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THE TIMELESS TRIUMPH OF NOTEWORTHY NARRATIVES

EVERYONE has a story, and during my four years at UT, the most important thing I’ve learned is to WRITE YOUR OWN.

Even within the apparent microcosm of CCI, each student and faculty member has taken a unique path. The importance of diversity is one of the main tenets of every college within UT, and CCI’s students, faculty and alumni are living examples.

But CCI’s diversity resides in the spaces both inside and outside the Communications Building doors. Andrew Jones’ snapshot of CCI’s International Lunch illustrates our differences in the traditional sense, whereby the School of Information Sciences represents our remarkably rich global community.

Other articles in this issue exemplify the array of activities that pique people’s passions, from volunteer firefighting and caring for service dogs, to competitive paintball and rock climbing.

Yet we also strive to bring you news of topics and trends that unite us as communicators. In this issue, you’ll learn more about the recent must-have social media tool Pinterest, page 17, and how Apple brings lectures to laptops, page 14.

Scoop identifies itself as a magazine for the students, faculty, alumni and friends of UT’s College of Communication and Information, and with this range of audience, there’s no shortage of engaging topics. Come with us and explore this issue’s selection of noteworthy narratives about the people and ideas that make CCI truly diverse.

- Spencer Coates,
Editor-in-Chief, SCOOP

EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

Scoop magazine is produced for College of Communication and Information alumni, students, faculty and friends. It strives to keep its readers up to date with what’s happening around campus and at The University of Tennessee’s School of Journalism and Electronic Media, School of Advertising and Public Relations, School of Communication Studies and School of Information Sciences.

This is the reader’s magazine, a magazine that celebrates CCI students past and present. We spotlight the faculty and other numerous ventures of CCI, including campus media outlets and organizations.

In addition, Scoop keeps its eyes on media, always covering – and uncovering – the latest trends. We represent a college that is preparing students and alumni for a changing job market, and we will be there to explain how and why the world of communication is changing in an effort to best serve our readers.

More than anything, Scoop is exciting. Our mission motivates us, and we want our readers to be able to take the same pride in their work and the work of their colleagues.

This magazine also functions as an educational tool for JEM students interested in magazine journalism and it celebrates all the exciting changes within the publishing industry.

It’s an ideal time for a fresh outlook, and Scoop stands prepared to deliver all that and more.

COME SEE WHAT ELSE WE HAVE TO OFFER

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RIVR Media production assistant, ALICE MCLALLEN knows what to keep at hand. If your team produces a show like DIY’s “RUN MY RENOVATION,” you better be organized. And RIVR Media’s (JEM, 2011), who studied VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS, keeps all the necessities (and more) within reach.

story ad
“For each episode of DIY’s ‘Run My Renovation’ (RMR), we make several copies of the DVDs to give to the homeowners, companies that donate products and the networks. I’m sort of the RMR vault at RIVR.”

“We like to keep paint samples around because you never know when the interior designer is going to say, ‘Oh, I want the room to be stone white or arctic blue. Can you show me that?’”

“House Beautiful - I get these magazines once a month and usually pick out pictures of awesome furniture to bring to production meetings.”

“The pre-production list, or “pre-pro” list, is a backup of the things I need to do the month before we start filming. It has all my tasks, like booking flights and hotels and creating travel itineraries.”
Call him a man of many hats, quite literally, actually. School of Information Sciences Associate Professor Bharat Mehra teaches courses about public library management, and he researches diversity and intercultural communication. His office boasts a happy harmony of both worlds.

Global Vision, above: Mehra’s former colleague, Kendra Albright, gave him this map, which represents his intercultural and international research, his Indian origins and the potential impact of his work.

Mentorship Mementos, right: Cards from former students taped to his office walls remind Mehra of meaningful classroom connections.

Mini-Pearl Superstar, left: Seattle librarian Nancy Pearl branded herself by creating an action figure in her likeness to draw attention to the profession. “People are still unable to see the role that libraries play in their lives,” says Mehra. Pearl sought to correct that by bridging the gap between libraries and their users.
Peek-a-bag!

Colin Skinner (JEM 2012) tells the backstory of what’s in his backpack.

Click In
“The clicker is for attendance and answering questions for some journalism teachers.”

Hold the Sugar
“I try to reuse stuff. That was the coffee that I drank 45 minutes ago. I’m a big coffee drinker these days. Fresh or not, doesn’t matter. I have to stay focused.”

Mac Attack
“I used to hate on Mac. I was always a Windows guy, but I love Macs now. They’re very user-friendly and good for a journalism major like me.”

Anchors Aweigh
“That’s an HDV Tape. I’m more of a broadcast student. I anchor shows for TVC, and then I shoot for class. It’s Journalism 460, and we produce a show called ‘UT Today,’ which is on Sunday at noon on WBIR Channel 10. We run everything: production, anchor – I help anchor every show.”

Final Fantasy
“I’m done being advised. I have one semester left. I’ll be a four-and-a-half kid. I’ll be here next (fall) semester, and that’s the last DARS.”

Fancy Pack
“I love my backpack. I usually keep them for about six years. My last one finally just broke. This is probably my first nice backpack.”

Plugged In
“The headphones are for Pandora when I study. I appreciate jazz drummers. My grandfather’s a big fan of jazz, and he got me into it at a young age. So I have a couple of jazz stations that are strictly instrumental and don’t distract me with lyrics.”
For the last several months, you've undoubtedly noticed the latest trend in nail polish: crackle, shatter, mosaic. The two-toned, textured polish has been a must-have, but glitter, metallic and matte polishes are also trendy. No matter which you prefer, a polish exists for every style. According to UTK student and Merle Norman cosmetics beauty consultant, Katie Bilyeu, celebrity nail products (such as Justin Bieber’s One Less Lonely Girl collection for O.P.I and its more recent collection by Nicki Minaj) are also selling big. On top of that, Sephora introduced a polish that is bound to change the nail polish world as we know it: magnetic polish. This polish contains iron powder that reacts by forming a pattern when it comes in contact with the included magnetic nail polish cap, resulting in an edgy design unlike any other polish. Despite all the glamour, Bilyeu says, sometimes the biggest trends are in tandem with the most basic polishes.

“Gray is huge right now,” Bilyeu says.

And for those who cannot afford an expensive manicure, stick-on nail strips with every print and design imaginable, including cheetah, floral and lace prints, are available for around $8 at most major retailers. With those kinds of choices, there's almost no excuse for a naked nail.

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SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRITS

Bizarre LOVE boosts box office

Heather Rainey (JEM) explains her take on Hollywood’s recent approach to unconventional date movies saying, “We want to see a new and different form of love.” Sure, this take on teenage angst is a far cry from Cameron Crowe's “Say Anything” (1989), but the basic underlying theme is universal: Love is complex.

Two of the most recent blockbusters, both adapted from bestselling novels, are Twilight’s “New Moon,” written by Stephanie Meyer, starring Kristen Stewart, and young adult favorite, “The Hunger Games,” written by Suzanne Collins, starring Jennifer Lawrence. In the Twilight plot, Isabella Swan pursues the love of a vampire, while The Hunger Games’ Katniss Everdeen must pretend to love her competitor to survive a barbaric battle.

If such storylines seem too strange to be worth your while, consider yourself in the minority. Whether it’s about marrying a vampire or protesting an authoritarian government by defeating it at its own game, proof of the successful lure of bizarre and dangerous teenage love is in the box office numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEKEND BOX OFFICE RECORDS*</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WINTER</strong></td>
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<td>Passion of the Christ</td>
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<td><strong>HOLIDAY</strong></td>
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*Source: Mojoboxoffice.com
The hottest shot in the camera world?

In today’s tech-focused age, the DSLR camera reigns supreme. And little wonder. These days technology manufacturers are producing cameras that take exceptional pictures and record HD video comparable to studio-quality video cameras.

The two photography heavyweights, Canon and Nikon, churn out reasonably priced cameras that allow students to produce high quality work in their photojournalism classes as well as their videography classes. Cash-strapped students can pick up a DSLR camera for not much more then the price of a traditional point-and-shoot, giving them access to professional quality without the professional price.

From music videos to TV series, the DSLR makes headlines. The 2010 season finale of TV’s “House” was filmed using a Canon EOS 5D Mark 2 DSLR camera, and the recent film “Act of Valor” was produced on a $2,500 Canon 5D Mark 2, and it made roughly $24.7 million its first weekend in theatres. In these cases, one might say this camera choice proved a sound investment, indeed.

SIRI-OUSLY SIMPLE

Story by LUKE COTTAM

Side by side the iPhone 4 and iPhone 4S look more than similar, they look identical. In fact, after their home buttons are pressed and their screens flash to life, the iPhone 4S fails to immediately differentiate itself from the older model. Factor in the smart phone’s similar functionality and one may ask, what’s the difference?

In one word: Siri. Though the 4S has an upgraded camera and faster dual-core A5 chip, its biggest selling point is undeniably the ability to run Apple’s personal assistant voice recognition software Siri. As Apple.com articulates, “Siri understands what you say, knows what you mean and even talks back.” With voice commands, Siri allows iPhone 4S users to access apps, play music, send text messages and e-mails, set reminders and surf the Web.

In arguably characteristic Apple grandiosity, Siri aims to fundamentally change the way people interact with technology. But has it worked? Students from the University of Tennessee’s College of Communication and Information weigh in.

Robbie Hargett, senior minoring in journalism and electronic media, uses Siri “very, very rarely” and points out a preliminary problem facing all new technologies. Hargett says, “I don’t really use Siri much because I’m not used to having it, so I don’t think about it.”

In contrast, Brooke Smith (JEM), uses Siri to set alarms, find places and set reminders. Smith says Siri “is such a revolutionary tool and in these days of convenience, it is very useful.” Similarly, TJ Tooker (JEM) uses Siri upwards of 10 times daily and says it “makes simple tasks even easier.”

Of the 10 students from CCI asked about their Siri use, seven reported they think voice recognition software like Siri will become standard in all smartphones. So how about it; is Siri the wave of the future? CCI students seem to think so.
Tell us about your typical day.
It'd be easier for me to describe my week because it varies day to day, season to season and year to year. The dance team has workouts at 6:30 a.m. Last semester, I had classes two days a week and my internship the other three days. Dance practice is three hours long in the evening, three days a week.

Can you describe your game day routine?
During football season, we are doing something the entire day. We attend pep rallies and make other appearances. For basketball season, we have to be at the arena to practice two hours before tipoff. We only get to use the court for a few minutes to practice our new routines before the players need to use it. The school is a lot more excited as a whole for football games, but basketball is shorter and sweeter.

How has the national champion title affected you?
I was a freshman when we won the national championship, and that year was crazy. I was adjusting to college while trying to balance required study hours, school, social life and dance. It was definitely overwhelming. Now, I'm doing all those same things plus pursuing my career ambition to become a TV producer. I want the others to know that excitement and sense of accomplishment in the years to come. It's an amazing experience to know your hard work has paid off.

So is there an off-season in dance?
Not really, we host camps in the summer to raise money for scholarships and also have weeklong practices. In August, we put together a routine to send as an audition tape to our national competition. In September, football begins and lasts through much of December. In October, we begin our choreographed routine for nationals. The University Dance Association Dance Team Competition takes place in January, so much of winter break is spent practicing. Basketball season starts in November and lasts through part of March. We have a mini-break in March, and then we start clinics for upcoming tryouts. Then, it all starts over again.

Where do you fit in schoolwork?
I have it with me at all times, so if I have a few minutes of free time, I just pull my work out and do what I can. I have my day scheduled out in 15-minute increments, so when I have a 15-minute-or-more break, I get done what I can.

What’s been your job as a senior on the team?
There are three seniors on the team, and we all have an unofficial job. I’m kind of team manager. I pick a time and place for our practices. I pick out the uniforms and let the girls know which one we are wearing for each game. I’m responsible for ordering our nationals costumes. As a senior, you want to lead and want to go out with a bang.
NIGHT WRITER

From Daily Beacon sports desk to SPORTS ILLUSTRATED WEBSITE, this JEM (2011) alumni knows the score

by BETH MADRID

Most workdays, Zac Ellis wakes up at 10 a.m. Sound lazy? Think again. Ellis’ standard schedule has him starting his work in Atlanta as an associate producer for SI.com at 6 p.m. and lasts until 2 a.m...And sometimes even longer (think late-night NBA games).

Despite his success in the field of journalism, Ellis has not let it go to his head. "I constantly remind myself how extremely fortunate I am to have found a job only two months after graduation," Ellis says. "I am lucky to be as stable as I am with a great company and publication in such a competitive field."

6:00 p.m.: "We wait for our emails for what we call shift notes, from people in New York, and they basically just tell us what they did on certain pages, what they want done. And well, I read those notes and do what they want."

7:30 p.m.: Ellis spends his early hours sifting through content to go on the site while he waits for the original content to filter in. "I saw an AP story come through about Pro Day," says Ellis. "I thought well, we have this AP story here first, but we want to have our original content on there as much as possible, but we didn’t have our top story, yet I took that story, and I worked it up into a template. I worked all that up and got it in the story, just for the time being.”

8:00 p.m.: Ellis says that as hours go by he spends some time watching games and building packages for the stories that he is waiting for. "You want to put stuff on the site for the stories coming in later, then you start to think of related content to put there so you can have a bigger package.”

9:00 p.m.: "Around 8:30, games start wrapping up and some of the NBA guys will email me and tell me, ‘Ok we’ve finished these highlights, here’s a link to it.’ So I’ll put that on the page,” says Ellis, who then uses the links as part of the packages for stories on the website.

10:00 p.m.: “I emailed the person that was following Pro Day,” says Ellis. It is around this time of night that he begins sending emails and hunting down stories that need to be put onto the site as soon as possible. Also at this time, Ellis starts to juggle stories from slide to slide, deciding which stories are most important. This process of juggling and working stories into SI.com worthy templates takes several hours.

12:00 p.m.: “So, the guy that filed the NBA [story] came in, and I got him worked up and put it onto the site,” says Ellis. And at the same time, Ellis received an email from the NBA guys again with more highlights that he could add to the website.

1:00 a.m.: “At that point, I knew I had everything that I was going to be getting in and that’s the point you try to wrap up and get everything put on the pages, based on the shift notes of the producers in New York,” says Ellis. Ellis rounds out his work day with maintenance of the site and writing notes for the producers in New York City, so that they can continue where he and the other night shift employees left off.

photo courtesy of Zac Ellis
It's been 11 years since Apple introduced iTunes, an application credited with single-handedly revolutionizing the music industry. Five years later, the tech giant spawned iTunes U, the educational branch of iTunes. Some recent updates to iTunes U show that Apple is hoping to bring the same streamlined digital facelift to education.

How did a music-centered program like iTunes become affiliated with education? Before Apple's co-founder and chairman Steve Jobs died in October, he said he “hoped to bring sweeping changes to higher education.” His goal to end students' aching backs caused by heavy book bags was met through the production of the iPad and iBooks 2, and now, the creation of iTunes U has further transformed learning into a modernized, technology-based process.

Accessed through the iTunes store, iTunes U provides university, collegiate and K-12 educators with the opportunity to create courses featuring lectures, videos, books, presentations and notes for their students' learning pleasure. According to the manager of UT's iTunes U site, Donna Carnduff, UT wasted no time utilizing the program. “Apple announced iTunes U in 2007, and UTK entered into an agreement with Apple that year and began to develop a UTK-branded iTunes U site, which was launched in 2008.”

The original iTunes U only partially satisfied Jobs' desires. However, Apple's announcement on Jan. 19 of a new iTunes U application offers the first glimpse of Jobs' educational vision. Instead of navigating through the iTunes store, all iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch users can now purchase the iTunes U app for free through the App Store. The app presents iTunes U courses in a more organized fashion and has a list of new features including interactive elements and streamed lectures.

Presently, Apple has only provided select schools with early access to the app including Yale, Duke, MIT, The Open University and HACC. UT has not been granted permission to post courses through the new app, but Carnduff says iTunes U is simple to navigate because professors can request a collection through Blackboard within their Online@UT courses. After getting an iTunes U collection, professors are able to upload a variety of material including recorded class lectures, guest speaker lectures, videos, links to videos from other universities, podcasts and assignments.

The program is becoming increasingly popular at UT, as 37 iTunes U collections were added for the spring 2012 semester. Carnduff cites this adoption as a result of instructors talking to one another about iTunes U, as well as student demand. “We are finding that instructors are requesting iTunes U collections because their students are asking for recorded lectures, and iTunes U makes for easy storage and distribution of this content,” says Carnduff.

So which collections top UT's popularity list? Seven of the “Top 10 Collections” come from Professor Matt Gray of the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries. In fact, the top five collections belong to Gray with topics including “UT Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries,” “Amphibian Ecology and Conservation,” “Wetlands Ecology and Management,” “Advance Wetland Ecology,” and the “2011 International Ranavirus Symposium.” The other three collections in the top 10 fall under the music category. One collection, for example, provides podcast versions of original interviews conducted on Knoxville radio station WUOT.

Although the university’s iTunes U site was private for the first three years, a public site was added in April 2011. “Content posted to the public site is available to the general public,” explains Carnduff. “Anyone with an Internet connection and iTunes installed on their machine can listen and/or download podcasts stored here. Content on the private site is restricted to students, instructors and staff with a valid UT NetID and password or restricted to those students enrolled in a specific course, depending upon the request of the instructor.” As of January, 193 professors were associated with UT’s private site, and nearly half that number used the school’s public site.

But perhaps the biggest asset to iTunes U subscribers is the podcasts, which Carnduff describes as “a convenient, subscription-based model for distributing course content.” One of the biggest disadvantages is that iTunes U only accepts limited formats when professors upload audio and video files.

Hopefully, Apple will invite UT to join the new iTunes U app in the near future. Or maybe it's a good thing, as the class attendance rate might plummet if students start watching their professors through live streaming in their bedrooms instead of actually attending class. Hey, learning is learning. At least that's what Steve Jobs would say.
TEXT APPEAL

Can Apple’s DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS lighten your backpack AND wallet?

story by ERIC MEEWES

There’s no arguing with the benefits of getting technology into the hands of children early in life to get them adept with new devices. Apple iBooks 2 textbooks provide visually stunning ‘print’ as well as interactive pictures, video and 3D models to learn from and view. The application can also create study cards based on user-highlighted text and notes marked within the book.

Another welcome feature is that these textbooks are digital and can be updated and changed at any time. Print books would require a reinvestment that most school districts cannot make with their shrinking budgets.

E-books are not a new technology, but these do have the typical polished Apple platform. A more favorable possibility for schools is open-source textbooks. These are unlike websites such as Wikipedia where anyone can update and edit content. The books are always edited by paid experts and peer-reviewed. The only difference is the far from strict licensing that allows for copying and ease of use for districts with tighter budgets.

Many laud the advent of Apple iBook textbooks as a way for students to excel and become comfortable with the technology that is flooding the marketplace. However, to understand whether or not this development is good, all grades and socioeconomic settings must be taken into account. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the current national average a college student spends on textbooks per year is $700 to $1,100. If textbooks for university courses become available, then the $14.95 price tag will be more than welcome.

Where the technology gets tricky is with the school districts handling K-12 students that can currently pass down print books from year to year. With iBooks 2 textbooks, each is linked to a specific iTunes account. Essentially, the school district is paying $14.95 per student per year to never truly own each textbook.

Break it down like this, though: a school district buys 1000 licenses for Apple textbooks for $14.95 every year for 10 years. That’s $149,500, while a similar program purchasing 1000 books for $100 every five years would cost $200,000 in the same decade.

This looks like a $50,000 savings over that period of time. However, the true cost comes with purchasing the iPads themselves, currently running around $400 per device. That rockets the cost up to $400,000 just for 1,000 iPads for the school. Ultimately, this could prove to be too much for the average district, especially when it comes down to replacing iPads.

There are two main motivations Apple may be adhering to with this iBook textbook development. The first, and more noble, is to increase the knowledge of students around the country by providing a favorable method of learning that promotes interactivity. The second, and more business-centered, is that Apple is trying to both increase iPad sales as well as connect with new customers as early in life as possible. Unfortunately, the second has growing support and evidence to prove it.

A recent debate on the benefits of digital textbooks has also highlighted some technological disparities between school districts in the United States. A school like the up and coming Knoxville Charter Academy (KCA) may be able to utilize this technology. The school focuses on science, technology, engineering and math promotes the opportunity to push kids to technological advancement. Also, by state law, the school must provide something that students wouldn’t normally receive with a traditional education. If the school does not live up to the standards determined by the county, the charter will be revoked. Schools such as KCA would be able to adopt a new Apple iBooks 2 textbook system before others because of its financial support and small enrollment.

Apple is also coming under heavy scrutiny by a much bigger force, the U.S. Department of Justice. Apple is accused, along with Macmillan, Penguin, HarperCollins, Simon & Schuster and Hachette, of colluding to raise the price of e-books. According to the Washington Post, the eyebrow raiser came in 2010 when e-book prices rose by $2 to $3 per book in a span of a few days.

What this means for Apple iBooks 2 textbooks is a growing dissent over the sales model with customers. An already near-unaffordable textbook situation has become worse now that Apple has been accused of driving prices even higher. School systems would be better off waiting for cheaper options, using open-source content or sticking to print versions of textbooks until tablets drop in price.
20 SECONDS. That’s three blinks and a good yawn before the average user makes the decision to stay on a webpage or forever toss it back to the digital seas. This means web designers, marketing teams and companies across the digital board must do everything in their power to perfect their product’s content delivery. But what makes this task more daunting is the ever-expanding list of ways to do it.

Behold the College of Communication and Information’s User Experience Lab, a facility nestled in room 230 of the Communications Building, helping communicators understand and better tailor the options. The lab, in its most basic form, combines psychology and technology to study how people use the Web. Both CCI faculty and doctoral students are invited and encouraged to use the lab for research purposes.

The UT-ORNL User Experience Lab is divided into four rooms: a waiting area, two participant rooms and an observation room with one-way mirrors. The two participant rooms contain computers with dual-screen monitors that utilize Morae, a three-application software that records, logs, analyzes and outputs data based on the subject’s time using the computer. The room’s newest addition, installed in 2011, is a piece of hardware called an eye-tracker, a device that follows eye movements, making it possible to pinpoint exactly where a user is looking.

The lab, like technology itself, has been a work-in-progress for more than 10 years. Carol Tenopir, Chancellor’s Professor and director of the Center for Information and Communication Studies (CICS), recalls 2002, when the lab was just a one-person room built with money from a National Science Foundation grant.

At that time, Tenopir, Professor Peiling Wang (IS) and now-retired Associate Professor Richard Pollard (IS) studied undergraduate science students’ use of electronic journal systems. “One of the questions was at what point do undergraduate students begin to understand the content of scholarly journal articles in sciences,” says Tenopir.

In 2009, CCI collaborated with Oak Ridge National Labs (ORNL) to build the current lab and add new hardware with funds from ORNL, the college and an NSF grant. “We’ve done some work to get our team of doctoral students feeling comfortable with running studies,” she says. “We’ve also done some studies for some outside groups – like the Tennessee Electronic Library.”

Currently, an NSF grant has several Information Science faculty members working on Data Observation Network for Earth, or Data-ONE; a project that, according to its website, “meets the needs of science and society for open, persistent, robust and secure access to well-described and easily discovered Earth observational data.”

“We are about to do the third round of usability tests for the Data-One public website,” says Tenopir. “We’ve done two rounds, and they completely redid the website based on that. So we’re going to do another round for the new site, which just became live this week. A lot of this equipment now is there because of the DataOne project, so it always take precedence.”

In addition, Communication Studies is in the midst of completing a message effects lab that is also be on the second floor. This lab has galvanic response hardware and software, capable of detecting heightened stress. “We could use that to see how you react to certain content,” says Tenopir. The combination of both research labs and equipment will allow a wider range of testing, including those involving group interaction and public speaking.

Now if only a mechanism could explain why we spend hours watching talking animal videos on YouTube, we’d all sleep soundly.
THE
PIN
CROWD

What does an ALEXANDER MCQUEEN gown, 10 new uses for a strainer and a CHOCOLATE LABRADOODLE have in common?

Their images can be found on PINTEREST, this year’s buzzed-about social media tool story by CANDICE GRAHAM

The two-year-old website, attracting nearly 1.5 million users per day, is a virtual pinboard that takes the old idea of clipping inspiring images from magazines and tacking them to a corkboard and transforms it into Web 2.0. Pinterest, currently invite-only, allows you to “follow” your friends’ boards, which may contain anything from knock-off Chick-Fil-A nugget recipes to dream vacation destinations. And while Pinterest is technically a social media site, according to a February 2012 article by MediaShift blogger Courtney Cowgill, it has distinct differences that set it apart. “Pinterest is not about chatting or finding out about what anyone is up to or what they look like or what they think about politics or current events. It’s a step back from all that. It’s personal, and yet, somewhat anonymous,” she wrote.

But what does all this mean for the creative industry, which is the source of so many of the images that are pinned and repinned, shared and linked to, on Pinterest? Since May 2011, Pinterest has had a 2,702.2 percent increase in unique visitors, and, according to a February 2012 Mashable article by Lauren Indvik, it’s becoming a top traffic driver for women’s magazines. In fact, Pinterest drives more referrals to a magazine’s website than social media tools Facebook, Twitter and Google+. Online traffic increases have been a great thing for magazines; however, the question of whether Pinterest referrals will turn into magazine subscribers is still debatable. It seems that many Pinterest users, for now at least, are content to casually browse, not buy.

Emily Sledge (ADV/PR, 2012) has 1,105 pins on her 13 pinboards and more than 200 followers. “I love that Pinterest is almost like an online file cabinet,” she says. “All of these ideas that I love are in one place, and you can keep up with them so easily.”

If Pinterest sounds less than edgy, consider that factor a draw for many. On Pinterest’s “Pin Etiquette,” developed to keep the community positive, the number one rule is “Be Nice.” It explains, “We know that tastes are personal, but be respectful in your comments and conversations.” This focus on kindness and cookie-cutter values has led Pinterest to be the chosen social media site of the devoutly religious and conservative.

But perhaps the most intriguing thing about Pinterest is its ability to bring so many unique visitors and users to one place. From celebrities like Reese Witherspoon, who sang Pinterest’s praises on the Chelsea Lately show, to stay-at-home moms, college students, magazine editors and almost everyone in between, Pinterest is a uniting force. Even the demographic landscape is starting to evolve as more males are beginning to sign up and participate.

One such male is Daniel Hunley, a social media coordinator for Powell Creative: Branding, Design & Interactive in Nashville, Tenn. Hunley says Pinterest is an exciting source of traffic for a lot of the more traditional publishing institutions like magazines. “Say you’re Southern Living Magazine and you post a recipe – your content, this recipe, is no longer bound to the pages of your magazine. It can spread like wildfire through sharing. If a pinner wants the entire recipe, they simply click the picture and it will take them back to Southern Living’s website,” he says. And Hunley knows Pinterest – he ranks among the top ten followed Pinterest users and is frequently recommended to new users by the site itself. Hunley currently has... brace yourself... 1,170,737 followers and counting. “The easiest way to understand it is to think about each pin as being a link back to my page. If I post something, I can expect at least 100 people to repin it, but sometimes I can get as many as 5,000 repins. That’s 5,000 links being placed in front of those 5,000 followers’ friends – just from one pin,” he says.
Nothing motivates Jamie Bernal (JEM, 2012) more than the intensity of an emergency. The Atlanta native had this self-realization five years ago in his hometown, when he witnessed city firefighters quench a blaze that started during Bernal’s routine lifeguarding shift at Six Flags White Water. He cites the episode as a personal turning point. “I like being part of the intensity that is associated with an emergency, and I enjoy helping the public very much,” says Bernal, now a volunteer with the Seymour Volunteer Fire Department, located about 20 minutes southeast of Knoxville.

Bernal says his volunteer spirit took form in 2009 when he typed “volunteer fire departments in Tennessee” into Google’s search engine, and began going down the results list. He had never even heard of Seymour, Tenn., but by October 2009, Bernal was training with the town’s department. In April 2010, he was voted in as a probationary member, a status he maintains today since he does not live in Seymour year-round. This status, however, doesn’t affect his participation, as he still runs calls and fully participates in all member duties.

“When I began training and got voted in, I was dedicated to the department because the fire service was a new thing to me, and I could not get enough,” says Bernal. “I met great people. I learned tons of information. I wanted to help make an impact on a small, close-knit community, and I wanted to prove to myself that I could do this. Toward the end of my first year, I stayed committed to the department because I began to consider this a profession. I wanted to learn and reinforce skills that would make me an asset for a career department.”

But Bernal also cites personal payoffs of the learning process, such as helping members of the community when they are in need, visiting with the community through fundraising events and spending time educating children about safety and health.

While the always-on-call demands of his gig can be problematic for an undergraduate’s class scheduling, Bernal’s commitment remained unwavering. Though he loves the work, Bernal says it can be tough to balance the volunteer service with a full schedule at school. “I would like to spend more time up at the station and participating, but school gets jealous easily and always throws something at me to command more of my time.”

As for Bernal’s life post-graduation - stay tuned. He hopes to use his journalism degree as a public information officer at a mid- to large-sized fire department. In the meantime, he is currently going through the process to become a training technician for the fire department in Gwinnett County, Ga. His backup plan? Attend Walters State Community College to begin the Emergency Medical Technician program and make himself more marketable to fire departments. Fighting fires and serving others is what drives Bernal, and he can’t envision a life without it.

For this 2012 CCI graduate, STUDYING while listening to his EMERGENCY SCANNER is the norm

story by STEPHANIE DIXON

photo by BEN OZBURN
When Vol fans boast of UTK national title victories, they usually cite football glory days and the program that Pat built. What’s likely left out of the undoubtedly colorful conversation is the club team UT Paintvols, a member of the National Collegiate Paintball Association (NCPA) and the 2011 national champion.

Yet, like all Vol athletes, team-members come from all majors, and CCT’s contribution is Ben Devault (JEM, 2012), who joined the team his freshman year. “I don’t think there are many people that can say they are a national champion in any sport,” says Devault. “It felt great to go out on top, and it felt great to go out on top with my friends.”

College club teams might be considered a labor of love, as they require discipline and drive but receive limited funding for equipment and travel. In addition to regularly scheduled practices, the PaintVols compete against other southeastern schools such as Virginia Tech, Liberty University and Kennesaw State University. But these outings are mere preparation for the main tournament at the end of the season.

Last year’s title match pitted Tennessee against California State Long Beach, the same team who beat them in the semi-finals the previous year. But this time around, Tennessee came back from a 4-1 deficit, edging out Cal-State 5-4. Devault says the victory “meant a lot to be able to go out there and represent Tennessee and able to wear the checkerboard on my jersey.”
THE NOBLE CREATURES OF H.A.B.I.T.

CCI staffers works to improve elementary-level READING SCORES with help from their SERVICE DOGS

story by MOLLY HORNBUCKLE

An 8-year-old boy stumbles over his words while reading aloud in his class. His frustration rises and, just as he is about to give up, he glances at the friendly face with sincere eyes sitting next to him. The boy takes a breath, then finishes reading the story without making a mistake. His furry encourager, Boudreaux, part Tibetan terrier, part mutt, gets a hug and a treat from the boy, then readies himself for the ride home from his owner, Donna Silvey, communications specialist for the School of Information Sciences and the College of Communication and Information.

Such interactions are now normal for 7-year-old Boudreaux, an active member of the Ruff Reading program offered by Human-Animal Bond in Tennessee, a community of volunteers organized by the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. For Boudreaux to qualify for the reading program, he had to be in the top 10 percent of dogs being tested for composure.
Silvey says Boudreaux treated his assessment at the Veterinary Medical Center as a social call, and during his test, students walking by would stop in and ask to pet him. “Boudreaux interacted with everyone. Male, female, black, white, tall, short, he didn’t care,” says Silvey, as she gives Boudreaux a pat on the head. Indeed, Carol Stone, his evaluator, observed as the dog interacted with every person who stopped in. “After his test, the assessor told me Boudreaux could qualify for any of the jobs.”

Part of Boudreaux’s job responsibilities includes sitting and watching a student read aloud in the classroom. Silvey notes a strong sense of motivation from the students who read to Boudreaux. “It’s amazing how much of a leap students make from one time to the next. I’ll ask them if they’ve been practicing and, more often than not, they say they have so they can ‘get good for Boudreaux.’”

But Boudreaux isn’t the only service dog in town, or even in the building. Beth Cole, administrative specialist for CCI Dean Mike Wirth, owns a 7-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi named Oreo who is also a member of the H.A.B.I.T. program.

Oreo was born and raised in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University as a test subject for a potential treatment for progressive retinal atrophy. He spent the first year of his life at MSU, where he eventually lost his vision to the disease. Two years ago, Cole saw Oreo’s listing on the Cardigan Welsh Corgi Rescue Organization’s website, and soon her home became his.

Oreo is the first blind dog in the H.A.B.I.T. Ruff Reading program, making his inclusion a learning process for all. Cole thinks the children are touched by Oreo’s courage, and she has yet to see anyone with a negative reaction to his blindness. “I don’t want to make them think he’s in pain, because he isn’t,” says Cole. “It really does throw you, though. Since you can’t make eye contact with him, you have to learn to communicate through other means.”

While H.A.B.I.T. tends to choose the more energetic dogs for working with nursing homes and hospitals, the more laid back canines like Boudreaux and Oreo become listeners. But for all the participants in this program, each interaction between dog and sometimes-fragile human end with the same loving hug.

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Left: Boudreaux and Silvey with a young reader. 
Below: Oreo displays his volunteer spirit.
On any typical weekday last spring semester, Sara Jung (JEM, 2012) clipped her climbing shoes and chalk bag to her backpack, hopped on her purple road bike and rode to Circle Park for class. When she got there she locked her bike up, strolled into the curved lobby and commenced the grind of a 19 hour schedule with six JEM classes, her climbing gear bobbing along on the side of her backpack.

Most days, as the sun faded over Circle Park, she’d hop back on her bike and pedal down Volunteer Boulevard toward the Health and Physical Education Building with one thing on her mind: rock climbing. With a smile, Jung would swipe her ID at the Vol Wall front desk, slide her climbing shoes on, chalk her hands, and assume her role as one of the most familiar faces among UT’s climbing community. With a rope at her waist, and plastic holds at her fingertips, Jung appears to be in her element.

“For me, climbing is more than just a physical activity to stay in shape; it’s become more of a lifestyle,” Jung says with visible excitement. And still, in the midst of the highest point in her day, she unthreads herself from the rope, steps away from the crash pads and stairs up beyond the walls.

For a brief moment, Jung’s mind wanders along a familiar dirt trail, down some rough stone steps to the base of a rock face in the middle of the woods. At the heart of Jung’s infatuation with climbing is a deep love of the outdoors. “Every time we’re climbing indoors we talk about climbing outside. Every time I see her, we talk about climbing outside,” says Kenzie Wells, studio art sophomore and avid climber.

For Jung, Wells and many others, UT’s climbing gym serves a dual role. On the surface it’s a means to make muscle, or as Jung puts it a “tool for getting stronger.” On the other hand it is cold and pulseless; an inadequate representation of a sport irrevocably tied to nature. As Kevin Soleil, graduate student in recreation and sports management, and Vol Wall employee articulates, “climbing in the gym has merit on its own for sure, but what it lacks is the peaceful outdoor experience of climbing real rock, with moss and poison ivy and bugs and wind and a stream next to you, and all the other cool things that come with a natural venue.”

For Jung, as well as Knoxville’s climbing community, indoor climbing is a window through which one gazes at the visceral spectacle of outdoor climbing. Jung labors at this placid portal each day, waiting for the battery of classes to subside and give way to the weekend. And when it does, the woods are waiting.

“Sara just looks like she belongs outdoors, she’s really tan, and she always looks like she just came in from being outside.” says Wells. Whether Jung’s glow is a byproduct of weekends drenched in sunshine or an inner fire, one thing is for sure, under that chalk-dusted demeanor, Jung’s passion emanates from a place of purity. “It really is like tapping into that 5-year-old kid again and going like, ‘oh, I just want to climb rocks’ and I do and it’s awesome. It’s just where I feel most free.”

Jung’s Favorite Climbing Spots

Obed Wild and Scenic River (Cumberland County, Tenn.): http://www.nps.gov/obed/planyourvisit/rockclimbing.htm

Red River Gorge (Powell County, Ky.): http://www.redrivergorge.com/climbing.html

New River Gorge (Fayette County, W. Va.): http://www.nps.gov/neri/index.htm
Courting Success

She’s been an ESPN intern, ESPNU reporter, UT ATHLETICS production assistant and THE PAT SUMMITT SHOW PRODUCER.

Yet for COURTNEY LYLE (JEM, 2012)

it’s only just begun.

story by KELLY FOX

“I’ve always been a University of Tennessee fan. I grew up wearing orange,” says Courtney Lyle (JEM, 2012), her back straight and her voice and tone are steady but comfortable, showcasing her years of experience in broadcasting. “It was hard to choose another school when my loyalty was to this team.”

For those who know Lyle, they have no trouble throwing around the “over-achiever” term to describe her. However, she just modestly giggles shrugging off the compliment. But it is well-deserved: She has been an ESPN intern twice, an ESPNU College Sports reporter and is currently a student assistant for the UT Athletics Broadcasting department, the producer of The Pat Summitt Show and the network host of the Lady Vols radio broadcast.

Lyle spent the summers of 2010 and 2011 in Bristol, Conn. at ESPN headquarters, surrounded by athletes like Detroit Lion’s Ndamukong Suh and broadcasting heavyweights like Erin Andrews. In June 2010, she was an assistant producer of the 19th FIFA World Cup. "ESPN sent about 300 employees to South Africa to cover the World Cup. Then there were some of us in Bristol making feed requests to make sure the World Cup prime time show came down and was put together correctly," says Lyle, who came to love watching soccer, a sport she played when she was young.

After Lyle finished her World Cup duties, she became the production assistant for X Center, ESPN’s version of Sports Center for the Summer X Games. During her second summer with the network, Lyle worked in Los Angeles for a week to produce on-site footage of the 2011 Summer X Games. “I got to be there when Shaun White won the gold medal in Skateboard Vert, and I interviewed some athletes that actually made it onto X Center. It was just a great experience,” says Lyle.

Aside from Lyle’s 2011 trip west, the Tenn. native’s feet were firmly planted in Bristol, generating Major League Baseball coverage for ESPN. Her duties included pulling footage from every MLB team for recaps, ensuring the crews had everything needed to cover Monday, Wednesday and Sunday night baseball games. Lyle says she wasn't initially a baseball fan and admits her knowledge of the game fell short of her knowledge of football and basketball. “After having the opportunity to see the Boston Red Sox play the New York Yankees at Fenway Park, that kind of tradition can change your mind,” says Lyle, spoken like a true sports fan. “Passionate fans change my perspective.”

Lyle’s own passion for sports began at a young age and until eighth grade, her ambition was to become a Lady Vols basketball player. Those plans took a different turn after she started classes at Brentwood High School, in her hometown of Brentwood, Tenn., and she was introduced to what became her new passion - broadcasting. “It was unreal. As a freshman in high school, he would give us a camera and say, ‘Go out and shoot something,’ ” Lyle says of her high school broadcast station and teacher, Mark Madison. “Then we’d come back and he’d tell us what was wrong with it.”

Lyle worked as a student broadcaster for all home football games for two years before getting a promotion that changed everything. “Senior year I got to direct the broadcast of the football games, and that’s what really got me hooked,” says Lyle.

Only two years after that football season, Lyle was learning about the majors – ESPN. For most sports journalism majors, the opportunity to intern with the biggest name in sports broadcasting, ESPN, would be both a dream come true and a highly unlikely
reality. “I knew I wasn't going to get it,” Lyle says about her pursuit of an ESPN internship. However, after three phone calls, the first two that confirmed initial pessimism, the third was a ray of light, asking her for a phone interview. “They asked me to pick my favorite ESPN show, and I said Sportscenter. Then, they asked me what was wrong with it. My initial inner response was ‘nothing!’” After she spat out a spiel that is only a blur now, Lyle was offered the internship in Bristol. “It’s very intimidating because you’re on the phone with ESPN. It’s very surreal.”

In addition to Lyle’s ESPN internship, she also worked twice for ESPNU Campus Connection, in which ESPNU comes to each SEC college for an annual broadcast. Lyle took on the role of student sideline reporter at the Tennessee versus Louisiana State University softball game in May 2010 and as a student field reporter in 2011. “At ESPN, everyone has a passion for what they do, and they want to have the best product possible. When you go into that environment, you can’t help but work hard. And when you’re around hardworking people, you get close to them,” as she reflected on her time at ESPN.

Lyle continued her post-ESPN enthusiasm and drive with UT sports. “With Courtney, no detail is left undone and she always strives for excellence. It’s a credit to her that she has embraced the entire video production field because it makes her an excellent storyteller and reporter,” says Link Hudson, her boss and mentor at UT Athletic Broadcasting.

Serving as a student assistant for the UT Athletics Broadcasting department, she produced The Pat Summitt Show - focusing on the Lady Vols basketball team. She rarely missed a practice, and devoted her time to producing content for the show and previews for each game. “Sports broadcasting is not just about sports,” says Lyle of her future career. “Sports broadcasting is telling the story behind the game. Telling fans things they don’t know.”

“People think it’s an easy business to come into, that you walk into ESPN and they’ll put you on TV. But no, they pull you from a local market. So you go spend three years in Augusta, Mt. then you move on,” she says, commenting on the fear and stress of entering a tough job market. Lyle shares that being a female in “a man’s world” is going to be nothing but beneficial to her, because there is a special place for women in sports. “My plan is to go to a local, small market and learn all that I can to move my way up until I have the skills a network is looking for,” she says, confident of a bright future.

“Sports broadcasting is not just about sports. Sports broadcasting is telling the story behind the game. Telling fans things they don’t know,” says Lyle.
SMALL TOWN SNAPSHOT:

Eyes on LaFollette

Next year, that is, 2013, marks two decades that Professor Rob Heller’s advanced photojournalism class takes its annual trip 40 miles north of Knoxville, to LaFollette, Tenn. The group photographs the 7,500-person town for two days, then returns to Knoxville for one week of editing photographs and captions that are published in the LaFollette press the following week.

Although there is consistency in this assignment - photographically capturing the daily lives and settings of this area - the students’ creative output is anything but static. In a place where Southern hospitality reigns and beautiful countryside is everywhere, each year’s visit to LaFollette is truly unique.

We bring you a sampling of last spring’s colorful bounty.

story by BEN OZBURN

photo by GREY KEITH
right: A student has an up-close and personal experiences with the local buffalo herd. Photo by AJ HALL

below: Marilyn Bowman stocks supplies at Ace Hardware, one of the town’s oldest businesses. Photo by LAUREN LOY

above: Hunter Goins learns a “cowboy rhythm” from Eric Burrell at Burrell’s Music. Photo by JUSTIN CIPRIANI

left: Jon Griffith sells his canned goods at the flea market. Photo by STEPHANIE DIXON
above: Photojournalism classmates photograph together at a local art studio. Photo by JJ BAUTISTA

left: A local barber takes a convenient seat. Photo by AMY BOSHERS

below center: Photojournalism students take in the view during their trip to LaFollette. Photo by GREY KEITH

below: Matt Mitchell and his dog Jo en route to feed the cows at his family farm early in the morning. Photo by BEN OZBURN
left: Chuck Jacobs spends his afternoons entertaining listeners during his show on 104.9 WTNQ-FM. Photo by AMY BOSHERS

below top: Flourine Brown sets up her roadside thrift store. Photo by TAYLOR SMITH

below bottom: Bryson Kimbell and his mom, Crystal Kimbell, walk along the bridge at Cove Lake State Park. Photo by JENNIFER SMITH
The black screen of a long-broken computer reflects shelves of deteriorating books with titles bearing little resemblance to classics like “Huckleberry Finn,” “Little Women,” or even current favorite, “Twilight.” If you find a working computer to try an Internet search on the books, you’ll come up empty handed too – those kind of searches are blocked. Yet, such a scenario would not be uncommon for someone using a Cuban public library, as IS Professor and Director Ed Cortez recently experienced. Cortez was among a delegation of librarians and library and information science educators, who recently visited a variety of Havana libraries and became familiar with the culture, history and outlook of this island nation, while learning about its uniquely difficult position.

“This was a goodwill mission in that we wanted to primarily do an exchange of ideas. We wanted to learn about their challenges, how they train their librarians and how they approach and maintain the collections in their libraries,” he says. The visitors’ goal was to collect facts about the state of libraries in the country, and while this seems like a typical educational endeavor, the team was presented with interesting challenges.

As a result of the U.S. embargo with Cuba, it’s a rare occurrence for Americans to be allowed to visit. “We were told we were the first American librarians to have ever visited any of these particular libraries,” Cortez says. Historically problematic relations between the U.S. and Cuban governments led to the country’s ban of American material in Cuban libraries, even if the products are apolitical in nature. Cortez cites the Cuban government’s confiscation of U.S. books at border entry as a means of regulation.

“They’re really particular about it because they’re afraid of American propaganda infiltrating their country,” says Cortez. Print is highly monitored and Internet access is restricted and controlled by the government. In an article entitled “Feeling Squeezed by Political Pressures,” Cortez and his coauthors explain that Internet access is primarily approved solely for certain professors and their students. “They had very few computers, and they were all very antiquated. Even a photocopier was somewhat of a luxury,” says Cortez.

Cuba’s tropical climate lends additional hardships to the libraries. Because libraries have no mechanism for preserving the collections, and no climatic controls in the libraries, many of the books are in poor shape. Jane Bethel, electronic resources/references librarian at the University of North Carolina, explains that hurricane damage, a lack of climate control systems in buildings and no funding to repair or update buildings are contributing factors in the current conditions. “It was really an eye-opener to see libraries in the state they were in,” says Cortez.

While the state of libraries may have been grim, Cortez says the spirit of the Cuban people shined. “Cubans absolutely adore Americans. The children and people in the streets would stop and ask what state we were from. They knew of California, New York and Florida, obviously,” he says.

Although U.S. and Cuban tensions have been high in the past, Cortez learned this has not filtered down to the Cuban people. According to Cubans, the relationship between Cuba and the U.S. is a “blockade,” not an embargo, because not only are they unable to trade with the U.S., the U.S. has also intimidated other countries into not trading with Cuba. This inadvertantly has an effect on the state of their libraries.

“For example, any time one of their computers break, they have to go sometimes as far as Australia, Japan or China to get a replacement part. It would be so much easier to get it from the U.S. only 90 miles away, or Canada, which is much closer than Japan. Their response was that Canada is one example of a country that is intimidated by the U.S.,” explains Cortez.

The Cold War has left many lasting effects on Cuba, but not all are negative. Cuba is extremely advanced in areas such as science and math. Because their scientists went to the Soviet Union to be educated, Cuba is now unlike other Caribbean countries in terms of technical sophistication. Cuba holds very important pharmaceutical patents, making their academic libraries much more highly sophisticated than their public ones. “There is a disconnect between academic libraries and public and school libraries in Cuba that is really very sad,” says Cortez.

Diplomatic relationships with the U.S. could mean positive changes in Cuban public libraries. According to Cortez, mending relations between the U.S. and Cuba is not an “if” but a “when.” “The government really wants to have a diplomatic relationship with the U.S., but they insist that it is going to be on their terms and not ours,” he said. “It’s inevitable that we’re going to reestablish our diplomatic relationship with Cuba, but under what terms is what will be really, really interesting.”
Anyone who has ever misplaced his or her mobile phone likely shares a momentary (and usually, panicked) realization of how much they depend on handheld communication devices.

Yet, segments of the global population, namely women in developing countries, are just acquiring this technology. By using small loans, this demographic is now able to purchase cell phones. Devendra Potnis, Ph.D., assistant professor in the School of Information Sciences, is on the forefront of examining such technological adoption.

“I was interested in finding out the impact of cell phones on women in developing countries such as India,” says Potnis. Because many developing nations still lack the infrastructure for the Internet, Potnis says much of the poorest populations cannot communicate outside their direct circles.

In his published article in IEEE Technology and Society Magazine, Potnis describes his findings. “These women group up and use cell phones,” says Potnis. “The phones are very basic, and the users can’t send text messages, as English is a barrier for them. They only receive and send calls,” he says. Three or four women come together and insert their personal sim card into one shared phone. This allows them to have their own specific login accounts, similar to those on computers, while sharing the same device.

Potnis found that his sample of women use cell phones primarily for social and economic purposes, such as contacting family and searching for employment. Many of the demographics Potnis studies don’t have a steady income source, but a cell phone helps them connect with job opportunities and reduces the uncertainty in their lives. “For instance, women who are unemployed in the traditional practice set out in the morning and tried to find a job that would pay them for that day – things like lifting materials and getting materials from one place to another on construction sites,” says Potnis. The cell phone allows women to communicate with potential employers in a more efficient way.

Women’s empowerment is the goal to overall socioeconomic development for every region, Potnis says. He believes that similar segments of the global population would also experience such benefits. “In the southeastern United States, we have sent about 6,500 surveys for understanding the role of mobile technologies in empowering small enterprises,” he explains. These small enterprises employ less than 50 workers and are run by women. His belief is that the use of technology will help to advance any business, individual or a small company.

“Rich narratives of disadvantaged cell phone users demonstrate that cell phones introduce them to a number of socioeconomic opportunities even in a remote, rural part of a developing nation,” writes Potnis in his article. However, barriers and struggles to cell phone use are presented to women in underdeveloped regions, such as male family members or mothers-in-law who are against the idea of women’s cell phone use.

Nevertheless, Potnis believes that this social struggle is about the power of information, and that the access to information through cell phones could eventually empower and equalize women not only in India but throughout the world.

A SAMPLE OF POTNIS PUBLICATIONS


If Disney ever needs a best-practices tour guide for young professionals, Gina Jones (JEM, 1992) gets our vote. Indeed, Jones, currently the director of broadcast marketing and original content at Walt Disney Records, has earned her mouse ears (not to mention an Emmy) during her post-CCI professional experience.

Jones’ relationship with Disney began when she was a UTK journalism student, and she was recruited for the Disney College Program. But she earned her broadcast chops with “UT On Tap,” a cable access show she produced and co-hosted with long-time best friend and CCI alum, John Wood. “That’s really where I got my feet wet as far as working in television. It was very instrumental and gave us great hands-on experience. Plus, I enjoyed it and made a lot of long-lasting friendships,” says Jones.

“I remember Gina as a very talented and creative producer. She approaches her productions with great enthusiasm and her winning personality makes her an ideal team leader,” says Sam Swan, JEM professor, who remembers her as a member of the National Broadcasting Society and an attendee of his annual trips to New York City. Those trips, along with hard-earned know how, combined to create this tour-de-force.

But as today’s successful media professionals know, that trip is rarely a direct path. Jones’ journey took her from Knoxville, her hometown, to Nashville, where she became marketing manager of the Cumberland Science Museum. Her next stop, the associate producer of America’s Health Network in Orlando, led to freelance producing gigs, which resulted in jobs with Turner South, Animal Planet, HGTV and Discovery Channel.

Jones’ myriad producing background proved an invaluable asset to finding her professional home with Disney. “While I was freelancing in Orlando, I got the opportunity to become broadcast manager of the theme parks division for Disney, really allowing myself to utilize my producing experience,” says Jones. “Your career path will always lead a couple different directions.”

Similarly, Disney offered Jones new career opportunities and job titles. She began as broadcast manager of the theme parks and was then promoted to original content and new media director of all original productions created for the park. One is the production of the Walt Disney World Christmas Day Parade that airs on ABC. “Through that position I was able to travel and do some work at Disneyland Paris and Hong Kong Disneyland. I feel so fortunate for those experiences,” says Jones.

And another unique experience? Winning an Emmy. In 2005, the parade won the Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Special Class Special. “These things are definitely a team effort, and we had a great team of people dedicated to the parade. It was just a wonderful, wonderful experience!” says Jones.

In 2009, Jones said her goodbyes to Orlando and moved to Los Angeles to begin her current responsibilities as director of broadcast marketing and original content at Walt Disney Records. “Now I get to work with promoting original content album releases, so I might work on music videos or handle a parade appearance with an artist or anything that applies to our label,” says Jones, citing Disney luminaries such as Hannah Montana, The Jonas Brothers and Selena Gomez as recent examples. While Jones’ trajectory might be the stuff of daydreams, her early years of hard work have made the daydreams into reality.
What it takes to make it in America

Bridget Wade (JEM, 2010) dishes about the realities of working in a major market

*story by JOSEF BEAL*

When Bridget Wade moved to New York City to be a digital sales assistant, she imagined scenes from AMC’s Mad Men: Black suits and wining-and-dining with clients. But the reality of her Scripps Networks job, is that she’s usually in the office more than eight hours a day, and even when she’s not working, she’s networking. We asked Wade to take us behind-the-scenes of her Don Draper-less workday.

Q: What exactly do you do?
A: I’m a campaign manager for account executives. They secure the major advertisers like Johnson & Johnson, and I make sure the clients get what they want. I make sure those who visit any Scripps websites receive their message.

Q: What is your typical day like?
A: Technically my hours are 9-6, but usually I’m in at 8:30 and out around 6:30. I check my email. There’s a daily meeting where we give delivery reports. We discuss how campaigns are going and how much revenue we are making compared to our projections. Then, I make phone calls to the clients to recap how the ads do.

Q: What did you expect your job to be like?
A: I interned in the Knoxville office, so I had a good idea of what to expect. I kind of thought it would be like Mad Men, though. Taking clients out to dinner, being out and about.

Q: And the reality?
A: I have two big monitors on my desk and a calculator in my hands all day. I was surprised how much math I use. I sit at a desk most days and do very detailed work.

Q: What’s the biggest hurdle in the school-to-career transition?
A: Getting adjusted to working more than eight hours every day. Finding a work-life balance takes time.

Q: What did you feel was the hardest part of finding a job?
A: Knowing if someone is looking at your resume. Everything is digital, so you submit your c.v. and wait. There’s far less control.

Q: Do you have any advice for someone looking for a job in a major market?
A: Anyone who is given the opportunity to work in a large market should take it and embrace it. Do everything possible to make it happen. It’s so hard to get your dream job if you’re in the wrong market. Make it clear in your interview that you want to move [to NYC] and are capable of committing. People from small towns always feel homesick and often return because they feel overwhelmed. I got my job because the girl before me went back to Auburn, Ala., to be with her family.

Q: What advice do you have for moving to a big city?
A: Expect it to be hard. Give yourself that warning when you start your first job out of college. Accept that you’re going to be overwhelmed. Then, put yourself out there to your friends (and friends of friends) and family to find a place to live and positions available. Put on your “brave pants.” Bring as much in a suitcase as you can. Do your research about neighborhoods in which you’d like to live. Use Craigslist to find a temporary roommate. You can always move out later. I actually recommend a sublease at first.

But remember to find your alumni association. They are so helpful for everything. It’s a good way to network and get in touch with your new home.

Q: New Yorkers are always working, aren’t they?
A: “What do you do?” is the first question anyone asks when they meet you outside of work. Your job is your identity here. Networking is paramount, so even when you’re out, you’re working.
While many new college graduates spend the summer searching for jobs following graduation, recent Torchbearer recipient, Courtney Vick (JEM, 2012) has the next few years figured out. Vick will join Teach for America (TFA), a two-year program that places recent college graduates in low-income school systems to teach underprivileged children in hopes of increasing their educational future.

Vick said her interest in the program began in 2010 when she signed up for UT’s TeamVOLS Alternate Spring and Alternate Fall breaks. “That’s when I knew I wanted to work with inner-city kids,” says Vick. “There’s a huge divide in the educational system and where you live ultimately determines how well educated you are.”

Vick says the TFA application process consisted of five rounds of interviews and phone interviews. “It took several weeks, and only 11 percent of applicants get accepted.” According to the program’s website, the corporation has 5,100 members, representing 460 colleges and universities. The corporation cites leadership potential as key, something Vick certainly demonstrated during her time at UT.

During her four years at UT, Lebanon, Tenn.-native, Vick, held positions in numerous organizations on campus, such as Mortar Board President, Vice President of Finance for Panhellenic Council, Dance Marathon’s Corporate Event and Development Coordinator, and was a host for The Volunteer Channel’s “Greek Corner.”

Vick listed schools in Los Angeles, D.C., Chicago, New York, Dallas, Atlanta and Miami to teach kindergarten, first or second grade. And after she was accepted into the program in November, she was placed in Miami. While Vick has plenty of reasons to be excited about living in the south Florida city, she cites her upcoming work with the children as the pinnacle. “Their education affects their whole future, and I just want to get their education off to a good start and be able to make an impact,” she says.

While Vick’s near future is in the works, she says she’s already considering her professional options for 2014. Vick says she plans to apply to graduate school to pursue a master’s degree in journalism to ultimately work as a news reporter. “The cool thing between the two, Teach for America and wanting to be a reporter, is that with both, you educate people,” she says. Vick believes her Teach for America experience will provide her with a better understanding of the education system, and different perspectives that she can then apply to her own future reporting skills.

For more information about the program: http://www.teachforamerica.org/
Devon Turner (PR 2011) was researching possible public relations jobs her junior year, and she knew she wanted to incorporate her French minor language skills and improve upon them for future job opportunities. “I had all the traditional options in front of me, and none of them really made me feel excited, so I applied to teach English in France,” says Turner. “Plus, my sister has been teaching in Thailand for three years, so she partly convinced me. She loves it.”

In October 2010, Turner applied and was accepted to the French government teaching assistant program and was assigned to Toulouse, a city with nearly 1 million inhabitants on the banks of the Garonne River in southwestern France.

Turner’s new employment quickly morphed into more of an adventure. “I’ll always remember when I arrived, because I was all alone. I was walking around the city lost for an hour,” she says. The program does not supply housing for teaching assistants, so with no idea where to look, Turner moved between hostels and hotels for the first month and a half. “It was unnerving. I was expected to carry on day-to-day life while coming home to a hostel,” she says, adding she only felt settled finding an apartment to rent two months after her arrival.

As a teaching assistant, Turner makes lesson plans for and teaches 10-12 conversational and professional English classes a week. Her students, between 17 and 20 years old, go to schools for hospitality and engineering. “I have to interact with students in a way that doesn’t get boring,” says Turner. “Maintaining a level of professionalism is hard when my students are my peers.”

But, she cites these experiences as invaluable. “I’m so glad I took this opportunity. Not only did I get to discover another culture and use my skills, I have gained a completely different perspective.” With two upcoming interviews with fashion PR firms in Paris, Turner seems in prime position for more such personal discoveries.
Last Feb. 24, while students scurried through the CCI halls toward their 12:20 classes, a roomful of CCI professors and instructors were digging into plates of Arroz Con Pollo, Finnish Meatballs, Orzo Salad as well as countless other delectables offered at the International Lunch, an annual event hosted by the School of Information Sciences (SIS) for CCI faculty and staff.

Each year, all SIS faculty and staff members are encouraged to bring a dish to share at the lunch, which means food from China, India, Latin America, Lebanon, Africa and European countries fill the room with a blend of aromas representative of the SIS international community.

The International Lunch began in 2007 to commemorate SIS international faculty within the school and to celebrate commitment to diversity. “Besides doing research together and teaching, we decided to do something fun, so that’s how the original idea started,” says Peiling Wang, IS professor.

Wang describes her dish, Russian dumplings, as very similar to Chinese dumplings. “I used to bring Chinese dumplings, but one day I was introduced to these Russian dumplings. Since Russia and China are neighboring countries… I would say they may-be adopted our way of doing it.” Wang, educated in both China and the United States, brings an expansive knowledge of diverse cultures, including Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Greece, Croatia, Germany, France, England, Belgium, Switzerland and Japan.

Vandana Singh, assistant professor in SIS, moved to Knoxville from Texas in 2008 and says she finds comfort in both her colleagues and her surroundings. “My colleagues are so great. Everybody is from different places and very welcoming. I have been very happy since I’ve been here,” says Singh. “It’s a very good group.” Singh also cites the mountains of East Tennessee, as reminding her of the foothills of the Himalayas in India, her childhood home. Her lunch contribution was an Indian dessert made from chickpea flour, sugar and pistachios. “It’s something I grew up eating. I have brought it here before, and people really liked it,” she says.

Ed Cortez, director of SIS, has been involved in hosting the International Lunch from its beginning. “We are committed to diversity. When we recruit, we recruit with an idea of meeting the challenges that the university has presented to us, which is to diversify the faculty,” says Cortez.

“Out school has the most diverse faculty probably anywhere in the university, and certainly the most within the college,” says Cortez. “If you go to our website, simply by the names, you would be able to see the diversity.”

Cortez also believes one reason that SIS has such a diverse faculty is because Information Science attracts an international community. “When we advertise a faculty position, it’s likely that we are going to get a lot of international applicants for our position simply because of the nature of our field,” Cortez says.

The International Lunch is a small reminder to CCI students, faculty and staff that—in an age where technology has rapidly influenced the field of communications and the transmission of information—diversity is essential. SIS provides as a role model for all to appreciate.
On this spring day, the University Center Ballroom could be mistaken for an advanced science fair, except the cavernous space is devoid of the requisite throngs of fifth graders, meddling parents and bubbling clay volcanoes.

No, this is no science fair. It is the Office of Undergraduate Research's 15th Annual Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement, more commonly known as EURēCA. The two-day, college-wide exhibition features the research and creative projects from University of Tennessee undergraduates.

During this cranial goldmine, upwards of 250 college students wearing business attire linger in front of their research displays. They stand in groups and chat: New acquaintances try to pinpoint the judges; friends take turns being awed by each other's displays; a photojournalism student worries if her audio slideshow will be loud enough to be heard over the increasing crowd noise; three art majors peer at an empty spot on a table, glance at the clock and wonder if their companion will make it on time, “she was supposed to be here,” they explain.

While such anecdotal snippets may inspire anxiety in some, the experience alone might be considered worth the mental workout. UT Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Greg Reed feels the program is a chance for students to branch out of the classroom and do something that interests them. “Undergraduates need to have more ways to have opportunities,” he says.

EURēCA participants can connect with faculty, community members and experts they might not have known otherwise by collaborating on expanded projects. Undergraduate students pair up with a faculty advisor and with only limited guidance along the way. Their final project exhibited during the fair is essentially a solo achievement.

One winning example is biochemistry major Jennifer Brown, who studied with JEM Professor Mark Littmann last summer and wrote feature articles profiling undergraduate researchers. Brown says that despite her initial anxiety about journalism since science was her primary focus, the experience ultimately allowed her to publish six articles.

“Never in a million years did I think myself capable of this,” she writes in her EURēCA abstract. “But with the support of a UT professor, I had the guts to make an attempt—and I am so proud of myself for taking the risk.”

Subjects vary by college and student, as illustrated by the range of research, everything from algae blooms to plush toys created to represent children with cancer. The unifying factor is that each project offers a unique story. The results of a biology student's iron solubility study about bacteria will be sent to a collaborator at a New Zealand university. A sculpture student displays six-foot planks of dotted wood, a tribute to her late mother.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the competition, one may almost forget this is indeed a contest. However, participants are categorized within the competitions 12 divisions, each awarding its own winners. All told, the event distributes 75 division award certificates, plus four projects are awarded monetary awards for best overall.

But perhaps equally valuable for all participants is the underlying research experience. “I learned that you must have an intimate understanding of what you are doing to effectively communicate your message to others,” says Jeremy Rumsey (JEM), an author of a project entitled, “Communicating Science to the Masses.” As students stroll amidst projects to see what others have produced, they seem both willing to share and happy to learn.
NETWORK NET WORTH

story by KERI SANDERS

When UT advertising senior Caroline Pekarsky started using Twitter her freshman year, she quickly realized its potential. Since most of her friends were slow to adopt the social media tool, she decided to follow her favorite athletes. One surprising result: a retweet by Ryan Clark, a safety for the Pittsburgh Steelers. "I tweeted about blogging about Ryan Clark on a Friday night, and he retweeted me," says Pekarsky. "I was geeking out. Oh my gosh!"

Pekarsky is now the social media manager for Rent the Runway, a business that rents designer dresses to customers. She manages the site’s Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr pages, a position she landed after replying to a post she saw on her friend’s Facebook wall that stated UT’s Rent the Runway representatives were looking for interns. One semester later, social media is more than a pastime for Pekarsky, it’s a skillset to hone.

Pekarsky is one of the AdvPR students enrolled in Advertising 490 Social Media, taught by Courtney Childers, assistant professor in the School of Advertising and Public Relations. Childers offered the special topics course to both indulge her own interests in social media and guide students to better its use before entering the media profession. "You can’t ignore social media," says Childers. "It’s going to become a bigger part of our lives, both professionally and personally." This same reason is what makes Childers enthusiastic about organizing the College of Communication and Information’s Social Media Week.

The initial influence behind Childer’s brainchild came when Adam Brown (AdvPR, 1994) reached out to CCI about ways to help CCI to become more involved with social media. Brown, now the executive director of social media for Dell, believes one way to give back to his alma mater is to help CCI move to the forefront of social media activity and innovation.

Brown’s idea evolved into what became the April 25 and 26 CCI Social Media Week. According to Childers, the first annual Social Media Week was an opportunity to "immerse yourself for three days and get more information on the topic than you probably thought you could." Brown, the keynote speaker, was joined by Cox Enterprises Senior Director of Public Affairs Ed Patterson (AdvPR, 1989) in helping to fund and plan the event. Professionals from Cox Communications, The Tombras Group, Scripps Networks Interactive and more shared their knowledge with students by participating in panels.

“It’s going to become a bigger part of our lives, both professionally and personally.”

—Courtney Childers, assistant professor in the School of Advertising and Public Relations

Above, a sample of events.

Childers encourages students to take advantage of the opportunity to learn how to use social media more effectively as she believes the tool impacts all businesses, not just multi-million dollar companies. In addition, Childers emphasizes students can further benefit professionally by learning to use it to their advantage when looking for jobs and internships. “To me, it’s great to have a social media elective course, but then again, we should be talking about social media in every course,” says Childers.

While the week focused primarily on subjects of interest to UT’s students and faculty, prospects for future programs are endless. She says next year’s event will likely include material of interest to a broader local audience. But in the meantime, stay tuned as Childers says, “This was the first in what hopefully will be an every-spring event.”
BIDDER SWEET SYMPHONY

WUTK cleans out its signature closet and AUCTIONS off its funky fare to raise funds

story by CHANELLE PRICE

This year marks the 30th anniversary of WUTK electrifying Knoxville airwaves with its unique blend of air-guitar-inspiring indie rock. And what more appropriate way for “The Rock” to celebrate than a rock-n-roll auction?

Station manager Benny Smith says WUTK began collecting memorabilia five years ago, so the station’s anniversary is the ideal time to “strike when it’s hot” and host its very first auction of autographed musical memorabilia.

Although the logistics are not yet finalized, the items up for auction are pretty much set in stone, all boasting back-stories that might make Rolling Stone envious. Smith says the auction will feature three guitars and two stools. The first guitar, a First Act, is the most legendary item. Smith says a former WUTK deejay’s mother received the guitar as a promotional gift when she purchased a Volkswagen Beetle. The purpose was to highlight the car’s sound system, as the guitar can be plugged in and played. Instead of highway jamming, she donated it to the station.

The First Act has now been autographed by guest artists of WUTK, including Scott Miller, Marc Broussard, Galactic, Jim James from My Morning Jacket, Sharon Jones, Joe Pug, Matt Costa, Mitch Easter, Richard Lloyd of Television, Colin Hay of Men At Work, Arrested Development and North Mississippi All-Stars.

The other two guitars, custom Power T Epiphone electric guitars made my Gibson, are signed by women’s basketball head coach emeritus Pat Summit and former men’s basketball head coach Bruce Pearl, respectively.

Music fans interested in non-instrument memorabilia can rest easy, the auction features two stools to inspire rock fan drool. Although Smith describes the stools, which he says are “similar to ones a singer-songwriter would sit on while performing live,” these seats include signatures from Bela Fleck, Steve Earle, Will Hoge, Ben Taylor, Bobby Bare Jr., Rodney Crowell, Umphrey’s McGee, Hayes Carrill, Dane Bradshaw, Peter Case, Jason Isbell, The Hackensaw Boys, Martin Sexton, Chris Barron of The Spin Doctors, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, The Wailers, Delta Spirit, Reckless Kelly, Butch Walker and Reel Big Fish.

Hosting an auction with items marked by such prestigious names, Smith says the station’s goal is to make as much nontraditional revenue as possible. “We are billing over $10,000 a month but want to get to over $15,000 a month to sustain the station and to keep it improving,” says Smith. As for who he thinks will bid most? Smith says he predicts WUTK fans, music fans, UT sports fans, students, faculty and the community.

A date for the event has not been selected, as Smith says he has to determine the mechanism for the auction prior to setting one. He wants it to be held online, preferably through the station’s website, www.wutkradio.com, but he is still figuring out the most effective way to conduct the auction.

Smith says the station will hold several other fundraising events this year, including benefit concerts, merchandise sales and celebrity bartending. “We need enough money to make sure the station sticks around and remains a fun learning environment for the students,” Smith says. “That’s always our number one goal.” But fear not, the auction is but one element of the station’s anniversary celebration.
34th ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Leaping FORWARD in Communication and Information Research

story by CELESTE GOODMAN

Each spring, College of Communication and Information graduate students, faculty and academic guests partake in a one-day audio and visual treat of diverse research presentations. Risk communication was the theme of this year’s 34th Annual Research Symposium, held on Feb. 29 and appropriately named “Leaping Forward in Communication and Information Research.”

The all-day event featured 13 contributing papers and 13 posters from master’s and doctoral students, with sessions held in the CCI Auditorium and poster displays in the lobby. “This year we put refreshments out where people could view the posters in the main lobby,” says Assistant Director of the Center for Information and Communication Studies Bobbie Suttles. “There was a lot of energy with people making connections.”

One of the most eye-catching posters featured images of notable individuals who have challenged cultural perceptions of transgender individuals. In CCI doctoral students Scott A. Eldredge and Iveta Imre’s research, “Media and gender: How has the story of Chaz Bono impacted media’s portrayal of transgender people,” the authors examine newspapers portrayal of transgender people in the media. “The way we structured the research is we wanted to look at how the media are talking and presenting transgender issues (whatever the issue may be). What kind of messages do we take away when a reporter who writes a story that is about a transgender person or a transgender issue?” says Eldredge.

Their poster, pictured below, right, featuring an image of pregnant male Thomas Beatie as well as the female-to-male progression of Chaz Bono, provided visual weight to their discussion of how people with high celebrity profiles are perceived. “Without a high profile celebrity, person or issue for transgender people, coverage on any kind of transgender issue tends to fall away from the media,” says Eldredge. “It’s not on the radar until someone like Chaz Bono is out there who is a high profile celebrity that brings light to the issue again. Gender is the domain of the ownership of the person that claims it.”

Eldredge cites the symposium as a valuable opportunity to both receive feedback during the review process and meet other academics from peer institutions, such as the attendees from the University of Kentucky, the University of South Carolina and the University of Alabama.

Given the symposium’s luncheon keynote speakers’ Dr. Deanna Sellnow and Dr. Brandi Frisby from the University of Kentucky, topic, “Leaping forward in Crisis Communication Research: Connecting with Audiences in a Rapidly Evolving Information Environment,” the event’s enriching face-to-face interaction seems all the more notable.

RESEARCH WINNERS

BEST PHD PAPERS
- Betsy Dortch Dalton, “Motherhood as salvation: The experience of young Appalachian mothers”
- Ilwoo Ju, “DTC advertising and perceived importance of illness: Two-sided messages and the moderating role of DTCA skepticism”

BEST STUDENT-FACULTY COLLABORATION
- Lorna F. Keathley (CCI Master’s student), Virginia Kupritz, and John Haas, “Verbal Judo training module for law enforcement: An ethnographic perspective”

BEST POSTER
- Ioana Coman, Justin West, and Dr. Karen Freberg (Univ. of Louisville), “Framing Crisis perceptions through user-generated context: An exploratory case study examining the crisis message frames in the Mexican blogger Maria Macias crisis”

BEST M.S. PAPER
- Charles F. Prim, “Propinquity and news coverage: The U.S. as seen in Latin America”
Most UT students take either Communication 210 or 240 as part of the general education requirements. The large enrollment connected with these courses means that the School of Communication Studies has a number of lecturers.

To help ensure the quality of these lectures, Communication Studies Lecturer Suzie Prentiss seized the situation as an opportunity to improve and spearheaded the Master Teacher Certificate Training Program, designed for College of Communication and Information instructors to help improve course development and learning styles.

Prentiss initially discussed the idea with John Haas, Director of Communication Studies, and together they applied and were awarded a Faculty First grant to start the Master Teacher Certificate Training (MTCT) Program. The program offers lectures, including graduate students, online classes, quizzes, as well as workshops. “We started exploring ways in which we could enrich the work life of the people that are in lecture positions in the program and where we could also update their skills,” says Haas. “We have a fairly large contention of people who are lecturers in our program.”

Guest speakers from the Office of Disability Services, Career Services, the Thornton Center and several other departments have partnered with MTCT. “It’s a great partnership because we are able to ask, ‘What are the resources on this campus, and will you come and speak to us?’ So it’s been very collaborative,” says Prentiss.

Prentiss created an all-new three-tier program for fall 2012. Tier one, Practitioner, is the program that exists now. The requirement within tier one is a 15-hour completion and at least three hours finished per academic year to stay enrolled. Tier two, Developer, will have a requirement of eight hours with a two-year completion rate, along with a one-hour workshop presentation on a unique, creative teaching module that does not count toward the other eight hours. Tier three, Scholar, will have the same requirements as tier two, but the instructor must also create an individual piece of scholarly work for inclusion in an in-house journal/newsletter, be it a classroom activity, learning module, independent research or literature review. Once tier one has been completed, participants earn a $500 stipend and a Certificate of Completion.

For the last 40 years, the goal of the nonprofit organization, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), has been to develop educational, social and outreach programs. The organization, a byproduct of the Muslim Student Association, was created in 1963 to act as a fellowship for college students of the Muslim community. “As those [original members] got older and had families, they started to realize they needed an organization that focused not only on college students, but the family unit as a whole,” says Nida Saleem, Student Programs Coordinator of ISNA.

The organization’s current focus is tailor-made for ISNA’s newly established scholarship. ISNA will begin awarding five Muslim American freshmen $4,000 for four years, an amount certain to help any household budget. Applicant requirements include a U.S. citizenship or permanent residency, a 3.5 GPA or higher in high school, and a major in journalism or political science - both being instrumental components of mainstream media’s portrayal of Islam. “This particular scholarship came to us through a donor who is very interested in the impact that Muslim youths can have on portraying the positive image of Islam,” says Saleem.

Scholarships are provided through member estate donations. “There are a number of donors who have approached us over the years, and one of the key areas of focus of the Islamic Society is education,” says Saleem.