



College of Media

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE

**\$7.5 million gift establishes
the Richard and Leslie Frank Center
for Leadership and Innovation in Media**



Fall 2020

Message from the Dean

As quickly as media evolves, it's exciting to be in a field where we regularly develop new curriculum to provide students cutting-edge learning experiences.

While we navigate a year like no other, the College of Media continues to innovate as we implement our new strategic plan and look ahead to a bright future. As you may have heard, our exciting momentum has been accelerated further by a game-changing \$7.5 million gift from Richard and Leslie Frank. The creation of the Richard and Leslie Frank Center for Leadership and Innovation in Media is an infusion for the College of Media at a time where support for our students and programs is vital in preparing the next generation of media professionals.

This transformative gift dedicates \$1.5 million for facilities upgrades and a \$6 million endowment to establish the Frank Center. While the gift targets our journalism programs, a priority for the Franks and their motivation for giving, the entire College of Media will benefit from the programming provided by the Frank Center and by the renovations for classrooms in Gregory Hall and for Richmond Studio, where we teach our broadcast journalism classes.

The Frank Center will offer a distinguished speaker series, a professional-in-residence program, symposia, professional development support for students, and opportunities to engage with the community in public-facing events—all of which tie back to the important land-grant mission of the University of Illinois.

This gift is also a testament to the hard work of our faculty, staff, and students, and the resulting belief that the College of Media is worthy of major investment. We are so thrilled about the impact this gift will have on educating our students, attracting and retaining the very best faculty, and continuing to produce alumni who make a significant societal impact.

Tracy Sulkin

Tracy Sulkin
Dean



Advancing Excellence is a publication of the College of Media Office of Advancement at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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Message from Advancement

In the past year, we've seen an incredible number of alumni and friends become more involved in College of Media initiatives. Whether that's by sharing wisdom in our Media Career Night virtual panels and in virtual classrooms through the Alumni Speakers Bureau, offering guidance to our students in our new mentorship program, or providing financial support to us, we are grateful for your contributions.

This engagement on all levels is extremely valuable and we're all the better for it. Everyone at the College of Media is benefiting from this momentum, which surged this fall when Richard and Leslie Frank gave the biggest gift in College of Media history. Their belief in our mission and their desire to invest in our success ensures our future as a premier college at a world-class university.

If you haven't already, I hope you'll consider joining the excitement here through your time, expertise, or financial support. Throughout this magazine, we have showcased some of our donors who have given in a variety of ways, including outright gifts, estate-based gifts, and scholarship and internship opportunities.

To give to the College of Media or to get more information on ways to support us, please contact our Office of Advancement at 217-244-5466 or visit our website at media.illinois.edu/giving.

Deanne Johnson

Deanne Johnson
Assistant Dean for Advancement



Director of Communications: Holly Rushakoff
To read the latest news, visit media.illinois.edu.
To submit alumni news, visit go.media.illinois.edu/alum-news.
Questions? Email media-giving@illinois.edu.

\$7.5 million gift establishes the Richard and Leslie Frank Center for Leadership and Innovation in Media

The College of Media at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign announced on October 12, 2020, that its students will benefit from a suite of enhanced professional experiences, thanks to a \$7.5 million gift by Rich and Leslie Frank of St. Helena, California. The gift, the largest in the College of Media's history, will establish the Richard and Leslie Frank Center for Leadership and Innovation in Media.

"The opportunity this gift provides to our students who are pursuing careers in media is phenomenal," said Illinois Chancellor Robert J. Jones. "The passion Rich has for his alma mater and his vast industry experience have combined perfectly with Leslie's broadcast news experience to create a center that will become the perfect ecosystem for budding journalists and media professionals at Illinois."

"Now more than ever there is a critical need for good, solid, objective journalism in this country," said Rich and Leslie Frank. "We are encouraged our contribution will help create the highest level of learning for the next generation of journalists and that we are able to play a part in elevating the stature of the program at Illinois, making it a top destination for students and faculty."

Rich Frank, former president of Disney Studios, and Leslie (Miller) Frank, an Emmy award-winning broadcast journalist, both now vintners and hospitality leaders in Napa Valley, wanted to make an investment in the University of Illinois that would have an impact for generations.

The Richard and Leslie Frank Center at Illinois will develop students who are leaders in their professions by offering access to a diverse group of experts and practitioners through residencies and a speaker series, and by supporting outside learning opportunities such as professional immersion experiences, conference participation, and internships.

A portion of the Franks' gift will be used to create a state-of-the-art broadcast facility within the Richmond Studio, and additionally to create two classrooms in Gregory Hall to accommodate the use of new technologies, and to offer space for media editing and production.

"The Richard and Leslie Frank Center will have a transformational impact on students and will define Illinois' excellence in media fields from this point forward," said Tracy Sulkin, dean of the College of Media. "This gift is a game-changer for the College



Rich and Leslie Frank have given the largest gift in the College of Media's history. After having illustrious careers—Rich was president of Disney Studios and Leslie was an Emmy Award-winning TV news anchor—they now run one of the most successful family-owned-and-operated wineries in the Napa Valley region, Frank Family Vineyards.

of Media," she added. "The upgrades to instructional facilities and the programming provided will ensure that we continue to train innovative and ethical professionals who will lead the way in their chosen fields, attract and retain the very best faculty to the Department of Journalism, and enhance our opportunities to engage with the public on pressing issues. We cannot thank the Franks enough for their generosity and commitment to shaping future generations of journalists and media professionals."

Rich Frank, who received his bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Illinois, is no stranger to media. He began his career at the advertising agency BBDO in New York City before moving to Los Angeles to work as a sales manager at KTLA. He then served as president of Chris-Craft Broadcasting. In 1977 he became president of Paramount Television Group, overseeing the creation and production of such shows as *Taxi*, *Family Ties*, and *Cheers*, as well as the creation of the groundbreaking entertainment news show, *Entertainment Tonight*.

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In 1985, he became president of Disney Studios. Under his leadership, the studio created iconic sitcoms such as *The Golden Girls* and *Home Improvement*, and films including *Good Morning, Vietnam*; *Dead Poets Society*; and *The Lion King*. He also oversaw the launch of the Disney Channel. Rich served three terms as president of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. In 2007, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences recognized him with the prestigious Syd Cassyd Founder's Award. In 2011, Rich received an honorary doctorate from the American Film Institute where he is currently a vice chairman on the AFI's Board of Directors. Rich previously served on the board of the Motion Picture Association of America.

Born in Hamilton, Ontario, Leslie (Miller) Frank began her career in Canada before crossing the border to work in some of the largest television markets in the United States. She spent more than 25 years covering many major stories including the 9/11 attacks where she reported live from ground zero in New York City, as well as from the scene of the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and inside the courtroom at the Michael Jackson trial. Leslie spent the last nine years of her TV news career reporting and anchoring at the number one rated station, KABC in Los Angeles, where she covered politics, crime, weather calamities, as well as interviewed some of the biggest stars in Hollywood on the red carpet. Prior to Los Angeles, Leslie was the main anchor at KCPQ in Seattle, where she took the 10 p.m. newscast to number one in its time slot and clinched an Emmy for outstanding news anchor.

Today, Rich and Leslie live in the Napa Valley and run one of the most successful family-owned-and-operated wineries in the region, Frank Family Vineyards. Established in 1993, the winery is well regarded for its estate-driven still and sparkling wines.

Rich and Leslie return to the Illinois campus frequently, speaking with students and faculty in both the College of Media and the Gies College of Business and advising journalism students on their television news broadcasts and resume videos.



Richmond Studio, a broadcast training facility, will be completely renovated with state-of-the-art equipment thanks to the Franks' gift. (Photo by Madeline Wilson, BS '20, journalism.)

Media courses shift experiential learning opportunities online

By Marissa Plescia, Communications and Marketing Intern

Like many faculty members, the COVID-19 pandemic left Jonathan Knipp wondering how he was going to teach his MACS 464: Film Festivals class virtually.

Normally, the class puts together an in-person film festival on campus. But instead, the class worked together to provide a virtual film festival of student work, including showcasing their experiences in quarantine.

"It was a really intense moment for me in which I had to kind of think on my feet all the time," said Knipp, lecturer in media and cinema studies.

Knipp said his students stepped up to make the film festival happen, even though it was different than expected. Some of his students even created a website to livestream all of the content. The website also allowed students to vote for their favorite films.

"Without the participation of everyone, then it would have been unmanageable," Knipp said.

Knipp wasn't the only one who had to change lesson plans. Alison Davis, lecturer in journalism who taught JOUR 199: Intro to Documentary Production in the spring, also had to make a quick turnaround. Fortunately, her students were able to take home all of their camera equipment. For their final assignment, which is a short video documentary, she encouraged her students to focus on their experience during the pandemic.

She said she received some amazing creations from her students. One of her students is from Spain and made a film about what it was like living with her family in their apartment during quarantine. Her grandparents had contracted COVID-19 and the video ended with them getting out of the hospital, Davis said.

Davis added that her students have been very engaged in class and have handled the transition into remote learning well.

"I've had excellent attendance to my classes," Davis said. "I've had excellent participation. I just think it really says a lot about the quality of students that we have."

Since the pandemic didn't end during the spring semester, faculty had to continue changing their lesson plans into the fall. Marisa Peacock, lecturer in advertising, teaches ADV 350: Writing for Public Relations, which entails an assignment that is usually done in person.



Facilities & Services employees prepare Room 100 in Gregory Hall for safe in-person instruction. (Photo by Charles "Stretch" Ledford, associate professor of journalism.)

For the assignment, students have to create press materials for a fictional organization. But beforehand, they use physical messaging cards that allow them to sort and organize their company's communication goals. For a virtual replacement, Peacock decided to use Trello, a free app and web-based platform, that allowed groups to visually organize their projects through virtual cards.

"By using tools that were easy to access and worked well with the tools I was already using, it was a great way to make learning engaging, while giving students hands-on experience," Peacock wrote in a blog, which is part of a series on remote instruction resources compiled by the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning at Illinois.

Christopher Ball, assistant professor in journalism who taught JOUR 460: Extended Realities and Immersive Technologies in the spring, created virtual reality presentations for his students. He experimented with different virtual lecture formats, which were rated highly by his students, so he decided to continue experimenting with different virtual formats in the fall.

He said using emerging technology like VR provides students with a hands-on learning opportunity that motivates them to be more involved.

"Students are learning *with* the new technologies that they are learning *about*," Ball said. "I also think that these new virtual formats can add an invaluable compo-

nent to online education—intrinsic motivation. In other words, I try to make my class content fun, and I try to have fun making it."

This semester, Ball is also experimenting with creating a virtual lecture hall where students can interact in real time. In this virtual environment, he would be able to meet with students and have discussions within the virtual lecture hall.

These virtual learning experiences have extended even outside the classroom. Under normal circumstances, students would be able to go to the basement computer labs in Gregory Hall to work on projects and receive tech guidance from "Adobe helpers." But the College of Media has created a "Virtual Basement" where students can have this same experience online through Microsoft Teams.

The Virtual Basement will be staffed in the afternoons and evenings, and students will be able to interact with each other 24/7, as well as ask for help when needed, said Meghan Burnett, director of information technology and operations.

"The goal of the space is to have a place where our students can interact with each other like they may have in the basement computer labs before COVID-19," Burnett said. "The concept behind the Virtual Basement is to narrow the gap created by being unable to offer lab space this fall."

Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives planned for Media

The College of Media is pleased to announce a number of new initiatives, emerging from our recent strategic planning process, to create and sustain a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment for our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Foremost among these is the appointment of Jason Chambers, associate professor of advertising, as our first Dean's Fellow for Diversity. In this role, Chambers serves as our first senior diversity officer, helping to provide leadership in this important area within the College of Media and serving as our representative to campus entities.

Chambers chairs the college's Diversity Committee, which was charged by Dean Tracy Sulkin to coordinate a series of workshops that engage with diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism; to develop a composite picture of, and determine ways to make more visible, the range of faculty teaching, research, and student activity, that foregrounds Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples and provides models of diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist practices; and to engage with campus diversity and anti-racism initiatives. The committee hosted its first workshop on October 16, "Equity-Mindedness in the College of Media," led by Ross Wantland, director of curricular development and education in the Vice Chancellor's Office of Academic Inclusive Excellence. More than 30 faculty and staff participated in exercises designed to provoke new perspectives on equity and inclusion.

Among our initiatives for students in this area is a new mentoring program that connects students with accomplished alumni to share perspectives and advice. This initiative is a joint effort of college leadership and alumna Carol Hillsman Sagers (BS '79, advertising), a member of the College of Media Alumni Leadership Council and principal consultant at CHS Marketing Consultants. Sagers said: "We are connecting students to a 'village' of people who earned degrees and launched successful careers in their areas of interest. And everyone in the village has been where these students are now. I expect there will be a lot of



Some of the Media alumni participating in a new mentoring program include Karen Coleman, Bianca Shamell Flowers, Felicia Fortenberry, Tamara Gibbs, Ryan Johnson, Clarrie Johnson, Pamela Crittendon Johnson, Carolyn Kidd-Harper, Renee Cogdell Lewis, Joy D. Lindsey, Tristin Marshall, Ronald Alan Norwood, Ric Pringle, Taylor Rooks, Carol Hillsman Sagers, Maisie Sparks, Cheryl Whitlow Thompson, and Catherine West.

experiences, identification of pitfalls, helpful hints, and wisdom shared between student mentees and mentors who want the students to succeed." The pilot this academic year focuses on Black students and Black alumni; the program will expand in future years.

The college also continues to prioritize scholarship support to recruit and retain an excellent and diverse student body. We are pleased to announce that, due to the generosity of a number of donors, our Media Underrepresented Scholarship Fund has now reached endowment level. This enables the college to establish a yearly scholarship for students from underrepresented groups. By contributing to this fund, you can help us expand our capacity to support students.



College's strategic plan sets priorities for 2020-2025

The College of Media initiated strategic planning in September 2019. From a robust series of conversations with stakeholders, a set of common themes emerged about our identity as a unit, our strategic priorities, and our aspirations. We identified common themes and priorities that crossed units and disciplines, and defined Media at Illinois in

each of the three pillars of our mission: education, research and creative endeavor, and public engagement. To advance these strategic priorities, our faculty and staff identified a series of actionable steps to take over the next five years.

You can read the plan online at media.illinois.edu/strategicplan2020.



Alumni share knowledge at virtual events

By Holly Rushakoff

In two new initiatives, the College of Media is bringing together alumni to share their wisdom, experiences, and career advice with students. Media Career Nights have been launched as a virtual series and an Alumni Speakers Bureau has been formed to provide guest speakers to Media classrooms.

After the pandemic caused a shutdown of in-person events and the rise of Zoom as an online gathering space last spring, the College of Media decided to use the virtual platform to its advantage. Not only has the convenience of Zoom enabled even more alumni to participate, but those who are geographically dispersed are able to join in on panels for robust conversations.

"Over the course of this year, we are aiming to capture a breadth and depth of virtual opportunities for our students," said Dean Tracy Sulkin. "The virtual events have received such enthusiasm among students, faculty, and alumni that they will undoubtedly become part of our repertoire going forward."

Media Career Nights feature monthly discussions on topics of interest to students across all majors in the college. The Zoom sessions are recorded so other students can benefit from the conversations.

The first virtual panel addressed crisis communications and featured alumni experts Jack Modzelewski (BS '76, advertising), chief executive of JackKnifePR, which provides communication advisory services; Jim Schlueter (BS '80, journalism), who retired from Boeing as director

of technology communications; and Angela Sinickas (BS '75, journalism), CEO of Sinickas Communications, an international management consultancy.

Students asked about the differences between working for a small ad agency compared to a large firm when dealing with crises, about how the emergence of technology has changed strategies, and what they could do as students to prepare for crisis communications.



Thinking critically, writing well, and writing quickly are important skills to develop, Modzelewski said. "I'm pretty sure I learned that when I was on campus in Gregory Hall."

The second Media Career Night panel, "Getting Started in Film and TV in LA," featured alumni Stephen Feder (BS '02, media studies), a producer at T-Street Productions; Steve Hirschen (BS '71, radio and TV), original director of *America's Funniest Home Videos* and a director for *Entertainment Tonight*, and currently a professor at Chapman University; Emma Miller (BS '08, media studies), vice president for scripted development and programming at the AMC Network; Mort Nathan (BS '75, radio and TV), one of the creators of the *Golden Girls*; and Frank Sinton (BS '84, advertising), COO and executive producer at A. Smith and

Company Productions and producer of *Trading Spaces*, *America Ninja Warriors*, and *Hell's Kitchen*.

A third Media Career Night panel in November will address science communication with Allan Brettman (BS '81, journalism), a science writer at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory; Douglas Isbell (MS '88, journalism), cross-program risk communication coordinator at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory; and Emily Scott (BS '17, agricultural communications;

MS '19, journalism), public affairs specialist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

The College of Media also established a new Alumni Speakers Bureau, featuring some of our most prominent and

accomplished alumni. This program is designed to enrich classes with guest speakers joining in via Zoom to offer Q/A about specific topics, live or recorded lectures, or small group discussions.

"Fall semester is a pilot program, and we are looking forward to building on its successes and growing the initiative in future semesters," Sulkin said.

For the month of October, guests in the line-up included journalism alumni Angela Sinickas; Andrea Darlas (BS '94), WGN radio host and UIUC senior director of constituent engagement; David McCraw (BS '76), deputy general counsel at *The New York Times*; Kurt Winter (BS '91), vice president of regional marketing at Allstate Insurance; and Anne Woodward (BS '91), former vice president of CNN technical operations.

Kalis supports students with new award for creativity in advertising

By Kimberly Belser, Communications and Marketing Intern

Talented advertising undergraduate students will be recognized for their creative work and provided with a monetary gift to support their creative career path, thanks to the Murray Kalis Award for Creativity in Advertising. The new award was established by College of Media alumnus Murray Kalis (BS '61).

“Much of advertising education is quantitative based: media, research, tracking,” Kalis said. “Yet, what can truly differentiate ad agencies is qualitative. What I learned in the ad business was creative is the great equalizer in agency pitches. No matter how big our competitors were, if we had the big idea, we won the account.”

Kalis, who spent most of his career as a creative director, endowed this award to emphasize to students the importance of creativity in advertising.

“Overall, as a department head, I feel blessed and very happy that we have alumni who care deeply about our students, and who would really like to recognize the strength in our talent pool,” said Professor Mike Yao, head of the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising.

The award process, which begins this December in advertising senior lecturer Peter Sheldon’s ADV 452: Creative Concepts I course, will take place during a virtual portfolio review, where at least one “upper-level creative with an extensive track record” will critique the students’ work.

Three awards will be given: one for the best single ad, one for the best three-ad campaign, and one for the best 10-ad portfolio. Students have the ability to win in multiple categories.

The criteria for the Murray Kalis Award for Creativity in Advertising is smart positioning, outstanding creative concept, and strong execution, in addition to that “wow” factor, Sheldon explained. The winners will be given a gift award to support their efforts in pursuing a creative career path in the advertising industry.

“From the time I started at [the University of Illinois], I was always interested in majors that require creativity,” Kalis said. “In fact, I switched majors every semester, starting with architecture, to industrial design, to fine arts painting, and then to creative writing.”

Because of this, he had little to no concentration of prerequisites to start his junior year. Then, he learned that the School of Journalism only required 60 hours completed, and that the school offered a major in advertising.



“I loved advertising because it called upon everything I knew and had learned. After all, you never know what products you might need to work on,” Kalis said. Two years later he graduated from the journalism school having majored in advertising.

“Even though our curriculum does not have a dedicated track for creativity because its history has always focused on strategy, there are many creative talents in our major,” Yao said. “We will always be looking for a way to discover and support these students who are interested in pursuing a creative path in advertising, and so this timely gift and this award will allow us to discover and cultivate this type of talent.”

Yao said it is important for students to be given a broad view of the industry and to be able to pursue their interests through the advertising curriculum, while feeling supported and recognized.

“This award really reflects our dedication and our view of the importance of this particular dimension of advertising,” he said.

Kalis is creative director of Kalis, Inc.; a partner and creative director emeritus at Riester; a board member of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council; on the board of advisors for Dave’s Hot Chicken; and a member of the Tech Coast Angels, the largest angel investor group in the U.S. Most recently, he joined the Los Angeles-based B2B delivery startup, Ship District, as Chief Marketing Officer.

Noted journalists leave a legacy

By Judy Schneider, University of Illinois Foundation

As an editor, Doug Balz (BS '66, MS '68, journalism) knew how to get the best from writers. In 1980, he advised one journalist stalled while writing, “When in doubt, put the reader on the road. Learn from the best. If the journey motif was good enough for Homer...” That encouragement proved valuable to Madeleine Blais, a colleague who received the Pulitzer Prize for her feature writing. Balz was her editor.

The late Balz and his wife Jane Scholz are putting Illinois journalism students “on the road” through a gift from their estate. “Journalism has been our life,” Scholz said. The couple has remembered the College of Media with a gift from a charitable remainder trust they established in the late '90s. The trust provides payments to them while living, and the remainder is directed to beneficiaries including the University of Illinois Foundation to benefit the Department of Journalism.

Balz’s academic journey began in the early '60s when he left Freeport, Illinois, destined for the U of I. Several years later, his younger and only sibling Dan (BS '68, MS '72, journalism), also an accomplished writer and currently chief correspondent for the *Washington Post*, would follow.

Dan Balz shared that neither of them set out to study journalism. Doug was an avid reader and co-editor of his high school yearbook. At Illinois, he declared journalism as his major during his junior year. Doug encouraged Dan to write for *The Daily Illini*—igniting his interest. While at Illinois, Doug was awarded a Ford Foundation Fellowship and spent a year in Springfield, Illinois, studying the Illinois legislature and working as an aide to the speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives.

Doug Balz pursued a PhD in American studies at the University of Minnesota before taking his first reporting job at the *Akron Beacon Journal* in Ohio. He then worked as the arts editor for the *Miami Herald* where he met Scholz. She too was an accomplished journalist and would work as a publisher before retiring.

“Doug loved the arts, current events, and politics,” Scholz said. “He had a great sense of how to take a story and turn it into something really special.”

Balz’s writing skills earned him awards as a newspaper editor and general and investigative reporter. While at the *Beacon Journal*, he would uncover the cause of leukemia deaths of workers at an area Goodyear plant. When Scholz was named publisher of the *Gary Post-Tribune* in Indiana, Balz accepted a job at

the *Chicago Tribune* as editor of the arts section. Following the death of a young boy at the Cabrini Green Housing Project, he came up with an idea for an architectural competition to reimagine housing there. It drew 300 contestants from 10 countries.

“The project spoke to Doug’s journalistic ambitions, his creativity, and his belief in the power of newspapers to make people’s lives better and cities more livable,” Dan Balz said.

Journalism careers provided both Balz and Scholz a better life and their gift will make a difference in the lives of students. Dan said remembering Illinois is a tribute to the education, guidance, and inspiration his brother received there.

“I think he wanted to say thank you to the institution,” Dan Balz concluded.



Make a gift and increase your income

Doug Balz and Jane Scholz are not alone in making a charitable remainder trust part of their financial plans. The growth in such arrangements has been dramatic the past couple of decades as interest rates on traditional income-producing investments have stayed historically low. The rate of income paid is generally based on age. The older you are, the higher the rate.

Add in the fact that a donor receives an immediate charitable income tax deduction and can reduce taxation of long-term gains if property is donated, such as stocks or real estate, and you quickly realize it’s a “win-win” situation and a wonderful way to “give and receive” at the same time.

You can even set up the plan to provide income for someone else, such as a friend, spouse, sibling, or adult children. This can be done while you’re still living or with language in your will or trust to ensure their financial well-being after you are gone.

To learn more about gifts that return income, please contact the College of Media Office of Advancement at 217-244-5466 or media-giving@illinois.edu.

The University of Illinois Foundation does not provide tax, legal, or accounting advice. You should consult your own tax, legal, and accounting advisors before engaging in any transaction.

New faculty positions and leadership appointments

By Kimberly Belser and Marissa Plescia, Communications and Marketing Interns

College welcomes three new faculty members this fall

Angela Aguayo, associate professor of media and cinema studies, centers her research around documentary production and media studies, and her work “creates connections between production, theory, and history.” She begins by looking for answers to two questions: Which problems are not being solved right now, and what are the world’s most pressing social issues? Many of her projects, including the oral history project Rural Civil Rights Project and the summer camp Girls Make Movies, were prompted by this approach.



Chris Evans, clinical assistant professor of journalism, is facilitating connections between the College of Media and Illinois Public Media in a brand new position at the college. He will help students gain real newsroom experience, get their work on the air, and allow them to create work that is held to a professional standard with local, and possibly national, reach.



Jacob Fisher, assistant professor of advertising, is interested in technology design and the way it influences people’s attention. He said he was attracted to Illinois by its strong reputation in computation, neuroscience, and brain imaging. He plans to collaborate with colleagues across campus, including at the Beckman Institute and the Siebel Center for Design.



Inaugural Dean’s Fellows to lead initiatives on diversity and experiential learning

Jason Chambers, associate professor of advertising, and Ann Reisner, associate professor of media and cinema studies, were appointed by Dean Tracy Sulkin as inaugural College of Media Dean’s Fellows for the 2020-2021 academic year. The creation of the Dean’s Fellows program, in which faculty lead initiatives on college priorities, emerged from the college’s new strategic plan.

Chambers serves as the college’s senior diversity officer, and his projects will include leading initiatives to improve the college environment and create programs that will recruit and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. He will also organize workshops and participate in college committees, including the Diversity Committee. Specific projects will be developed this year.



For Reisner, there will be a special emphasis on exploring ways to provide experiential learning, which allows students to develop knowledge and skills through methods outside the classroom, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of her activities will include initiatives like coordinating the college’s Undergraduate Research Symposium, evaluating platforms for student work, and creating a system to connect faculty with students who are interested in independent studies and research assistant opportunities.



Faculty appointed to leadership positions at ICR

The Institute of Communications Research, which houses the College of Media’s doctoral program, ushered in the academic year with new leadership.

Sela Sar, associate professor of advertising, and Mira Sotirovic, associate professor of journalism and Karin and Folke Doving Scholar in Propaganda, serve as the ICR’s director and director of graduate studies, respectively. Both appointments are three-year terms.



As the world’s oldest program for research and doctoral education in communication and media studies, the ICR has been a pioneer in interdisciplinary research methods and training. The ICR’s faculty members, all active and renowned scholars in the field, teach graduate-level seminars and closely advise PhD students on their research projects and dissertations.

“I am hoping to facilitate and enhance collaborative interdisciplinary research and an enhanced teaching environment for the PhD students and ICR faculty through organizing symposiums, colloquia, brown bags, sponsoring research talks and presentations by ICR faculty and students, and by faculty from other colleges and universities,” Sar said. He and Sotirovic will “continue fostering research and professional development opportunities for PhD students by organizing workshops on research, teaching, and future career development plans for grad students,” he added.

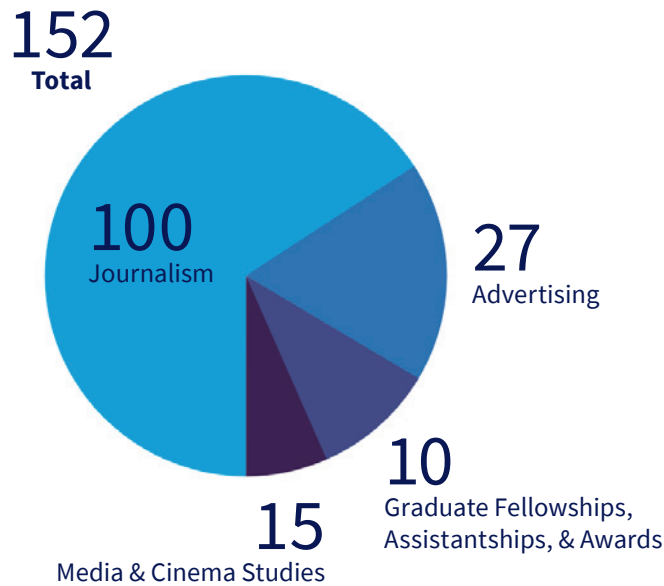
Media by the numbers

Support from our alumni and friends transforms a College of Media education. Private gifts help to alleviate financial need and recognize students’ academic achievements. With you, student recruitment and success is possible. See our list of donors for FY20 at media.illinois.edu/giving/donors.

Funding Priorities

- Support College of Media Unrestricted Funds
- Foster Opportunities for Media Students
- Champion Innovation in Media Research & Collaborations
- Nurture Excellence in Media Faculty

Scholarships, Internship Support, Fellowships, and Awards FY20



Student Stats

- 1,144 Undergraduate and graduate students
- 9% International undergraduate students
- 22% Undergraduate students from under-represented populations
- \$37,357 Yearly cost of attendance for an Illinois resident taking 16 credit hours

*Total amount of scholarship package from College of Media and campus sources

Scholarship Stats FY20

- \$351,000 Amount of scholarships awarded
- \$4,352 Average award package for freshmen*
- \$3,379 Average award package for sophomores, juniors, and seniors*
- 416 Freshman and transfer student applicants to the College of Media
- 201 Continuing students who applied for scholarships
- 25 Incoming freshmen who received scholarships
- 23.7% Eligible undergraduate applicants (freshmen through seniors) who were supported through available funding

New Business FY20

- \$1,356,677 Amount of gifts
- 466 Number of donors
- 615 Number of gifts



Every gift counts. To learn more about giving to the College of Media, contact the Office of Advancement at 217-244-5466 or media-giving@illinois.edu. You can use the remit envelope in this magazine or make a gift online at media.illinois.edu/giving. Learn about the With Illinois campaign at with.illinois.edu.



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Hear Media faculty discuss research and projects related to current events:

- How the pandemic has changed consumer behavior and brand strategies
- Student-driven investigative reporting of COVID-19 on CU-CitizenAccess.org

► go.media.illinois.edu/youtube

EBERT SYMPOSIUM SERIES

Hear panels of filmmakers and scholars address:

- The Movie Industry in a Time of Change
- Documentary Film and Social Change
- Representation in Media

► youtube.com/Ebertfest

FOR STUDENTS

“Sit in” on a College of Media class or hear career advice from our alumni:

- media.illinois.edu/watch-class
- media.illinois.edu/career-night-panels