” she said. She also said it is important to “not let others’ doubts or misconceptions tell you what you’re capable of because I think everyone is capable of achieving their goals.”

Goodwill Industries is an advocate for people all over the country, helping them become self-sufficient by gaining employment and learning skills.

Washburn says she believes they show employers that people with disabilities “really do have abilities.”
FACULTY NEWS

Fellowship helps professor continue summer project

BY MAUREEN MUSTARD

David Sumner, recipient of an iComm faculty summer fellowship, participated in researching information from three major newswires: Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report. His goal was to determine how these major publications are attracting new readers through their Web sites.

Barbara Strauss Reed, Rutgers University, arranged visits during June 2002 with online editors and print managers from the news magazines in New York.

Sumner said the major challenge of digital media hinges on the news magazine’s ability to attract new readers and become profitable.

“Magazines do not consider their Web site to be in direct competition with their magazine,” said Sumner, “but rather adding a new source for readers,” he said.

Sumner, along with other colleagues, participated in a separate three-day tour of Time Inc., Publishers Weekly, Trade Magazine and American Business Media.

“It was very rewarding to see people working behind the print,” said Sumner. “The exposure to the mecca of magazine publishing provides more credibility as a teacher to be able to relate firsthand experience to the students.”

The group also visited with the founding editor of New York Review of Books. This additional tour was to gain insight into the working aspects of the magazine industry and to develop contacts within the industry for student internship opportunities.

Sumner said his experience will provide students with a better understanding of the nuts and bolts issues within the magazine industry as well the issues involved in publishing magazines.

The contacts Sumner made have already proven valuable with students and alumni.

“I had a former student call me asking for information regarding internships,” he said. “I was able to give the student the names of eight editors to contact.”

Sumner hopes to publish research gained from this fellowship and has applied for a special assigned leave in order to pursue this endeavor. This research will build upon several articles on 20th century American magazine history.

New iComm faculty help encourage convergence

BY YAVONDA SMALLS

The goal of Ball State’s new iComm program is to prepare students for a media revolution by converging technology with communications. As part of that program the journalism department received two faculty and two professional staff positions.

Angelia Abrams-Rains received her undergraduate degree in special education and a master’s degree in English and technology curriculum.

She has worked in instructional technology for the Indiana University system. Abrams-Rains is now the convergence workshop coordinator at Ball State and appreciates the journalism department’s integration of technology and communications.

“I love to watch students get excited about using the technology,” she said. “I like the size and focus of the university and how it has been supportive of the whole iComm initiative.”

Larry Dailey earned his bachelor of arts in secondary education in 1980, his bachelor of journalism in 1982 and his master’s degree in photography in 2000.

In addition to working as a multimedia producer for MSNBC for the three years, he has worked as a picture editor for The Associated Press and for United Press International, in Washington, D.C.

At teaching at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, University of Missouri and Syracuse University.

Dailey is now assistant professor of Journalism at Ball State and is excited about how committed the department is to quality.

“They have a vision here for what new media can become, and I want to help them develop it,” Dailey said.

Lori Demo, assistant professor of journalism, received her bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska in 1976.

Originally from Griffith, Ind., she taught journalism courses at Ohio University and the University of Kansas. She has also worked for several newspapers, including Florida Today, where she was a managing editor, and USA Today, where she was a founding staff member for the Money section.

With her 17 years of newspaper experience, she hopes to prepare students to become the next generation of journalists.

“Journalism is a vital part of democratic society,” Demo said. “I like the energy in the department. People here have a vision to prepare students for the future.”

Jerry Pierce is the Integrated Media Lab administrator. He earned his bachelor’s degree in telecommunications at Ball State in 1988.

Though originally from Muncie, he lived in South Bend for nine years, where he was a partner at a multimedia company and served at Notre Dame as an Internet manager.

Additionally, he worked at Village Company in Mishawaka for more than four years, where he served as director of new media. He now enjoys implementing technology at Ball State’s journalism department.

“Ball State is an excellent means for students to get experienced in items pertinent to what they’re going to school for,” Pierce said. “It’s a university where you can come to get a degree and great hands-on experience.”

Hanley brings Fortune 500 experience to advertising sequence

BY NOELLE BOWMAN

Michael Hanley (M.A. 1978) joined the journalism department staff this year as a full-time advertising instructor. Hanley earned his MBA at Ball State as an adjunct instructor in the news-editorial sequence.

Hanley received his bachelor’s degree from Purdue University in visual design and a master’s degree in journalism from Ball State. Upon graduation, he worked as a field editor for a magazine and then as a photographer for two newspapers. He then went into corporate advertising and marketing, including positions with Fortune 500 companies.

Before he joined the journalism department full time, Hanley owned and operated a communications consulting firm based in Carmel, Ind. Now his full-time focus is on teaching, but he continues to operate the company on a part-time basis. He said actively working in the advertising field allows him to stay current. He uses the consulting work as “unofficial research” to learn new and emerging technologies he can bring to the classroom as real-world experience.

“This allows me to be on the leading edge of technology instead of the trailing edge,” Hanley said.

His 20 years of experience in all areas of journalism have made him fit for the journalism department. Hanley has received numerous advertising and journalism awards, including a Pulitzer Prize as part of a team coverage of flooding, while working for the News-Sentinel.

Mike Hanley
Massé takes summer to write book

BY NOELLE BOWMAN

Next semester, Mark Massé, coordinator for the news-editorial sequence and associate professor of journalism, will be taking a break from classes to concentrate on faith.

During Massé’s sabbatical, he will finish work on a literary journalism book tentatively titled “Faith Works: Dramatic Stories of Religious Social Activism.”

When Massé returns next fall, he will be able to share first-hand experience with the type of writing he teaches to graduate students, which has also been called “narrative journalism” and “immersion reporting.”

The book focuses on 12 people of faith and the social causes to which they have committed themselves such as homelessness, unemployment, poverty, neighborhood improvement and environmental protection. The 12 personalities come from a variety of faiths and interests including an Episcopal minister to improve severely blighted neighborhoods in Chicago and a Catholic nun working with migrant workers in Florida.

“What I hope to show is a unique group of individuals who share a common bond of committing to making a better society,” Massé said. He said the traditional media often ignore these people.

The profiles extend beyond biography by focusing on the issues each individual works for and the impact on society.

Massé got the idea for the book while he was teaching at the University of Oregon five years ago. He met a Jesuit priest who had been working the streets of Portland with drug addicts, ex-convicts and poor, dis-enfranchised people for 30 years. Massé spent time walking the streets with the priest, observing how he interacted with people while interviewing him.

Massé received a Freedom Forum grant enabling him to expand the book and cover more activists. Tom Price, assistant professor of photojournalism at Ball State, traveled with Massé to take photographs for two of the stories. Massé did his own photography for the other 10.

He spent several days with each subject trying to capture the days in the life of each person, what drives them and what motivates them to do the work. Massé said the subjects represent a range of personality types from humble and self-effacing to ego-driven personalities. He said even though the personalities differ, what drives each individual is a strong faith and strong spiritual convictions.

“I am trying to put a human face on issues often times the media don’t cover,” Massé said.

Four stories are complete. During his time off next semester, Massé will finish the research and write the remaining eight.

He hopes to deliver the book to Indiana University Press by Sept. 1, 2003. A publication date has not been set for the book, but Massé hopes to have it in print by the end of next year.

BY ALAN BURNETT

This fall, Jennifer Gravel, assistant professor of mass communications at Indiana University, will be teaching a photojournalism course. Gravel wrote a weekly social-political commentary column for The Star Press’s Sunday newspaper.

She is also working as an expert trainer for the Air Force Strategic Communications Training. Gravel’s Spring 2002 publication was “Sixty Four Years of Life and Times the media don’t cover,” Massé said.

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BY EMILY ERICKSON HOFF


“Revisiting Student Writer Apprehension: A Q Interpretation of the Riffe and Stacks’ Writing Apprehension Measure,” AEJMCE Southeast Colloquium, Gulfport, Miss., March 2002.


“College of Communications, Information, and Media representative for UniverCity 2002, September 2002.”


“Faculty Advisor for the Public Relations Student Society of America.


Subject matter expert and member, Ball State University Crisis Management Team.


Expert Trainer, General Command Strategic Communications Training, Bogota, Colombia, Aug. 29-30, 2002.


Participated in Advisor Resources and Training program, Aug. – Nov. 2002.

Published: “Sixty Four Years of Life and Times the media don’t cover,” The Journal of Magazine and New Media Research, Summer 2002.

Reviewed: “Reporting With the Internet for Educators” at the PointeYar Institute, St. Petersburg, Fla., May 19-24, 2002.

Feeling involved in the department
Future plans after graduation: Hopefully I’ll get a job I love with a salary I can live with, but I want it to be in the Charlotte, N.C. area.

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Waechter said, “Our students have to be comfortable telling stories in a variety of packages.” The Internet, radio and television are just some of the places students can use their writing, photography and technological skills, and the department wants to give students as many advantages as possible.

The development of the new curriculum came at a time when the department itself was experiencing change.

The new Art and Journalism Building, now the department’s home, offered the opportunity for implementing many of the faculty’s “ideal educational goals.” This includes rock¬ focus groups with video and audio recording equipment, labs for practical work, classrooms better aimed at integrated teaching and an integrated media lab.

The Integrated Media Lab allows students to produce news stories for print, broadcast and the Web from a single workstation. The Lab is a working newsroom with live broadcast capability and a fully automated control room that can be run by one or two students.

Video can be digitally edited with Final Cut Pro or iMovie. Digital video cameras and digital still cameras are available for students to check out and use for class projects.

A joint partnership between journalism and telecommunications was created as well.

“Journalism is about story-telling (and telecommunication’s) broadcast news option now requires students to take a number of courses and experience as much integration as possible.

Just as the industry is changing, the new curriculum is a “fluid concept,” open to growth and further changes as students offer feedback over the next few years, Waechter said. Internships will further determine if students are as prepared for the changing world of journalism as the faculty intends.

BY GERRY APPEL

In the age of convergent media, newspapers across the country must change just to keep up. The Daily News is no exception. As a result, the DN is looking to the future for answers to age-old questions.

Of course the print edition of the DN is not going anywhere. However, DN staffers are not only publishing all content from the print edition on their Web site “dn now,” but they also are creating original content at www.basketballstate.com.

Sophomore Meghan Farr is acting as “convergence director” for the DN and has helped establish a bond between the DN and Newscenter 43, a student-produced nightly newscast in the Department of Telecommunications. Newscenter 43 provided the DN with updated content for “dn now” as Newscenter 43 promoted “tomorrow’s headlines today” during their evening newscasts. Farr said the two media outlets learned a lot from each other and someday DN staffers will be video experts.

“Convergence and a partnership are two different things,” Farr said. “The partnership was great; we learned a lot and now have open door access. But convergence is really something we would leave at night when the TV station’s help eventually.

DN staffers were inspired to create interactive multimedia content after the Chicago Tribune produced a CD ROM documenting Sept. 11 events. DN Interactive’s first project is “Basketballstate.”

“We’re taking something on campus, taking an issue, and bringing it to the viewers through interactivity and multimedia storytelling,” Farr said.

“Basketballstate!” features original print stories, photographs and video packages, which has brought the site lots of attention. DN editor-in-chief Jon Seidel said the site has had at least 17,000 hits on the first day. Seidel said he was impressed with the staff’s dedication and with their early initial work leading to the site’s early success.

“Students have spent entire nights and mornings here. I would leave at night when the paper’s done, and then they would still be here in the morning working,” Seidel said. “They are working really hard on this, and it’s getting even better as it goes along.”

Seidel said a redesign to “dn now” is currently underway.

While DN Interactive is undergoing change with “dn now” and “Basketballstate,” the print edition of the DN has also undergone changes, which involves a major redesign.

“We took a year of reader studies, debating on what to do with the layout that would be different from what we had,” Seidel said. “We had an award-winning design previously, but we all felt it was falling kind of stale. We felt like it wasn’t working anymore. We created new design concepts such as the dog leg and the billfold page.”

The opinion page has also been restructured. Seidel said the opinion page is no longer the “usual hodgepodge” of columnists who “write a daily diary.”

“He’s (Opinion Editor John King) gotten a group of columnists who are really going to provoke some thought. We’ve had an overview of letters (in response to the columns)...we have so many letters people are getting upset because they aren’t getting published as soon as they’d like.”

Both Farr and Seidel hope DN Interactive will someday have its own staff and fall under the “umbrella” of the Daily News, creating a larger media conglomerate.

JOURNALISM GRAPHICS SEQUENCE

As graphics technologies and software become more advanced, visual journalists become capable of translating their print graphics and design skills to other media such as the Web and broadcast.

Several new courses have been created in the journalism graphics sequence so that we may begin to explore these concepts and skills. Multimedia Storytelling, which will be taught by Larry Dailey and Pamela Liedig-Farmen, will expose students to a variety of digital storytelling and the navigational abilities that the Web offers to this process. This course will be offered as an elective for all journalism and telecommunications majors.

In addition to this, an advanced graphics course has been added in which students will apply the print skills they learn in the introductory graphics course to the concepts related to animation and interactivity for broadcast and Web graphics.
The Graduate Education Council approved the proposal for a master of arts in Digital Storytelling on Nov. 26. According to Dan Waechter, faculty adviser to the Department of Journalism, the master’s program is an interdisciplinary program between the journalism, communications studies and telecommunications departments that will be housed in the telecommunications department.

“The three departments will work together to give students a wide exposure to storytelling experiences,” Waechter said.

Beth Messner, associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies, said story is a fundamental and highly compelling form of human communication, one that is common not only to telecommunications, but also journalism, public relations, corporate communications, animation, film and Web design.

The newly approved master’s program is a revision of a dormant TCOM program that existed in the 1980s. “Given the evolution of digital technologies, the old M.A. in telecommunications was ripe for transformation into the new media arena,” said Messner.

Digital technologies enable storytellers to approach storytelling from a different perspective and to devise nontraditional story forms, such as non-linear and interactive narratives. Given its potential, digital storytelling promises to play a significant role in both the corporate and creative arenas associated with telecommunications and related fields. Thus, the skills of digital storytellers, whether they are broadcasters, film producers, corporate media consultants, scriptwriters or journalists, will be in great demand.

Few academic institutions offer a master’s program in digital storytelling. Therefore, this program places the college at the forefront of this digital transformation.

“When we looked at other programs we didn’t find many of this nature that encompass telecommunications, journalism and communication studies,” Waechter said. “I think there’s a need for this at the master’s level.”

Messner said that while there are other digital media programs being developed across the nation, the Ball State program is the only comprehensive academic program that focuses upon marshalling its features for the purpose of storytelling.

According to Waechter and Messner, students who pursue this degree will be provided with a great deal of flexibility in its application and a wide-range of possibilities to market their skills.

Students wanting to enroll in the program must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate School and must have completed the GRE. Applicants must also demonstrate proficiency in written, verbal, and visual communication and have relevant computer skills.

Students may only enter during the fall semester of each year, and the program has a target enrollment of about 20 students per entering class, which will give the two-year program a total enrollment of about 40 students at a time.

Waechter said prospective students started showing an interest before the master’s program was approved by GEC. The program’s development was funded through the iCommunication grant, and some of the faculty who will teach the classes are also funded through the grant. Additionally, they have had the opportunity to become comfortable using equipment that they may be using in the workplace and to practice being on camera in a spokesperson capacity.

The public relations sequence is also planning to incorporate convergence into the media relations and campaigns classes by planning projects that will enable them to work on convergence issues and assist organizations in preparing media releases and press kits for a convergent media.

College creates new master’s degree

BY BETSY HATCH

The secondary education students are being introduced to the topic of convergence in a variety of ways. They are learning what the topic is, methods used to teach convergence, and how they can teach their students to write for the Web as well as regular print publications and broadcast.

Secondary education majors face scholastic journalism at an exciting time but there are still many unanswered questions. Coordinator Mark Herron is currently doing thesis work in how convergence can and will develop in the high school publications room. This is a topic of great interest because many schools have access to the Web, yet rarely use it. Lack of use is due to privacy issues that face schools wishing to use students’ names and pictures.
Ten Ball State faculty members, including CCIM dean Scott Olson and five journalism department fac-ulty, traveled to South Carolina to see how another university is approaching the topic of media con-vergence. The University of South Carolina, Columbia, held the two-part conference Nov. 13-16.

The purpose of the conference was to provide a scholarly examina-tion of the attributes and implications of the power of integrated information systems and the con-solidation of media organizations. It was also an exploration of media economics that are prop-elling a new generation of media products, production processes and information services. These trends are affecting all areas of communi-cation.

Some of the conference events were focused around the grand opening of Newsplex. Newsplex is a prototype multiple-media micro-newsroom for demonstration, research and training in next-gener-ation news handling tools and tech-niques. It will provide opportunities for training and research for professional the next generation of news prac-tices. Newsplex is a joint venture of the University of South Carolina, Itra and South Carolina Educational Television. Construction on the $2 million facility began in March 2002.

Lori Demo, assistant professor of journalism and fellow for the Center for Media Design, said that the conference gave her the confir-mation that she’s on the right track.

“We’ve been exploring some research projects dealing with con-vergence that will allow us to help the industry,” Demo said. “Ball State is in a great position to do some work that is really meaningful to the industry and to the public.”

Mark Herron, Director of Secondary Education Services and the sequence coordinator for jour-nalism secondary education, said he walked away with new insights and knowledge of convergence.

“I was given the chance to look at convergence from a higher aca-demia standpoint and see what’s applicable to the high school mar-ket,” Herron said.

The first part of the conference, “Defining Convergence,” took place Nov. 13-14. It was attended by Olson, Center for Media Design Director David Ferguson, journalist-department chair Marilyn Weaver and journalism faculty members Demo and Lars Duley.

Joining Weaver on Nov. 15-16 for the second phase of the confer-ence titled, “The Dynamics of Convergent Media,” were journal-ism professors Mark Herron and Jennifer George-Pallison, and telecommunications faculty Nancy Caruso, Bobapper and Terry Heizelt.

The keynote speaker was Shel Holtz, author of “Public Relations on the Net,” (recently re-released in a second edition), and “Writing for the Wired World.” Holtz pre-sented “FutureView of PR on the Net,” where he discussed the impact of conver-sations professionals’ loss of ability to control information about their companies due to the increased use and reach of the Internet. His complete presentation can be viewed at www.holtz.com/tsu.

In July, Dr. Melvin Sharpe and Brazilian instructor Dr. Helanos Rosa join their students, Yucih Hasegawa, Julia Osso, Jeff Leitch and Aaron Cron in communicating with Brazil via the video-conferencing system in Ball State’s Art and Journalism Building.

BY BETSY HATCH

For the past two terms the public relations sequence has been using technology to teach effective inter-national public relations tech-niques. Through a partnership with the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Melvin Sharpe’s campaigns stu-dents and public relations students in Brazil have been learning through interaction of planning campaigns for implementation in each other’s countries. The interac-tion is made possible through Internet-based videoconferencing.

Both groups of students are con-ducting campaigns for the Red Cross. Ball State students are working on a campaign for the Porto Alegre Red Cross chapter in Brazil, and Pontificial Catholic University students are conducting a campaign for the Hoosier Heartland chapter in Muncie.

According to Sharpe, this experi-ence has been beneficial to both groups of students.

“The greatest learning experience has been the two groups of young professionals bouncing ideas off each other, using each other for research and counsel, and explain-ing cultural differences to one another,” Sharpe said.

The Internet-based videoconfer-ence technique has taught students how to work with Brazilian profes-sionals in collecting and conduct-ing research in planning so that concepts and decisions reflect cul-tural needs, show knowledge of media and government require-ments, and avoid needless verbal and nonverbal errors.

According to senior Lee Morrison, the videoconferences are held on a weekly basis for about an hour.

“The videoconferences have given students in the class a direct interna-tional perspective,” Morrison said. “Through this type of communica-tion we’ve learned how different cultures think and how different cul-tures present information.”

Scheduling the videoconferences hasn’t always been easy. The two-hour time difference between Muncie and Porto Alegre, as well as the students’ schedules, has caused some difficulty. Nonetheless, the students have tried to maintain communication on a regular basis.

Senior Allison Zeber says she has developed new skills as a result of this class.

“I’ve learned how to communi-cate on an international level, which will help me when I enter the profession,” she said.

Student communication and inter-action is further supported by a Web site developed for the class provid-ing information in two languages, international information links, easy e-mail exchange, and a chat room for group input and interaction.

Ball State students involved in the project this summer were able to meet the Pontifical Catholic University students when the Brazilian students traveled to Muncie in June.

Sharpe said he hopes Ball State students will have a chance to travel to Brazil at some point. He also said he plans to continue the partnership for future campaigns classes.

“We’ve already identified clients in Muncie and Porto Alegre to work with next year,” Sharpe said. Due to the different schedule of seasons between the United States and Brazil, the partnership will be an aspect of campaigns classes taught during summer and fall term.

The Department of Journalism public relations sequence hosted “Digitally Conscious: Effectively Integrating Technology into Today’s PR Classroom,” in early October. The three-day confer-ence, planned in conjunction with the 24th annual Vernon C. Schranz distinguished lecturership, was based around the questions to the answer, “What should we be teaching in public relations classes today with regard to new media and technology?”

Thirteen speakers with a variety of professional and educational backgrounds told participants what graduates in public relations programs should know regarding the use of new media and technol-ogy in the practice of public rela-tions and how to better use tech-nology in the classroom.

The keynote speaker was Sharpe’s campaigns students at Ball State and the partnership with Ball State. The syllabi critique section of the conference critiqued the syllabi of Ball State public relations class-es suggested by the Public Relations Society of America for an ideal undergraduate major in public relations.

Six conference presenters gave their suggestions for what technol-ogy should be covered in these courses and what technology should be used to teach these courses.

A majority of the conference events took place in the Art and Journalism Building. Conference participants took full advantage of the technology available in the new facility.