Students Engage Community Through Democracy Project

What would it take to get more than 250 UNO students and community members to attend a campus event on a Thursday night at 8 o’clock? An athletic event perhaps? A theatre production?

You might be surprised to find out a group of that size gathered to participate in Debate Watch 2004, viewing the first presidential debate between Sen. John Kerry and President George W. Bush. A week later a second group of more than 175 participants attended the second Debate Watch event to view the vice-presidential debate.

Debate Watch is a national project supported by the Commission on Presidential Debates and the National Communication Association. Debate Watch brings groups together to view the campaign debates and participate in small group discussions, free from the influence of political pundits and campaign staff members.

This year nearly 30,000 participants were included in more than 2,000 organized Debate Watch events throughout the United States. UNO was one of 81 universities to participate in the project, and was the only university campus in Nebraska to be involved with Debate Watch. The two events were hosted at UNO by the School of Communication and funded by an American Democracy Project mini-grant. Students and community members ranging in age from 18 to 80 participated in the two-night event.

“I have organized Debate Watch events on other campuses in the past, and this event by far exceeded my expectations,” said Dr. Barbara Pickering, assistant professor of communication. “To attract more than 425 people over two nights to participate in the political process was very exciting to me and to my students.”

Pickering and students from her Political Communication course were responsible for planning, organizing, and facilitating the events. Participants were asked to complete attitude surveys both before and after each debate. Once participants finished viewing the debates, Pickering’s students facilitated small group discussions to gain further information about the viewers’ opinions, and to provide an opportunity for participants to express their ideas about the debates.

The UNO Debate Watch events not only attracted the attention of UNO students, and Omaha community members, it received media attention as well. KFAB, KPTM, KETV, and the 89.3 Lincoln based-NPR station interviewed Pickering about the project. The Omaha television stations covered each night’s events, with all four doing live feeds from UNO for their late news broadcasts.

“I was very pleased by the support we received from the Omaha metro community, the UNO student body and faculty,” Pickering said. “It reflects the very best about the American democratic process, and I hope that the information gained was valuable to everyone who participated.”

Students who participate in Debate Watch have shown an increased knowledge of political issues, and are more likely to vote, especially when participating in discussion groups that include people of all ages, Pickering said.

“We hope to bring some participants back to campus for follow-up discussions,” she said. “This will enable us to determine what impact Debate Watch 2004 may have had on voting behavior.”

For more information about our ADP projects, see the sidebar on page 8.
Some Lines from Lipschultz

As I write in the second week of November, we are catching our collective breath following a very exciting election year—one that included unprecedented student and faculty involvement in Debate Watch 2004, as well as a media forum focused on young voters, and election night student news coverage that included The Omaha News cable television show (Cox Cable 17), a news blog, and TheOmaha.com Web site. Please visit the blog at:

http://avalon.unomaha.edu/www-comm/electionnight/bloggersite.html

These were all a part of our American Democracy Project work, and you can read about these activities in the cover story. We attracted newspaper, television and web interest in our events, as hundreds of UNO students participated!

We have been on the move since the last issue of CommUNO. As you probably have heard by now, Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell was named assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs—one of the highest academic positions at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Deb helped tremendously in the transition over the summer, as did our head secretary Mary Gum, and Dr. Sherrie Wilson worked more than her share of hours to cover some of the workload. While we miss working directly with Deb, her leadership and clear vision will continue to help UNO grow.

Our students also have been making their mark on the world. In October, officers and members of the UNO chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) traveled to New York City to accept their award for the National Organ Donor Awareness campaign on campus last spring. The UNO School of Communication team won over top competition from runners-up Arizona State, Iowa State and Wisconsin. While in NYC, the team also was honored with the Community Service Award. (See story on page 6.)

The PRSSA team, as well as a trip to New York by members of the UNO chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, helped us to see (following a large number of bake sales and other fundraising activities!) the need for development efforts. Alumnus Paul Critchlow, Merrill Lynch’s senior vice president for communications and public affairs, is enriching the educational experiences for students in the School of Communication in a number of ways.

Critchlow, who received his bachelor’s degree in journalism from UNO in 1971, supplied all students in the school with subscriptions to the American Journalism Review and the Columbia Journalism Review.

We have formed a School of Communication Development Committee and are creating a communication plan. Thus far, we can report that:

- The Al Bates Student Travel Fund was recently endowed, thanks to the active involvement of UNO Professor Bill Blizek and many generous donors.

- The School of Communication continues to offer students numerous scholarships worth thousands of dollars each year.

- We have just established a “Faculty Development Excellence Fund” to assist with travel to academic conferences, needed instructional equipment and ongoing training.

- We have plans to create a Communication Week in April to highlight the enormous amount of technological and other changes in the fields of broadcasting, journalism, public relations/advertising, new media, and speech.

If you can help us in these efforts, please call me at 402-203-7247 or email jlipschultz@mail.unomaha.edu. You can now read more about us on the World Wide Web at http://communication.unomaha.edu. Secretary Jenn Mullins spent the summer updating the site, and she continues her magic with keeping it current, as well as designing the election blog.

In other news, the School of Communication has another top teacher in its midst. In 2004, Dr. Shereen Bingham was honored with the prestigious Outstanding Teaching Award at UNO, as well as College of Arts and Sciences honors. Other faculty have also received honors. (See story on page 5.)

We have a new face among the faculty. Professor Susan Schnase joined us from Creighton to lead the Forensics team, and students performed well in early competition. “The students on the team are very skilled and dedicated, and there is so much untapped talent still on this campus,” Schnase said.

“Our first tournament was quite difficult and we worked hard to succeed, but I think that success was still a bit of a surprise.”

Most recently, the School of Communication received University of Nebraska Priority funding for a Speech Center, thanks to the hard work of Public Speaking Coordinator Dr. Karen Dwyer. Dr. Robert Carlson, after directing the Nebraska Semester abroad program in the Czech Republic during the spring semester, returned to a leadership position on the bottom of page 5...

Projects, Awards, Field Trips Keep Organization Busy

Society of Professional Journalists
Six students from UNO’s chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists attended the national SPJ convention in September. This year the convention was in New York City, and students heard such noted journalists as Brian Williams and Walter Cronkite.

Student reporters were Heather Alexander, Jesse Hapke, Kyle McClellan, Joe Owens, Crystal Reid and Toni Willms.

During the fall semester, SPJ also sponsored a presentation by alumna Christine Kasel of Omaha Magazine. She offered students advice about how to get started with careers at magazines.

SPJ also cooperated with PRSSA and the Ad Club to organize an Oct. 21 forum on what communication professionals are doing to reach young voters. The event was part of the School of Communication’s American Democracy Project activities.

The Ad Club
It’s been a busy semester for UNO’s Ad Club. Several of the Ad Club members participated in the “Democracy Project” election night event and Kristina Hauflion created the flier for the debate night event.

In October the club visited Vala’s Pumpkin Patch and had a great time. A contest was held to design T-shirts for the club, and Jessica Rial’s entry was declared the winner. The T-shirts will be available in the spring semester.

Natalie Vacanti was elected treasurer in November.

The Ad club visited Bailey-Lauerman, Nebraska’s premier ad agency, on Dec. 9. Several students from the Ad Club submitted an entry for this year’s Addy awards, using a campaign book they created in their Advanced Advertising class.

At its November meeting the club heard a presentation by Claudia Martin, president and media director of Redstone Communications. Martin discussed media buying and provided the students with practical and insightful information.

The club is looking forward to next semester and our participation in the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC). The regional NSAC competition will be held in Dubuque, Iowa in April.

PRSSA
The Public Relations Student Society of America combined efforts with the Continued on page 7...
For Alumnus Johnson, Witnessing History is Part of the Job

Jay Johnson and Forrest Gump have something in common. Like the movie character, Johnson seems to find himself enmeshed in historic moments. Working for Air Force intelligence in April 1975, he monitored military radio transmissions during the fall of Saigon, in the desperate hours when the last U.S. troops and personnel left South Vietnam collapsed.

He followed Jimmy Carter’s sister, Ruth Carter Stapleton, during her evangelical swing through the Midwest in the late 1970s. He was in Uganda and Rwanda in 1995 during its civil war when the U.S. military began flying in humanitarian aid. He was in China on the brink of the activities leading up to Tiananmen Square.

Since the Vietnam War, Johnson’s brushes with history haven’t been by happenstance. It’s the nature of his job. Johnson is an Emmy Award-winning producer/photographer for KIRO-TV, the CBS affiliate in Seattle. Johnson stresses the “producer” in his title, because it’s a role he first learned as a UNO communication student.

In 1975 as a news intern at KMTV, he learned that photographers did a little and sometimes a lot of everything. That was before the advent of videotape when photographers shot, processed, and edited film and often wrote the accompanying script.

“I’m primarily a news photographer, but a news photographer who produces stories,” said Johnson, a 1976 graduate of UNO. “As my career progressed I did more and more behind the camera, but I never stopped writing.”

Johnson’s transition to a journalism career began while he was stationed at Offutt Air Force Base. He had served as a Chinese Mandarin language specialist during the Vietnam War. After the war and his transfer to Offutt in 1975, the military had little use for his skills and he was assigned as a clerk-typist. He rekindled his interest in journalism, an area he had planned to study at the University of Houston before his military stint, and enrolled at UNO.

“After a few days of classes, I met Joe McCartney,” Johnson said. “He told me about the KMTV internship. That changed my life.”

While Johnson would shadow historic events in years to come, historic events seemed to overshadow him early in his career. A presidential visit to Omaha was the first such event. While Johnson was a KMTV intern, President Ford came through Omaha and NBC’s Tom Brokaw was among the media contingency who followed.

“Mark Gautier [KMTV news director] marched me to a backroom at KMTV to work on editing with Brokaw, and he said, ‘Tom, I want you to meet Jay Johnson. He has a future in this business.’ I was 25 years old and that’s when I knew I could make it in this business.”

History was not so kind to Johnson during his first full-time job after finishing his MA degree in journalism from the University of Missouri in 1979. Johnson accepted a position with Telepress International News Agency, a television network news service based in Tehran, Iran, to produce a “60 Minutes-type” show for Iranian TV. Then came the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and the taking of U.S. hostages.

“I was on assignment somewhere, I think, in Florida,” Johnson said. “I found out the president of our news agency had been executed by a firing squad. I was out in the field with no money, nothing. No one was at the home office. I never heard from those people again.”

Out of a job and out of money, Johnson went to Southern California, but was lured to the Pacific Northwest for a job as a news photographer at KHQ-TV (NBC affiliate) in Spokane, this through a connection at the University of Missouri. In 1982 he joined KIRO-TV. Twenty years later, he received an Emmy for a story focusing on human whimsy in the midst of a natural disaster. During his coverage of flooding along the Skokomish River near Shelton, Wash., Johnson happened across two people on U.S. Highway 101.

“The river was running over the road, and salmon were literally swimming down the highway,” Johnson said. “These two people were clumsily trying to wrangle the salmon and pick them up and carry them across the highway and throw them back into the river. They were comically inept.”

Johnson received several Emmy nominations before winning his first. He risked life and limb for some of those nominations. He and his camera and microphone were part of an expedition to the top of Mount Rainier, “a very challenging peak where a number of folks die each year,” he said. Johnson described scaling the mountain as “the hardest thing you can ever imagine doing. If you’re around these guys [mountain climbers] for five minutes, you’ll no doubt hear, ‘No one has ever died from a fall from a mountain. It’s the sudden stop at the bottom that gets you.’”

Johnson said such experiences would not have been possible without his UNO background.

“The really great schools are places where students don’t just get classroom instruction. Students are given a camera, microphone, notepad and deadline they have to meet,” he said.

Johnson said the best thing UNO gave him, however, was guidance. “The accessibility and the willingness of the faculty to help were really special. Joe McCartney, Warren Francke, Hugh Cowdin, Bob Reilly...these people were like family. I felt like I had a home away from home.”

For more alumni news
• Critchlow Contributions
• Alumni Updates
• Kenton Anderson presents paper

See the School of Communication Web site at http://communication.unomaha.edu
Lipschultz Excited About New Role

Editor’s Note: The introduction to this story was written by Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell, former chair of the Department of Communication and who marshaled the Department’s transition into the School of Communication as its first director. Dr. Smith-Howell was appointed chair of the department in 1996 and left the post in May to become assistant vice-chancellor for academic affairs at UNO.

I am excited and pleased with the selection of Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz as the new Director of the School of Communication. I’ve worked with Jeremy for almost 16 years. He has always impressed me with his dedication to students, scholarship, and service—service to the university, the community and the profession. Jeremy is one of the few faculty who truly excels in all areas of academic life. He has won awards for his teaching and research. I know that he will provide dynamic leadership for the school that will benefit us all—students, faculty, alumni and our community partners.

While I greatly miss my interaction with the students and faculty in the school, I know that the school is poised for an exciting future under Jeremy’s leadership and the school’s outstanding faculty, staff and students.

As an undergraduate at the University of Illinois, Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz earned a bachelor of arts (A.B.) in political science but he also took as many speech classes as he did journalism classes.

He received his M.A. in public affairs reporting from University of Illinois-Springfield and a Ph.D. in journalism from Southern Illinois University. That integration of disciplines continues to serve him well as the new director of the School of Communication.

UNO has proven to be a good fit for Lipschultz, who said he’s “always loved the fact” speech and mass communication are united under one program. In his 16-year tenure, he has taught such diverse courses as Public Speaking Fundamentals, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), Radio Production, Public Affairs Reporting, Mass Communication and Public Opinion, Mass Communication Research, Electronic Media Management, Telecommunication Regulation and the Graduate Foundation Mass Communication Seminar. He brought the CMC and research courses to the UNO campus.

Lipschultz said the school director position—especially at such a critical time when the School is moving forward with creation of a new college—offers him a “challenge and an opportunity for personal growth.”

“Once we create the new college with our name on it, by definition we will become a more significant entity and one the community will look to for leadership,” Lipschultz said. “The smaller college will allow for a bit more intimate interaction—we’ll get to know and understand each other well as we plan and develop initiatives.

One of the biggest challenges is finding new funding sources. Lipschultz emphasized the importance of long-range planning. “There’s so much potential out there,” he said. “We can’t do everything at once, but we’re making progress.”

Lipschultz admits his job is time consuming but good time management skills help to prevent stress. “I try to take a balanced approach and still do a fair amount of teaching and research and service and prioritize what needs to be done first.”

One of the best parts of his new position is getting to know the faculty and students better. Despite his 16 years at UNO, Lipschultz said he didn’t fully grasp the depth of research activity, teaching and service within the School until he assumed the director position in August. “The more time I spend learning about all our activities, the more impressed I am with what all these folks are doing.”

10 FACTS ABOUT JEREMY LIPSCHULTZ

Did you know?

- Has the middle name Harris.
- Met his wife Sandy while they both worked as reporters at two Indiana radio stations.
- Has been married to Sandy for 21 years.
- Cut his teeth in management as news director of a medium-market radio station.
- Enjoys golfing with his 16-year-old son Jeff.
- Enjoys making snowmen with his 7-year-old daughter Elizabeth.
- Suffers with the rest of the Cubs fans every August and September.
- Roots for the Fighting Illini basketball team.
- Brings a sack lunch to school.
- Tunes in to CNN on his office television.

New Forensics Director Aims High

As the new director of forensics in the School of Communication, Susan Arnsdorf Schnase knows what she wants to do with the program.

“I hope to build the team into something UNO is known for,” she said. “I want high school students to come here and major in speech and to be on the forensics team.”

Schnase said she wants “to coach another national champion,” something she did at Creighton University, where she was assistant director of forensics and director of individual events.

Schnase received her B.A. from Hastings College and her M.A. from New Mexico State University. She was a graduate assistant at New Mexico State.

She has been active in Nebraska politics, working as the deputy state field director for U.S. Senator Bob Kerrey’s re-election campaign. She was also campaign manager for Omaha City Council candidate Kathy O’Connor and was field director for James Martin Davis’ bid for Congress.

In addition to her duties as UNO forensics director, Schnase also teaches public speaking fundamentals.

Forensics Finals on the Web

The UNO Forensics Team received its share of the hardware during the 2004 season. Melanie Rogers, Channa Rench, Marty Ertz and other forensics students received awards in tournaments around the region. See specific results on the School of Communication Web site. http://communication.unomaha.edu.
Awards Bountiful for Bingham, Other School Faculty

Awards to faculty in the UNO School of Communication are so plentiful, you'd think faculty would take them for granted. They don't.

"To join the group of excellent teachers who have received these awards over the years is truly an honor," said Dr. Shereen Bingham, this year's recipient of a 2004 Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award and the University Excellence in Teaching Award.

Bingham is one of several communication faculty who have been recognized for their teaching, research, and service. Bingham contributes to each area with enthusiasm and careful thought. "I hope to pass on to students the ability to see the world through multiple perspectives and to help them realize their own capacity to make informed decisions and solve problems in collaboration with others."

Bingham joined UNO in 1988 as an assistant professor. Since the beginning, her research has focused on sexual harassment. She has presented several studies on the topic during her 16 years at UNO. "My research on sexual harassment has been both challenging and rewarding. It has allowed me to examine the role of communication in producing, challenging, and changing an important social problem," she said. "I have studied individual, interpersonal, and institutional responses to sexual harassment and how these responses can perpetuate the problem and their potential to prevent and stop it."

Bingham encourages students to participate in the community by assigning service-learning projects in several of her courses. "The service-learning projects I have incorporated in my classes have been the most challenging, rewarding, and life-changing in my career," said Bingham. "When students leave the safety of the classroom and engage in community activities, their learning experience becomes more exciting, unpredictable, and therefore more stressful and potentially rewarding for both students and the clients."

In the future, Bingham plans to develop a graduate certificate in conflict mediation and coaching. She hopes that such a certificate will provide students with a specialization in theory and the practice of conflict resolution, conflict mediation, group facilitation, and conflict coaching.

She also has a dream to develop a conflict resolution center in the School of Communication. This center would be a place where students, faculty, and staff could get training in conflict resolution. "I believe this project has the potential to become the most rewarding endeavor in my career as an educator," Bingham said. "As Bingham looks to the future, she keeps the past close at hand. "The advice and encouragement I received from my professors in graduate school led to my decision to become a professor at UNO and thus shaped my life's path," she said. "The environment at UNO has given me opportunities to be continuously innovative as a teacher and researcher, and to apply my knowledge and abilities through community service."

-By Jennifer Mullins

Lines from Lipschultz Continued...

position as the Assistant Director of the School of Communication. Our Advisory Committee (Dr. Hollis Glasser, chair; Dr. Marshall Prisbells; Dr. Chris Allen; and Dr. David Ogden), along with Graduate Chair Dr. Michael Hilt, round out the leadership team this year.

On the research front, Professor Hugh Reilly, Dr. Bruce Johansen and Dr. Dwyer published new books. Dr. Johansen, named Kayser Professor earlier in the year, is having his book, "Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Issues," translated into Japanese. In other research news, Dr. Hilt and I have become co-editors of the online journal SMILE – Studies in Media & Information Literacy Education – published by the University of Toronto Press. Dr. Barb Pickering, Dr. Teresa Trumbly-Lamsam, and Dr. Ogden all had recent important publications.

Our graduate program continues to be very important. Nine M.A. students have competitively selected presentations at the National Communication Association conference in Chicago. Several faculty members also were on the program. Dr. Hilt reported recently that we have 84 graduate students enrolled in course work this semester. The School of Communication has more than 650 students overall, some of whom joined us recently for the annual Open House – an event planned by Professors Holly Miller and Paula Hazelrigg.

Our students and faculty express high enthusiasm for the potential of the new School of Communication, and we are optimistic about the prospect of creating a new School of Communication, Fine Arts and Media, which could happen as early as July 1, 2005. We believe the new college will expand opportunities for students. In these pages, and in future issues of CommUNO, you will learn more about our amazing students and alumni – we are very proud of their accomplishments.

UNO's strategic planning goals, which emphasize student focus, academic excellence and community engagement, guide our thinking. The UNO School of Communication continues to demonstrate through the high quality of its students and graduates, the exceptional teaching and research of our faculty, and the commitment of service in the community that we are among the elite of metropolitan comprehensive university programs in the nation.

Other Faculty Honors

Prof. Ana Cruz
- Inspiration Award - UNO Section of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc.
- Certificate of Appreciation - Latina/Latino Communication Studies Division and La Raza Caucus of the National Communication Assn.

Dr. Karen Dwyer
- 2004 State of Nebraska ASTD Championship Award for Distinguished Service to ASTD
- Selected to sponsor and host the National Communication Center's Annual Conference, April 2006.
- Presented "Presenting Effective Introductions Seminar" to the Nebraska Business Development Center Directors and Staff.

Dr. Bruce Johansen
- Frederick W. Kayser Chair 2004

Dr. Teresa Trumbly-Lamsam
- Project Achieve: Exemplary Service to Students Teaching Award 2004
- National Promising Professors Award, Third Place, AEJMC, 2004

Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz
- Robert T. Reilly Professorship 2004
- Distinguished Research/Creative Activity Award 2004.
PR Students Garner National Awards

The UNO chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America took first place honors in the 2004 national competition for university and community service.

Six members and recent graduates of the chapter, along with PRSSA adviser Karen Weber, accepted the $300 cash award and plaque during the awards dinner Oct. 25 at the National PRSSA Conference in New York City. The award, part of the Dr. H.H. Teahan National Chapter Awards Competition, recognizes the best execution of projects, campaigns and voluntary services that directly impact and benefit the community and university.

The UNO PRSSA chapter, under the sponsorship of the School of Communication, participated in service projects for juvenile diabetes, credit education, organ donor awareness and eating disorder awareness. Members also volunteered in the annual Race for the Cure and Toys for Tots campaigns.

In addition, the chapter accepted its first place $400 cash award in the National Organ Donor Awareness Competition at the PRSSA conference. The public relations campaign “It’s Good to Care—Better to Share” conducted last spring as part of a PR Campaigns class, created awareness on campus of the need to increase the number of organ donors and made sure donors inform family members of their decision to donate.

The class’ eating disorders awareness campaign received state honors. That campaign received a 2004 Paper Anvil Award from the Nebraska Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. The campaign also won “Best of Show” among all student entries in PRSA’s awards competition.

“The PRSSA awards demonstrate the excellence of our students and the effectiveness of our faculty. Quite simply, when it comes to a PR campaign, Professor Karen Weber has demonstrated that UNO students are second to none,” said Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, director of the School of Communication.

The chapter showed a slide presentation of its award winning campaigns at its November meeting at the Venice Inn.

Gateway Alumni Seek Former Staff

The Gateway Alumni Organization (formerly Gateway Alumni Group/GAG) is undergoing a reformation and is seeking former Gateway writers, photographers, editors and former students for membership and/or participation in the organization. The main objective is to support and promote student journalism.

Gateway Alumni Organization’s regular annual activities include judging the best newspaper category for UNO’s high school newspaper contest and providing all entrants with a detailed critique. The organization also selects and presents the Best of Gateway awards each spring.

In 2005, GAO will be resurrecting its annual scholarship. It is also creating a page linked to the Gateway Web site to keep alumni informed of GAO activities and serve as a contact point for former staff members who would like to find out what their former Gateway colleagues are up to. Organization members also explore opportunities to mentor student journalists.

GAO membership is open to former Gateway staff members from all eras, including individuals who did not ultimately graduate from UNO. If you would like to participate in one or more GAO activities, contribute to the scholarship fund or submit information for the “Where Are They Now?” alumni page, please e-mail GAO president Kara Schweiss at kschweiss@uno.edu for more information.

School Looking to Expand Speech Internships

Wanted: Companies and organizations that can use highly qualified communication students for a variety of tasks, from employee orientation to speech writing.

The School of Communication can supply the students, but it’s hoping that alumni or others can help to identify businesses, nonprofit groups, associations or any other organization that would offer internships for speech communication students.

Dr. Shereen Bingham, professor of communication, said the types of skills speech communication students would bring to an internship would qualify them to work in a variety of areas, including: personnel screening, employee orientation and training, developing speeches and presentations, sales, conducting research, customer service and assisting with political campaigns.

Dr. Karen Dwyer, another professor of communication, said that students from her Communication Training and Development classes are prepared to develop and assist in designing communication skills workshops.

“Many alumni enjoyed the learning benefits of internships while they were students here,” said Dr. Marshall Prisbell, professor in the School.

“Internships play a major role in our students’ academic experience. We are asking alumni’s help in furthering this experience by providing student internships through their companies or present employers.”

Deb Dice knows the benefits of working with interns. As manager of organizational development at First National Bank in Omaha, she offers students “hands-on” experiences and she thinks her company is better off for it. “It’s a win-win situation,” she said.

“Interns have helped me develop training programs that allowed me to administer a larger project at one time. I have seen an entire project completed in a much shorter time by the work interns contributed.”

Rikki Willerton, a UNO graduate student, said her internship as an undergraduate taught her skills she still uses today. As part of her internship, Willerton wrote technical manuals for Burlington Motor Carriers to help truckers understand the computer software in their tractor-trailers. She now writes manuals for administrative assistants as part of her job in training and development at C&A Industries, a staffing consulting company in Omaha.

“My internship has impacted every job I have had because of the skills I learned,” she said.

Bingham said organizations have the option of paying their interns, but financial compensation is not necessary. She said the most important things students can gain from their internships are experience and academic credit.

Alumni or anyone whose organization is interested in offering internship opportunities should contact Bingham, Prisbell or Dwyer at 402-554-2600.
continued from page 2...
Ad Club and Society of Professional Journalists in October to sponsor a pre-election forum, titled “Who Cares about Politics? Communicating to Young Voters.” A panel of broadcast and print journalists discussed ways to get young people interested in the voting process.
Panelists included: Amy Adams, WOWT assistant news director; Kim Bryant, UNO Gateway editor-in-chief; Henry Cordes, Omaha World-Herald political reporter; Ben Gray, KETV reporter/photographer and host of “Kaleidoscope”; Travis Justice, KM3 commentator and Z-92 radio commenta-
tor; Doug Parrott, vice president of public relations at Bailey Lauerman & Associates; and Ben Salazar, editor and publisher of Nuestro Mundo newspaper.
PRSSA members have also been busy creating care packages to send to American army soldiers stationed in Iraq.
The contents of the care packages were collected from the UNO student body via drop boxes around campus. PRSSA held a series of bake sales to raise money to mail the packages to Iraq.
Those who received the packages are members of a medical unit that cares for soldiers suffering from combat stress and fatigue. The unit is based out of Topeka, Kansas.

School Remembers Miriam Carter, Julie Cowdin, Jeff Frolio

Miriam "Mim" Carter
Miriam "Mim" Carter, wife of the late UNO graduate dean and communication professor emeritus Elton S. Carter, died Oct. 4.
A celebration of her life was held Dec. 20 at the UNO Alumni House on the occasion of what would have been her 87th birthday. The family requests that memorials be donated to the Alzheimer's Foundation or to the Elton S. Carter Master's Thesis Award, at the University of Nebraska Foundation, 8712 W. Dodge Rd., Ste 402, Omaha, NE 68114

Julie Cowdin
Julie Cowdin, the wife of long-time UNO Department of Communication chair and Professor Emeritus Hugh Cowdin, died in May of 2004.

Julie Cowdin held two bachelor's degrees (one of those in nursing) and a masters degree in counseling. She was a surgical nurse at Bergan Mercy for three years and left that hospital in 1980 to work for the Nebraska chapter of the American Cancer Society.
In 1981 she joined the staff of Richard Young Hospital as a mental health nurse. She spent the next 10 years there before accepting a position as a counselor in a private psychiatric clinic. She retired in 1992.
Hugh Cowdin said his wife's major interests were cooking, Native American art and gardening.
"As soon as April came around, she was in the garden constantly," he said.
The UNO School of Communication's scholarship honoring the Cowdins has been renamed the Hugh and Julie Cowdin Scholarship.

Jeff Frolio
A 1982 alumnus of the School of Communication died in June. Jeff Frolio, a 45-year-old photographer for KETV, Omaha, was killed when he was struck by a car while working on a story at a highway intersection where two Nebraska teens had been killed weeks earlier.
Frolio had been at KETV for 20 years. Before that he worked at KSFY-TV in Sioux Falls, S.D.
An educational fund for his three children has been established. Donations can be sent to the Frolio Family Educational Fund, Security National Bank, 142nd and Millard Ave., Omaha, NE, 68138.

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. Jeremy Lipschultz, 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. Lipschultz 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)? ____________________________

E-mail address: ____________________________

Brief update of what you have been doing since graduating from UNO.

__________________________

__________________________
Debate watch was not the only School of Communication activity funded by the American Democracy Project, a national program supported primarily by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Its goal is to encourage civic engagement among undergraduate students at campuses throughout the nation.

Another way in which the School fostered students' civic-mindedness was to involve them in coverage of the 2004 national and state elections. Broadcasting and journalism students provided election night coverage during an hour-long newscast aired live over Cox Cable's Knowledge Network. Students produced all aspects of the newscast, including live reports from the headquarters of candidates and of organizations that sponsored gambling initiatives.

"I can't think of enough superlatives to describe the students' performance and that night's experience," said Dr. Chris Allen, associate professor in the School of Communication. Allen's class, Advanced Broadcast Journalism, produced the newscast. "What our students produced that night," he said, "could have been aired on any commercial station."

Communication students also produced a newsblog (internet news log) election night to serve as a community forum for the discussion of the issues and the candidates. Teams of students from Dr. Teresa Lamsam's Public Affairs Reporting class, along with eight metro-area high school students, traveled throughout the Omaha area and Iowa connecting with community members as they engaged in the democratic process. Back in the "blogosphere" newsroom, faculty and student editors typed in the stories as reporters in the field called in on their cell phones. Their work can still be viewed on the following web link: http://avalon.unomaha.edu/wwwcomm/electionnight/bloggersite.html. The log received more than 300 hits by the day after the election. The students also provided election updates on the School's Web site, TheOmahaNews.com, which was managed by Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, director of the School of Communication, and journalism student Amy Csipkes.

The School of Communication also used ADP funds to hold pre-election and post-election fora. The pre-election forum was held in October and featured local broadcast and print journalists (see Student Organization News, PRSSA).

Participants in the post-election forum included faculty members Barb Pickering, Deborah Smith-Howell, Chris Allen and Hollis Glaser, along with faculty from the Political Science and the Black Studies departments. The forum focused on controversial issues in the election (such as the gay marriage amendments, and gambling), and other topics such as voter turnout, the role of the debates and campaign financing. The school is planning more ADP projects for the spring semester.

Visit us on the web
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