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CONVERSATIONS

A publication for College of Communication alumni



The College of Communication recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. Read more about its evolution on pages 2-3.



Spring 2018

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CELEBRATING 10 YEARS AND BEYOND WITH DEAN SALMA GHANEM

Our 10th anniversary as a stand-alone college has been a time of retrospection. As we have grown through the years, alumni have always been integral to the process. Your engagement and willingness to partner with us to ensure student success inspires us every day to continue to provide the education and experiences that transform students into skilled, constructive and engaged citizens. In that spirit, I would like to share a few recent developments that help pave the way for the next 10 years and beyond.

- We established the Communication Decade of Excellence Scholarship last year to celebrate the legacy of our alumni and commemorate the college's 10th anniversary. Marty Wilke (CMN '86, DHL '17), inspired by a commitment to student success, became the founding donor of this fund. More information about the scholarship can be found on the back page of this newsletter.
- A new BA in communication and technology launched this winter to address the many ways technology shapes our approach to human communication. The curriculum builds on a theoretical foundation and ethical considerations, while developing a core of practical, transferable skills. To learn more about the degree program, please see page 4.
- In the spring, Radio DePaul Sports, The DePaulia and 14 East Magazine will join Good Day DePaul with new homes in the DePaul Center on the Loop Campus. This location, in the heart of Chicago's thriving media market, is sure to inspire student media to new heights.
- To close the year and inspire the next, we celebrated 10 recipients of the inaugural College of Communication Alumni and Friends Awards at our reception in March. We will bring you their stories in a future issue of the newsletter.

**NOW IT IS TIME TO
SHIFT OUR FOCUS
TO SETTING THE
STAGE FOR THE
NEXT DECADE
AND BEYOND.
YOU INSPIRE THAT
FOCUS, AND WE
LOOK FORWARD TO
GROWING WITH YOU
IN THE FUTURE.**

THEN AND NOW

Last year, in observance of the 10th anniversary of its founding, the College of Communication celebrated its numerous achievements and changes since 2007. It has launched several new undergraduate and graduate degree programs that helped boost enrollment. More faculty joined the college, strengthening its innovative curriculum and academic reputation. One of the most obvious changes is the physical landscape of the college: largely housed on the Lincoln Park Campus in 2007, the college moved into its Loop home in the 14 E. Jackson building a year later. Take a look below at the many ways the college has changed over the course of a decade.

2007

2017

The Department of Communication separates from the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and becomes a stand-alone college.



THE COLLEGE

The college celebrates its 10th anniversary.

3

DEGREE PROGRAMS OFFERED

12

22

FULL-TIME FACULTY



54

Headquartered on the Lincoln Park Campus with two specialized learning spaces on the Loop Campus

SPACE

Headquartered in the 14 E. Jackson building on the Loop Campus, with faculty presence in Lincoln Park; additional spaces include a converged newsroom, a screening room/black box theater, audio studios, the Innovation Lab for social media and data analytics, and a new space in the DePaul Center for student media outlets

1,096



ENROLLMENT

1,696

0

DEGREES AWARDED

5,338

1 scholarship (end of the 2007–08 academic year)

FUNDING



15 donor-funded scholarships, gifts and funds

0 college-specific programs

STUDY ABROAD COURSES

9 specialized programs have been offered abroad and in the U.S.

125 students per year



INTERNSHIPS

More than **250** each year

Radio DePaul

STUDENT MEDIA AND ORGANIZATIONS

14 East Magazine, AdVentors, DePaul chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America and the Society of Professional Journalists/Online News Association, Good Day DePaul, Graduate Communication Association, Lambda Pi Eta, Latinx Journalists at DePaul, Radio DePaul, Radio DePaul Sports and The DePaulia

COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

NEW DEGREE LAUNCHES IN THE COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

It is not uncommon for recent communication graduates or students looking for internships to be hired for jobs in social media. “They’re young and they’re considered digital natives, so [employers think] they must know what’s happening with social media—but they might not. They don’t necessarily have the curriculum background to think through questions of tech and society, data analytics, how people maintain relationships through social media or the specific ways that communication technology works,” says Assistant Professor Bree McEwan. Students now have an opportunity to gain that background with the newly launched communication and technology undergraduate degree program.

The new BA major became available for students to declare this winter. “It will take a theoretical direction of human processes in communication and then marry that with the practical skills of how to create digital content,” explains McEwan, who

also serves as the program’s coordinator. “Students will then have both of those things when they go into the job market so that they’re not creating content without any realization of how it will be used or how people experience social media.”

The interdisciplinary program also includes courses from the College of Computing and Digital Media and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Students take a set of core classes rooted in critical analysis, ethics, and communication and technology theory, as well as a series of hands-on professional skill courses. Some of those courses include photojournalism, digital advertising, sound design, web development, digital storytelling, newscast production and digital cinema production.

According to McEwan, the program has a strong emphasis on the ethics of communication and technology. “Ethical considerations will come up in multiple

classes. Within the core of the curriculum is [Associate Professor] Jason Martin’s communication law and ethics class that focuses on the legal aspects of what ethics mean. We also have an ethics section where students can think through media ethics or journalism ethics,” says McEwan. “We think of communication, technology and society through sort of the tensions between different problems of wanting to use technology [while considering] the social implications.”

McEwan believes the program will be beneficial to students who are interested in areas like data analytics, social media, web development, and information technology and security. “I anticipate that when students start coming out of the program, they will really have strong communication and technology skills. Hopefully employers will be happy to have a student who actually has some background and practical experience in that area,” says McEwan.

GOING FOR GOLD

Ever wonder how a film wins awards? Take a close look at an alumnus's career in the entertainment industry and his role on the award-winning film "Call Me by Your Name."

Ziggy Kozlowski (CMN '79) has always been a movie buff. One of the Chicago native's best experiences at DePaul was writing film reviews for The DePaulia. By meeting film publicists at free movie screenings, he was able to secure his first public relations (PR) job in the entertainment industry. Years later, Kozlowski is now a partner at Block-Korenbrodt, a Los Angeles-based PR firm that handles publicity and award campaigns for independently produced American films, documentaries and foreign-language films.

In Good Company

Since becoming a partner at Block-Korenbrodt more than two decades ago, Kozlowski has managed campaigns for several films that went on to win awards, including "The English Patient," "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," "Crash," "Still Alice" and "Whiplash." When he runs campaigns to earn films Golden Globes or Academy Awards, Kozlowski ensures voters and critics watch the film and then assesses their responses.

"I remember when I was working on 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,' somebody asked me what I was hearing from the Academy voters. I said, 'I don't have to ask them. They're telling me.' I would host these screenings and they would burst into applause during the fight scenes," says Kozlowski. "A lot of times people just let you know that way or they'll come out of screenings and say, 'Oh, my God. This is great.'"

Love It or Hate It

A large part of a film's success is up to public response. Kozlowski recalls one summer when he screened Universal Studios' "E.T." and the remake of "The

Thing." A representative from Universal asked him what he thought of the films, and he told the representative that while he thought "The Thing" was going to be successful, he was not so sure about "E.T."

"Don't get me wrong, I loved 'E.T.' It's one of my favorite films. But I remember saying to the guy that 'E.T.' was like 'Lassie Come Home' but with a thing from outer space instead of a dog. Who the hell was going to go see this thing? It goes to show that you can be right about 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' and wrong about 'E.T.'"

A Good Year

Last year was a big one for Kozlowski and his firm. They managed the publicity and award campaigns for many critically acclaimed domestic and foreign films, including "Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool," "Novitiate," "The Leisure Seeker," Austria's "Happy End," Israel's "Foxtrot," Chile's "A Fantastic Woman" and Russia's "Loveless." But according to Kozlowski, their breakout film was Luca Guadagnino's "Call Me by Your Name."

Adapted from the novel by André Aciman, the coming-of-age drama is about a teenage boy falling in love with an older man while vacationing in Italy with his family. "The film is this lush, romantic, first-love story. It's very moving," says Kozlowski. "I think it's probably Guadagnino's best film. I think that's saying something, because his other ones are no slouches, trust me."

Big Break

With the rising popularity of streaming services like Amazon, Hulu and Netflix, Kozlowski says that there are more



possibilities for people to break into the industry. "Decide whether you want it, and try to go for it—not just publicity, but for any endeavor in entertainment," he says. "I remember reading a quote from an actor, this really good-looking guy, and he said, 'You know the difference between me and that guy bringing our food?' And the interviewer said, 'What?' He said, 'Nothing.' You just have to realize that there's talent available everywhere and a large factor of it is just pure dumb luck."

MOVIE MARATHON

Check out some of Ziggy Kozlowski's favorite films and watch one at your next movie night.

1. **"Casablanca"** (1942) "One of my favorite jobs was being the publicity director for the 50th anniversary re-release back in '92. It's my all-time favorite film."
2. **"Chinatown"** (1974) "I think it's just a great, great film."
3. **"The Godfather Parts I, II and III"** (1972, 1974 and 1990) "Part one and two. Together. But not three. Aw, three, too."
4. **"Pinocchio"** (1940) "I think it's still the best animated film ever."
5. **"The Searchers"** (1956) "It's a great piece of American filmmaking."

TRUE OR FALSE

FACULTY DISCUSS HOW THE COLLEGE IS COMBATING THE "FAKE NEWS" PHENOMENON

Since the 2016 U.S. presidential election, news and social media outlets have been working to battle the circulation of misinformation—the so-called “fake news” phenomenon. Universities and colleges across the country have also taken additional measures to educate students on identifying misinformation in the media, and continue to emphasize the importance of factual and responsible reporting. Last spring, the college hosted a panel of scholars to discuss the “fake news” phenomenon. In her introduction, the panel’s moderator, Assistant Professor Jill Hopke, quoted famed broadcaster Edward R. Murrow: “The speed of communication is wonderful to behold. It is also true that speed can multiply the distribution of information that we know to be untrue.”

Hopke said she selected that quote to encourage students to think about issues associated with misinformation and “fake news,” especially in relation to current and old technologies. “I chose to open the panel with that quote to help our students contextualize our conversation about ‘fake news,’ which is a very important phenomenon to explore with our students and aspiring media professionals, whether they’re going into journalism, public relations and advertising or another facet of communication,” explains Hopke. “And from a scholarly sense, we need to understand how misinformation propagates and spreads through social networks.”

According to Hopke, “fake news” is not always entirely false. Citing a Harvard/MIT study, she says, “One of the things they found is ‘fake news’ [during the 2016 election] wasn’t as much outright fake information or completely false information, but rather, misinformation or a misrepresentation of facts.” Many factors are responsible for the propagation of misinformation, including the rapid pace of information spread on social media, as well as the pressure media outlets face to publish breaking news. Fortunately, there are measures media professionals can take to report facts correctly.

“One of the things I emphasize, particularly to my Introduction to Journalism students, is verification of information. We spend a week talking about how you verify information and how you source information from social platforms.” In one of her classes last year, Hopke and her students discussed an infamous incident at O’Hare

Airport of a passenger being dragged off of a United Airlines flight. Passengers on the flight filmed and shared the incident on social media, where it was quickly picked up by numerous news outlets, eventually becoming an international story. “If you’re a journalist and you see that kind of content, how do you go about the process of verifying that content? What I do with my students is talk about how we use social platforms and social media as tools in our reporting, but maintain our journalistic skepticism, consider alternative explanations and verify that content before we share or spread what could potentially be misinformation,” explains Hopke.



From a scholarly sense, we need to understand how misinformation propagates and spreads through social networks.”

“Fake news” is discussed outside of the journalism program, in courses taught throughout the college. In communication studies, for example, “fake news” can be analyzed in the context of deceptive communication. “Deceptive communication is communicating in a way that intentionally tries to create a false belief in the minds of others,” says Associate Professor Tim Cole. “It’s designed to mislead, to get people to believe things that you don’t believe are true.”

Cole says that journalism and science have methodologies that help lessen personal biases. “The problem, though, is social media. Anyone can create content, anyone can share content, and the systems of checks and balances we have put in place are no longer there,” says Cole. “We’re in this sort of post-truth world where our biases are overwhelming our ability to share and disseminate accurate information.” Cole suggests that the best way to prevent the spreading of misinformation is to acknowledge biases, reduce them and think before spreading information that might not be true.

“My hope is that when our students graduate and embark on their careers, or continue their careers, they’ll be equipped with conceptual, analytical and critical-thinking skills, as well as a strong sense of the social obligation of journalism,” says Hopke.

A HELPING HAND

ALUMNA DETAILS HER EXPERIENCE WORKING IN A SYRIAN REFUGEE CAMP

By the end of 2015, millions of Syrians had fled their home country as a result of the civil war that erupted there in 2011. Desperate refugees fled to neighboring countries and throughout Europe, resulting in one of the largest humanitarian crises since the end of World War II.

Chicago native Liz Paturzo (CMN '07, LAS MA '12) was living in Barcelona, Spain, where she was involved in a PhD research project that focused on social media's impact on the Catalan independence movement. After Paturzo's good friend reported on the refugee crisis and recounted her devastating stories from the field, Paturzo felt compelled to get involved.

"Originally, I just wanted to help and volunteer in Greece for a short term. But once I got there, I instantly thought, 'I'm not going back. I'm staying longer,' and I ended up staying for almost a year," recalls Paturzo. After she arrived in Greece in February 2016, Paturzo volunteered on the island of Lesbos at a transit camp called Moria, a site set up for refugees arriving from Turkey.

When the European Union-Turkey agreement on refugees was signed in March 2016, several organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Danish Refugee Council and the Red Cross, immediately had to transport refugees to Greece's mainland to prevent their deportation back to Turkey. "We had a mass population of refugees sitting in Greece at the border of Macedonia hoping that the border would open," explains Paturzo. "There was no aid and a lot of health risks involved."

Ultimately, UNICEF and other humanitarian aid organizations established Ritsona, a camp for Syrian and Kurdish refugees. Paturzo was part of a collaborative group



that faced rising problems in Ritsona. "In times of emergency, there's not a specific role in which you do a specific job. You have a million problems in front of you, and someone needs to do it, it needs to get done," she says.

After strenuous weeks in Ritsona, Paturzo decided to take a break. "I think it's very important for aid workers to take a break. You're surrounded by people who are depressed and war-torn," explains Paturzo. "They're dealing with extreme issues like suicide, kidnappings and child abuse."

Paturzo adds, "These are people who are escaping terrorists. They are families with three to four children who have lived comfortable, nice lifestyles who are now living in tents, sleeping on the floor with blankets, no beds or pillows. It's kind of like a middle-class family in America who have had everything taken from them, and now they live in a camp. These people have lost so much dignity."

When she returned to Ritsona, Paturzo assisted with projects such as building a school for children, managing the logistics of the camp, and creating child- and women-friendly spaces. Despite all the devastation, Paturzo found hope and

beauty through human interactions. "In the camp, religion or gender or race didn't matter—we were all human beings helping one another. No one judged each other by those categories. It was literally like, 'Do you need help? I'm here to help you,' and vice versa," says Paturzo.

Since returning to Chicago in November 2016, Paturzo has been heavily involved with UNICEF USA, which fundraises for emergency aid projects abroad. She volunteered for its annual gala, as well as Kid Power, a program that empowers public school students to get active and healthy. In July 2017, she was hired by UNICEF USA as a program manager, a position that will allow her to remain directly connected to the organization's humanitarian efforts.



ACCOLADES



Don Moseley, co-director of the Center for Journalism Integrity and Excellence, received the Roy Bain Distinguished Special Achievement Award in Journalism from Auburn University. Moseley, who grew up in Montgomery, Ala., received his degree from Auburn's College of Liberal Arts in 1973.

Professor Xing (Lucy) Lu and Professional Lecturer Amy Merrick received the Quality of Instruction Council's Excellence in Teaching Award during DePaul's annual academic convocation last fall. At the same ceremony, Associate Professor Blair Davis received a Spirit of Inquiry Award, which honors specific research, scholarly or creative achievements that strive to inspire students. Davis was also recently elected to the executive board of the Comics Studies Society, an organization that promotes the critical studies of comics, improving comics teaching and engaging in open and ongoing conversations about the comics world.



Lu (bottom right) and Merrick (second from bottom right).
Photo by Jeff Carrion

Associate Professor Jason Martin was elected head of the law and policy division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). In his role, Martin will make budgeting and planning decisions for the division for 2017–18. He previously served as the division's clerk, programming chair, research chair and teaching chair. Martin also received the 2017–18 Wicklander Fellowship through DePaul's Institute for Business and Professional Ethics, allowing him to pursue research on professional journalism ethics.

Associate Dean Carolyn Bronstein received the Donna Allen Award for Feminist Advocacy from the AEJMC Commission on the Status of Women. Bronstein was also selected to serve on AEJMC's Professional Freedom and Responsibility Committee.



Ron Culp Inducted Into Page Society Hall of Fame

Last September, Ron Culp, public relations and advertising (PRAD) professional in residence and graduate professional program director, was inducted into the Arthur W. Page Society Hall of Fame for his outstanding professional achievements.

He is the only Page Society member in the history of the organization who has received the Page Distinguished Service Award and been inducted into the hall of fame.

During his 35-year career, Culp held a multitude of senior communication positions for companies such as Sears, Sara Lee, Pitney Bowes and Eli Lilly. He opened and led the Chicago office of Sard Verbinnen and later became the senior vice president and director of Ketchum's North American corporate practice, as well as the managing director of the agency's Midwest operations. In 2011, he joined the college as a faculty member and director.

"Ron's commitment to his students, the PRAD program and a growing list of alumni and countless professionals he has mentored over the years is unmatched," says Associate Professor Matt Ragas. "The PRAD program's rising national—and even international—reputation in recent years owes much to Ron's tireless commitment to strengthening our curriculum, programs and professional engagement."

➤ Stay up to date on recent student media awards and achievements by visiting go.depaul.edu/studentawards.

BOOKSHELF



Time Lords & Tribbles, Winchester's & Muggles: The DePaul Pop Culture Conference: A Five-Year Retrospective

Edited by Paul Booth and Isabella Menichiello

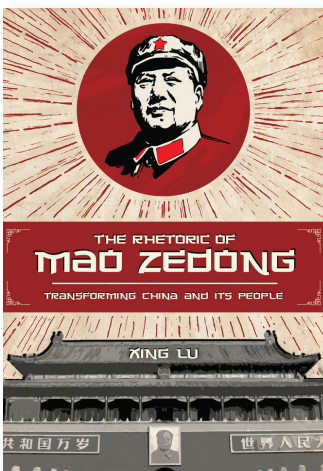
Last spring, to commemorate the college's annual Pop Culture Conference, conference curator and Associate Professor Paul Booth and student Isabella Menichiello released "Time Lords & Tribbles, Winchester's & Muggles." The self-published book is a collection of essays from the first five years of the conference. "It includes essays that have been presented at the previous conferences. Unless you have a Time-Turner, this is the only way to see some of the amazing work that our presenters have done! It also includes new, specifically commissioned essays by our keynote speakers," says Booth. Conferences have focused on "Doctor Who," the work of Joss Whedon, "Supernatural," "Star Trek" and "Harry Potter." Proceeds from the book go to Global Girl Media, an organization dedicated to empowering young women from underserved communities through media, leadership and training in journalism. To purchase the book, please visit bit.ly/DPUPopCulture.



Comic Performativities: Identity, Internet Outrage, and the Aesthetics of Communication

By Dustin Goltz

In "Comic Performativities" (Routledge), Associate Professor Dustin Goltz looks at controversies involving performers such as Seth MacFarlane, Amy Schumer and Sarah Silverman and the resulting backlash they received on social media. He examines the patterns of criticism and public debate in the relationship between humor, identity and offense, while also analyzing contemporary comedy. "The book coaches the reader to cultivate a self-reflexive and multichanneled approach to engaging the art of stand-up comedy," says Goltz. "The text calls upon readers to wrestle with the complexities of physical bodies, various audiences, media, irony and their own interpretive processes when they experience the deceptively simple-seeming reactions of laughter or offense."

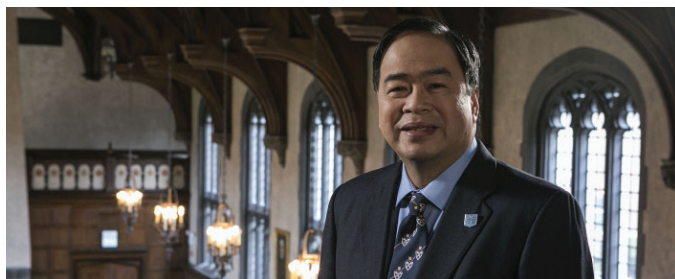


The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People

By Xing (Lucy) Lu

In "The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong" (University of South Carolina Press), Professor Xing (Lucy) Lu examines 60 years of the Chinese ruler's speeches and writings to analyze how Mao's rhetoric radically persuaded and mobilized millions of Chinese people, and ultimately reshaped and transformed the country. "I'd like readers to be aware of and reflect on the power of rhetoric that can benefit or destroy individuals and societies. Political rhetoric can be transformative or damaging to cultures and societies. It is particularly dangerous when the head of a nation propagates a rhetoric of hatred, division and dualistic thinking; it is often the common people who pay a heavy price for such rhetoric," says Lu.

AROUND THE COLLEGE



On Sept. 22, 2017, A. Gabriel Esteban, PhD, DePaul's new president, joined college faculty and staff for a reception welcoming him to the university. Dr. Esteban most recently served as president of Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J., before becoming DePaul's first lay president on July 1, 2017.



Last year, the Office of Global Engagement and the college launched the Latino Media and Communication Speaker Series. In October, they held the inaugural event of the series, "Engaging the Latinx Community," with Sindy Chapa, associate director for the Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication at Florida State University. Chapa, who has taught marketing courses in the U.S., Mexico

and Chile for more than a decade, provided insights from her research and experience on the most effective ways to communicate with the growing Latinx community in the U.S.

In October, the college hosted the GLAAD Media Institute to conduct training sessions for journalism and media students. The two-day event focused on how to advance the message of inclusion and acceptance of the LGBTQ community in mainstream media. Topics included understanding media mentality, speaking to multiple audiences, messaging and framing LGBTQ issues, social media basics and interview techniques.

DePaul's Continuing and Professional Education will offer a three-week certificate program in crisis communication this spring. Led by Professional Lecturers James Motzer and Jill Stewart (SNL MA '08), the program is designed to enable professional communicators to act quickly to assess a possible critical situation and disseminate key messages to the appropriate audiences. To learn more, please visit bit.ly/CPEcerts or contact Kristine Emrich at kemrich@depaul.edu.

The College Welcomes New Faculty



Samantha Close, assistant professor of digital communication and media, received her PhD from the University of Southern California. Her research interests include digital media, theory practice, fan studies, gender, race and Japanese media, primarily focusing on labor and transforming models of creative industries and capitalism. Close's writing appears in edited volumes and journals, such as *Feminist Media Studies*, *Transformative Works and Cultures*, and *Anthropology Now*.



Robin Hoecker, assistant professor of journalism, earned her PhD from Northwestern University. She teaches courses in photojournalism and mass communication. Her research looks at the intersection of visual communication and conflict. Hoecker was a Fulbright Journalism Fellow in Frankfurt, Germany, and is currently a 2017–18 fellow at the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at DePaul, where she is exploring ideas about community, journalism and social justice.



Juan Mundel, assistant professor of advertising, pursued his PhD from Michigan State University prior to joining DePaul. Mundel's research involves the extension of marketing practices to second-generation social media platforms, understanding millennials' consumption patterns and campaign tailoring for vulnerable populations. His work has appeared in several academic publications, including the *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* and the *Journal of Marketing Communications*.



Nur Uysal, assistant professor of public relations, teaches courses in corporate communication and public relations. Her research focuses on corporate social responsibility, stakeholder engagement and the use of new communication technologies in public relations. Uysal is a three-time winner of the Top Faculty Paper Award from the National Communication Association, and she recently received a Legacy Scholar Grant from the Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Communication. She received her PhD from the University of Oklahoma.

Most Likely To...

Student applies her love of storytelling through her coursework



WHAT I'VE REALIZED AT DEPAUL IS THAT I AM DRIVEN AND HAVE PASSION."

Photo by Misael Rodriguez

Rachel Fernandez loves Ira Glass. Actually, in her own words, she is obsessed with the host of "This American Life," a storytelling-oriented public radio show. If you see her walking to class, you might notice the large, red pin on her backpack that advertises his name. "I went to a talk he gave in L.A. in November, and I had to get permission to miss one of my finals. I planned it for months," she says. Fernandez felt it was worth the advance planning because she loves documenting and sharing people's stories—penning or recording them herself—and wanted to learn from a real master. But she has also found that such masters teach at DePaul.

Fernandez has pursued her passion for storytelling at DePaul with the guidance of some influential instructors. "I took an audio documentary class with [Professor] Daniel Makagon ... I loved that class and I thought he was a really good professor," says Fernandez, a senior pursuing a five-year combined BA/MA in communication and media and journalism with a minor in documentary studies. She also is a managing editor of The DePaulia.

One of her assignments from Makagon was to create her own audio documentary. Fernandez decided to focus on high school superlatives. "My high school band voted me biggest complainer. It was a very bad, candid 'compliment,' a very back-handed superlative. It's something that really affected me at the time, and I was wondering how other people who got superlatives feel about them now," she says.

Fernandez conducted several interviews with people who received superlatives, such as a woman who was voted most likely to succeed.

"She's not a lawyer, but she works in the legal field, very low profile. She said, 'I have my family. I'm making a livable wage. I don't hate going to work every morning. I'm totally successful.'"

Fernandez's most revealing conversation was with someone who, like her, received a not-so-flattering superlative. "She told me, 'The reason that I won most gullible is because I'm a trusting person,'" recalls Fernandez.

The project helped Fernandez put her own superlative in perspective while giving her hands-on experience in interviewing and storytelling. "We should take them with a grain of salt, but they do weigh on us. I was voted biggest complainer, but it was because I talk a lot," she says with a laugh.

Adjunct faculty member Kelli Marshall's documentary class on stand-up comedy resulted in Fernandez's first short-documentary film. "I went out and interviewed a bunch of comedians in Chicago about their favorite bits and made a five-minute documentary," she says. "I now have this thing that I created that I don't think I ever would have done if it had not been for the class."

After she graduates, Fernandez hopes to focus on projects in print or digital media involving long-form journalism or storytelling. "What I've realized at DePaul is that I am driven and have passion," she says. "My degree matters as much as the experience I now have. I feel like that can take me anywhere."

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CONVERSATIONS

We welcome your story ideas, questions and comments. Please contact Jacob Sabolo at (312) 362-8820 or jsabolo@depaul.edu.

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The Decade of Excellence Scholarship

Established last year to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the College of Communication, the Decade of Excellence Scholarship celebrates the legacy of communication alumni and their many accomplishments, while also supporting the next generation of communication students.

Visit bit.ly/10excellence to learn how to support the scholarship.