

department of journalism

university of wisconsin oshkosh

<http://www.uwosh.edu/journalism/>

June 2008

New faculty member excited to join journalism department

By Kendra Sohm

After spending five years working as a journalism professor at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., Vincent Filak is coming back to Wisconsin to join the UW-Oshkosh journalism department.

"I really enjoyed my campus visit and the faculty and everything around the area, so when they offered me the job, I couldn't help but take it."

A Wisconsin native, Filak was born in Cudahy and moved to Milwaukee at age 4. He received his B.A. in Journalism and Communication Arts and M.A. in Journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He received his doctorate in journalism from the University of Missouri.

This fall, Filak will teach Writing for the Media, Reporting and Editing. He said he is looking forward to helping



Dr. Vincent Filak

students shape their work and improve their approach to journalism. "My goal in teaching is to give them an opportunity

to learn and improve as we go through the course together. I'd like to look at it as being their class as opposed to mine. If I do my best to meet their needs, I think the class goes along a lot better than if I just lecture at them."

Another area he would like to be involved in is working with faculty on research projects. A few topics he enjoys researching are news writing and reporting, newsroom management and quantitative research. "I love to have an idea and see how it will pan out. That's the core of all good research. I start with theories and move to data collection or I move from a topic and seek out a theory."

Some of his published articles include, "The impact of instructional methods on medium-based bias and convergence approval" and "News (un)scripted: An

Please turn to **FACULTY** / Page 3

Journalism department continues with technology upgrades

By Meghan Plummer

Any journalism major knows how quickly the profession can change with the latest technology, especially as it relates to online media. And students in the UW-Oshkosh journalism program will have a better chance to keep up with those developments now that funding has been approved for two permanent property requests.

The first request was for an upgrade to Adobe Creative Suite 3 Design Premium for the department's 63 computers. Previously, the computers were running on CS1.

With CS3 being installed on computers in the department's three labs and in journalism offices, students and faculty can work on projects without worrying about compatibility issues. Previously, work done on files created elsewhere on CS3 could

not be edited on computers running CS1.

Also, since Adobe acquired Macromedia, CS3 has new versions of Dreamweaver and Flash, both increasingly necessary in the journalism field. With these programs, students can better learn to work with online media, which companies are looking for in the hiring process.

The second request, which was partially funded, was for additional digital camera equipment, and for "mobile journalism" kits. The kits include audio recording equipment and cameras that take still photos as well as video.

With these kits, students can work on all aspects of a story. Instead of just attending an event and writing about it, students can take video, audio and still photos, then use everything they gathered to write stories and upload video to the Web. This will help students become more proficient in Web production.

In this issue:

Chair's Remarks (2)
Outstanding Alumni (4)
Race/News Panel (6)

Student on 'Today Show' (8)
PRSSA earns top prize (10)
NSAC best in region (11)

From the desk of the chair

Hello everyone. I hope your year has been a productive one so far. In the Department of Journalism, the faculty, staff and students have worked hard to move the program forward, and to make you proud of your alma mater.

You will read about some of these accomplishments elsewhere in this newsletter. However, I will offer up a “Ten Things to Know” about the department, or perhaps to ponder, in no particular order:

Student competition teams—Our students continued to excel in many areas.

** The Strategic Campaigns in Advertising team won first place at the District 8 competition in St. Paul, Minn., in April 2008. The team then competed in June in the national contest in Atlanta. In addition, the team won a 2007 Student Addy Award.

** The Public Relations Campaigns team won first place in the 2007 National Organ Donor Awareness competition, and picked up its award at the PRSA convention in October in Philadelphia. And this spring, the public relations students received an honorable mention in the PRSSA 2008 Bateman Competition.

New faculty—Last year, we were fortunate to have Dr. Elizabeth Crawford join the faculty as an advertising professor. This fall another new faculty member will join the department. Dr. Vincent Filak, a journalism professor at Ball State University, will teach news/editorial classes beginning in the fall. He received his doctorate from the Missouri School of Journalism. Two full-time positions remain open in the department, but we hope to receive permission to conduct searches for both of them this year.

Alumni—For the second year in a row, a graduate of the journalism program was selected to receive a university Outstanding Young Alumni award. Laura Denissen Scherr, who works for Harley Davidson in Milwaukee, was among those honored during Homecoming weekend in October 2007.

Facilities/technology—This spring, journalism received permanent property funds to upgrade laboratory and technology equipment. We are upgrading all of the department’s computers to Adobe Creative Suite 3 from CS1. In addition, funding was received to purchase additional digital cameras, and “mojo kits.” The kits contain all of the essential equipment for students to capture audio, video and still images. Software programs also were purchased to assist in online production.

Student accolades and awards—Journalism major Becky Thomas, a student in Grace Lim’s Feature Writing class, received her 15 minutes of fame and then some this spring.

Becky wrote an essay for class on what it is like to be a “tall girl,” and it was posted on a New York Times blog. That led to an appearance on the “Today Show” in New York.

Vanessa Virbitsky, meanwhile, doubled her pleasure with two outstanding accomplishments this year. She was selected to be the class speaker at the College of Letters & Science graduation ceremony in May. Earlier, she was named as one of two 2008 winners of the Judy Kruckman Women’s Gymnastics Scholar-Athlete Award in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC).

Advance-Titan adviser—Beginning in fall semester 2008, the A-T will have an editorial adviser. Student staff members and the faculty were involved in establishing the framework for the new position. Funding to pay the adviser’s salary will be provided by the provost’s office. Miles Maguire has agreed to be the adviser.

Student clubs—Among the many strengths of the department are the student organizations—the Ad Club, the Photo Club, PRSSA and SPJ. Their activities range from bringing in guest speakers to attending conferences to performing public service activities. These clubs, as most of you know, are run by the students and have a faculty adviser. They continue to be a way for our majors to show their leadership skills and to work on group projects.

Accreditation—Next year the department will be up for re-accreditation by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). Every six years the faculty puts together a massive self-study, and we undergo an intense onsite inspection by a visiting team from the council. Accreditation is important for the journalism program because it a great recruiting tool. Prospective students, and especially their parents, are impressed when they hear that our program is accredited. It also helps us to keep class sizes small, and gives us guidance in curriculum matters and in professional development. Don’t be surprised if we call on some of you in the next year to give us feedback, or to provide written support of our re-accreditation effort.

A challenge to you—Students today learn about the “real world” early on, as they face rising costs for tuition, textbooks, room and board and, of course, entertainment expenses. We will continue to rely on you, our alumni, to provide financial support for our department scholarships, the Gary Coll Journalism Fellowship, and other educational endeavors. In a time of shrinking support from the state for higher education, we call on our graduates to help us as we prepare the next generation of journalists.

A look ahead—I have completed my first year as chair of the journalism department, struggling mightily to fill in for Dr. James Tsao, who took a position last year at Syracuse University. This spring the faculty voted to have me continue serving as chair for the next three years.

Although journalism faces an ever-changing and uncertain future, I believe the department is positioned to continue what Dr. David J. Lippert started when he came to Oshkosh to head the department in 1966. We continue to graduate students proficient in writing and editing, and with presentation and critical thinking skills. We also prepare them to be multimedia savvy, ready to apply those skills in a Web-based world.

So that’s my message to you. Please tell me what you think about the department, and what we as faculty and staff can do to make it better in any way. I am always just an e-mail message away, at cowling@uwosh.edu. So be sure to keep in touch.

Sincerely,
Mike Cowling
Chair, Department of Journalism

Filak excited to join journalism faculty

FACULTY, from Page 1



Filak hands out newspapers with his 2-year-old daughter Zoe.

analysis of support and blame in the wake of two fatal shootings.”

Filak gained professional experience working as a night-side reporter at the Wisconsin State Journal and city-side cops and courts editor at the Columbia Missourian in Columbia, Mo. He was also the adviser to the Ball State Daily News.

Outside of work Filak enjoys spending time with his wife Amy and their 2-year-old daughter Zoe. He also likes bowling, reading, collecting baseball cards and listening to games on the radio.

Filak replaces Margaret “Peggy” Davidson, who retired in 2006.

Instructor receives gold star award

By Mary Patterson

Kevin Rau, a UW-Oshkosh adjunct instructor in journalism and owner of Rauhaus Design, won a Gold Award from Graphis, the International Journal of Visual Communication.

The poster, originally designed for a contest through the Linotype font library, celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Helvetica typeface.

Rau said he draws inspiration from the work of Bauhaus design founder Walter Gropis, and in 1997 named his business Rauhaus as an homage to the designer.

Other awards he has received include the Printing Industries of Wisconsin Award of Excellence for

the UW-Oshkosh College of Business 40th Anniversary booklet in 2006, and the Communications Concepts Grand Award for the Fairleigh Dickinson University Alumni Magazine in 2004.

Rau teaches Visual Media Design.



Kevin Rau

Faculty Achievements

Dana Baumgart:

- Co-adviser for NSAC team that took first place at regional convention in St. Paul, Minn.

Mike Cowling:

- Participated in the New York Times Student Journalism Institute at Dillard University in New Orleans in May 2008. He supervised the institute’s copy desk before heading back to his summer job. He has worked at The Times as a copy editor for the past 12 summers.

Dr. Elizabeth Crawford:

- Presented “Using Advertising and Public Relations Related Initiatives to Increase Circulation,” for the Advertising and Publicity Panel at the American Academy of Advertising.
- Presented “Constructivism goes to Hollywood: The influence of the Soviet constructivist aesthetic on American movie poster design,” for the Politics and the Media Panel at Central States Communication Association.

Dr. Tim Gleason:

- Presented “Anthony Suau’s ‘Fear This’: The Subjectivity of a Photojournalist’s Photobook,” at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Visual Communication Division Research Session on Aug. 12, 2007, in Washington, D.C.
- Presented “Martin Parr in Mexico: Does Photographic Style Translate?” at the National Communication Association, International and Intercultural Division, which was held in Chicago on Nov. 16, 2007.
- Presented “Nathan Lyons and the Despair of a Social Landscape,” at the National Communication Association, Visual Communication Division on Nov. 16, 2007.
- Joined the editorial board of SIMILE: Studies In Media & Information Literacy Education.

Dr. Julie Henderson:

- Published book review of “The Cigarette Century” in Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Spring 2008.
- Joined the editorial board of Revista Romana de Marketing, a journal addressing public relations and marketing issues originating in Romania.
- Member of the Board of the Educators Academy for the Public Relations Society of America.
- PRSSA adviser, PR students won NODAC (National Organ Donors Awareness Campaign) competition. Placed first in national competition in October 2007 for April 2007 campaign. Received national honorable mention in Bateman competition (PRSSA case study) in April 2008. for Community Partnerships.
- Joined the marketing team of the UWO Center for Community Partnerships to develop creative concepts for Culver’s new drive-through services in spring.

Miles Maguire:

- Presented “When Magazines Have a Mission: Measuring the Scope and Performance of a Nonprofit Media Sector,” at the Media & Communication Conference at the University of Paris Medical School in November 2008.

Judy Schultz:

- Was recognized as the winner of the Skip Zacher Friend of Scholastic Journalism Award at the 2007 NEWSPA Spring Conference.

Denissen named Outstanding Young Alumni

By Marie Daniel

Journalism graduate from the 1999 class, Laura Denissen Scherr, was a UW-Oshkosh's 2007 Outstanding Young Alumni award recipient.

After several years working in different states, Denissen Scherr has found her way back to Wisconsin as current marketing project manager at Harley-Davidson.

For the past year and a half she has been working on the Buell Motorcycle Company account, which is a subsidiary of Harley-Davidson and manufactures American sport bikes.

A typical day for Denissen Scherr varies depending on the projects at hand. Part of her role is to help define the strategy for their corporate and dealer events, including demos, rallies and races. She also works closely to integrate the brand into relative promotional opportunities as well as product line brochures, advertising and Web site content. On a daily basis she interacts with various internal stakeholders as well as agencies and vendors.

Denissen Scherr has learned throughout her many years in the field to be flexible and learn how to adapt to whatever new situation she is presented with.

With a B.A. in Journalism and an Advertising/Public Relations emphasis she has gained many talents throughout her career. From account manager, at



Laura Denissen Scherr

Hanson Dodge Design in Milwaukee, to interactive project manager, at Tribal DDB Worldwide in Chicago, to Harley-Davidson starting out as senior Web site content coordinator, Denissen Scherr has just about done it all.

However, she is still striving to advance her knowledge with a master's degree from Marquette University, which she hopes to complete within the next five years.

She advises new graduates to be open to opportunities that you may not have initially thought about, and to remember that experience is vital.

"I've found that employers are (more and more) interested in seeking candidates who have the ability to learn and apply their talent to whatever may come their way," she said.

"Make connections, ask questions, get involved and start identifying the things you like to do. There's something to take away from every experience – even the bad ones," she said.

Denissen Scherr is thankful for the education and extra-curricular experiences that she gained from her time at UW-Oshkosh. She said that working with Ad Club and the Advance-Titan really helped prepare her for the real world, and allowed her to make several connections with other students and professionals in the field.

Denissen Scherr is looking forward to her future as an alumna of UW-Oshkosh because she still finds ways to connect with those at the university.

Her next project is working with the UW-O alumni director, Christine Gantner, on the upcoming 2008 Homecoming theme, which will partner with Harley-Davidson, who is a big supporter of UW-O and the community, considering they currently employ 40 UW-O alumni.

Denissen's ideas are endless and her determination follows her goals, but her favorite part of her job is that she is customer of Harley-Davidson and she rides her own motorcycle.

Alumni Updates: Where are they now?

Jeni (Kimmet) Asaba – is a reporter at the Bronx Times in New York. She wrote that the publisher said he has always been impressed with Wisconsin journalism grads.

Tiffany Boyke – started in January 2008 as an account relationship specialist at the Oshkosh Northwestern.



Tiffany Boyke

Marisa Cuellar– worked as a circulation coordinator at Kalmbach Publishing. She is attending law school at Marquette in Fall 2008.

Brian Dederling– began in October 2007 at the Miami Ad School's Minneapolis location.

Melissa Goldman - works as a marketing specialist at Oracular Inc. in Oshkosh.

Justin Kartheiser – is a Web editor for the e-commerce division of Kohl's Corp.



Justin Kartheiser

Bryanna Lancour – works as a marketing/PR communications specialist at CPM Marketing Group in Madison.

Bronx Times offers a variety for journalism graduate

By Meghan Plummer

Working as a reporter in New York City is only a dream for many journalism majors. For Jeni (Kimmet) Asaba, a December 2005 graduate of UW-Oshkosh, it's a reality.

Asaba started at three weekly newspapers outside of La Crosse. She got married and moved to New York in August 2006, but found no openings for jobs in the journalism field. While working as a project coordinator with the New York Public Interest Group at Bronx Community College, she persevered and applied for jobs at newspapers in the Bronx, even though no jobs were open.

"One year after I sent in my application to the Bronx Times, the editor called me in for an interview," Asaba said. "After interviewing with the paper's editor, publisher and editor of The New York Post, which owns the Bronx Times, I was hired on the spot."

Asaba began working at the Bronx Times in January 2008. She is a general assignment reporter and also edits other stories, making her responsible for nine to



Jeni Asaba flashes her tickets to cover the pope's New York visit.

12 stories per week. "We have only three weekly papers for the Bronx's 1.7 million people, so we don't cover individual beats,

but rather get to dabble in a little bit of everything," Asaba said.

The article that stands out the most to Asaba was a rather gruesome one called "Three Months in Trunk".

"Police found a half-decomposed body stuffed in a duffle bag in the trunk of an abandoned car," Asaba said. "Upon hearing the news, my photographer and I literally rushed to the scene. Unfortunately, because of horrible New York City traffic, we got there right after they put the body in the white body bag."

Asaba hopes to become a column writer in the future. "I wrote 'The Vent' back in the day when I worked for the Advance Titan and I'd love to continue down that path," she said.

Asaba has plenty of advice for journalism students at UW-Oshkosh. "Be persistent. Nothing will ever get handed to you," she said. "Listen to your teachers, because UW-O has some of the best."

According to Asaba, the UW system has a great reputation in New York, and she's grateful for the quality education she received.

VandeHei returns to Oshkosh, speaks to students

By Mary Patterson

Jim VandeHei, a University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh graduate and co-founder of Politico, gave a keynote speech to high school students during the Northeastern Wisconsin Scholastic Press Association conference on April 23.

During his speech, "Politico: Changing the Way Politics is Covered," VandeHei explained that in the past politics was reported mainly in big newspapers like The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, but now even little organizations are able to have an influence.

He asked students whether they read newspapers on a regular basis and how often they read news online. After the large show of hands for Internet use, VandeHei told students that they were in a good position, just starting out in the business as it is changing dramatically.

"You should feel optimistic about

everything that is before you," he said about the change from print to online media.

Some advice the journalism alumnus had for students was that they need to come into the industry "with [their] eyes wide open". He told the prospective journalists that the journalism department is more important than ever because professors are no longer just teaching students how to write. They are helping to teach the technology that students will use daily.

Students asked questions about VandeHei's experiences while covering politics. One student asked if Politico.com was at all biased. He assured the student that the content on the Web site was "journalism you can trust".

When asked what beat was his favorite, VandeHei said, "Congress is the most fascinating beat" because of the ability to



Jim VandeHei speaks to high school students.

talk to the policy makers.

One student asked him what an average day was like and VandeHei said it was a lot of waiting for elections.

"This campaign was a godsend for Politico," he said.

Before ending his speech, VandeHei encouraged the students to pursue an internship, saying that there is no cooler job than one where you get paid to learn.

Popular columnist and music critic catches students' attention

By Mary Patterson

Stanley Crouch, the columnist and music critic known for his appearance on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” after the Don Imus scandal, came to the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh campus to present “Blues for America” on Feb. 28.

Crouch, who writes for the New York Daily News, contacted his friend, and director of the University Honors Program, Roberta Maguire, about speaking on campus.

During his stay in Oshkosh, Crouch spoke to Miles Maguire’s reporting class. There, he fielded questions from aspiring journalists about his book “Considering Genius: Writings on Jazz,” what he thought about rap music, and the upcoming presidential election.

Crouch said he wasn’t a mentor, but rather a friend to jazz musician Wynton Marsalis. He told students that Marsalis is a genius who has “the exceptional ability

to absorb very complex information in and out of music.”

The critic, originally from Los Angeles, was firm in his belief that rap music was misogynistic and did nothing to help the reputation of African-Americans.

During his appearance on “Oprah”, Crouch discussed the double standard where rappers are excused for their lyrics because they were at the bottom of society.

For two and a half hours, students asked the 62-year-old MacArthur fellowship recipient questions ranging from why he enjoys being a jazz critic to what he had to say to people claiming he likes to drum up controversy.

“The challenge [of a critic] is to attempt to capture an experience that is not particularly palpable and transfer it to a page,” Crouch said. He went on to say that people are able to challenge critiques of sports performances with help from YouTube, but it is a different story with music where you have to take the critic’s word for it.

During a question and answer segment, Crouch referred to his essay, “Blues as a Constitution,” as he explained that black American culture isn’t fully represented. The only aspects the public sees are those that are depicted in rap music.

He also offered that if the directors of the MacArthur Foundation really wanted to see what someone could do with the award money, they should give the winners a second \$500,000 grant.

Students, faculty and members of the community filled all 168 seats in the theater in Reeve Union later that evening, to hear what Crouch had to say about jazz, rap and politics. Crouch read two of his columns about presidential candidate Barack Obama before answering questions. Earlier in the day, Crouch told students that he believed Obama would win the primary elections.

He later attended a reception at Pollock Alumni House.

Race discussion panel offers insight to journalism students

By Mary Patterson

Four journalists spoke about why and how the media cover race-related events during a symposium panel discussion on April 10 at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

Victor Huyke, editor of *El Conquistador* newspaper in Milwaukee; Eugene Kane, a Metro columnist for the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*; Susanne Rust, a science reporter for the *Journal Sentinel*; and Matthew Johnson, director of *Strive Media Institute* in Milwaukee, discussed the topic “The Role of News Media in Reporting on Poverty and Race in Urban Areas.”

The panelists were asked whether the media report on events in a fair and unbiased way or if they tend to perpetuate stereotypes, with a reference to recent robberies on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campus. Kane said that reporters need to find out who was to blame instead of just saying what happened.

Rust agreed, saying that many reporters



Matthew Johnson, left, and Victor Huyke

just tell what, not why. Johnson explained that students at *Strive* are taught to research history and “why it happens.” He said that because newspapers are fighting against the Internet, he believed they tend to embellish some stories.

When asked how newspapers can do a better job of reporting events, Rust said they need to constantly update information and to focus on their community. Huyke added that newspapers can get wrapped up in award-winning stories, but that commu-

nity news is always important. Johnson suggested the need for young minority journalists to report on issues that relate to them.

Diversity in journalism is “bringing different voices to the newsroom,” Kane said. The panel members agreed that minority journalists need to be part of the media in order to cover race issues fairly. However, Johnson said that white journalists can report on minority issues, but they need to know how to write a balanced story.

During some final thoughts, Kane encouraged students to follow their passions no matter their race or sex.

Rust added: “Value what you bring with you in whatever kind of work you do. It’s your background that makes what you do interesting.”

The symposium was co-sponsored by the Department of Journalism and the African-American Studies program with the help of a UW System Race and Ethnicity grant.

Students spend time across the ocean

By Mary Patterson

The 2007 study abroad trip to England offered a chance for University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh journalism students to get out of the classroom and into the streets to learn first hand about sports and culture in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Tim Gleason and six students stayed at Homerton College in Cambridge and Kent Hall in London between July 20 and Aug. 4, 2007.

Students learned about ethnographic differences between the United Kingdom and the U.S. while taking the three-credit course. They also read the book "Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour" by Kate Fox.

Walking the streets of England, students looked for interactions among people in the community. Some joined pickup soccer games, while others went into shops to talk to and observe people.

Louis Garcia said some people thought he was strange because he "went up and talked to everyone."



Guys pose in photo booths in England.

In local pubs, Margaret Brill, Ann DeVillers, Matt Gabriel and Matt Danek tried their hands at trivia games, which proved academically challenging; the all-girl and all-guy teams took the bottom two places. The students were not able to answer American political science questions because they were so difficult.

Cultural differences between the two countries included a slower pace of life for those in the United Kingdom. After

Please turn to **STUDY** / Page 10

Classes combine for new experience

By Marie Daniel

This was the first year that the Magazine Editing and Production class produced its own student publication and partnered with other classmates to learn the realistic nature of a career as a magazine editor or writer. The result of all their hard work was the creation of a prototype called DIG magazine.

The magazine's purpose was "Uncovering Oshkosh for the Do-It Generation." The publication's tone was upbeat and creative. The students in the class chose to focus on their own generation of young professionals because there are not many local publications that target graduates or locals in Oshkosh that are just starting their career.

DIG magazine explores the latest trends, hot spots and events that would appeal to this generation of young outgoing people.

The spring course partnered with the

Feature Writing class, taught by Grace Lim, to aide the editing students with feature articles and other stories published in the magazine.

Both classes worked together to brainstorm concepts for the magazine. The Magazine Editing and Production class, taught by Dana Baumgart, focused more on layout, design and final production, while the Feature Writing students focused on writing the content.

The editing students divided up into two different groups, the managing editors and the creative directors, however, both teams worked together to design the template, and students individually designed their own spread in the magazine.

The students learned a great deal from both classes, however, many found it to be challenging because working together with two classes isn't as easy as one might think.

Multimedia: Students take it to the next level

By Mary Patterson

Two journalism students went above and beyond the requirements in their advanced reporting class when asked to put a print story online.

The project for Miles Maguire's class last fall became a complete Web site devoted to the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh women's volleyball team.

This assignment was a way to get students used to working with multimedia. Since many students had little or no training in the field, it was an optional assignment. The department is working on ways to integrate multimedia training into the curriculum, and Maguire said a project like this will be a requirement in the future.

Kevin Kosterman and Ricky Nelson, both in the news/editorial emphasis, decided to create a Web site for the women's volleyball team.

"We decided to go with a Web site as a way of maximizing the impact of the information we were gathering and presenting our research in an entertaining, stimulating way," Kosterman said.

He went on to say the girls' journey to the NCAA Tournament would be a compelling story to tell.

Along with a blog, the Web site features player profiles, game recaps, interviews and video clips from games. Links to UW-Oshkosh's volleyball site are posted as well.

Kosterman graduated in December, but Nelson, now in his last semester, is still keeping up with the blog when he gets a chance.

"It was just natural to see the season through to the end because the Web site and blog were never about getting a grade in a class," Nelson said, adding that it is nice to have an outlet for his volleyball-related thoughts.

Check out the site at: <http://www.students.uwosh.edu/~kostek00>.

Student receives national attention on a lengthy subject

By Kate Briquetelet

Becky Thomas had never talked about it much. While her 6-foot-4 stature stands out, no one knew the life behind her height until she wrote about it for her feature writing class -- a personal story that gained national attention.

Thomas's essay "Life as a Tall Girl" was published on the New York Times blog "Well" in March, sparking enormous response from people of all heights and landing her on NBC's *The Today Show* and NPR's *Talk of the Nation* in April for segments on extreme heights. She was also featured May 1 on Milwaukee's channel FOX 6.

"I didn't expect it," Thomas said. "(When) I finally went on the Times Web site, there were 300 comments and I read through some of them, some from other tall women. Some of them said, 'This was like a page out of my diary.' It struck a chord with people."

"Life as a Tall Girl" was published after journalism adjunct professor Grace Lim shared the essay with Times health columnist Tara Parker-Pope, a longtime friend who writes the "Well" blog. Parker-Pope, who said she's always enjoyed student journalism, knew the essay would resonate with readers.

"It's an essay about Becky's own personal experience growing up as a tall girl, but it tapped into this universal theme about feeling comfortable in your own body and feeling good about yourself no matter what size or shape you are," Parker-Pope said. "It just had all the right ingredients to get people talking and thinking about their own feelings and behavior toward others."

With more than 500 comments on the essay to date from people of all ages and sizes, Parker-Pope said she thinks it will remain one of the most-talked about "Well" blog posts for the year.

Women who are envious of taller women, tall women who date shorter men, and men and women who feel they aren't taken seriously for being too short were among those who responded to the blog. There was also a comment by Pulitzer



Becky Thomas stands next to adjunct instructor Grace Lim. Photo by: Megan Sheridan

Prize-winning novelist Jane Smiley (comment No. 200), who stands at 6 feet 2 inches.

Journalism department chair Mike Cowling said that in his 14 years at UW-Oshkosh, he doesn't remember a time when a student has received such sudden national attention. To have an article appear on a New York Times blog and then to have that lead to an appearance on *The Today Show* isn't an everyday event, he said.

"Becky's experience should show our students that it doesn't matter where you are going to school today, that if you have good writing skills and are willing to put yourself before the public, you can be successful," Cowling said. "The publicity that she received certainly reflects well on our department, and the university as a whole. It was a good story, and people nationwide now not only know about Becky, but also our department and UW-Oshkosh."

Cowling also said the experience shows how journalism faculty can help push students to do more than just class

assignments. Members of the department, he said, often go that extra step to help students earn more than just a grade, whether it be with a byline in a local or national publication or help finding a job.

Journalism student Megan Sheridan also received praise for a photograph she took of Thomas and Lim to accompany the blog post. The photo was taken in an art department studio on campus and showed Thomas in heels standing next to the 5-foot-9 inch instructor Lim.

Parker-Pope said she thought Sheridan's photo "really captured the tone of the essay and added further to the story's appeal." She added, "Several people at the paper and even some readers commented on what a great photo it was."

Sheridan got the idea for the photo from the last line of Thomas's essay, in which the 6-foot-4 student wrote that she sometimes wears heels "just to make them look twice."

Sheridan credits Lim for the Times photo opportunity and said Lim is just an example of how passionate journalism professors are about teaching students.

"I've encountered a lot of professors in the university who have given up on truly teaching students," Sheridan said, "but in the journalism department, they really want you to understand the trade and that what you're learning now is what you're going to be doing when you graduate."

Lim said Thomas's essay is a new standard she wants her students to reach.

"Becky wrote a true personal essay," Lim said. "It was real, powerful and honest. ... I was floored by her essay. My students will tell you that I am, should I say, frugal with my praise, but I wasn't with Becky's essay. I loved it from the get-go, and I knew it would resonate with people of all heights."

Thomas will graduate in fall and said she doesn't know exactly what career she will choose but hopes to write anything, whether news features, sports or fiction. She currently writes for the sports section of the student paper, the *Advance-Titan*, and she started her own blog to keep the conversation on height going at tallgirlwrites.blogspot.com.

Students prepare for jobs

By Meghan Plummer

On the average “fun activities” list, job interviews fall somewhere between getting pulled over by the police and undergoing knee surgery. Internship coordinator Barbara Benish hopes to settle stomachs and prepare students with her Professional Journalism Internship class, which participates in mock interviews once each semester.

Mock interviews give students a chance to practice interviewing for jobs and to get feedback from employers like Gannett, Cumulus Broadcasting, Moran Publishing, and many others. Around 20 students participate each semester. Employers conduct a full professional interview and look at students’ resumes and portfolios. Although jobs don’t have to exist for the interviews, many mock interviews result in coveted job offers.

“We try hard to match students with employers in their field of interest,” Benish said.

Job offers may not always be the result, but students still find the interviews to be beneficial. “It helps them become more comfortable at interviewing,” Benish said. “[Mock interviews] mainly give them more confidence to do ‘real’ job interviews.”

Students also appreciate the feedback from employers. “Once they graduate, apply for a job and interview for that job, there is no feedback. The employer won’t call them to tell them what they did wrong,” Benish said.

After 20 minutes of interviewing and 10 minutes of employer feedback, students participate in a panel discussion, where they get the opportunity to ask employers questions. “That’s always a favorite part,” Benish added.

Mock interviews also help in the journalism department’s assessment for reaccreditation by helping to determine if students are learning. “The employers are quick to tell us what skills or abilities students are lacking,” Benish said. “Employers can usually determine quickly if a particular student has the skills needed to compete in today’s workforce.”

Students can participate in the mock interviews by enrolling in Benish’s Professional Journalism Internship class, or by contacting her at 424-7145 or benish@uwosh.edu

Employer participants

Marilyn Bazett-Jones-Integrus Energy Group Inc.
Jeanette Dediemar-UW-Oshkosh Integrated Communications
Becky Dorschner-Deluxe 920 Magazine
Nathan Eid-Directions Inc.
John Giesfeldt-Directions Inc.
Emily Glass-Brand Spank’n News
Maggie Grafwallner-Appleton Performing Arts Center
Kelly Igl-Gannett Newspapers
Dick Knapiński-EAA
Tim Lyke-Ripon Commonwealth Press
Jim Moran-Chilton Times Journal
Kelly Nelson-EAA
Mark Schiefelbein-Green Bay Packers
Kate Unger-Reeve Union
Lisa Voss-Oshkosh Public Library
ER Waskawic-Directions Inc.
Steve Wuerger-Affinity Health

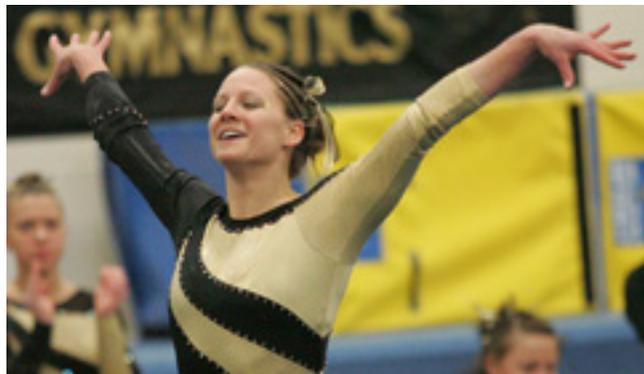
Journalism student-athlete receives recognition

By Kendra Sohm

Vanessa Virbitsky, a recent journalism senior was named one of two 2008 winners of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) Judy Kruckman Women’s Gymnastics Scholar-Athlete Award.

Virbitsky, nominated by her UW-Oshkosh gymnastics coach, said she was honored to receive the award because Judy Kruckman founded the WIAC, and her former beam coach, Jenny Williams, received the award in 2003. “I look up to both of these women tremendously and the biggest honor in receiving this award was being able to follow in their footsteps.”

Virbitsky maintained a 3.61 cumulative grade point average as a major in political science and journalism. She was a two-



Vanessa Virbitsky

year team gymnastics captain and a four-time All-WIAC recipient. Virbitsky said she believes gymnastics made a positive impact on her college career.

“It enhanced my ability to focus and multi-task, it introduced me to some of my best friends of my life and it allowed me

to finish a lifelong career in the sport of gymnastics,” she said.

Virbitsky, who graduated in May is from Harrisburg, Pa. She plans to pursue a career in sports journalism or public relations. “From sports organizations to the tourism industry, I believe that communication is the cornerstone of success for any cause, company or nonprofit organization—and I want to be a part of the communications

team that makes that success possible.”

In order to be nominated for the scholar-athlete award, student-athletes must have a minimum 3.25 grade point average, be in their last year of competition, or on schedule to graduate this academic year, and have competed for a minimum of two years.

Senior named class speaker at graduation

By Mary Patterson

Vanessa Virbitsky, a journalism major with an advertising and public relations emphasis, spoke about the vitality of choice during the commencement speech for the College of Letters and Science on May 17.



Vanessa Virbitsky

Approached by the executive director of the Integrated Marketing and Communications Department, Virbitsky had not considered applying to be the commencement speaker.

“The only way someone would pick me for commencement speaker is if they wanted someone to screw up,” she said.

But her address to fellow graduates went off without a hitch.

During the speech, she talked about how past decisions affect future ones, connecting the choice of attending UW-Oshkosh with the result of fearfulness.

“As we come to terms with saying goodbye and begin to look into the unknown, we must remember that we chose to go to college to have these very choices we now fear.”

Virbitsky, originally from Harrisburg, Pa., chose UW-Oshkosh for the gymnastic program and hasn’t regretted that choice.

Before being chosen as the commencement speaker, Virbitsky read a draft of her speech and answered questions from a panel of six UW-Oshkosh students and the commencement coordinator.

Virbitsky said the support from classmates and professors was “wonderful,” and, given the chance, she would do it again.

See the entire speech at: <http://www.uwosh.edu/news/?p=891>.

PRSSA brings home top honors

By Kendra Sohm

Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) earned first place in November 2007, for its “Tell ‘em” organ donation campaign.

Senior Amanda Kutil said, “I couldn’t believe that we had actually won, especially after hearing the runner-up schools—Penn State and University of Nebraska.”

The National Organ Donation Awareness Competition (NODAC), sponsored by Rowan University, is designed to inspire PRSSA chapters around the country to promote their own organ donor event.

The 2007 spring campaign focused on communicating one’s wishes about organ donation with loved ones and family members.

To spread the message the PRSSA team organized a graffiti dance party held in the Reeve Titan Underground. Dance attendees received a white T-shirt and colored Sharpie markers and wrote on each others’ shirts, filled out postcards to send to their family members and danced.

After the campaign the teams are required to put together a 3-ring binder containing all of their event work, photos

and research. The judges look at the overall presentation, grammar, event, research and the number of people reached to determine a winner.

Senior Krista Knabenbauer said: “I felt a huge sense of accomplishment after working on this project. Our chapter really put a lot of time and thought into this



PRSSA members pose after receiving their award.

campaign and in the end it paid off.”

Six students traveled to Philadelphia in October 2007 for the Public Relations Society of America convention and to receive the award.

Students study journalism and culture abroad

STUDY, from Page 7

returning, students said it seemed like people in the U.S. were rushing around for no reason.

The type of dress was also different from what students were used to seeing. The more dressy style had an affect on students; many brought clothes home. Gleason said Dan Shafer “looked the most English” by the end of the trip because of the new style of dress he embraced.

While studying English behavior, students had a chance to visit many sites including the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and the Fitzwilliam Museum, as well as The Eagle Pub, all in Cambridge. The pub is home to graffiti left by World War II airmen. Shafer saw the local band The Dead 60s



Louis Garcia enjoyed his trip.

play during his free time.

The next study abroad will be over the spring interim of 2009. The course will cover travel and documentary photography. It will cost less because it will be built into the semester tuition. Garcia said he might sign up again since it will be a different course, and cheaper.

First place: NSAC team dominates regionals

By Meghan Plummer

Strategic Campaigns in Advertising isn't your average class, and this year, the students proved to be far above "average," winning first place in the district National Student Advertising Competition.

Rather than taking notes from overheads and listening to lectures for much of the semester, students scramble to create a national campaign for a real company over winter break and part of spring semester. Also, some students spend the fall semester researching the company in the Research in Strategic Communication class. "Intense" doesn't even begin to describe it.

Teamwork is essential to the Strategic Campaigns in Advertising class, and working on a team of 19 isn't always easy. "Everyone has different opinions about every last detail," said Marie Daniel, a senior who took both the research class and campaign class. "I learned to have a lot more tolerance for those who have strong personalities."

The culmination of a year of hard work is the National Student Advertising Competition, or NSAC, sponsored by the American Advertising Federation, where schools from across the country vie to receive top rankings for their campaigns. First come the district competitions, where judges choose a first-place winner for each district. Next is the national competition, where the top teams compete for first place in the country.

It was a big year for the UW-Oshkosh team, which took first place in the District 8 competition with its campaign for AOL Instant Messenger, the 2008 client. The competition was in St. Paul, Minn., and included teams from Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Canada.



2008 NSAC team. Photo by: Dylan Stolley

"The team's campaign was developed around a new product the team created called AIM3D, which manages a person's private, social and public lives online," said Dana Baumgart, who co-advises the team with Kathy Fredrickson. With the tagline "It's You," the team's strategy focused on "making your life yours again."

The AIM3D campaign clearly worked, and the team members were elated when the judges announced them as the first-place winner.

"I cried," Daniel said. "It just made all of the long hours, arguments and scattered thoughts make sense. We were finally,

completely a team. It was the best feeling ever, especially when we got to share that feeling together."

The team raised funds, and organizations and individuals that donated included Dr. Gary R. Coll, Mike Cowling, Madison Advertising Federation, Karma Group, UW-Oshkosh Marketing Dept., UW-Oshkosh



Students and instructors Dana Baumgart, left, and Kathy Fredrickson, right, pose with members of the 2007 ad team and their ADDY award.

Undergraduates Fund, UW-Oshkosh Journalism Dept., and the College of Letters and Sciences. The team traveled to Atlanta for the national competition on June 8 and 9.

New members join Kappa Tau Alpha honor society

By Kendra Sohm

Kappa Tau Alpha is the honor society for students in journalism and mass communication.

Admission to the UW-O chapter is done by election based on scholarship and character. No more than 10 percent of the total junior-senior class may hold membership at one time. To be

considered for election students must have completed at least nine professional-level credits in journalism.

Initiation ceremonies are held in the spring.

This year newly inducted members include: Becky Disbrow, Rachael Hughes, Samantha Marx, Amy Radtke, Tracy Rusch, Anna Simeth and Vanessa Virbitsky.

The society is supervised on campus by Dr. Tim Gleason.

Congratulations/Thank You

Student Achievements

Journalism Department Scholarships

David J. Lippert Memorial Scholarship: **Amanda Munger.**

E. Garner Horton Memorial Scholarship: **Craig Bollig.**

Gary Coll Journalism Fellowship: **Marie Daniel, Ann DeVillers, Krista Knabenbauer, Ashley Madaus, Anna Simeth.**

Virginia A. Sokolowski Memorial Scholarship: **Jenna Kleist.**

Kappa Tau Alpha new members

Becky Disbrow, Rachel Hughes, Samantha Marx, Amy Radtke, Tracy Rusch, Anna Simeth, Vanessa Virbitsky.

UW-Oshkosh Awards

Brian Dederig – UWO Diversity Poster Contest, runner-up.

UW-Oshkosh University Honors Program

Becky Disbrow, successfully completed the program.

Photographer's Forum Annual College Photography Contest

Thomas Lombard – Finalist

Contributors

The Department of Journalism is proud to recognize the following alumni and patrons for their generous donations. These donors assisted the journalism program by contributing to the Journalism Fund and various scholarships offered by the department.

Amy L. Behrendt
Mary L. Bergin
Coalesce Marketing & Design, Inc.
Dr. Gary R. Coll
Mike R. Cowling
Dennis L. Deppisch
Fred Dobratz
Donna J. Gilson
Rod L. Gnerlich
Randall R. Gorske
Willard J. Henken
David J. Hesse

Christina N. Huffman
Kelly A. Kubisiak
Christopher J. Lee
Annette Y. Lys
Jeffrey S. Maki
Mary C. Meier
Linda L. Merz
Mary M. Micke
Holly J. Reed
William K. Roerdink
Karrine L. Spiller
Donald W. Stoner
Connie J. Walker

To make a donation:

To make a donation specifically to the Department of Journalism, write a check payable to the UW-Oshkosh Foundation, and include a short note requesting that the donation go to the journalism account. Donations also can be made online at www.uwosh.edu/foundation. Click Online Giving in the middle of the page, and fill in the donation information. Under the "Please direct my gift as follows" section, click Other, and type Department of Journalism.

Journalism Alumni Newsletter

Editor and Designer: *Kendra Sohm*

Contributors: *Mary Patterson, Kendra Sohm, Meghan Plummer, Marie Daniel, Kate Briquet*

Supervised by: *Mike Cowling*

Journalism Alumni Newsletter *is a publication of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Department of Journalism.*

Read Journalism Alumni Newsletter *online at* www.uwosh.edu/journalism/alumni