UNO School of Communication established
Looking to the future,
Building on the past....
Innovative Communication Studies in a Metropolitan Environment

by Deborah Smith-Howell, Ph.D.
Director, School of Communication

It’s official. Finally, A School of Communication exists at UNO.

On March 10, 2004, the Nebraska Post-Secondary Coordinating Commission approved the restructuring of UNO’s Department of Communication into a School of Communication. Coordinating Commission approval was the final step in a process that included approval by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, NU Central Administration, and UNO administration and faculty. The specific proposal approved in March of 2004 began winding its way through the administrative channels in November 2002 with approval by the faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. In reality, the proposal began in 1972 when UNO as a campus of the state university system had existed for less than five years. The UNO School of Communication has its roots in a visionary proposal written by Dr. Hugh Cowdin and Dr. Jack Brilhart requesting the merger of the then Departments of Journalism and Speech. In 1972, Drs. Cowdin and Brilhart wrote “the basic rationale for establishing a School of Communication is the recognition of common interests among the groups of faculty members in such a school, stemming from a mutual concern with communication processes in any and all social contexts.”

While the merger idea was unique—almost radical—in the early and mid-1970s, Professors Cowdin and Brilhart truly understood the future of communication as a discipline for the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The second proposal for a School of Communication, written in 1973, was for a School of Urban Communication consistent with the Regents Commission Report that recommended that UNO develop programs and services focused on community problems and undergraduate and graduate programs that would enable UNO to “accomplish its mission as the urban university of the ’70s.”

Drs. Cowdin and Brilhart eventually settled for a Department of Communication merging the departments of Journalism and Speech in 1975 to meet some of the conceptual and practical objectives of the School proposals. In its almost 30 years of existence, the Department of Communication was extremely successful in its efforts to meet the educational needs of its students with exemplary teaching, research and service. However, the dream, vision and rationale provided by the journalism and speech faculty of the early 1970s remained.

Why a School of Communication? Given the success of the current undergraduate programs in broadcasting, journalism and speech communication, as well as the master’s program in communication, many people have asked why it was so important for communication to be identified as a school rather than a department. In the next few paragraphs, I’ll try to address that question.

First, the school structure communicates better the size, complexity and range of activities in communication at UNO. Current and future students as well as local and national professionals, and even other UNO colleagues, frequently do not recognize that one department offers the broad range of majors and specializations available in communication at UNO. In comparing UNO communication to peer institutions organized as schools, we found that we had comparable undergraduate and graduate programs usually with more students majoring and graduating in those programs. In fact, it is actually rare to find a unit of comparable size and complexity as a department—school or even college status is more common.

Additional factors related to moving to school status included the extensive multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of our activities and the scope of our outreach and community involvement. We have interdisciplinary graduate certificates in Human Resources Training and Development and in Technical Communication, as well as the undergraduate minor in media technology. Each year we have more than 100 students in for-credit internships throughout the metropolitan area, the region and nation. We also have extensive student involvement in professional organizations at the local, regional and national levels and far-reaching service-learning options in many courses in all of our programs.

We also believe that school status will assist us in developing external support for our programs and students.

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School Facts

- 29 Full-time faculty.
- 658 Majors (Fall 2003)
- 100 for-credit internships each year.
- $50,000 in scholarships granted to 26 students for 04-05.
- 57 guest speakers.

BA, BS and MA Degrees Available

- Broadcasting
  - Broadcast News
  - New Media
- Journalism
  - News Editorial
  - PR/Advertising
  - Media Studies
- Speech Communication
  - Concentrations available upon consultation with advisor.
- Bachelor of General Studies (BGS)
  - Concentration - Division of Continuing Studies.
- Graduate
  - MA in Communication
  - Certificate in Technical Communication (with English)
  - Certificate in Human Resources and Training (with Psychology and Business).
Early Vision Realized

In the late 1960s, two UNO department chairmen shared an idea, one that was revolutionary for that time and for that size of an institution. Their vision was realized more than 30 years later when the UNO Department of Communication became the School of Communication in 2004.

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents approved the change in February and the Nebraska Postsecondary Coordinating Commission did so in March.

Drs. Jack Brilhart and Hugh Cowdin, chairmen of the Department of Speech and the Department of Journalism, respectively, took the first major step in 1973. With theater splitting from the Department of Speech to become part of the College of Fine Arts, Brilhart and Cowdin, now both retired, proposed that the departments be combined to form a school.

"It was a pretty savvy move," Brilhart would recall years later on the KYNE-TV program “Reflections in Time.” “We were in the forefront for a middle-sized school.”

Brilhart said that a few larger universities, such as University of Ohio at Athens, University of Michigan and Purdue University, had combined speech and journalism or were attempting to do so in the 1970s.

Cowdin said the situation was right for the creation of a school of communication. He said UNO, previously an independent municipal university, was absorbed into the state university system in 1968, the year he came to UNO and became the Journalism Department chair.

"It was a new university and everything was not carved in stone,” he said.

Dr. Dennis Fus, who joined the Department of Speech and Theater in 1962 and still teaches, had doubts about the concept of a school.

"Jack and Hugh really had vision that I didn't give them credit for at the time," he said. "To me it seemed such an unwieldy and unlikely marriage of journalism and speech.”

UNO administration also had its concerns about a school, but did agree that the departments should be combined. Cowdin said the "catalyst" for the change was broadcasting. The Department of Speech was teaching broadcast production courses, while the Department of Journalism offered courses in broadcast journalism.

But a more fundamental reason drove the department chairs to seek the merger and become the philosophical core for developing the program.

Brilhart recalled: "I discovered fairly early that Hugh had a communication orientation. He had studied [at the University of Iowa] with some of the people whose work I most respected in the field of communication. Both Hugh and I looked on the process of communication as central to the field.

"It had to be based on a focus on the process of human communication, whether it’s mediated face to face, or it’s mediated electronically, or it’s mediated by the machines of print.”

The academic entity resulting from the 1975 merger was the Department of Communication, and the focus on the communication process served as the foundation for the expansion of the graduate program and for the recruitment of quality faculty. Prior to the merger, the Speech Department offered a master’s degree. The formation of the new department “opened the door for graduate education for journalism students and faculty,” said retired communication professor Warren Francke.

Brilhart agreed. “It made it possible to have a strong graduate program,” he said. “With separate departments none of that would have been possible.”

The department grew, from 100 majors in the 1970s to more than 650 majors today. The number of internships and service-learning activities for students has substantially increased during that time, as has the number of faculty.

“By the time we got to the mid-1990s,” said Cowdin, “we may have been the country’s largest communications department that was still a department, and we may have been the only department where mass communication faculty all had doctorates and all had professional experience.”

What made the transition from department to school possible, said Brilhart and Cowdin, was not only the growth in students and faculty, but the quality of teaching, research and community service by the school. While such quality may be less tangible than the department’s growth, the evidence is there, based on student feedback.

“Our alumni speak in laudatory terms about their education, and that’s always been a source of satisfaction for me,” Cowdin said.

Fus noted that the prestige of a school of communication rests on the prestige of the faculty.

“We’ve been very fortunate over the years with the people we’ve attracted to this department and now school,” he said; “we really have some excellent faculty.”

A Special Visit...

It was a private, yet historic, occasion for the UNO School of Communication when four of the founding members gathered in April 2004 to reminisce. Hugh Cowdin, Warren Francke, Bob Reilly and Joe McCartney (as shown in the photo) shared memories about the formation of the Department (now School) of Communication.

Bob Reilly sketched this cartoon, (left) almost 30 years ago, of the first meeting of the speech and journalism faculty as the Department of Communication.
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Students Win National and Regional Awards

Five students in a public relations campaign class in the UNO School of Communication took top honors in a national contest to promote awareness of the need for organ donations.

“The Public Relations Student Society of America chapter of Rowan University in New Jersey sponsored the competition. The students—Kristin Logan, Sarah Hamilton, Cassie Greisen, Brett Samson and Freddie Grande—competed against other PRSSA chapters across the country.

“In every step of this campaign, these students brought the important message of organ donor education to the campus in a creative and professional way,” said Karen Weber, instructor of the class.

“This is a huge honor for not only the team, but also for our chapter and the School of Communication,” Weber said.

Kristin Logan, a UNO PRSSA chapter assistant, was among the students of the organ donor campaign team by staffing special events and implementing other PR tactics.

The students will travel to New York City in October to accept a $400 award and plaque at the national PRSSA conference.

Kristin Logan was also among six School of Communication students who received individual accolades from national organizations. Logan, a public relations/advertising major, is one of 10 students nationally to receive the 2004 Vance L. Stickel Memorial Internship Award from the American Advertising Federation. The Stickell Advisory Board selected Logan to receive its summer internship. She and the other students were selected from 43 students who were nominated as the best, most deserving individuals from their AAF student chapters.

Logan is vice president of UNO’s student chapter of the AAF. For her internship Logan is working this summer at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

“The experience she will receive at the Journal-Constitution will be extremely valuable to Kristin in her career path,” said John H. Murphy III, coordinator of the Stickell Internship Program.

Telecia “Leia” Baez, a UNO journalism-news editorial major, is one of 16 students selected nationwide as a Dow Jones Newspaper Fund business reporting intern. Baez is spending 10 weeks working as a full-time business reporter at the Denver Post this summer.

Program participants receive a week of training at New York University with two journalists from the Wall Street Journal. Those successfully completing their internships and returning to college also receive a $1,000 scholarship.

Josie Loza, a UNO journalism-news editorial major, is one of 22 students selected nationwide to participate in the Associated Press Internship Program, which is a highly competitive training program for aspiring print, photo, graphics, radio broadcast and multimedia journalists.

Loza is working in AP’s Omaha bureau for 12 weeks and also will receive four days of training in New York City.

Chris Machian, UNO journalism-news editorial major, earned top honors in the photography division in the national Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence competition for college journalists. His award-winning photo of a UNO hockey game was published in

Winners of the Pinnacle Award (left to right): Laura Friesell, Mike Poklo, Christina Combs, Hugh Reilly (faculty advisor), Lisa Butterfield, Katrina Olsen and Mary Lash Anderson.

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A Special Thank You

The School of Communication would like to thank Chet McCarthy and Printing Services for their continued support of CommUNO.

The school would also like to thank Tim Fitzgerald for his ongoing contributions.
Student Organizations Active Throughout the Year

Advertising Club

The Ad Club had a record number of students, 35, attend the Omaha Federation of Advertising's annual "Meet the Pros" conference in February. Ad Club members Laura Friesell, Katrina Olsen, Mary Anderson, Christina Combs, Lisa Butterfield and Mike Peklo received top honors in the American Marketing Association's Pinnacle Awards for their campaign with Toyota (see Student Recognition story on front page).

Kim Stowe from Sacco advertising and current president of the OFA spoke to the club on Feb. 29 on advertising career choices and scholarship opportunities available through OFA.

American Society of Training and Development

Recently the School of Communication reactivated the UNO student organization of the American Society for Training and Development. The new student officers are: president-Leslie Rill; vice-president-Marlina Howe; secretary-Carly Lambert, and treasurer-Kathy Denker. Dr. Karen Dwyer is the advisor. This semester ASTD members attended the Nebraska Chapter of ASTD meetings and became involved in monthly networking opportunities and special interest groups, such as February's Experiential Learning Workshop at the Book Worm in Omaha.

ASTD is in the process of partnering with current ASTD Nebraska members for a mentoring program that began in July. This summer ASTD members will be participating in community service activities in the Omaha area. Two student members, Kathy Denker and Leslie Rill, will become board members of the Nebraska ASTD. Rill will be representing the student section and Kathy will become the vice-chair of programming.

Public Relations Student Society of America

The PRSSA chapter centered its efforts on helping out with the PR Campaigns class this semester as 15 students on three separate campaigns worked to educate the UNO community on responsible credit, eating disorders awareness and organ donor awareness. The three campaigns, each part of a national or regional competition, reached hundreds on campus during their major events. The organ donor team won its national competition (Mascot, "Donny D. Onator" is pictured above).

Members of all teams, along with their fellow PRSSA volunteers, gained real world experience in research, event planning and media relations.

This spring the chapter inducted 12 new members in a ceremony and meeting at Wheatfields. Lesley Brandt, co-owner of Planet Omaha, spoke to the group about corporate event planning.

Chapter members assisted PRSA-Nebraska with its June 18 golf tournament as a fundraiser for the UNO chapter. Members recruited golf teams, obtained gift certificates and prizes and served as volunteers for the event.

Society of Professional Journalists

During the spring semester, the Society of Professional Journalists chapter heard a presentation from Kristin Zagurski, a recent UNO graduate who now works at the Omaha World-Herald, about the transition from school to the work world. The group also toured the Omaha World-Herald and helped with the School of Communication's annual high school journalism contest/conference as a service project.

Three students -- Kyle McClellan, Crystal Reid and Tina Mak -- attended the Region 7 meeting in March 2004 in Overland Park, Kan., where Mak received an award (see student recognition story on front page).

Ad Club, ASTD, PRSSA, and SPI

SPI, the Ad Club, ASTD and PRSSA jointly organized and sponsored a career informational event, "Launching Your Career in Turbulent Times," on April 13. More than 15 professionals from all areas of communication met informally with students to discuss their careers, review resumes and portfolios, and offer advice for entering the job market.

- by Danelle Petersen

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the Gateway.

The award was presented last fall at the SPI 2004 Mark of Excellence national convention in Tampa, Fla. Machian initially placed first in the sports photography category in the Region 7 Mark of Excellence competition, and his photo then competed on the national level.

Tin Mak received a regional award in the SPI competition. The award was for a column he wrote for the Gateway.

Jeremy Wangler, a journalism-news editorial major who works in UNO's Sports Information Department, helped create two media guides that won national recognition. The department earned six first-place awards for its 2003-2004 media guides in contests sponsored by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Wangler was the writer/editor for the soccer media guide and the writer for the softball guide.

State Awards

UNO Gateway staff members also earned state honors for their work. They were honored by the Nebraska Press Association at its 2004 awards ceremony. They received the following first-place honors: Machian won for Best News Photo and Best Feature Photo; Josh Williamson for Best Sports News Photo; Marion Rhodes for Best Spot News Story Award; and Josh Bashara for Best Personal Column. In addition, the Gateway received first place in the NPA's General Excellence category.

Regional Awards

Regional honors were bestowed on five advertising students-- Mary Lash Anderson, Lisa Butterfield, Mike Peklo, Laura Friesell, Christine Combs and Katrina Olsen. Those students earned a Pinnacle Award for their campaign book on the Honda Civic Hybrid. The students created the campaign as part of an Advanced Advertising class taught by Assistant Professor Hugh Reilly.

The Pinnacle Award is the highest honor the American Marketing Association bestows on its members. UNO competed against other area schools to win the award for best total campaign. It is the first year that the Omaha AMA has given student awards.
Robert T. Reilly Remembered, Honored

Editor's Note: On Wednesday, April 14, Robert T. Reilly, emeritus professor of communication at UNO, died at his Omaha home after a lengthy illness. He wrote 14 books, several screenplays and thousands of articles, many of which were published in national magazines and journals. Most importantly, he was a role model for thousands of students. The following is an excerpt from a speech by Hugh Reilly, Bob's son and an assistant professor of communication at UNO, at a ceremony on April 23, when the Omaha Press Club Journalism Education Inc. honored Bob posthumously with its Career Achievement Award.

If you asked my father to describe himself, he'd probably say, "I'm a writer." And he was, but he was also a professor, a mentor, a brother, a husband, a father and a friend. His one life breathed against so many others. One student told me, "He was electric, when he touched your life, you knew you had been touched." As the Irish would say, he was an Aman Mor ... a great soul. Someone, who by his presence, makes an impact on everyone he touches.

This has been a very difficult time for our family. Six weeks ago, we lost our beloved mother and last week our father. But it has been made easier by the outpouring of love and support from so many people across the country and even the world. There were cards and letters from people I've known for years and from people I've never met. They all said the same thing: We loved your father and we will miss him.

Matt Holland, the son of one of my Dad's oldest friends, Denny Holland, wrote one of those letters and included this story: "Yesterday afternoon, the day of your dad's funeral, I was at my mom's checking on the house since she was out of town. Her neighbors, the Tvrđik's, were in their yard and we began visiting. Mrs. Tvrđik asked me if I had called dad and told her about Bob Reilly. I said I had, and Mrs. Tvrđik said, 'Well you know, I met Bob Reilly a long time ago.' She went on to tell me this story: Nearly 40 years ago, she was attending a Catholic elementary school in south Omaha. The supply of books in their library was sparse, and her teacher, an enterprising nun, had each student pick a children's book out of the library and write to the author, asking if they would donate a copy of one of their books. Mrs. Tvrđik chose your dad to write to. She retold with amazement and pride how he not only sent books, he came and visited the school, making sure that his visit was publicized in the South Omaha Sun and the World-Herald. With the publicity the news articles provided, the book drive was a great success."

My father had the uncanny ability to take a small request and not only to fulfill it, but to look at the possibilities, expand it far beyond the asker's imagination and return it many-fold. He could turn a book into a book-drive.

My good friend Dave Harding sent me a brief note where he posed some questions. "What was the secret of your dad's success? He followed his heart? He committed himself to family and faith? He delighted in life's little inconsistencies? I suspect it was all of the above. You're lucky, Hugh, because whatever he did well, he shared with others, with his family and with his friends. I think many people live admirably, but it's the ones who share it that we think of as great. I know you are sad, but I hope you feel lucky as well."

I do, Dave, I feel very lucky. We were all lucky.

Reilly Professorship

The UNO School of Communication continues to honor the late Bob Reilly through the Reilly Professorship. Established in 1990, the professorship is for three years, at the end of which the Reilly Professor is evaluated for research, teaching and service. Pending a successful evaluation, the professorship is extended another three years. The award comes with an annual stipend with funds for the endowment managed by the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz currently holds the title. Lipschultz has authored or co-authored four books. He has also written two workbooks, two book chapters and more than 50 articles. His research has ranged from TV news and its effects to the integration of media via cyberspace.

"It's a great honor," said Dr. Lipschultz. "It represents the department's commitment to scholarship."

The School of Communication named Dr. Michael Sherer as the first Reilly Professor in 1990. Sherer, who teaches photojournalism and communication law, is nationally known for his advocacy of photojournalists' rights and was president of the National Press Photographers Association in 2002-2003. In 1996, Dr. Bruce Johansen was selected as the second Reilly Professor. Johansen teaches news writing and has written 18 books that have been published or are in press. The books have ranged from studies of Native American issues and environmental concerns to histories of World War II and Latino culture.
Building and managing a printing business is no small business. Ask Chet McCarthy. For the past 15 years he has owned and managed Printing Services Inc., an Omaha business that averages more than $1 million in sales annually.

But McCarthy's entry into the business world was unlike that of many printers, who often must establish a client base over time before achieving any profit. McCarthy took the printing facility of the one-time energy giant Enron and made it his own.

He attributes his business success and savvy to his diverse professional background and his experiences as a student at UNO. He has been involved in both the creative side and production side of communication.

When McCarthy first enrolled at UNO (then Omaha University) in 1963, he aspired to be a broadcast journalist. He anchored a weekly student newscast on KYNE-TV and wrote a column called "Our Man Chester" for the UNO student newspaper, the Gateway.

"It was a take-off from a movie at that time, called 'Our Man Flint.' But we turned it around and capitalized the 'O' and 'U' because it was Omaha University then," he said.

By the time he graduated with his bachelor's degree in 1968, his career in broadcast journalism seemed assured. The late Mark Gautier, long-time news director of Omaha's NBC affiliate, KMTV, offered him a job for $400 a month.

"That salary wasn't bad in 1968," he said.

But McCarthy had a better offer. He accepted a position in the public relations department of Northern Natural Gas. McCarthy recalls that his decision surprised and disappointed Gautier.

"He said people would give their eye teeth to get a job at the station," McCarthy said.

McCarthy worked for Northern Natural Gas until 1972, when the company downsized and he was one of those laid off. McCarthy then worked for Methodist Hospital where he was involved in media relations and publications. Seven months later Northern Natural Gas lured him back. McCarthy spent the next 20 years at Northern, working in corporate advertising and consolidating the company's graphic and printing services.

The opportunity to start his printing business came when Northern Natural Gas merged with two other companies to form what would later be called Enron. The company decided to move its headquarters to Houston, and McCarthy, director of graphic services at that time, was asked to develop a plan to decide the future of the company's graphics and printing center, which was still in Omaha.

"One of the options I gave them was one they weren't expecting," McCarthy recalled. "That was to sell the equipment to me and sign a printing contract, and I would leave the company and stay in Omaha. I had two small children at the time, and I didn't want to leave Omaha and move to Houston."

Enron accepted his proposal and signed a contract that made McCarthy Enron's exclusive printer of forms and guaranteed him $1 million over the next four years. He said that contract gave him a financial foundation from which to build Printing Services Inc.

"I took what you would call an in-plant operation and turned it into a commercial printing operation," McCarthy said.

Although he never envisioned himself as a business owner, McCarthy said his experiences at UNO prepared him to be one. He served as business and advertising manager of the Gateway. Some of McCarthy's most vivid memories are of the critique sessions with the newspaper's faculty adviser, Dr. Paul Peterson.

"We called those sessions 'the bloodbath,'" McCarthy said. "We dreaded that, because if you had a story in that edition, you knew he was going to tell you everything you did wrong. But I learned more from those sessions than from any textbook."

McCarthy remains involved in the UNO School of Communication. He consults with the school's faculty and staff in producing CommUNO and serves as an information resource on a variety of communication topics.

McCarthy plans to retire from his printing business in April 2005. He has sold the business to another Omaha printer. He said he plans to find another job in sales or public relations and to spend time enjoying his family.

McCarthy said he and his wife, Mary, also a UNO alumna, have been "happily married for more than 30 years" and have two sons. His oldest son Robert is a law enforcement officer in Ralston and Scott works in the marketing department for 20th Century Fox.
by Kristin Logan

In his work, "Nicomachean Ethics," Aristotle stressed that humans learn by doing.

Aristotle lived from 384 BC to 322 BC, but this principle is still alive and well in the minds of students and instructors in the School of Communication. Students are able to choose from a variety of courses that include many "real-world" opportunities to test the theories and principles they have already learned in prerequisite classes.

Examples include airing a live, 30-minute newscast, implementing a full-scale public relations campaign and creating a play-by-play sportscast. Students may learn that their career tasks are not what they had hoped for, or they may become more enthused about the professional world. Either way, students are one step closer to where they want to end up and often two steps closer to knowing where that may be.

A sampling of such classes is listed below.

Public Relations/Advertising

Advertising Campaigns
with Hugh Reilly

In Fall 2004, a class of 15 students will begin preparing to compete in the American Advertising Federation's National Student Advertising Competition the following semester.

In Spring 2003 students competed and tied for third in their district for the Toyota Matrix campaign in the Advertising Campaigns class under Hugh Reilly. The class is now restructured into two classes to allow next spring's campaign class to have more time for research. The same 15 students will take Advanced Advertising this fall and will compete next spring.

“All of the advertising professionals I have talked to have told me that the No. 1 thing they look for on a resume is NSAC,” Reilly said. The competition provides more than 3,000 college students with real-life experience in working on an advertising/marketing/media campaign for a corporate sponsor. Sixteen schools are selected to present their campaigns to a panel of industry executives at the AAF National Conference.

Public Relations Campaigns
with Karen Weber

The Public Relations Campaigns class allows students to conduct full-scale promotional campaigns to increase awareness of issues and organizations.

In the Spring 2004 semester three groups of students developed and implemented campaigns to heighten awareness about college student credit problems, eating disorders and organ donation. All three campaigns were entered into separate competitions of the national Public Relations Student Society of America, with the organ donor team winning first place in its competition (see front page story).

“Studying concepts in class can only take you so far,” Weber said.

Some of the things she said students learned included communicating with media, research, working with students with different backgrounds and personalities, solving last-minute problems, organization and creativity.

Broadcasting

Advanced Broadcast Journalism
with Dr. Chris Allen

Beginning in Fall 2003, students in the Advanced Broadcast Journalism class began airing “The Omaha News” on the Knowledge Network carried on Omaha-area cable TV systems.

The live, 30-minute news and interview program is available on Cox Cable Channel 17 and Qwest Choice TV Channel 77.

“In the field of broadcast news, there is no substitute for on-air and behind-the-camera experience,” said Dr. Allen, associate professor and instructor of the course. “It’s a vital part of the educational process.”

The program is recorded and broadcast throughout the week during the fall and spring semesters.

Sportscasting
with Dr. Mike Hilt

Students in Sportscasting get the chance to hone their announcing and presentation skills by attending sporting events where they tape themselves doing play-by-play.

The tapes are brought back to class, and each student has the opportunity to be critiqued by the class.

“It fills a niche for students who are interested in sports and sportscasting,” said Dr. Hilt, instructor for the course.

“It gets them out in the community, lets them do something that some of them may have a desire to do.”

He said some people tend to see sportscasting as glamorous and exciting, but this class demonstrates how much work goes into it.

News Editorial

Environmental Writing
with Dr. Bruce Johansen

Students in Environmental Writing benefit from Dr. Bruce Johansen's extensive research on the topic.

The emphasis for students is to work on honing their research and writing skills. To do this Johansen describes his work on environmental issues. Students then propose story ideas, develop their stories and later discuss the final stories that were turned in.

Johansen's last three books have been on global warming, toxic chemicals and world environmental issues faced by indigenous peoples. His book on world environmental issues served as an Internet research exercise, based on 170 world wide case studies.

Speech Communication

Group Facilitation and Public Dialogue
with Dr. Shereen Bingham

Students in Group Facilitation and Public Dialogue planned a "public dialogue" event for members of the community.

The spring 2004 event, titled "Omaha Youth Dialogue on Diversity," allowed youth from across the region to initiate conversations and discussion about diversity issues and to build relationships with other youth from different backgrounds. Thirty-five Omaha area youth were in attendance.

The course is part of the National Communication Association's "Communicating Common Ground" project. CCG is a national initiative urging faculty and students to form service-learning partnerships with community groups and schools with the goal of using communication instruction to foster respect for diversity and to fight hate in communities nationwide.

"Group facilitation and dialogic communication skills are valuable for students to develop no matter what their major is. By using these skills... students become civically engaged citizens who can make a difference in their community," said Dr. Shereen Bingham, instructor for the course.

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A Record Year for Student Scholarships

Twenty-six students in the School of Communication received more than $50,000 in scholarships for 2004-2005. “Our number of scholarships is growing, but I can’t stress enough how important scholarships are,” said Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell, director of the school. “We have so many deserving students.”

Smith-Howell said the newest scholarship, given for the first time this year, is the Fred & Mary Jo Petersen Communication Scholarship. Fred Petersen was president and CEO of Omaha Public Power District for 16 years. He retired in December 2003. That scholarship was awarded to Jessica Rial.

“The School of Communication is especially honored that OPPD chose to establish a scholarship in Mr. Petersen’s honor here at UNO,” said Smith-Howell. “Mr. Petersen had a distinguished career in corporate communication and is a true role model for our students. All of our scholarships make a tremendous difference in the life of the students receiving them as well as demonstrating the commitment of professional organizations, families, and individuals to UNO, the School of Communication, and most importantly, our students.”

Other scholarships and their recipients for 2004-2005 are:

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<td>Gunnar Horn Journalism Talent Scholarships</td>
<td>Danielle Petersen, Megan Stoddard, Kelsey Joelle Zach</td>
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<td>Hartman Memorial Journalism Talent Scholarship</td>
<td>Elizabeth M. Flynn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sue Francke Memorial Scholarship</td>
<td>Jennifer Salemink</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paisley Family Newspaper Scholarship</td>
<td>Jaime Potthast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forensics Scholarship</td>
<td>Abbie Farrens</td>
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<td>Richard A. Palmquist Nebraska Broadcasters Association Scholarship</td>
<td>Anthony Blue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Omaha Federation of Advertising Scholarships</td>
<td>Brian Fitzpatrick, Kristina Hamilton, Laura Friesell, Brittney Haak</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRSA/Nebraska Chapter Scholarship</td>
<td>Julia McConahay</td>
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She said that students had the opportunity to interact with members of the community, including leaders of Omaha community agencies and organizations and high school-age youth across the city.

Communication Anxiety with Dr. Karen Dwyer

Students in Dr. Karen Dwyer’s special section of Fundamentals of Public Speaking are learning to cope with excessive anxiety about public speaking. “I would say the success rate is 100 percent for those who stay in the class,” Dwyer said.

The Speaking Confidently section requires students interested in taking the class to get a permit from Dwyer. They must complete a survey; those exhibiting a high level of anxiety are admitted to the class.

“Seventy percent of people have anxiety about public speaking. About 20 to 25 percent would prefer a dentist drilling all day or dying than giving a speech,” she said.

Dwyer said that students need to do something about their anxiety when it inhibits the things they want to do, such as taking a certain class or getting a particular job.

Dwyer said the class uses “state-of-the-art techniques for speech phobia or anxiety.” Some of these include, but are not limited to, mental rehearsal that athletes use, systematic desensitization, picturing themselves being successful in public speaking, deep breathing and cognitive restructuring.

Students practice various techniques for a few weeks before giving their speeches. The supportive structure of the class allows students to give each other their speeches before they are given before the entire class.

Beyond all of this, Dwyer said, “They have to want to overcome their anxiety.”

While there are a variety of things being learned in the class offerings in the School of Communication, Aristotle himself would have been proud of one common theme: Learning by doing is sometimes the best way. From fully implemented public relations campaigns to on-air news broadcasts to overcoming speech fright, students have stepped into another role and walked away knowing more than what they could have ever learned from a book or lecture alone.
Students Present Research at State and National Conferences

Two School of Communication undergraduate students presented their research before an international audience in Las Vegas in February 2004. Abbie Farrens and Scott Wike presented papers at the Far West Popular Culture Conference.

Farrens’ paper was titled “A Fearful America: Bowling for Columbine and the Sociology of Knowledge.” Wike discussed “The Search for Male Identity Within Modern Society: A Rhetorical Analysis of David Fincher’s Fight Club.”

The conference was attended by scholars in numerous fields, including communication, philosophy, anthropology and sociology.

Another communication student, Megan Fonfara, presented a paper titled “Women and War: Competing Ideologies for Women—A Feminist Criticism” at the No Limits Conference in March 2004 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The conference was sponsored by the women’s studies programs at UNL, UNO and UNK.

Two UNO communication graduate students—Kenton Anderson and Michelle Gauchat—presented conference papers at the annual Sooner Communication Conference held at the University of Oklahoma in March 2004. Anderson presented two papers focusing on rhythm, classical rhetorical theory, and contemporary applications. Gauchat’s paper was titled “Strategic Blame Receives Forgiveness: An Analysis of Deborah Sampson’s ‘An Address on Life as a Female Revolutionary Soldier.’”

A group of seven communication graduate students collaborated with Dr. Karen Dwyer on a paper accepted and presented at the 2003 National Communication Association convention held in Miami during November. The graduate students were Lisa German, Katherine Denker, Kathryn Milleman, Eric Allen, Kenton Anderson, Georgia Culliver and Lara Imbrock.

Jason Axsom presented a paper titled “Compulsive Talkers in the Workplace: Less Intelligent and Less Likely to be Hired Than Those That Are Quiet,” at the 2003 NCA convention.

A number of graduate students have submitted papers for presentation at the 2004 NCA national conference to be held in Chicago.

“All these student papers were competitively selected,” Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell, director of the School of Communication, said. “Such experience and recognition are important for developing scholars. It’s also important in developing a national reputation for our school’s programs.”

Classroom in London

London was the classroom for 15 students from the School of Communication during two weeks in May. The students were part of an international communications class taught by Dr. Chris Allen, associate professor. Dr. Allen takes his class to London each May.

You are Important to us... Let us know what you are doing!

If you are a UNO communication alumnus, you probably remember that written assignments were a major part of your college education. The UNO School of Communication has one more assignment for you.

The school is compiling its history and considers you an important part of that history. Please take a few minutes and fill out the form (right) and send in your update. You can also e-mail your update to Dr. Dave Ogden at dogden@mail.unomaha.edu.

“Developing and keeping connections with our alumni are very important activities,” said Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell, director of the school. “Nothing mirrors the success of our school more than the accomplishments of our alumni.”

Please let us know about the latest developments in your career and in your family. Smith-Howell said alumni news is not only important to the school, but also is important in providing opportunities for alumni to reconnect with former classmates and instructors.

Please answer and mail back the following questions.

Name: __________________________
First __________________________ Last
Graduation date: ___________ Graduate or Undergraduate (circle)
Where are you living (City, State)? ___________________________
For whom are you working (Company)? ___________________________
Brief update of what you have been doing since graduating from UNO.
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Alumni Updates

1956
Betty Ellsworth Davis (BS) is with the Douglas County Historical Society and has been involved in the planning of Omaha’s 150th birthday celebration, held July 17, and a July 27 event to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition. She was also involved in the publication of the book "Historic Omaha" by Hugh, Peggeen and the late Robert Reilly.

Robert W. Henkel (BS) of Robbinston, Maine, stays busy by enjoying his grandsons and working with the local historical society and the volunteer fire department.

1960
Carol Dugan (BS) and husband Mike (‘63, BS) have spent their second year as full-time residents of Estes Park, Colo. They moved there after 15 years in Des Moines. Mike works out of their home as a vice-president for ARAG USA.

1970
Susan Kruse Saxenmeyer (BS) lives in Tyler, Texas, and is vice president of public affairs for Cox Communications’ largest operating group, Middle America Cox. That group serves more than 800,000 customers primarily in Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana. She completed an MBA at the University of Texas at Tyler in August 2003. Last year she received the John L. Mankin Award from the Texas Cable & Telecommunications Association.

1977
Jim Adams (BS) is finishing his 30th year in broadcasting, the last seven of which he has been assistant general manager of UNO Radio and Television. He spent the first 23 years at KETV.

1978
Jim Ressegieau (MA) retired from his position as a training manager for Aquila Inc. and is now in seminary school.

1982
Marge Peterson (BGS) received the Tom Allan Travel Media Award from the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism for her 20 years as a writer and editor for "Home & Away Magazine."

1994
Greg Gardner (BS) works as an order filler and in problem resolution for the Oriental Trading Co.

1995
Hillary A. Tripp (BGS) is a major and public affairs officer in the Army Reserve in Seattle. Last year she served in Kosovo as the task force public affairs officer and the mobile public affairs detachment commander. As quoted in the summer 2004 edition of the UNO Alum, Tripp said her years in speech competition at UNO helped her prepare for her career. "They have helped to make me more confident when speaking to the press, and many of the courses I had made it possible for me to do my job. Even after 10 or 15 years, I still think back and say, 'I remember during this course we learned...’"

1999
Ruth Leacock (BS) is a board member of Computers for Africa. CFA refurbishes used computers for use in countries in East Africa. Because of CFA’s efforts, computers are being made available to more than 12,000 East Africans each year.

2000
Ken Wall (BS) is publications editor for HDR One Company, the international architectural and engineering firm based in Omaha. He is responsible for publishing 10 technical newsletters annually for the company’s engineering team. He assumed his position in February after three years of working as a reporter for the Midlands Business Journal.

2003
Deborah Derrick (MA) is a technical writer and editor for the UNO College of Engineering at the Peter Kiewit Institute. She is also teaching writing seminars for graduate students and has been accepted into the UNL Department of English doctoral program. Her master’s thesis on Celia Thaxter received a first place award for research in a statewide competition sponsored by the Nebraska Press Women.

In Memoriam

John R. Duncan Jr. (BS), class of 1950, died Dec. 29, 2003, in Mesa, Ariz. He retired as president of the Milwaukee Association of Commerce. While a student at UNO, he played on the golf team and was sports editor of the student newspaper.

Coming in the Fall Issue...

Coverage and photos of the 49th Annual School of Communication Annual Awards.

Details of the 50th Annual Awards Dinner in May 2005.

Faculty accomplishments in teaching, research and service.

We’re putting out a call for Alumni News. Let us know what you are doing!

...and More.
Alumni Reflections

The ultimate measure of the success of a department or school of communication is its graduates. The speech, broadcasting and journalism alumni of UNO have enjoyed success in a variety of communication fields. CommUNO asked some of those alumni to share their thoughts about the role of their UNO communication education in their careers and lives.

Roger Catlin
(1977, BS) is TV critic for the Hartford Courant. His work has appeared in the South China Morning Post, Chicago Tribune and the Los Angeles Times. He received the School of Communication's Alumni Achievement Award in 2001. He said the School of Communication greatly influenced his career through its internships, a "lively student newspaper" and an outstanding faculty.

"Among them, Warren Francke's writing consistently sparked with detail and humanity. His legendary grading of an F for a single misspelled name seemed at first harsh but was entirely appropriate training for a world where details really count.

"Bob Reilly's writing style was similarly simple and effective; he was encouraging to the most way-out responses to his assignments. I admired Hugh Cowdin taking a year off to become a truck driver, absorbing that experience as a writer and professor (plus he had a crisp speaking style I mimicked freely). The Gateway was the greatest part of the experience - an outlet for all creative expression, a warm refuge from campus, a place I worked all hours with friends for life."

Renee Franklin
(1994, BS) is executive director of the Social Settlement Association in Omaha. She said one of the strengths of the School of Communication and its faculty is their ability to bridge theory and practice. She received the School of Communication's Rising Star Alumni Achievement Award this year.

"There aren't many educational programs that span a diverse set of career choices. Personally, I never anticipated that I would pursue a career in the nonprofit sector and yet, I use the skills I developed in the communication program on a regular basis. Understanding the power of communication from an organizational, interpersonal and societal perspective has impacted my career on many levels (i.e. grant writing, organizational development, professional presentations, fundraising and marketing).

"Two people in the Communication program influenced my life on a personal and professional level: Dr. Hollis Glaser and Dr. Shereen Bingham. Both of these individuals encouraged me to critically reason and challenge conventional sources of wisdom. The passion I embraced for gender equity in the context of communication soon developed into a passion of equity for all (i.e. low income, age, sexual preference, ethnicity)."

Mike Holmes
(1974, BS) is regional and national editor for the Omaha World-Herald and former Nebraska bureau chief for the Associated Press. He is a recipient of the School of Communication's Alumni Achievement Award.

"I was delighted last spring when my alma mater hosted an Associated Press Managing Editors retreat, bringing together 125 mid-career newspaper editors from eight states. Thanks to the generosity of Deb Smith-Howell, I think we also helped UNO show off a little.

"What a great place. Why haven't I ever heard of it?" a Missouri editor asked me.

"Because we're small and don't have a famous football team," I laughed.

"In the nearly 30 years since leaving campus, I've practiced journalism every day. I've written about legislators debating abortion and a guy who wanted to build zeppelins. I covered two papal visits and the 2000 presidential campaign. I wrote about Ann Richards turning good ol' boy politics on its ear and a madman turning a Waco church into a battlefield.

"My UNO degree prepared me for that. But the value of that degree wasn't a 'prominent' name atop the diploma. The value was getting the chance to study with professors who were accessible, who would argue with you, who knew your strengths and your weaknesses -- and who wanted you to do more."

G. Rosanna Moore
(1993, BS) is an Omaha attorney. She worked in the Douglas County Public Defender's Office for five years and in a private practice for two years. She said that the School of Communication faculty taught her lifelong lessons.

"I enjoyed the fact that there was never one person there who accepted mediocre performance. I was pushed and encouraged to always do better and

Continued on back page...

Dr. Dennis Fus
Dr. Dennis Fus (left two photos) and Dr. John Wanzenried (right two photos), then and now. Fus, an assistant professor, continues to teach full-time in the School of Communication. Wanzenried is associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Fus and Wanzenried are the only active faculty from the teaching staff of the Department of Communication when it was formed almost three decades ago.

Dr. John Wanzenried
Continued from Reflections inside front....
to strive to reach my goals. I highly doubt that I would have had the confidence to apply to law school if I had not had the backing of professors who had more confidence in my abilities than I had myself...I’d like to add that a program is only as good as the faculty. It may sound a bit cliché, but this cliché is true. I had wonderful professors and believed I received a first-rate education."

Kevin Warneke (1994, MA) is executive director of the Ronald McDonald House in Omaha. Warneke has been director of publications for the University of Nebraska Medical Center, editor of the York Times and a reporter for the Omaha World-Herald. He received the School of Communication's Alumni Achievement Award in 2003.

"It has a nice ring. Say it out loud: The School of Communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. It does sound like it belongs. It sounds proper and it sounds proficient...I like the way it sounds when I tell people I earned my master's degree from UNO's School of Communication...To be honest, the title may not be necessary. For the past 10 years I've marveled at the talent of students in the program. They're now working for the Omaha World-Herald, for top public relations agencies and for some of the best corporations in the community and beyond. They're self-starters and they're hard workers. That's a great combination. It's a winning combination....Helping students succeed should be the goal of every institution of higher learning, and the people behind the School of Communication understand that mandate."

Continued from front page...
While the department has received significant gifts for student scholarships and a major gift dedicated to technology and renovation, there are many opportunities for additional development. Given the experiences at other institutions, we believe that there will be more interest in development for a School of Communication than a department.

Since the inception of the department in 1975, every external review has recommended the creation of a School of Communication. Communication is one of the fastest growing disciplines in the United States. It is a diverse discipline encompassing public, organizational and interpersonal communication, as well as traditional print and broadcast journalism, public relations and advertising, mass communication, new media, and media technologies. While diverse, the focus for the future is on an integrated approach to communication that allows for the development of specialized skills within the overall context of communication as a knowledge and skills base, as a discipline, and as a profession. A school structure provides a more manageable and efficient administrative structure for the diverse yet integrated programs. Additionally, a school structure provides more visibility of the variety of offerings in communication.

In developing the proposal for the School of Communication at UNO, we examined institutions throughout the United States, especially metropolitan institutions, to create a unit appropriate for 21st century communication education as well as the distinctive mission of the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The UNO School of Communication is built on the strong foundation and vision established by our predecessors—faculty and students. Current faculty and students truly are looking to the future by building on our past.