



College of Letters & Science  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



# VilasVoice

Fall 2018 | For Alumni and Friends of the Department of Communication Arts



**The Power of Internships**  
CAPS member and owner of  
Cannonball Productions Sean  
Hanish works with intern  
Noah Frassetto on location in  
Malibu, CA  
*Page 4*

**INSIDE  
VILAS**

**2** Connecting Students  
and Alumni

**3** Reimagining  
the Classroom

**5** Giving  
Matters

**6** Faculty  
Update

**7** Excellence in  
Education



# VilasVoice

is the alumni newsletter of the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, 821 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

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## Chair's Voice

### Connecting Students and Alumni



MICHAEL TREVIS

When Arielle Bordow arrived on campus from Milwaukee as a freshman in 2016, she never expected to be interning at *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* in New York City, but thanks to the generous financial support of our alumni, it happened. No matter how rich our classroom education, nothing beats real world experience in helping shape a student's future career.

One of my goals, as the new Chair of Communication Arts, is improving our undergraduates' career development by deepening our connection with alumni. In early September, we invited three UW–Madison alumnae back to campus for “Spotlight on Documentary,” a symposium devoted to contemporary documentary film. Justine Nagan, Executive Director of American Documentary, Inc., and an Executive Producer on its series *POV* and *America Reframed*, Raney Aronson-Rath, executive producer of PBS's *Frontline*, and Libby Geist, Vice President and Executive Producer of ESPN Films, headlined screenings and roundtable discussions where conversations with both undergraduate and graduate students ranged from the need for diverse voices in media, to the importance of fact-checking, to our thirst for authentic, layered, complex stories. It was also an excellent networking opportunity for our students.

Alumni support also made possible Jordan Campo's internship at Viacom in New York and Joshua Frank's internship at the Los Angeles production and man-

agement company Epicenter. Alumni brought Badger interns to Amblin TV, Cannonball Productions, Townsquare Media, and CBS. (More on page 4.)

Our goal is to expand dramatically the internship opportunities and funding for our students in a range of fields, including film, television, radio, digital media, communication, public policy, public relations, marketing, advertising, and human resources. Internships jumpstart our students' careers and strengthen the Communication Arts community.

Now, more than ever, our students need your help. Your contributions provide opportunities for students to accept unpaid internships, and they fund travel to New York City, Los Angeles, and beyond. If your workplace could support a UW Communication Arts intern or if you could help fund a student's internship, I would love to hear from you.

To learn more about current developments in Communication Arts, as well as how you can engage with and support the department, please visit our website, connect with us on social media, or contact me directly at [kellyconway@wisc.edu](mailto:kellyconway@wisc.edu).

Kelley Conway, Chair  
Communication Arts Partners  
Professor  
Department of Communication Arts

### Reimagining the Classroom



MICHAEL TREVIS

CA 260 students working in small groups during lecture, a common occurrence in the restructured course.

If asked to recollect their classroom experiences during college, students and alumni are bound to recall the large lecture halls and long monologues from professors, and the discussion sections that followed later in the week. For better or for worse, the tradition of teachers teaching and students listening has remained a staple of large courses for centuries. However, some courses at UW–Madison are making strides to alter or forego this age-old approach in favor of more engaging and dynamic course structures. Communication Arts 260: Communication and Human Behavior is one such course.

Working with the REACH (Redesigning for Active Learning in High-Enrollment Courses) Initiative at UW–Madison, Communication Arts Professor Sara McKinnon and her teaching assistants have revamped CA 260. The main objective of REACH is to

help faculty and instructors restructure large lecture-based courses into more active and inclusive learning environments. For CA 260, the two lectures and one discussion format is gone and in its place is a far more nuanced one. Online lessons replace the lectures, the entire class (about 240 students) meets once a week to work on a case study together that applies to the week's content, and small group meetings and writing workshops with a TA replace the typical discussions.

Students used to feel intense pressure from research-heavy writing assignments, but now with the course's new format they focus on communication in practice. McKinnon says, "This involves learning about how to compose very common types of communication, like an advocacy speech, a human interest story, or a grant proposal. And they also do writing workshops with

peer review of the assignments they turn in." McKinnon continues, "One of the things I like most about teaching this course is the practical utility of the material that students can apply in their everyday lives."

Retooling CA 260 was not a simple task, however. While McKinnon maintains the new version of the class has kept many of the same learning outcomes of the original version, she says, "The challenges were thinking entirely anew about the learning objectives and how to best accomplish them, including how to construct all of the materials to meet those objectives." Based on the response from the students, the changes appear to be working. "Most of these students are sophomores so they are very enthusiastic and engaged, which has made the class so fun for myself and my teaching assistants," says McKinnon.



### The Power of Internships



Internships connect students with potential employers, provide valuable workplace experience, and help students refine their career goals. Responding to our need to expand internship opportunities, the CAPS Internship Initiative provided five Communication Arts majors with internships in the summer of 2018 (more on page 5). The students' descriptions of their experiences in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Connecticut attest to the quality and importance of internships.



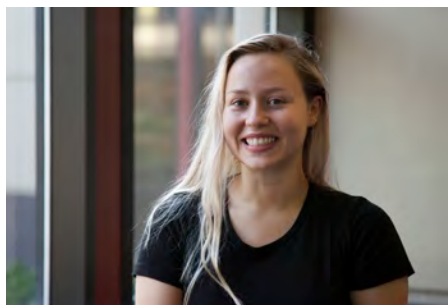
"I've gotten the chance to be involved in a number of different things from office upkeep, to creative meetings, to pitching my own ideas," says senior Noah Frassetto, who spent his entire summer interning at Cannonball Productions in Pasadena, California. "Working at a small company really gave me the chance to have my voice heard on film and commercial projects from the very beginning."



Senior Samantha Marz also had a range of responsibilities through her internship with Amblin Television in Los Angeles. "This opportunity helped me grow on a professional and personal level by living and working in a city I had not been to before. Those skills, as well as the relationships I formed, have been invaluable to me," she says.



The opportunity for personal growth was particularly important for senior Marissa Di Silvestro, who interned in ad sales for CBS Media Group in Chicago. "I knew that I wanted to complete an internship so that I could get a sense of what career path I wanted to pursue after graduation," says Di Silvestro. "I've always been interested in the media industry and this internship was the perfect opportunity to get a taste of what it would be like to have a career in [it]."



"I chose to pursue an internship because I wanted practical experience within a media conglomerate. I wanted to see how much of what I learned in classes applied in the real world of

media," says Danielle Murray, a senior whose internship at Townsquare Media took her all over the country, from Connecticut and New York to Minnesota. She adds, "I think it's important because it gives you an idea of what your life is going to look like after college. And more often than not, internships will lead to opportunities you wouldn't have had otherwise."

Joseph Hushek (BS'18), who interned at CBS Television Network in Los Angeles, agrees: "As someone who started off with no connections in the entertainment industry, this internship was a great way to get my foot in the door, meet people, and gain valuable experience, all while doing work I'm passionate about."

"Having spent a summer in LA, and talking to people about the opportunities available in this field, I've become more confident in the possibility of working out there," adds Frassetto. "It has turned a dream into a reality, and that's been amazing."

#### CAPS Internship Initiative for Summer 2018:

From top to bottom (pictured left):

**Marissa Di Silvestro**

CBS Media Group in Chicago

**Noah Frassetto**

Cannonball Productions

**Joseph Hushek**

CBS Corporate

**Samantha Marz**

Amblin Television

**Danielle Murray**

Townsquare Media



CAPS Initiative intern Noah Frassetto on set with Cannonball Productions

## Giving Matters

### The CAPS Internship Initiative



Top: Kelly Kahl  
Bottom: Matthew Tauber

In early 2018, the Communication Arts Partners (CAPS) and Comm Arts faculty launched the CAPS Internship Initiative. The initiative, which has already provided five internships, aims to create a dynamic, robust internship program whereby companies and organizations provide opportunities exclusively to Comm Arts students at UW–Madison.

“By being able to offer internships to students, CAPS hopes we can help foster career development for them,” says Matthew Tauber (BA’99), CAPS member and Executive VP of Brand Development at APEX Exchange. “In turn, CAPS also hopes to be able to help corresponding employers and organizations find future talent within the Department of Comm Arts. The better the program long-term, the more students and employers will want to be a part of it.”

Kelly Kahl (BS’89), CAPS member and President of CBS Entertainment, offers a CBS internship to a Comm Arts student each summer and has done so for the last thirteen years. “Internships are

really step one in careers in many fields, but particularly in entertainment and media. While there’s obviously a ton of critical knowledge to be gained in school, there is also a lot to be learned that is industry-specific; that is, on-the-job training,” Kahl says. “An internship might not prepare you to walk out of Comm Arts ready to run a TV station, ad agency, or write for a late night show, but you’ll certainly have a much better picture of what it takes to succeed in those fields.”

At its heart, the initiative is about giving back to students. Says Kahl, “In the short-term, we’re simply looking to increase the number of opportunities for UW Comm Arts students. In the long-term, we hope former interns will look to create dedicated internships at their places of employment and the ‘circle of Badger life’ will continue to expand.”

*If your workplace could support a Comm Arts intern or if you could help fund a student’s internship, please contact Department Chair Kelley Conway directly at [kellyconway@wisc.edu](mailto:kellyconway@wisc.edu).*



## Faculty Update

### Professor Rob Asen Receives Prestigious Award

Each year, academics around the country publish theories and research in a multitude of publications, but only a small percentage receive official recognition for their work. This year, Communication Arts Professor Rob Asen is among those select few. He is the 2018 recipient of the Golden Anniversary Monograph Award from the National Communication Association, which is the largest communication association in the United States.

The award is given annually to honor the most outstanding scholarly study published during the previous calendar year. Asen is recognized for his detailed study, “Neoliberalism, the Public Sphere, and a Public Good,” published in *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 103 (2017): 329-349.

“The study considers the implications for public engagement when people lose faith in the idea of a public good—the sense that we can work together to solve shared problems,” Asen says. “In recent years, skepticism toward democracy has grown, and public officials and laypeople alike have looked to the market for alterna-



MICHAEL TREVIS

Professor Rob Asen teaching CA 610: Democratic Deliberation and American Education

tive models of organizing our public lives together.”

Asen adds, “While the market does some things very well—and the farmers’ markets in Madison are a great example—the market does not adequately replace the admittedly hard work of democracy. My article considers the limits of markets as organizing

frameworks for public life and urges a reinvigoration of democracy.”

The award was presented on November 10 at the National Communication Association 104th Annual Convention in Salt Lake City.

*We congratulate Professor Asen on receiving this prestigious award!*

## In Memoriam

### Professor Ron Allen

IMAGE COURTESY OF JOANNE ALLEN



Professor Emeritus Ron Allen passed away on July 11, 2018. He was 87 years old. Born and raised in Wisconsin, Allen earned his PhD at UW–Madison in 1960 and went on to teach at Amherst College in Massachusetts. In 1963, Allen returned to UW–Madison where he served as a Professor of Communication Arts and Curriculum and Instruction until his retirement in 1990. He was an active member of the Speech Communication Association, now the National Communication Association, and served as its 66th president. His devotion to the department and to the rhetorical discipline was complete, and he was a reliable and engaging mentor to many. He will be missed.

# W ALL WAYS FORWARD

To continue our history of looking forward we need to advance in all directions.

Your gift to Communication Arts will support internships, scholarships, facilities improvements, student travel, faculty research, and curriculum updates.

Help move us forward at [allways-forward.org/giveto/communicationarts](http://allways-forward.org/giveto/communicationarts)



## From the Dean's Desk

### Excellence in Education

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS



Every year, I wait eagerly for the results of the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Awards. The honor has been given out since 1953

to recognize the university's finest educators. The vast majority—at least nine out of twelve every year—go to L&S faculty.

I'm always humbled and a bit surprised. After all, we have only 39% of the faculty at UW–Madison. But in Letters & Science we care about great teaching because we teach 64% of undergraduate credit hours (and 57% of all the credit hours taught on the UW–Madison campus). Moreover, knowledge creation and outstanding teaching often go hand in hand.

It is a myth that great research comes at the expense of great experiences in the classroom. Many of our internationally known scholars can be found working with undergraduates in labs and in archives, organizing

first-year interest groups, and developing innovative teaching methods. We call these “high-impact practices,” and they happen across the college, in large lecture classes (where one professor implemented small but important changes in the way he called on students, ensuring that all had a voice), and smaller courses (like the Shakespeare course that visited the Chazen Museum to view relics from the bard's era).

Our faculty bring talent, passion, imagination, humor, and empathy into their classrooms every day. If you could see, as I do, the notes from our graduating L&S seniors recalling their favorite professors, you would understand that not only do our faculty create knowledge, but they also change lives. I couldn't be more proud of what they do.

Your support of our teaching and learning efforts is greatly appreciated. Visit [ls.wisc.edu/about/our-faculty](http://ls.wisc.edu/about/our-faculty) to find out more about teaching and learning in L&S, and **alwaysforward.org/ls** to support our work.

*On, Wisconsin!*  
Dean Karl Scholz

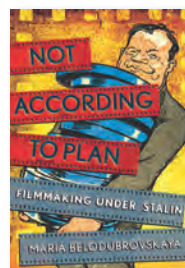
### New Certificate Launched

MICHAEL TREVIS



A new certificate, the Digital Cinema Production Certificate, was launched by the Department this fall. The certificate is specifically tailored to undergraduate students interested in media creation, from film to television, documentary, internet-based media, and more, and enables students to master visual storytelling through a strategic offering of media production courses.

## Professors' Voices



**Maria Belodubrovskaya**  
*Not According to Plan*  
Filmmaking under Stalin



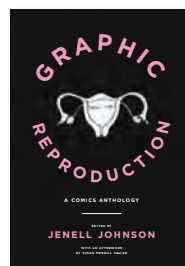
**Jonathan Gray**  
*Keywords for Media Studies*  
Edited with Laurie Ouellette



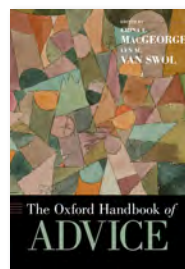
**Derek Johnson**  
*From Networks to Netflix: A Guide to Changing Channels*



**Jenell Johnson**  
*Biocitizenship*  
Edited with Kelly E. Happe and Marina Levina



**Jenell Johnson**  
*Graphic Reproduction*  
A Comics Anthology  
With an Afterword by Susan Merrill Squier



**Lyn Van Swol**  
*Oxford Handbook of Advice*  
Edited with Erina MacGeorge



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A late-summer sunset settles over Lake Mendota.

