Faculty Honored for Top-Notch Teaching

Few sports teams can boast about a “three-peat.” The UNO Department of Communication can.

For the past three years, a faculty member from the department has received the UNO Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award. Professor Robert Carlson garnered the award in 1999. The following year, Professor Michael Hilt received the award, and last year Professor Jeremy Lipschultz was chosen for the honor.

“These awards are expressions of the alumni body’s collective recognition of the importance and value of instruction in higher education,” said Don Winters, chairman of the UNO Alumni Association board. “Faculty members such as these inspire classrooms and make positive, meaningful differences in the lives of UNO students. We’re fortunate to have such outstanding teachers on our campus.”

The department’s track record for teaching recognition doesn’t end with Alumni Association awards. Receiving the University’s Excellence in Teaching Award were Dr. Karen Dwyer, associate professor, in 1998 and Dr. Warren Francke, now retired, in 1988. Dr. Carlson also won that award in 1985. That award is given each year by UNO to faculty who have distinguished themselves through their pedagogical activities. Nominees are selected based on faculty and student evaluations.

“The awards recognize the individuals as outstanding teachers, as well as demonstrate the overall strength of the department and the faculty’s commitment to excellence in instruction,” said Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell, department chair.

Dr. Carlson said teaching has always been a top priority in the department.

“It’s part of the culture here,” he said.

“Historically, that’s where our strength has been.”

What further strengthens teaching in the department, said Dr. Lipschultz, is the ambitious research agenda of the faculty. He noted that all five teaching award recipients are either full professors or graduate fellows.

“As a department, we value the importance of quality teaching, as well as the integration of scholarship into that endeavor,” said Dr. Lipschultz.

Dr. Smith-Howell said the teaching awards aren’t as important as what they signify: faculty putting students first by giving them the best preparation for a career or for continuation of their studies.

“All department faculty care tremendously about the success of all our students,” she said.
Letter From the Chair, Deborah Smith-Howell, Ph.D.

After going so long without a newsletter, it is wonderful to have two in one year. Thanks to the faculty, alumni and students who made this happen. Our goal is to produce two newsletters a year. The newsletter will be available on-line at http://communication.unomaha.edu and, in somewhat limited distribution, printed copies.

As I write this, we are busy preparing for the annual high school journalism conference, the 47th Annual Communication Awards Ceremony, and registration/advising for Fall 2002, in addition to our regular hectic schedule of classes, student organizations and research. Even after 13 years, the faculty and students of this department continue to impress and amaze me with the range of their accomplishments. I hope this newsletter and upcoming ones will give you a sense of their successes and dedication. I especially enjoy the activities of the student organizations, such as PRSSA, Ad Club, SPJ and Forensics.

These groups provide important opportunities for students to interact with communication professionals in the metropolitan area, region and nation, as well as apply the knowledge and skills from the classroom in their service projects, competitions, conferences, and organizational activities. The faculty advisers provide important (and labor-intensive) leadership, but the students make it work.

Some of you have taken Dave Ogden up on his suggestion to be a guest in our classrooms. I encourage more of you to visit. I also want to thank the dozens of you who have been speakers for our classes and student organizations or have assisted classes and individual students in visiting your workplace. Such connections enhance the educational experiences of all our students.

I hope to see you on May 2, for the department’s annual awards ceremony. Please keep in touch and come see us when you have a chance.

Club News

PRSSA—Public Relations Student Society of America

PRSSA activities for the spring semester include planning the launch of Organ Donor Awareness week. Students get to plan and implement a PR campaign to encourage more people to consider being an organ donor.

The Bateman Competition, a national competition where a team of students create a case study on an organization and implement a PR plan, was completed by Stacy Wilkinson, Jennifer Voelker, Angela Coon, Kerri Frericks and Amy Niewohner.

Ad Club—Advertising Club

The Ad Club is working on a couple of projects for outside clients. They have completed a newspaper ad for NAIFA (National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors) that will appear in a special issue of the Midlands Business Journal. The Ad Club has also taken on a long-term project to help the Lutheran Brotherhood put together an advertising kit.

Several of the students were able to participate in the Omaha Federation of Advertising’s “Meet The Pros” on February 14th & 15th. They were delighted with the experience, especially the opportunity to talk one-on-one with industry professionals. Officer elections will be held at the final meeting of this year’s Ad Club.

SPJ—Society of Professional Journalists

The UNO Ad Club and the campus chapters of the Society of Professional Journalists and the Public Relations Student Society of America jointly sponsored a career workshop for students April 2. Students talked informally about careers with professionals from public relations, advertising, newspapers, television, radio and magazines. A representative of the UNO Career Center also critiqued students’ resumes and offered interviewing advice.

During the spring semester, SPJ members also helped with the Communication Department’s annual journalism conference and contest for area high school students. SPJ also toured the KETV facilities in Omaha and watched a broadcast of the evening news.
Spotlight on Alumni—Moran Brings Home the Gold

Mike Moran can’t stop talking about the 2002 Winter Olympics.

The U.S. squad earned a record medal count. The U.S. squad reflected the many cultures found in its country’s people. And the U.S. squad minded its manners.

“If I didn’t know it was my last one, I would have made it so,” said Moran, a 1966 graduate of Omaha University. “It was the perfect Olympics.”

The 2002 Winter Olympics, Moran said, will have a lasting impact on attracting more minority athletes. For too long, U.S. Winter Olympic squads have been too white.

Speed skaters Derek Parra and Jennifer Rodriguez, and bobsledder Vonetta Flowers have created excitement among people who normally wouldn’t give winter sports a second thought, Moran said.

True, the Olympics had a few hiccups. Figure skating took a hit because of its judges, and Russia questioned the impartiality of nearly every judge at the games.

Not too surprising said Moran.

“Gee, what a surprise. There’s concern about judging in figure skating? I first heard about it as a fourth-grader at St. Margaret Mary.” As for the Russians, “A once powerful Soviet sports machine doesn’t exist anymore.” Expect some excuses, he said.

Moran’s 25-year romance with the Olympics will soon end. He plans to retire at the end of the year as assistant executive director for media and public affairs.

But not disappear. Moran’s dance card is full: his wedding, speaking engagements (including the April 30 ABC Breakfast at UNO) and a book about his Olympic experience. Then, there’s the job offers — five really good ones.

When he does walk away, he’ll always have the memories. Mostly they’re of people, rather than events or achievements.

One is his friendship with track star Florence Griffith Joyner, who died in 1998. The two became fast friends during the 1988 Olympics in Korea. Moran presided over her memorial service after her death in 1998.

Another fond memory is speed skater Bonnie Blair’s enduring Olympic success. She won five gold medals in three Olympics. Most memorable is the day Blair snuck into his office and placed her newborn son in his lap.

Moran credits his training — in the classroom and on the job — for preparing him for the rigors of Olympic work. The proof is found in the success his classmates at UNO have had.

Those classmates include UNO alums who have held top network, corporate and public relations positions. “And we all worked part-time while getting an education from a quality group of professionals.”

As for Moran, he worked as a full-time intern at television station KMTV during college and stayed with the station after graduation until becoming UNO’s sports information director. Two years later, he took the same job at the University of Colorado.

“My journalism classes included tremendous people who are winding down their careers.”

Moran may not be ready to join that group. He has too many options.

For faculty updates visit us on the Web!

www.communication.unomaha.edu
Internships Offer Students More Than Just Credit

By Sherrie Wilson

Experience opens the door to job opportunities in the field of communication, and internships often provide the key to open that door.

The majority of UNO Communication Department students are required to complete internships as part of their course work. Many do internships in some area of mass communication — broadcasting, public relations, advertising, and print or online journalism. Others complete internships in related fields such as human resources, sales, marketing, and training and development.

The department offers internship credits each semester, including in the summer. The number of students doing internships varies from 25 to 45 each semester, with the spring usually attracting the most.

Internships help most students determine their initial career paths. For many, internships confirm an interest in a particular field. Others decide they do not want to work in a particular area after completing an internship, but that’s also a valuable lesson.

Mike Torson, a junior broadcasting major who interned this spring with KYNE-TV at UNO, wrote in his midterm paper: “I feel that my hands-on experience has made me much more prepared to get a job after college. I have learned how to better operate a television camera, which is probably my favorite part of broadcasting. I have also learned more about lighting, audio and graphics. Those skills are the backbone of broadcasting. I consider my experience in live broadcasts a valuable lesson as well.”

Tim Anderson, a junior speech-organizational communication major, also gained valuable experience through his internship as a student assistant with the UNO football program. He helped with recruiting, served as a student assistant coach on the sidelines and in the press box during games, and acted as a liaison with the media and sports information staff. He plans to pursue a career in sports administration.

“There is no question that everything I am doing right now with this internship is directly or indirectly preparing me for my future career,” Anderson wrote in his midterm paper. “The communication process, everyday operations of an athletic department, and special events give me valuable hands-on experience in the field I am interested in.”

The best internships offer students experience that complements what they have learned in the classroom. Kacie Gerard, a senior journalism-news editorial major who worked at the Papillion Times newspaper, said the internship improved her photography and interviewing skills. “My internship has not been what I expected, but in a good way,” she wrote in her midterm paper. “At first I thought I would just be filing and occasionally typing a brief. Instead, I get front-page feature stories, camera experience and more.”

Lisa Lamprecht, a senior broadcasting major who interned in the WOWT-TV public affairs department during the spring semester, wrote in her midterm paper: “So far I think my favorite thing about my internship is the variety of things I have been able to do. I am not just stuck in one department. I have been doing things for several areas of the station. I like this because I get a feel for everything. I am still undecided as to what I want to do when I graduate, so this has been very helpful for me.”

During the spring and fall semesters, an internship class meets once a week to discuss resume-writing and job-searching skills, hear from communication professionals, and provide a forum for students to discuss their internships. Most Communication Department students do their internships in the Omaha metropolitan area, and many area professionals share their expertise with students.

Aaron Boyd, a senior journalism-public relations/advertising major, interned this spring with Bar None Advertising Agency. “My boss is a great mentor and includes me in everything she does,” he wrote in his midterm paper. “I feel I am lucky to have come across a position like the one I am in for the reason of how much exposure I am actually receiving.”

Mike Torson monitors audio during a recent KYNE-TV production.
Lamsam: From Osage to Omaha

By Amy Niewohner

“When I came back to the reservation, the tribe tried to convince me to start a tribal newspaper. I turned them down for one and a half years,” Lamsam said. “My ego got in the way.”

Finally, Lamsam caved to the pressure and agreed to start the Osage Nation News, the tribe’s first newspaper. “It turned out to be one of the most rewarding jobs of all time. I had to write, take photos and do the entire layout by myself,” Lamsam said.

“I had told them that I would do it if I could do it my way.”

Her demands to have a computer and the Pagemaker program installed on it almost backfired on Lamsam.

“I told them I needed Pagemaker, but I didn’t know how to use it, so I had to learn it in less than two weeks in order to get the paper out,” Lamsam said.

After three years of getting the paper out on time Lamsam decided to go to graduate school. She went back to the University of Missouri, Columbia and earned her masters in media management. Upon her graduation she had offers to teach in places like Florida which had “sun and sand,” Lamsam said.

Lamsam had actually accepted another job before considering the recommendation from the chair of her dissertation at Columbia, Keith Sanders, to “check out UNO and look at the job that was open here,” Lamsam said.

“I never planned to drive through Nebraska, much less live there,” Lamsam said. But she heeded Sanders advice and in 1999 came to check out what UNO had to offer.

“I had interviewed a lot of places,” Lamsam said. “But when I came here, everyone bowled me over. I just thought they were the real deal. “People here were genuine and there was a real synergy between the Mass Communication Department and the Speech Department. They also were very supportive of my research area in the Native American Press. I believed everything they told me.”

So in August of 2000, Lamsam became a full time faculty member at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and now teaches News Writing and Reporting, News Editing, and Introduction to Mass Communication.

Angela Coon, a UNO senior and former student of Lamsam’s, said, “Professor Lamsam’s classes were fun and taught me a lot. You could really see that she cared about how you were doing and wanted you to do well.”

“The most rewarding part of my job is when I see the students who are on the fence about journalism and then they write something that really affects them. They realize they can do it and their confidence transforms them and their writing. It’s amazing to see that,” Lamsam said.

Lamsam plans to add Introduction to Native American Studies into her teaching schedule, which is also related to the topic of her nearly finished doctoral dissertation, called “Tribal Employee Perception of Development Communication: Building Research with Tribal Media.” Lamsam said she hopes to complete her research by summer.

Lamsam said that her family now thinks she made the right decision, and although at one point Nebraska had never appealed to her or had been a part of her plans, she now says she can’t imagine working or living anywhere else. “It has turned out to be exactly the department I thought it would be,” Lamsam said. “I love it here.”
Top TV Newsroom Educators Make a Stop at UNO

Deborah Potter spoke to journalism and broadcasting students.

Two of the top TV newsroom educators in the country spent the day at UNO in February, meeting with students and faculty. Deborah Potter, executive director of NewsLab, and Wally Dean, a consultant to NewsLab, met with dozens of students from seven classes.

Potter is a former CBS Radio and TV and CNN news reporter who covered the White House, Congress and the State Department. She has taught journalism at the American University, and as a faculty associate at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, where she led writing, reporting, management and ethics seminars for professionals.

Dean worked for many years at WOWT-TV in Omaha as a reporter, anchor, producer and assistant news director before joining CBS in Washington, D.C., where he spent 12 years as producer. He currently works for the Pew Center.

The two shared their expertise with students from across the mass communication curriculum. In an early morning session the two met with students in the capstone Broadcast Journalism class to talk about the news business, and also talk about story construction, story-telling and ethics.

In his session with History of Mass Communication students, Dean led them through an exercise of defining news, news bias and how news gets covered. He utilized research from the Pew Center for the People and the Press. He repeated the session later in the day with an Introduction to Mass Communication class.

Potter spent most of her time answering questions when she met jointly with students from Radio Production, News Writing and Reporting and Public Affairs Reporting. Students were interested in such issues as the use of natural sound in radio stories, coverage on the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the current state of broadcast journalism.

Students also got a chance to chat informally with the two over lunch. Later in the day Potter and Dean met with faculty.

Potter was the keynote speaker at the Omaha Press Club Awards Banquet the next evening. And on Saturday she and Dean conducted a day-long workshop on writing and story-telling at the Omaha Press Club.

Two Communication Department Students are Nationally Recognized

Two students in the Department of Communication have received national recognition.

Josie Loza, a junior journalism-news editorial major, is one of five students nationally selected to participate in the Latino Reporter Digital Student On-Line Project. Nicholas Sierzant, a journalism major, was accepted for the Collegiate Sports Journalism Seminar.

The on-line project takes place in conjunction with the National Association of Hispanic Journalists convention June 9 to 16 in San Diego. Participating students work as reporters, editors, graphic designers and programmers to provide online coverage of the convention. They work under leading online journalists.

Loza works part time at the Omaha World-Herald and is the secretary for the UNO chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Sierzant will join other journalism and broadcasting students throughout the country the first week in May to learn the nuances of sports coverage from nationally known sportscasters and journalists. The seminar will take place at Churchill Downs in Kentucky, where participants will attend the Kentucky Derby as part of the training sessions.
Alumni Updates

1956

1964
Dick Fletcher (BS)—former weather forecaster for TV stations in Cedar Rapids, Corpus Christi, Denver and Omaha. Currently chief meteorologist at WTSP-TV in St. Petersburg, Florida.

1969
Rudy Smith (BS)—photographer for the Omaha World Herald and the first photojournalist to be elected into the Nebraska High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Researcher and contributor on two books, one on the history of blacks in Nebraska and another on the Omaha Indians.

1973
Larry Huelman (BA)—worked in public relations for the American Red Cross. Currently a representative for the Thompson Fiancial Group, Charlotte, North Carolina.

1974
John Powley (BS)—former media producer for Creighton University and former host of WOWT’s award-winning program, “On the House.” He has owned real estate companies in Omaha and Phoenix, and is the only realtor in Nebraska to have won two national marketing awards from the Certified Real Estate Specialist Counsel of America. He is currently a realtor in the United States.

1976
Charles Ellick (Assoc)—worked in advertising and sales for Omaha Magazine and as a news director for KETV. Currently a retired investor.

Margaret Clancy Keith (BS)—currently a sales representative in Omaha for Procter & Gamble.

1979
Mary Gabrail (Assoc)—retired and “aging gracefully” in Omaha.

1982
Jean Hawkins Robinson (BS)—obtained a paralegal degree after UNO. Currently quality assurance/training specialist for Maximus Child Support of Douglas County, Nebraska.

1987
Mark Allen (BS)—worked in public relations in government and industry in Omaha. Currently is a freelance television producer in Los Angeles.

1988
Kim Laursen (MA)—coordinates and teaches PC computing classes and conducts orientation sessions for faculty, staff and students at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She also serves as a newsletter editor for her department.

1989
DeAnn Bright (BA)—former reporter for WOW and KFAB radio, Omaha. Currently works at WTM radio and the Governor’s House Inn in Charleston, South Carolina.

Patrick O’Leary (BGS)—owner and operator of Gaelic Graphics in Omaha. Also works as a cartoonist and graphic artist.

1991
Christine North (MA)—obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. Currently an associate professor at Jamestown College, where she is developing a communication studies program.

1994
Jason Grey (BS)—a film and TV stunt man. Currently stunt coordinator for Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida.

1995
Peggy (Neiens) Root (BS)—currently a wholesale service specialist for Tender Heart Treasures, LaVista.

1996
Alan Siemering (BGS)—was a rock music reviewer for “Fast Lane” magazine in Omaha. Currently works as a dock manager for Priority Express, Des Moines, Iowa.

Cynthia Wilhelm (MA)—a writer, editor, analyst and researcher for TEKsystems in Omaha. Selected to be in “Marquis’ Who’s Who in America”, “Who’s Who in Science and Engineering” and “Who’s Who in the World.”

1997
Stacie Koenig-Gumm (BS)—works at Koenig Marketing, Advertising & Public Relations, an Omaha firm.

Gina Morhain (BA)—after working for several years as a consultant and technical writer in Omaha, currently documentation manager and senior technical writer for Lab-Interlink in Omaha.

Linda Ratcliff (MA)—moved to Utah in 1998 after teaching at Metro Community College. She now teaches full-time in the Communication Department at Weber State University.

Brian Todd (BS)—currently managing editor of Hepatitis Magazine, a health magazine for hepatitis patients and based in Houston.

Vern Wirka (MA)—currently conducts school assembly programs, featuring ventriloquism and magic, throughout the country. The programs focus on conflict resolution and the importance of education and good communication.

1998
Angie (Rinker) Herman (BS)—publications editor and coordinator in the Corporate Communications Department of Nebraska Health Systems. Expecting her first child in June.

1999
Sarah May (MA)—teaching English composition at Cincinnati (OH) State College. She is also working on her second master’s degree, this one in library science.

2000
Kendall Sidoruk (BS)—played one year of professional hockey for the Idaho Steelheads. Currently regional sales manager for Imaging Services Corporation in Omaha.

2001
Rhea Geschke (BS)—worked at KPTM and KMTV. Currently finance manager for Home Pride Foods in Omaha.

In Memoriam
The Department of Communication extends condolences to the family and friends of UNO communication alumnus Dick Palmquist. Palmquist, executive director of the Nebraska Broadcasters Association, passed away in March.

The department also extends condolences to the family and friends of Jerrold Paskins, vice president of the Devonshire Group, Anaheim, Ca. Paskins, 1970 UNO Communication graduate, died in the collapse of the World Trade Center on Sept. 11.
High School Journalism Conference

As part of a long tradition, the Communication Department sponsored a high school journalism conference titled “Get Jazzed About Jobs in Journalism” on April 15 in the UNO Alumni Center.

Three speakers from area media talked about their careers: Jim Rose, radio broadcaster and future voice of the Huskers; Rob McCartney, KETV senior news anchor; and Steve Buttry, Omaha World-Herald reporter. More than 130 students attended.

The annual conference also included recognition of the winners in a high school journalism contest sponsored by the department. Students from the Omaha metropolitan area received awards for entries in numerous newspaper categories, such as best front-page layout, best sports photograph and best in-depth story.

The contest is judged by Communication Department faculty, graduate students and alumni. Professionals from the community also assist.

Communication Awards Ceremony Awards 2002

The UNO Department of Communication will hold its 47th annual Communication Awards Ceremony on Thursday, May 2, in Bootstrapper Hall of the Thompson Alumni Center. The event begins at 6:00 p.m. The department will present awards and scholarships to outstanding students and honor alumni and communication professionals.

“It’s a great opportunity to greet old friends, make new ones, and celebrate the department’s and our honorees’ achievements,” said Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell, department chair.

The communication awards to be presented are:

Alumni Achievement Award:
• Jeff Bundy, Photographer Omaha World-Herald;
• Dr. Mary Ann Danielson, Chair-Communication Studies, Creighton University;
• Dave Failor, Community Relations Manager, US Postal Service.

Rising Star Alumni Achievement Award:

• Dr. Carma Bylund, Assistant Professor, University of Iowa.

Communication Achievement Award:
• Roger Hamer and Brian Mastre, WOWT.

Lifetime Achievement Award:
• Roger Flemmer, former Ag News Director, KFAB.

Distinguished Service Award:
• Dr. Eric Manley, Associate Dean, UNO College of Arts and Sciences.