Calendars of events

Communication Sciences and Disorders Speaker Series
PASTA TALLAL, Rutger University
May 10

Starry Starr Night: A Celebration of Music Theatre and Dominic Misslini
Cahn Auditorium
May 24

For more information, e-mail mcgovernm@northwestern.edu

COMMENCEMENT CONVOCATIONS
Pick-Staiger Concert Hall
June 18

For more information, e-mail commencement@northwestern.edu

Not Wanted on the Voyage
by Neil LaBute and Brian Hill
Directed by Amanda Dehnert
Ethel M. Barber Theater
July 15–August 8

Message from the dean

In my 10 years at Northwestern I have never seen a more exciting season than this spring. Our programs are being renewed: changes that for many years we have hoped would happen are suddenly under way.

One exciting development is a new agreement between the Departments of Theatre and Performance Studies to allow performance studies freshmen to study acting in the theatre department’s three-year program.

Another is a new framework for collaboration across the acting program, the new dramatic writing program, and the media production program. Media production students help to produce short films from scripts written by students in the graduate writing program, and the acting program provides the on-screen talent to make the films. This month’s cover shows auditions for these “Short Film Collaborations,” which have already created new connections and synergies across the performing and visual arts.

Two important new undergraduate majors are being developed, one focused on interactive entertainment and learning and the other a true major in music theatre.

The revived graduate program in theatre directing has developed a new partnership with Steppenwolf Theatre Company that will allow our third-year directing students to present their thesis productions in the Steppenwolf Garage. The new graduate Program in Writing for the Screen and Stage has matured and is now graduating students who are achieving success beyond our most optimistic hopes.

The American Music Theatre Project is finally realizing its goal of taking projects through the early stages of development and handing them off for further work by significant regional theaters. Last summer’s Girls vs. Boys received its professional premiere this spring at the House Theater in Chicago. The upcoming musical Not Wanted on the Voyage is a wonderful new retelling of the story of Noah and the flood. It will premiere on campus in midsummer, and we have high expectations for its future after Northwestern.

Faculty in communication studies continue to attract honors and funding for their cutting-edge scholarship on human-computer interaction, social networking, technological innovation, global culture and politics, and health communication.

Faculty in the ropey and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders have joined forces to secure a new multiyear, multimillion-dollar award to support a new educational model for doctoral students in hearing science and audiology.

This issue of Dialogue gives you an overview of all this exciting work and a look at the many individuals who are contributing to our success. I hope you enjoy this window into what has become an extraordinarily creative and productive school.

Barbara J. O’Keefe
Dean, School of Communication
Start a dialogue: dialogue@northwestern.edu

Dialogue is published for the alumni of the School of Communication. Comments and suggestions may be mailed to Dialogue, Northwestern University School of Communication, Evanston, Illinois 60208-3580, or sent via e-mail to dialogue@northwestern.edu. Please e-mail all address changes to address-change@northwestern.edu.

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From left: Northwestern seniors Emma Rosenthal and James Butler, theatre doctoral student Keith Byron Kirk, and senior Lakshita Hicks release the staged reading of Joanna McClaran Glass’s Palmer Park, a play about a Detroit neighborhood’s valiant fight to maintain racial integration during one of the nation’s worst racist riots. Theatre department chair Rives Collins directed the performance as part of an initiative among all Big Ten schools to explore a single play.

On the cover: Students participating in the first joint theatre-radio/television/film auditions (see page 14)
For Pablo Boczkowski, associate professor of communication studies, the idea came from a condolence call. In 2004 Boczkowski’s father died in Buenos Aires. Guillermo Culell, then director of www.clarin.com, Argentina’s largest news site, called to offer his sympathies. The pair met soon afterward, and Culell mentioned his site was in the middle of a transition. For Culell’s staff, these developments meant they had to expend more resources providing fresh stories throughout the 9-to-5 workweek. Work: Imitation in an Age of Information

Culell’s comments about news consumption gave Boczkowski the kernel of an idea that would become his new book: Abundance, due this year from the University of Chicago Press. The book’s research was funded in part by a School of Communication Innovations Grant.

Innovation at work

Innovation starts with an idea. We get ideas from serious study — and from spending time deeply engaged with a topic — and from spending time away from it. We get ideas from serious study — and from moments of pure serendipity. However the ideas come, the payoff can seem a long way from the moment of inspiration. Ideas need support, and they need momentum.

That’s one reason the School of Communication began the Innovations Grant program, a small starter-grants program to fund pilot faculty projects that, if successful, might lead to new funding from outside sources. New curriculum, or new research lines or academic achievement for faculty. Funded projects can address problems in the sciences, the humanities, or the arts. Past winners have taken on challenges of all sorts: artistic, intellectual, therapeutic, and instructional.

Abundance, due this year from the University of Chicago Press. The book’s research was funded in part by a School of Communication Innovations Grant.

From idea to innovation

Starter grant program funds inspiration and engagement

Patrick Wong, associate professor of communication sciences and disorders, received an Innovations Grant to continue his investigation of neural response changes resulting from exposure to different auditory experiences, such as speech or music. Eszter Hargittai, associate professor of communication studies, received a number of small grants from the school to start projects looking at differences in web-use skills and habits. Eric Patrick, assistant professor of radio/television/film, used a grant to work on his film Retrocognitions, a “recontextualizing” of found assets and animated techniques to critique the nuclear family of TV sitcoms, set to a soundtrack borrowed from early radio dramas.

Student engagement

Across disciplines, investigators do have one problem in common: how can faculty involve students in their research and creative endeavors? One of the major components of the Innovations Grant program is that funded projects provide substantive work for undergraduates. “There’s a lot of value in engaging undergraduates in faculty projects,” said Jane Rankin, the school’s associate dean for research. “They

But why are some words learned before others? To find out, Booth and her team — including student assistants Andrea Tsang (C07, GC09) and Stacy White (C07, GC09) — taught three-year-olds six new words for unfamiliar objects or animals. An example: a tomato grinder. When children were informed what it was used for — to grind up food — they were more likely to remember what it was called than if they were told about some other interesting but nonfunctional property of the object (in this case, that inside the grinder was a gold part). Functional information about newly labeled, unfamiliar objects gave young learners a meaningful context for mapping the new words to the new objects.

Booth’s pilot research helped land her lab a grant from the National Science Foundation and was published last year in the journal Child Development. She is expanding the study to include children of other ages and socioeconomic backgrounds and is extending the investigation to include natural contexts for word learning, such as book reading in the home and in preschool classrooms.

“Out our foundational finding is that functional information does facilitate word learning,” she said. “We’re also attempting to clarify the mechanisms underlying that facilitative effect.”

So, why? Booth doesn’t yet fully know, but she’s going to find out.
get a great deal from working closely with faculty and from seeing how scholars approach research and creative projects.”

“Undergraduates gain critical and widely transferable skills while working on research projects in a hands-on fashion,” said Amy Booth, who was awarded an Innovations Grant in 2015. “It provides an opportunity to explore a topic in greater depth than is possible in most classes.”

Boczkowski agrees. His Innovations Grant–funded research used the burgeoning skills of several students, including Gabriela Cantareno (C06) and Marie Silver (C07). Later, further funding from the Robert and Kayte Hurt Fund for Research on Media, Technology, and Society led to a second study involving Eugenia Mitchell and Lindsay Fullerton, doctoral students in the communication studies department’s media, technology, and society program, and Martin Walter, a doctoral student in political science. Further funding came from a second Innovations Grant and from the University Research Grants Committee.

Paradox of plenty

In his research Boczkowski and his team found that what Culell had described — news readers getting their news at work, with an intensification of fresh content during those hours — was playing out in other news venues.

And more than that, the perceived need to run more stories was leading journalists to step up the long-standing practice of monitoring their competitors’ coverage, using online editions to do so. In effect, journalists were now reading their news at work, too. “The paradox is the differences between judgment of what was newsworthy, said Boczkowski, and the differences between what was being read.”

Boczkowski’s book also takes a look at the leading online U.S. media during the 2018 election. “Our analysis showed that the diversity in what was reported was quite low, even during a period of major historical significance when resource constraints were relaxed and public interest in the news was higher than usual,” said Boczkowski. “In an age of plenty, what most consumers get is more of the same.”

Boczkowski’s book comes out this summer, but he’s already at work on his next project. Supported by another Innovations Grant, Boczkowski has enlisted doctoral students Nicole Joseph and Angela Xiao Wu, senior Sarah Love, and juniors John Powell, Molly Lister, Eliza Redish, Taylor Richards, and Jennie Wong to help him gather historical data for the book After the News: The History of the Demise of Print Newspapers in the United States, 1950–2010.

Relatable Debatable

When director Debra Tolchinsky and coproducer David Tolchinsky received an Innovations Grant for a documentary on the National Debate Tournament, the plan was for the film, Debatable, to follow the Northwestern debate team over the course of a season. It would be something like the spelling-bee film Spellbound, but featuring college students grappling with current issues instead of pretenses struggling with vocabulary.

Except, said Deb Tolchinsky, debate doesn’t fit so neatly into that package. “If you watch a contemporary college debate match, your jaw will drop,” she said. “They speed-talk like auctioneers. The average person can’t understand what’s being said.”

Deb has been experimenting with how to make debate “relatable” for nondoacters. “There seems to be a parallel between the increasing speed of college debate and the accelerated way humans live now. The push to do more, say more, to rush as many words out as you can in order to be successful and to win. The question is at what cost.”

Deb and her production crew, including coproducer Ronald Ward, have recorded more than 200 hours of footage and are putting the final touches on the film for a debut later this year. As the debaters traveled to compete, student filmmakers took turns behind the camera. Later, in the editing room, they helped Deb craft early test scenes.

The student contributors — new alumni — were Omar Butt (C08), Jackie Doherty (C07), John Pappas (C07), Martin Rodahl (C08), and Rachel Worther (C07).

Deb thinks the Innovations Grant was an important kick-start for the project, offering a valuable opportunity to students. “Students want the chance to work one-on-one with their professors in a professional setting,” she said. “Hopefully it was fun and educational for the students. From our end, it was a pleasure.”

Capturing a community

Innovations Grants are “starter” funds. They certainly started something for Harvey Young Jr., assistant professor of theatre.

His original proposal was to support research for a book on Chicago theatre history. That early funding helped Young obtain other grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mellon Foundation. The extra funding allowed him to develop a class on Chicago theatre and to create an archive of materials that he will eventually donate to the Northwestern Library. “The starter funds helped the project grow into a pretty major study,” said Young.

Young’s book is still in the works. He’s focusing on critical moments that created the theatre community the city enjoys today. Since the 1970s, Young said, the Goodman Theatre has experienced a resurgence of popularity, and other major houses — Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, and Lookingglass among them — were founded.

“Many of the founders of these companies are beginning to retire from the theatre, and I want to record their stories and experiences,” Young said. “My book celebrates the achievements of Chicagoans, fills in a missing chapter in Chicago history, and may serve as an inspirational read for people considering forming their own theatre companies.”

Student assistants Chris Eckels (C09), Aurora Curi (C08), Marco Minchielo (C08), and Leah Kaplan (C09) researched newspaper records and accompanied Young to interview theatre professionals. They learned a lot, but so did he, said Young. “The most surprising thing that I’ve discovered is how collegial the Chicago theatre community is, from critics to producers to directors to designers to actors. It isn’t uncommon for established theatre companies to mentor, coproduce, and otherwise create opportunities for smaller storefront theatres. There is a real commitment to supporting the theatre arts, regardless of scale, in Chicago.”
Abelson artist encourages living the creative life
When across, playwright, and director Regina Taylor visited Northwestern this past fall, students got more than tips on how to break into screenwriting and directing. “I’ve only seen you are the place where I could work on my writing, a place where I could take risks,” Taylor said. “And that’s what artists have to do — take risks, stretch, grow, own your own voice.”
Taylor’s play Maggie's prov- ered at the Goodman last spring, directed by Tony Award-winning director Anna Shapiro, associate professor of theatre. The play featured senior actress major Carlotta Collins, who was thrilled to recon- nect with Taylor. “One of the ideas Regina passed on to us that will stick with me is the notion that others may pass onto us that will stick with you in that relationship to find a theatre where I could work on my writing, a place where I could take risks,” Taylor said. “And that’s what artists have to do — take risks, stretch, grow, own your own voice.”

Leonard receives prestigious fellowship

Paul Leonard, assistant professor of communication studies, is one of six researchers selected to receive a 2010 Sloan Industry Studies Fellow- ship. The fellows were selected from highly qualified scholars in the early stages of their careers. Each fellow receives a grant of $45,000 for a two-year period to support research interests.

“I was very surprised and honored to receive this prestigious award,” said Leonard (above), who teaches in the communication studies department, the management and organizations department in the Kellogg School of Manage- ment, and the industrial engineer- ing and management sciences department in the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science, where he is the Allen and Johnnie Breton Junior Professor of Design.

Leonard’s teaching and research focus on issues pertaining to the design and implementation of new technologies, global product development, and the management of engineering work, which includes work in the automotive industry.

Schwartz sees Northwestern production of his work

Celebrated composer and lyricist Stephen Schwartz (above, sixth, from left) visited campus in November to speak with students and see Northwestern’s production of Leonard Bernstein’s Mass. Schwartz was the original lyrics in 1971. He provided revised lyrics for this production, which was directed by Dominic Mazzetti, professor emeritus in service of theatre (above, top left).

Schwartz has written the hit musicals Godspell, Pippin, and Wicked as well as lyrics for such successful films as Pocahontas, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Prizes of Egypt, and Enchanted. A six-time Tony nominee, Schwartz has won the Drama Desk Award for outstanding lyrics, three Grammy Awards, and three Academy Awards.

Leonard receives NSF career development award

Communication studies assistant professor Darvesh Gergle (below) has been awarded the prestigious Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award from the National Science Foundation. He is the first School of Com- munication faculty member to receive this honor.

The CAREER awards sup- port junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through outstanding research, excellent teaching, and the integration of education and research within the context of their organizations’ missions.

Gergle received his CAREER award for his project “A Multi-disciplinary Approach to the Next Generation of Collaborative Technologies.” The award will provide him with more than $485,000 over five years to conduct research on the topic.

“The goal of this research is to facilitate the development of the next generation of collabora- tive technologies,” Gergle said. “Previous approaches are fraught with failures that are due, in part, to a lack of attention to the coor- dination mechanisms humans use during everyday collaborative activities. This work takes a human-centered design approach that seeks to develop a detailed understanding of the ways that humans coordinate in real-world interactions and then use that understanding to develop novel technologies.” Real-life applica- tions range from teleurgery sys- tems to distance education systems to interactive museum experiences.

Schwartz, who taught for the 150th playing of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, spoke to a standing-room crowd in the Annie May Smith Auditorium on November 19. During her residency at Northwestern, students got more than tips on how to break into screenwriting and directing. “I’ve only seen a place where I could work on my writing, a place where I could take risks,” Taylor said. “And that’s what artists have to do — take risks, stretch, grow, own your own voice.”

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What does a documentary about high school basketball have in common with a squatters’ city in Rio de Janeiro? Not much on the surface, but films like *Hoop Dreams* (1994) illustrate some of the complex social interactions that occur in slums. Films about slums, says communication studies associate professor Dilip Gaonkar, tell us something about how humans adapt to — and operate within — these environments.

During winter quarter Gaonkar taught a cross-listed communication studies and radio/television/film course on slum cinema. As defined by the United Nations, slums are urban areas characterized by dense population as well as substandard housing and, often, standards of living.

Award-winning films such as *Slumdog Millionaire* (India, 2008) and *City of God* (Brazil, 2002) drew attention to the stories slums have to tell, but there have been many works in the genre. “*Slumdog Millionaire* is at the end of a long trajectory of these kinds of films,” said Gaonkar. “*Other films* are far more brutal and realistic, representing social problems differently.”

**Global focus**

Gaonkar’s students spent time with *Gomorrah* (Italy, 2008), *Ali Zaat (Morocco, 2000)*, and *Tinti* (South Africa, 2005). They also watched and discussed films telling the sometimes harrowing, sometimes uplifting stories of American slums — including *Boyz n the Hood* (1991), the story of three friends growing up in South-Central Los Angeles, and *Hoop Dreams*, a documentary about two high school basketball players trying to make it out of the Chicago projects.

Yes, Chicago. Miles Drummond, a senior communication studies major, found it interesting that the word “slum” had third-world-only connotations. “Some people tend to associate a slum with very physical descriptions, such as decaying homes, improper sewage systems, lots of dirt and garbage, starving children,” he said. “Therefore they hesitate to associate any place in America or most developing countries with having a ‘slum’ neighborhood.”

“I think we all have this notion that the entire population of every third-world country is living in desperate poverty that defies explanation,” said Katherine Cowell, a senior radio/television/film major. “A lot of corruption and misunderstanding goes into the treatment of poor urban areas, and slums are found everywhere, even in the United States.”

In Brazil, slums are called *favelas* in *Tinto y garabanda*.

“The course had a very explicit global focus as it juxtaposed cinematic representations from varied national and cultural terrains, from both the advanced countries and the developing countries of the global south,” said Gaonkar. That range is key. What Gaonkar wanted students to see was that slums, like any other setting, inspire and demand communication goals and habits particular to themselves.

“The slum, having ‘gone global,’ resists easy sociological definition, and also necessarily involves consideration of three levels of social interaction: the family, friendship, and economy,” said Gaonkar. “From those three vantage points, slum cinema films arrive at an image of the slum that tells us something more about the slum than entrenched crime and endemic poverty.”

Gaonkar asked his class to consider the relationships between formal economies, informal economies, and criminal economies illustrated in these films. “Through depictions of children and mothers, gangs and prostitutes, the poor and the rich, we learn about alternative forms of family relations, the complexity of the slum as an idea,” said Bush. “That is, it isn’t just a zone of extreme poverty or excessive crime. It generates practices and possibilities that require careful analysis and rigorous study to be understood.”

For instance, slums are usually associated with poverty and crime, but there’s more to life in a slum than abject misery. That message came through for senior communication studies and law studies student Alison Schaffer. “Slums can be vibrant centers of production of food, entertainment, all sorts of things,” she said.

“Each slum has its own personality, its own politics,” said Gaonkar. “And each has its own story about how to escape.” In *Hoop Dreams* the narrative is basketball stardom or poverty. All or nothing for basketball glory may not make sense to someone outside that community, but as Gaonkar explained, communities — including slums — have their own internal logic.

What the students are learning is that one can’t solve ‘the problem’ of the slum merely through legal or even economic means,” said Bush. “One has to be attentive to the complications of each slum and to see how law, economy, and society interact with one another in peculiar ways under the auspices of the slum itself.”

**Opening eyes**

Today more than a billion people live in slums, and by 2030 that number is expected to double, according to a 2007 U.N. study. But the students in Gaonkar’s course are unlikely to find themselves citizens of a shantytown. So besides being smarter global citizens, what did they gain?

Schaffer noticed the perspective of youth in many of the films, a viewpoint that should prove valuable when she joins Teach for America in New York City after graduating in June.

“The course was an inspiration for Marisha Mukerjee, an MFA student in writing for the screen and stage. ‘Having fully immersed myself in the genre,’ she said, ‘I am finding my current work heavily influenced by the class in terms of subject matter and overall awareness.’

Cowell found creative inspiration as well — and not just for films she might make someday. “People living in that kind of extreme desperation are very creative in their ways of survival, and in many cases they have inspiring solutions and stories we could learn from.”
Over spring break, a group of School of Communication and Medill School of Journalism students traveled to Northwestern’s Qatar campus. They found it quite different from — yet also very similar to — their own Northwestern experience.

Sunday, March 21
After 16 hours of transit, we finally arrived in Qatar! Tired and anxious, we still oohed and aahed our way through downtown Doha on the way to our hotel. Doha’s skyline is radically different from the sleek spires of Chicago. Architecture in the Persian Gulf region fuses ancient features, such as arches, domes, and geometrical patterns, with the latest engineering technology. The sight of a twisted glass building caged with changing LEDs prompted one student to ask, “Am I in the future?”

Doha’s eyes are certainly focused on the future. Within the first hour in the city, we could already witness the remarkable potential of this emerging metropolis.

Monday, March 22
By 6 a.m., Doha wakes up — cranes are functioning, cement is being poured, and large pieces of glass are rising into the air. The skyline is still under construction.

Our first day in Doha began at Education City, where we met with Dean John Margolis to discuss the Qatar campus’s progress and future collaboration between the two campuses, including presenting our films at Studio 22’s annual film festival. We also attended classes. The School of Communication group attended a seminar with associate professor of communication studies James Schwob that explored representations of espionage-intelligence security in film, television, and new media.

The day concluded with a Syrian dinner at Villaggio Mall, the newest addition to Qatar’s shopping culture. Surrounded by a canal, ice skating rink, and hundreds of shops, we were able to spend time with our Qatar-campus peers.

Tuesday, March 23
We started our day at the headquarters of the Arabic news network Al Jazeera outside Doha. As we toured the studios, we talked with a news presenter, bureau chiefs, and video editors about the challenges of the 24-hour news cycle, new media’s effect on television news, and how Al Jazeera plans to capitalize on the North American market.

The studio tour was a highlight of the week (see sidebar). We also attended classes. The School of Communication group participated in a discussion afterward with Brian Cagle, lecturer in radio/television/film.

On our last morning in Doha, we visited the Islamic Museum of Art. Designed by world-renowned architect I. M. Pei, the structure boasts one of the world’s most complete collections of Islamic artifacts.

Wednesday, March 24
After two days in Education City, it was time for the group to get out and see Doha. We spent two hours sailing the Persian Gulf on a dhow (a traditional double-decker sailing vessel originally used for fishing). As we danced to music and lifted our faces to the blazing sun, we got to see Doha’s beauty and energy — the ever-changing skyline, the luxurious resorts, and the low-flying planes shuttling to and from the airport.

As we sailed farther from the coastline, we saw a fleet of ships transporting sand to the Pearl, a multibillion-dollar development project of artificial islands under construction off the coast of Doha. We decided to go see the Pearl ourselves. The 4 million-square-meter site is jaw-dropping. Designed to look like an Italian Renaissance village, the Pearl includes the first land in Qatar to be available for freehold ownership by foreign nationals.

We returned to Education City to join Qatar-campus students in their weekly film night. We viewed the Japanese film Afterlife and participated in a discussion afterward with Brian Cagle, lecturer in radio/television/film.

Thursday, March 25
On our last morning in Doha, we visited the Islamic Museum of Art. Designed by world-renowned architect I. M. Pei, the structure boasts one of the world’s most complete collections of Islamic artifacts.

We ended our trip with a night of shopping and dining at Souq Waqif (“standing market”). Recently restored, the century-old Souq is a central destination for both tourists and Qataris who want to buy traditional garments, spices, handmade crafts, and souvenirs. As we enjoyed a delicious traditional Bedouin meal, we were sad to leave Doha and our new friends.

The most exciting part of my trip to Doha was our tour of the satellite network Al Jazeera, which broadcasts in both Arabic and English. This organization has featured prominently in the development of journalism in the Arab world. During Operation Desert Fox and the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Al Jazeera was one of the few Arab news outlets reporting on the war, and this reached a peak with its coverage of the Iraq war. Several scholars of Arab media have credited Al Jazeera with creating what has been called the “new Arab public sphere,” an emerging discussion in the media among Arabs about issues that affect Arabs.

The studio tour was impressive. The employees were diverse and very young, and the journalists we met were passionate about the work they were doing in challenging established international media organizations like CNN and BBC. They told us that Al Jazeera turned the world’s attention to the Middle East and promoted a new standard of journalistic integrity and practice in the region. This echoed what Dean John Margolis had described to us earlier in our visit as Northwestern’s goals for media across the entire country.

Northwestern in the Middle East

BY GABE BROTMAN, CLASS OF 2012

A visit to Al Jazeera

BY DAVID WILLE, CLASS OF 2010
Student creates play festival

Romi Barra (above, center) does not just sit back and wait for things to happen. Hoping to provide more outlets for creative students, Barra came up with the idea of developing a short play festival on campus. After a year’s planning, her 10-Minute Play Festival ran in February.

“I wanted to create opportunities for people who want to be involved — for people who haven’t had a chance to be on stage, haven’t had a chance to have their work produced,” said Barra. “Everyone wants to work and it’s really motivating, and it’s sometimes hard to get yourself out there.”

Working with theatre faculty such as Henry Godinez, Rives Collins, Laura Schellhardt, and Theatre and Interpretation Center manager director Barbara Burns, Barra created a full-season playwriting submission process for writing, coordinated a judges’ panel to read and select scripts, and planned a weekly winter-quarter independent study seminar where the selected writers could workshop their plays and directors could hold rehearsals.

Over winter break the judges selected 10 plays, including Barra’s Gold Coffee. Especially since six of the writers were freshmen, Barra helped the writers network with student directors who were interested in participating. The directors came to see the plays being performed. Ultimately, more than 50 students were involved in the festival — including writers, directors, designers, actors, producers and production team members.

Although Barra graduates in June, she is already talking to underclassmen at Northwestern about continuing the 10-Minute Play Festival next year. Godinez calls Barra’s initiative “truly terrific thing. It’s completely indicative of the way our students are in the real world once they leave here — and even here, our students are so self-motivated.”

See www.communication.northwestern.edu/events for a full list of the winning plays.

Searle Building study space wins architecture award

The communication sciences and disorders department’s new graduate-student study center in the Frances Searle Building basement won a 2009 Design Award from the Northeast Illinois chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The 8,000-square-foot basement space was transformed into a large student lounge (right) plus work station area, a private office, a file room, a storage area, and a kitchenette. Department students have key-card access to the space during the building’s standard hours.

Awards or not, students enjoy the space. “I am not surprised to hear that the space has won an architectural award,” said first-year PhD student Ashley Alvarez. “It’s extremely functional and aesthetically pleasing. I think that all communication sciences and disorders students would agree that it serves as a home away from home.”

Frances Searle is not the only School of Communication building to win an architecture award last year; in May, the extensive historic restoration of Annie May Swift Hall won the city of Evanston’s Margery B. Perkins Historic Restoration Award.

Alumni guide job-seeking students

The School of Communication’s 26th annual Career Night, sponsored by the External Programs, Internships, and Career Services (EPCS) office, drew nearly 200 students to Norris University Center in November. Four groups of panels — many of them School of Communication alumni — shared their experiences working in radio, television, and film; advertising; marketing and public relations; and nonprofit organizations.

Communication alumni panels included Keleen Kilroy (C07), a marketing associate in new product development for Discover Financial Services; Jay Shapero (C79), CEO of TeamWorks Media; and Rachel Scholten (C06), a producer for Sanctor Worldwide. Other participating alumni included Katie Braun (C08), Jason Bornstein (C09), Angela Topol (C00), Mary Kate Bailey-Jenkins (C04), Bradley Tierno (C09), Jason Bolick (C04), Tom Schneck (C07), Aracil Buesen (B08), Perris Richter (B08), and Ilya Bunimovitch (WCA07).

For students who are worried about job opportunities after graduation, the variety of professions and specializations represented went a long way to make attendees feel more comfortable about the job search and aided them in building networks of their own, said senior communication studies major Matthew Specter.

School careers manager William Bleich (above) said the event was a natural pairing, so this year for the first time, the two departments held unified general auditions (above), recorded them, and made the auditions available online or on DVD so audition filmmakers seeking talent.

The School’s unified system is off to a great start,” said William Bleich, senior lecturer in radio/television/film and economics double major. “Directors could sit at a computer and essentially cast their entire film,” he said. “Then they just need to e-mail the actors to ask if they were interested, attach a script, and boom, they were done with casting.”

Approximately 150 students from across campus auditioned on-camera in October, said theatre associate professor Cindy Gold, head of the acting program, who encouraged theatre majors to participate. “Our actors were so happy to have these auditions consolidated,” she said. “They know it’s important to graduate with as much time in front of a camera as possible, but they often let that go due to lack of time and knowledge of who is looking for talent.”

This new effort is an outgrowth of another radio/television/film initiative last year that helps connect students across writing, directing, and producing disciplines. Bleich and Gold give a lot of credit to their respective department chairs, David Tolchinsky and Rives Collins, for supporting the collaborations. “We anticipate that the educational rewards of these collaborations will produce a positive creative atmosphere at Northwestern as well as future film projects,” said Bleich.

WNUR wins award

WNUR News won first place for "Best All-Around Radio NewsCast" in the Society of Professional Journalists’ Region 5 Mark of Excellence Awards. The winning team included sophomore Yosnell Salman and junior Laura Rodriguez, both School of Communication students. The WNUR news staff (includingmodest junior Lauren Cole, left) broadens news updates three times each weekday in addition to occasional special broadcasts.

Departments share on-camera auditions

Radio/television/film/student produces films; theatre students want in. It’s a natural pairing, so this year for the first time, the two departments held unified general auditions (above), recorded them, and made the auditions available online or on DVD so student filmmakers seeking talent. The program might be the first of its kind.

“The unified system is off to a great start,” said William Bleich, senior lecturer in radio/television/film and economics double major. “Directors could sit at a computer and essentially cast their entire film,” he said. “Then they just need to e-mail the actors to ask if they were interested, attach a script, and boom, they were done with casting.”

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Around campus
School of Communication brings home the Jeffs Several School of Communication alumni, three faculty members, and a current student were among the winners when the 43rd annual Joseph Jefferson Awards were presented in Chicago in December. Northwestern University, unceremoniously and very well, brought home the best of Chicago theatre and never is this more apparent than on the evening of the Joseph Jefferson Awards,” said theater department chair Rives Collins.

David H. Bell, associate professor of theater, won for choreographing The Boy From Syracuse at Drury Lane Oakbrook. Joshua Havard, adjunct professor of radio/television/film, won the large-production sound design award with Ray Nandlall for that theater’s Mie Siegmont.

Bell topped the individual nominees with four nominations: as choreographer of The Boy From Syracuse as director, and as director, choreographer and adapter of The Boy From Syracuse. “I was very happy to receive the nominations and the award,” said Bell. “It is really a humbling thing to feel acknowledged by Chicago theatre artists and feel like an integral part of this wonderful community.”

Junior theater major Alex Winston won as actor in a supporting role for Next Theatre’s Theatre of Visions. He and alumna Unalome Kumar (C’13) also shared the position’s Jef Jeff Award for best ensemble. Other alumna Jeff recipients included Spencer Kenden (C’09) for costumes design, and Doug Pick (WCAUM) for music direction.

The Knowles Center honors Chicago at a special research conference this fall, the Hugh Knowles Center for Clinical and Basic Science in Hearing and In Disorders will honor Peter Dalles (above), professor of audiology, otolaryngology, and biomedical engineering and John Evans Professor of Neurosciences, Neurobiology, and Physiology. A symposium and gala celebrating Dalles’ 75th year will take place at Evanston’s Hilton Orrington on October 8.

“Peter Dalles is dedicated to bring together Peter’s past and current colleagues and students, along with such a distinguished group of scientists, for this fun and educational celebration,” said Dalles, the professor of communication sciences and disorders and the center’s director. Contact hughknowlescenter@northwestern.edu for more information about the conference.

Jump Rhythm Jazz Project celebrates 28 years 28 years The 2010 Emmy Award-winning Jump Rhythm Jazz Project celebrated its 20th anniversary by performing world premiere choruses by its artistic director and founder, dance professor Billy Siegenfeld (left) — as well as favorites from the company’s two-decade history. Siegenfeld, newest peers take their inspirations from very different sources. You Don’t Have to Be Good was inspired by Mary Oliver’s poem “Wild Goose.” With music by Tom Wars, Rinchik Sakamoto, and Sonny Rollins, it explores how society still isolating territorially can be transformed into the beginnings of a peaceable community. Why? Gardinen is a work for two based on the words and music of the Gardiner brothers and James Brown. Also performed was the Jump Rhythm Jazz Project’s principal choreographer and a member of its performing ensemble, Siegenfeld founded the company in 1990. In 2007 he received an Emmy Award for his work in the multiple Emmy-winning docu-drama Jump Rhythm Jazz Project: Getting Threw. Siegenfeld is the 2006 recipient of Chicago’s most prestigious dance honor, the Ruth Page Award. The Jump Rhythm Jazz Project members include Brandi Coleman,leader in dance at Northwestern, and alumni Kevin Durlahan (C’06), Jordan Khal (C’13), and Lizzie Perkins (C’13).

Pickaroon returns to the Met Mary Zimmerman, Julliard Family Professor of Production Studies, directed Arleuda for New York’s Metropolitan Opera this spring — her third Met opera in the last three seasons. The production stars renowned soprano Renée Fleming. In a New York Times profile of Zimmerman, this director is described as “truly cautious about excursions. This is why it is. He’s eclectic, he’s good at oral tales. Fantastical things happen. There’s a dream between Love and Revenge. There’s a ballet, there’s a trios of tenors, Furies, a choral of deities: all that stuff some people dread or think is boring. But it’s what is.”

Clairvoyance

Paul Leonard (Ph.D., Stanford University), assistant professor of communication studies, won "The Complexity Perspective: Using Technology to Capture Human and Increase Perceptions of Distance in Distributed Work Arrangements" with media, technology, and society PhD student Jeffrey W. Toom and Michelle H. Jackson. The professor of University of Colorado at Boulder's "It was in the Journal of Applied Communication Research. "Too Connected?" The Paragraph of "Telework" by the same authors appeared in "Communication Currents."

Jennifer Light (Ph.D., Harvard University), associate professor of performance studies, gave an invited lecture on the history of invention at the Festival delle Scienze 2010, Rome’s annual science festival.

D. Seynij Madison (Ph.D., Northwestern University), professor of performance studies, is the author of Art of Activism: Human Rights as Performing Politics, published in March by Cambridge University Press. The book presents the neglected yet compelling story of local activists in sub-Saharan Africa who use modes of performance as tactics of resistance and in their day-to-day struggles for human rights and social justice.

Haïmad Naficy (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles), professor of media/television, was named Northwestern’s Hamid B. In Ali Thane Professor in Communication. Among numerous speaking engagements, in March he presented “Female Troubled Women in the Islamic Republic Cinema” for the Iran-EU Film Festival and the University of California, Santa Cruz, as well as “Change, Converge, Multiply — Now Cinematic Trends” and “Global Technologies and Neworked Communities” at the Northwestern University in Qatar Inaugural Conference.


Public Bocciokwski (Ph.D., Cornell University), associate professor of communication studies, has written News At Work: Invitation to an Age of Information Abundance, forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press. This spring the French journal Réussite will publish a translation of one of the book’s chapters in a special double issue on online news. Bocciokwski’s research will also be featured in the Calendrier Journaliers Réussite’s “Research Reports” column this spring. In June he will serve as visiting professor at the Laboratoire Techniques, Territoires, et Sociétés of the University of Paris.

Daniel Cantor (M.A., American Conservatory Theatre), assistant professor of theatre, appeared in Chicago Shakespeare Theatre’s 2009–2010 season. In A Comedy of Errors, directed by David H. Bell. He also performed in the world premiere of Return to Paradise at Evanston’s Next Theatre.

Kat Falls (MFA, Northwestern University), professor of radio/television/film, is the author of Community Life published this spring by Scholastic Press and optioned for a feature film by the Gotham Group.

Rebecca Gilman (M.F.A., University of Iowa), assistant professor of radio/television/film, adapted the Carol Ann Duffy play, Heart & a Lonely Port for Next Theatre. This spring by Subtitle Press and optioned for a feature film by the Gotham Group.

Michelle Rohd (M.F.A., Virginia Tech), assistant professor of theatre, wrote and directed Willow Wittin & All, performed by Chicago’s House Theatre at the Chopin Theatre in February and March. The show used film and live video to create a speculative political thriller that the Chicago Tribune called “must see.”


Debra Tolichinsky (MFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, assistant professor of radio/television/film, exhibited the video and live installations: “But what it is on the back?” at the Chicago Cultural Center’s November Show Six Things, (Dis)Ordinary Conditions. The exhibit included performance, installation, and video works on disabilities and their attendant issues. Tolichinsky’s contribution dealt with brain plasticity in exploring an anecdotal incident.

David Zarefsky (Ph.D., Northwestern University), Owens L. Provost Professor of Drama and in the communication studies department, received the Senior Scholar Award at the 2009 AHA Conference on Argumentation, organized by the National Communication Association and the Speech Communication Association. During spring term he was a visiting professor of English at Shenzhen Normal in China. Last October in Japan he gave the lectures “The Appeal of Barack Obama” and “The U.S. Abortion Controversy: A Problem in Public Argument” at Nanzan University, Osaka Prefectural University, Tsuda College, Meiji University, and Rikkyo University.

Contact hughknowlescenter@northwestern.edu for more information about the conference.
Alumni achievements

Northwestern University Entertainment Alliance

NUEA East

NUEA East is proud to report that many of its recent and upcoming events are copresented with other New York–based Northwestern clubs. In November NUEA-East copresented the panel “Tootles, Bloggs, and Professional: The Charming Art of Entertainment Criticism” with the Medbi Club. In December NUEA-East and several other local Northwestern groups hosted a networking night at O’Lunney’s in Midtown. Participants brought toys to donate to Variety, the Children’s Charity of New York, which serves disadvantaged and physically challenged children. Other recent events included a comedy night cohosted with the NU Club to support the senior class’s New York Showcases in March. For more information, visit www.nuea.org.

NUEA-West

In October NUEA-West cohosted a “Below the Line” panel with Columbia College Chicago to offer alumni-insider information on how to break into behind-the-scenes work in film and television production. The panel, featuring editor Jeff Siebert (Goodwood & Down), the Sarah Silverman Shoes, editor Danni Navarro (Ghost, Teen Spirit), editor Peter Teschner (Bunnyman, Going the Distance), producer Dara Butner (Borat, Smear Your Peers), and executive producer Wally Hayward (C90), was attended by more than 70 actors attended the NUEA-West’s casting director panel at the Arca Comedy Theater in Times Square, Los Angeles. More than 50 guests attended.

1950s

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

Clancy Brown (C64) starred as Kent Stirling in the new ABC drama The Deep End.

Jeffrey A. Brauer (C60), a litigation partner at Hanken, Pardue & Pardue in Cleveland, received the Ohio State Bar Foundation’s community service award for the year and in District 12, which covers Cuyahoga County.

Margaret Marcouiller (C64), chief of the civil division of the Lake County (Illinois) state’s attorney’s office, was named an associate judge of the 19th Judicial Circuit.

Paul J. Trandahl (C84), former managing director of the 19th Judicial Circuit, was named an associate judge of the Lake County (Pennsylvania) Parks Foundation.

Christian Fulton (C64) was named executive director of the Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) Parks Foundation.

Jennifer Daniels (C85), founder and former managing director of the Tony-nominated musical Sister Act, was elected chair of the University’s Office of Alumni Relations, the alma mater as identified by the University’s Office of Alumni Relations and Development, and updates site in contact form either by mail or by email at dialoge@northwestern.edu.

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Alumni-led production company receives MacArthur grant

Chicago-based 137 Films, a nonprofit documentary production company led by an impressive roster of School of Communication alumni, recently received $6,000 in grant support from the MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture via the Richard A. Driehaus Foundation. Each year the MacArthur Fund provides grants to more than 200 arts and culture groups in the Chicago region.

“It’s a great way of what we’re trying to do: make films that tell stories in the world of science,” said Clayton Brown (GC06), coartististic director of 137 Films and a lecturer in radio/television/film at Northwestern.

Last year 137 Films completed the film, The Atom Smasher, which was named one of the top 10 productions of 2009 by the Journal-Constitution Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Green was named one of 10 finalists for the Awards and Recognition Association’s annual sportsmanship award.

Erik Gornick (GC08) is the founder of Acro Energy Technologies, a California-based solar energy installation company, after serving in an intern capacity since June. He continues as a member of the film’s board of directors. 

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Steve Zeldin (GC08) is the founder of 137 Films production company, and was pro-former New Jersey Business Woman of the Year by the New Jersey Association of Business Women Owners.

Natsu Ooka Power (GC06, GC09), visiting assistant professor at Georgetown University’s Davis Performing Arts Center, wrote God of Comics: Osamu Tezuka and the Creation of Post-World War II Manga (University Press of Mississippi, 2009). The book is one of the first English-language studies of the famed Japanese cartoonist’s body of work. Power’s work has also been seen in the International Journal of Comic Art.

Kate Baldwin (C97), co-captain of the 2009 New Jersey Association of Repertory Company Consortium. The organization, which in 2009 earned a master’s degree in direct-ing at the Brown University–Trinity Repertory Company Consortium.

Melissa A. Rose (GC01) is the author of Portrait of the Widow Kinski, a play selected for a screening at Chicago’s Victory Gardens Theatre.

Alexander Lurie (GC06) is founder of YouTube.com, a web site launched in December to offer discussion for Chicago businesses and services.

Alian Pazonski-Brown (GC06) was associate producer for the film Mine, which debuted on PBS’s Independent Lens. Mine tells the story of a veteran and his family in Hurricane Katrina and the resulting county battles between their original owners and adoptive families.

Zach Strief Dream Big Foundation, which works to enrich the lives of children in New Orleans.

Sarah Accuardi (GC09) is the author of Portrait of the Widow Kinski, a play selected for a screening at Chicago’s Victory Gardens Theatre.

Andrew Brewer (GC09), former Northwestern football player, was named one of 10 finalists for the Awards and Recognition Association’s annual sportsmanship award.

James D’Angelo (GC09) and three other Northwestern students received Action of the Year honors at the 2009 American Israel Public Affairs Committee and Conference in recognition of their work on campus.

Erik Gornick (GC08) made the short film Girl Parts, which was announced at NewFilmmakers in New York. The film, which is a single-camera musical comedy revolving around the lives of 20-something friends.

“We’ve really enjoyed working together on the piece,” said Mahler. “Each of us brings individual strengths to the project. Alan Schmuckler and I write the songs, and all four of us came up with the concept, the story, and the characters. Now we’re all four writing the outline and the pilot script.”

Boyfred’s focus on the life of a Chicago web designer named Fred. When his girlfriend goes overseas, he creates a web site (Boyfred.com) to keep their circle of friends together. The site remains on line if he needs new ideas. Boyfred is the only character that can keep in touch. The theme of the show is “how you stay connected when you’re a 20-something in the 21st century,” said Mahler in an interview with the Chicago Tribune.

Zimmerman said this “small idea” they discussed a party two years ago has become a huge part of their lives and has allowed them to meet some “truly inspiring people.” He adds, “A common trait I’ve noticed among Northwestern grads is this do-it-yourself mentality. If you have an idea and you want to make it happen, just do it. Figure it out and do it. And, more important, find passionate, creative people to take the journey with you. Whenever this project takes us, I’m happy knowing we’ve come this far by doing just that.”

Above, from left: 137 Films board member Andy Swindler (GC02), cinematographer and board member Stefanus Foster (GC06), coartististic director and faculty member Clayton Brown (GC06), associate producer and director of operations Carolle Zonne (GC06), coartististic director Monica Ross (GC06), assistant editor Stephen Pone (GC05), and executive director Andrew Suppelsa (GC05).
The following death notices were compiled by Northwestern's Office of Alumni Relations and Development and are updates sent to Dialogue by staff or by alumni by mail or e-mail at dialogue@northwestern.edu.

Alumni

Mary Alice Morgan (C34) died September 10 at age 94 in Califbush, California.
Margery Rudd Wells (C38, GSESP52) died November 23 at age 93 in Indianapolis.
Frances Irene Spahn (C42) died November 7 at age 89 in Granger, Indiana.
Richard A. King (C43) died September 10 at age 83.
Virginia Pate Lee (C50) died September 6 at age 82.
Ilan S. Bar (C50) died October 21 at age 60 in Fort Collins, Colorado.
Margaret Welsh Schutte (C51) died October 4 at age 73.
Betty Comer McDaniel (GC47) died November 26 at age 87 in Washington.
Jack Allen Willeford (GC60) died September 29 at age 75 in Fort Collins, Colorado.
Margaret K. Cohen (C53) died in January in Staker Heights, Ohio.
Patricia A. Green (C54) died December 19 at age 78.
Frank N. Hansen (C55) died December 19 at age 78 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Margaret Welsh Schutte (C57) died December 19 at age 78.
Sue A. Gilbert (C61) died December 26 at age 60 in Las Cruces, New Mexico.
Funds might assist students participating in the Senior Showcase. Gifts of $100 and more entitle you to a seat for the performance. Can’t make the performance? You can still give to the Dominic Missimi Fund for Music Theatre.
For more information, contact the annual Lambert Family Communication Conference is funded by the Lambert Foundation, the family foundation of Bill and Sheila Lambert (above). The Lamberts sought to support the School of Communication by providing resources for an annual conference that would highlight the latest research and trends in the communication fields as well as the prominence of the school’s faculty in those fields. The first conference in the Lambert series was last year’s “Possibility and Paradox: On Rhetoric and Political Theory.” Held April 22–24 at the Wyndham Chicago, this first open forum dedicated to the emerging field of team-science research was brought together thought leaders from a broad range of disciplines, including translational research, communications, complex systems, technology, and management. Panelists included communication studies professor Noshir Contractor.
“Were it not for the philanthropic support of the Lamberts in this first year while we built a community, we might have had a hard time pulling it off with the timing we did,” said Holly Falk-Kracelonski, NUCAATS director of research team support. “We were able to leverage that generous philanthropic support to move things forward quickly and get this conference going.” She added that the Lamberts’ status as an original sponsor of the conference “has given us direction in terms of where to seek philanthropic support and industry sponsorship in the future.” Bill Lambert is a member of the Northwestern University Board of Trustees, and Sheila Lambert is a member of the School of Communication’s National Advisory Council. Their son, Phineas Lambert (C64), is a communication studies graduate.

Michael Left, a communication studies professor from 1989 to 2003 and former department chair, died on February 5 after a brief illness. Most recently chair of the department of communication at the University of Memphis, he had previously held faculty positions at the University of California, Davis, Indiana University, and the University of Wisconsin.

Internationally known as a scholar of rhetoric, Left was named a Distinguished Scholar by the National Communication Association. At the time of his death he was also president of the Rhetoric Society of America.

“Mike Left was a major rhetorical scholar and powerful voice in that scholarly community,” said Michael Roloff, professor of communication studies. “He was also an astute supporter of the field of communication and as an advocate of those of us working in other areas. He had a quick and sometimes wittily dry but that endeared him to his friends.”

Former School of Communication dean David Zarefsky said, “There may be none among us more universally esteemed than Michael Left. A renowned scholar and teacher, he was even more a congenial colleague and close friend. His profound imprint on rhetorical studies and on our lives will not be forgotten.”

Larry Scott Deatherage (GC94) died on December 25 at age 74 following a heart attack on December 22. The University’s beloved and highly decorated former debate coach led the Northwestern University Debate Society to seven national championships as director of the program from 1993 to 2008. While at Northwestern, the man known as “Duck” to his students and friends was named the 2003 Paul H. National Coach of the Year and the 2007 Zigfeldmuller National Debate Tournament Coach of the Year.

His peers named him 1996’s Coach of the Decade.

“Generations of Northwestern debaters will remember and honor Scott Deatherage as the greatest coach in the history of college debate in America,” said Dave Fresel (GC56), Northwestern’s current director of forensics, who began coaching as an assistant under Deatherage in 2006. “But even more will remember him as their tireless advocate, their leader in crisis and calm, their mentor in life and loss. His legacy is carried by all Northwestern debate coaches who dedicate themselves to the pursuit of excellence, who strive for greatness when the goal is well within their grasp.”

Deatherage received a bachelor’s degree in economics and a master’s degree in communication studies from Baylor University before earning his doctorate in communication studies from Northwestern. He left Northwestern after the 2007–08 debate season to become the executive director of the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues.


Jennifer Jones (C40) died on December 17 in Malibu, California, at age 90. An Academy Award winner in her twenties for the 1945 film The Song of Bernadette, she was also nominated for her leading roles in Love Letters (1945), Dead in the Sun (1946), and Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing (1955) and as best supporting actress for Some You Never Want (1944). Originally from Texas, Oklahoma, she attended Northwestern and the University’s 1935 National High School Tournament (the Chicago program) as Phyllis Idey. Jones received a Northwestern Alumni Award in 1944.

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