

ANNUAL REPORT



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Long-time faculty and staff hold
key to Bellisario College's success



PennState

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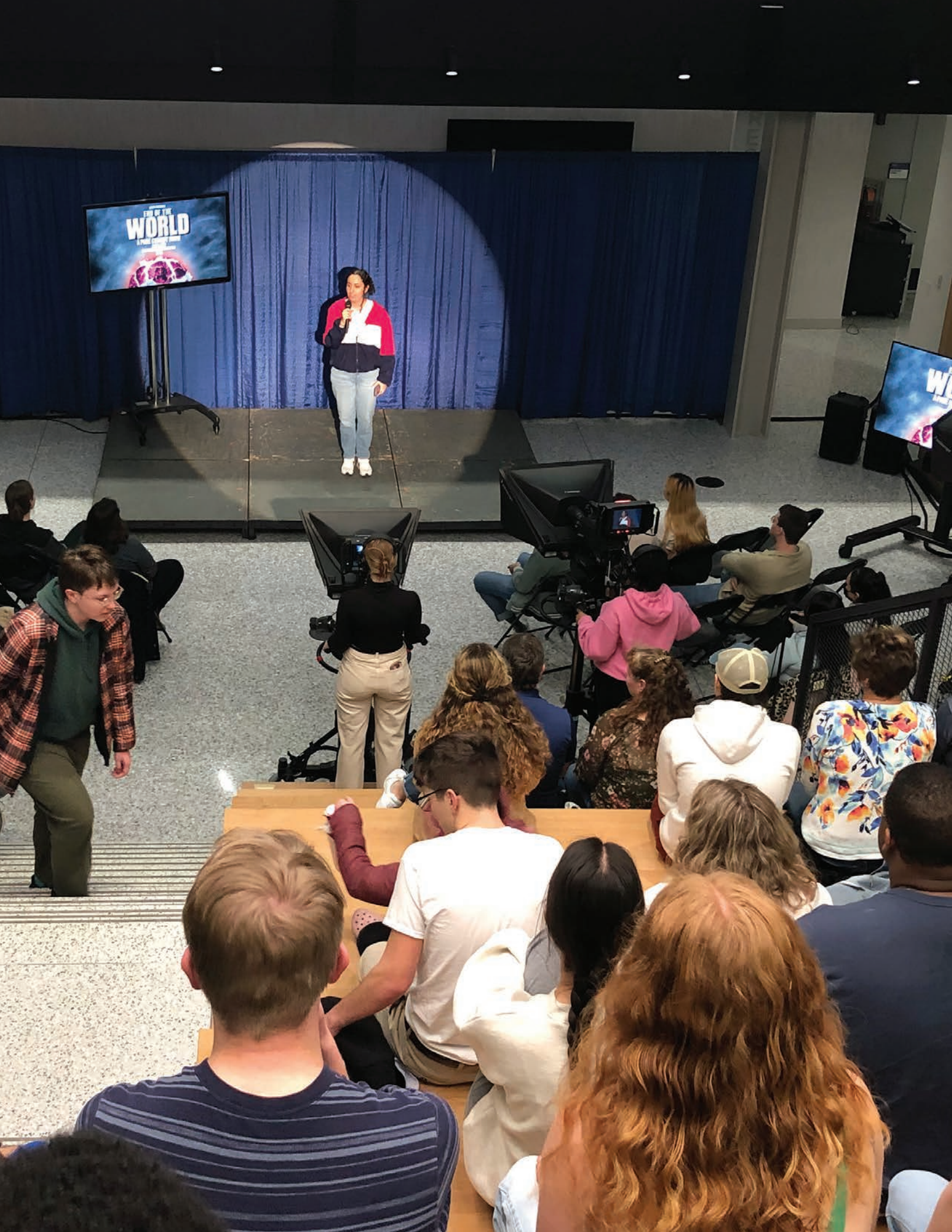
The Annual Report for the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, intended for alumni and friends, provides a brief overview of activities in the Bellisario College from the previous academic year. An abbreviated version may be found online: bellisario.psu.edu/annualreport

Comments/Questions: bellisarioinfo@psu.edu

ON THE COVER: Alumnus Don Roy King ('69), a 13-time Emmy Award winner and longtime director of "Saturday Night Live," presented the commencement address to the Class of 2022 at the Bryce Jordan Center in May. (Photo by Steve Manuel)

The Bellisario Media Center was a magnet for activity during the 2021-22 academic year, including this live taping of a sketch comedy show that was recorded by an advanced production class in the spring.

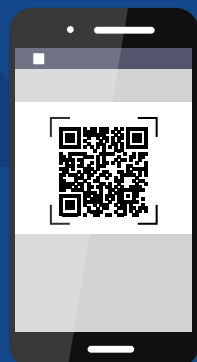






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FROM THE DEAN

What does it take to meet our potential?

A community.

As we reflect on the 2021-22 academic year and prepare to welcome more than 400 new undergraduate and graduate students in a matter of days, I've been thinking a lot about community.

Perhaps you have, too. We all know the impact the COVID pandemic has had on us, including on our work. At Penn State, we've experienced the challenges of large organizations in adjusting to remote work and then forging a path back to a more "normal" campus scene. The University also hasn't been immune to the issues that employees have reported in national surveys, such as heightened stress, feelings of burnout and isolation. Penn State students have also reported challenges with anxiety, loneliness and motivation.

The anecdote, in great measure: Community.

Although the research is overwhelming, we also know this intuitively: Strong connections and a deep sense of belonging to a group with common interests are critical to our wellbeing, productivity and happiness. Especially during what we've all experienced since 2020.

Even better: Community with purpose.

In this issue of our Annual Report, I think you'll see evidence that the Bellisario College — its faculty, staff, students, and the many alumni who are engaged with us — has been such a community. And during tough times, we have drawn on that strength and thrived.

Our unifying purpose last academic year was two-fold. First, we were driven by our mission to prepare students for the professions and for citizenship in a democracy. We did that in the classroom — through the work of faculty members like Steve Manuel (p. 34) — and we did it through our many co-curricular programs.

Our students produced the "46Live" webcast of the Penn State Dance Marathon (THON) for thousands of viewers around the globe, produced digital

media for clients across campus as part of CommAgency, and traveled to the Super Bowl to get behind-the-scenes experience in media relations and strategic communication. Our students and faculty also headed overseas as part of our embedded travel courses during the spring and got back into the field to do award-winning work and compete on the national stage.

The second unifying purpose for the Bellisario College was in the launch of our media center. We were determined, despite the challenges and delays presented by COVID, to get our students into their new home and help them thrive. And we did. This wasn't just a faculty and staff effort, but one that involved the support of our alumni and friends. Many of their names are on the digital donor wall just inside the media center. Others, like that of Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross (p. 14), are in our newsroom and student lounge, where students gather to connect and work. We're proud of the way our entire community has embraced the center.

As we move into what we trust will be a semester that looks much more like that of Fall 2019 than Fall 2021, we will recommit to our mission, values and goals as a community with purpose.

Thank you for being part of it!



Marie Hardin,
Dean



Dean Hardin
on Leadership

CAMARADERIE & COMMUNITY

By Steve Sampsell ('90)



There's no secret to the success of the Bellisario College — it's the people, many of whom have made Penn State their life's work while remaining creative and student focused.

Patrick Parsons remembers his first trip to Happy Valley, even though it felt brief. Jamey Perry remembers his first day on the job, even if the atmosphere seemed a little tense. Bob Richards remembers the response to his original proposals for start-up programming and student-centered endeavors. Similarly, Bob Martin remembers what those in charge said about his proposal for a brand-new communications-specific job fair. And Karen Mozley-Bryan, well, she remembers just about everything, a key trait of hers since Day One — from who to contact to get things done to who needs a little TLC when things get stressful, and she especially remembers to share a strong dose of kindness whenever possible.



Among the nearly two dozen Bellisario College employees with more than 20 years of experience, are (left to right): James P. Jimirro, Professor of Media Effects S. Shyam Sundar, Distinguished Professor Ford Risley, Facilities Manager Karen Mozley-Bryan, Assistant Dean Bob Martin, and Assistant Dean Jamey Perry. Those five people have a combined 143 years of service at Penn State.

With two dozen faculty and staff who have more than 20 years of experience in their positions, the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications has a wealth of institutional knowledge. That experience provides the foundation for a close-knit community committed to supporting student achievement and excellence.

All the experience — and especially that sense of community — makes the Bellisario College one of the best places to work at Penn State, something confirmed by a University-wide survey of faculty and staff that rated the unit as a generally happy and productive place by outlier-level statistics when it was last conducted in 2019.

“We have a critical mass of people who’ve been in the college over much of its life span, and that’s a special resource. Because we’re a comparatively young college, we have many people familiar with our institutional history. They’ve lived it,” Dean Marie Hardin says. The Penn State communications program became a school in 1985 and a college in 1995. “I can’t stress enough how important that is. Institutions have life cycles and when you have a lot of turnover of personnel you have to go back to square one on a lot of things. We really have not had to do that.

“Through everyday challenges, and especially through the past two years with COVID and so much more, we’ve been able to rely very much on the goodwill we have toward each other. It is that goodwill — we assume the best about one another, which leads to building trust — that has helped us succeed.”

Stability at the top has helped as well. The Bellisario College has had only two deans in the past 23 years, and Hardin is the second-longest-serving dean in an academic college on the University Park campus.

Just a short stay

Parsons was an aspiring faculty member when he first visited Happy Valley for a job interview in 1986. He was promised transportation from the airport to his hotel and a tour of town when he arrived from California, after he had earned his doctoral degree at the University of Minnesota.

“So, we’re in the car, going down Fox Hollow Road and a big stadium comes into view. We drive past that down to College Avenue, then turn right onto North Atherton Street and head to the hotel. It was a short drive

— it seemed like it was fairly direct from the airport,” Parsons says. “I just figured they would show me town the next day.

“It turns out the drive was our tour of town. It’s changed a bit through the years, obviously, but it still has that small town charm.”

Parsons, a professor of telecommunications and an internationally respected expert and researcher in areas such as cable television history and emerging media technologies, retired at the end of the spring semester. He plans to remain active by helping chronicle the history of the Bellisario College, mentoring fellow faculty members and working on some passion projects.

He and his wife, retired Bellisario College faculty member Susan Strohm, have some travel plans but after 36 years his connection with the University runs deep.

“When you’re someplace as long as we’ve been at Penn State, it just becomes part of you. Plus, my belief and understanding — based on input from colleagues in other disciplines here at Penn State and those at other universities — is that we do have something special in the Bellisario College,” Parsons says. “There’s clearly a community, a connection, and that’s rare.”

It’s a connection many others share, and the resulting collegiality and cooperation lead to a palpable sense of community. Visitors, aspiring faculty members and students alike notice, and it contributes mightily as the Bellisario College delivers what it promotes to students — big-school resources with a small-school feel. It’s most clear with everyday interactions, when faculty and staff pass in the hallways of Carnegie Building or the Bellisario Media Center and exchange pleasantries, as well as questions about family members, research ideas or just weekend plans.

Honestly, few of the long-term employees planned to be members of the Bellisario College as long as they have. Almost nobody, faculty or staff, takes a job expecting it to be a lifelong position. While most faculty work to secure

tenure, which requires a time commitment at one place, it’s often hard to envision that timeline when you accept a job. At first, it’s just a happy culmination to a terminal degree.

Likewise for staff, Penn State offers a plethora of opportunities — more than a dozen academic colleges as well as administrative and operational units on the University Park campus. It’s not unusual for a longtime Penn State employee



Patrick
Parsons

to spend several years in a few different units as they gain experience and find change or growth all while working on the same campus. Longtime Penn State employees are not rare, but one unit with more than a quarter of its people who have been in place for more than a quarter century seems somewhat unusual — in a good way.

Several longtime members of the Bellisario College have considered leaving or explored other options. Sometimes the case for change was strong, even though it was eventually rejected. And sometimes the considerations were more about geography than anything else. Those short-term obstacles were easily overcome, or they provided a reason to buy a winter jacket.

“We had a storm with 17 inches of snow my first November on campus and it seemed like we didn’t see the ground again until almost May. For someone from the South, that was an eye opener,” says Distinguished Professor Ford Risley, who served as associate dean for undergraduate and graduate education in the Bellisario College for six years, as well as head of the Department of Journalism for a dozen years. He’s the founding director of the Newspaper Journalists Oral History Program, housed in the Bellisario College.

In his first fall on campus (1995), having built his academic credentials at Auburn, Georgia and Florida, the mission of a land-grant university was appealing and familiar at Penn State, but the cold was something to be overcome. Risley and his wife did that, in part, through the power of community. Twenty-seven years later, he’s still here — a respected, steady force in the Bellisario College and across campus.

“There are probably little things about town that someone could point to — maybe another good restaurant or two — but Penn State itself has been an exceptional place for my career, and this community has been super for my family,” Risley says. “Plus, in our college the divisions seem minimal. We’re not separated or structured by office location in buildings, so offices of people in different disciplines are side by side. That certainly helps make things more collegial and gets us connected.”

A necessary upward curve

The upward curve of employee growth in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications rose quickly in the 36 months from August 1996 to August 1999, thanks to an influx of faculty members.

As then-Dean Doug Anderson worked to right-size the growing program to best serve increasing numbers of students, talented faculty members were a necessity. In three years, numerous faculty members who would become stalwarts of the Bellisario College — for their impact on students, involvement on campus and in the local community, and research productivity — joined the academic ranks. Additions during those years include:

1996: Steve Manuel ('84, 94 MA), Maura Shea

1997: Anne Hoag, John Sanchez

1998: Matt Jackson, Mary Beth Oliver, Russell Frank

1999: Rod Bingaman, Kevin Hagopian

For S. Shyam Sundar, who joined the University in 1995, became founding director of the Media Effects Research Laboratory and crafted an international reputation as a scholar focused on a wide variety of topics, the faculty growth — and collegiality — has been as striking as some of his research findings through the years.

He’s now the James P. Jimirro Professor of Media Effects, a faculty member whose expertise attracts top graduate students and fellow faculty members. His recipe for success includes a mix of curiosity and passion that make him a high-level educator and researcher — as well as a well-rounded colleague with outside interests, including hosting his own jazz show on the campus radio station.

“Our college is not only diverse in the traditional definition of the term but also in the range of topics we cover, from film to telecommunications and science communication to health communication, for example,” Sundar says. “We have a number of different aspects that all come under one media umbrella. We are all united because we’re interested in some aspect of media.

“Within that, we have creators, producers and writers as well as people who study policy aspects and the scientific impact of how media affects people. Plus, we all appreciate that those elements are necessary and none of us can do everything. Because of that, we have a very collegial atmosphere. It’s magical in that respect. It’s not every day you’ll see a college where everyone gets along so well.”

Changes and (brief) concerns

For Jamey Perry ('87), who worked for Penn State admissions centrally for a decade before accepting a position as an adviser for the communications college, the first day on the job was memorable.

"It was June 1, 1999, and it initially felt like a disaster," says Perry, who had been with the University since 1989. "The college was going through a transition. Everybody had just found out a new dean was on the way, and people seemed a little shellshocked and quiet. The energy was low. I was worried I had made a mistake."

He was just at the front part of a curve, though. And it was an upward curve.

Twenty-three years later, Perry does not regret the decision. Plus, his presence has led others to join the Bellisario College while his leadership of the undergraduate advising office has impacted thousands of students.

Perry's approach and enthusiasm — he's a former Penn State cheerleader who served as the "mic man," the squad member with a microphone leading stadium-wide cheers — help drive a palpable energy among faculty and staff. That,

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We have a critical mass of people who've been in the college over much of its life span, and that's a special resource. Because we're a comparatively young college, we have many people familiar with our institutional history. They've lived it.

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— Dean Marie Hardin

along with the physical diversity and proximity of faculty offices that Risley mentioned, provides a lack of division in the Bellisario College that generally results in an all-for-one, we're-in-this together mindset.

That approach inevitably attracts like-minded faculty and staff.

"Oh, Jamey's the reason I'm here," says Julie Evak, coordinator for undergraduate education, and she's serious about Perry's impact. She moved within Penn State, coming to the

Bellisario College while seeking flexibility and a part-time position as she remained a University employee while raising her three children.

After leaving the Department of Women's Studies, she found the right place, and the right people, working in the advising office led by Perry in 2000. Evak's productivity and work ethic were obvious, and her position was later moved to five hours a week in another part of the Bellisario College. Not long after that, she was promoted to a full-time spot. After 22 years on the job, she's among the half-dozen staff members who've worked longest in the Bellisario College.

A couple of even more experienced staff members — lab coordinators Jim Dugan (who started in August 1996) and Steve Reighard (January 1998) — have stayed in the Bellisario College because of similar levels of growth and support. Plus, in another not-so-secret to success, they've been entrusted with additional responsibilities that make their positions attractive.

Dugan ('94) credits Karen Mozley-Bryan ('89), his supervisor, for providing an unparalleled level of respect, support and trust. "When you have that, you're not really looking for anything else," Dugan says. "Nobody expects to be in one place this long, but we have good people who get along and work to solve problems together. That's rewarding and hard to find."

He says he never really considered leaving the Bellisario College, in part because the job changed around him, constantly providing challenges and growth. Studio space he's coordinated through the years has been housed in Boucke Building, Mitchell Building, Innovation Park and now the Bellisario Media Center. So, he's gotten to move without ever having a different job. The inevitable changeover of students and access to state-of-the-art equipment have ensured fresh interactions and opportunities on a regular basis.

Reighard, who started in a part-time position like most other lab coordinators, only considered leaving once and that was because he was seeking a full-time spot. It was only a brief consideration.



Jim Dugan

“Before I really had a chance to complete things or make a decision, we were told our spots were going to be changed to full time. That was a difference maker,” Reighard says. “It was the right thing to do for the program, and it was certainly appreciated.”

The value added for Dugan and Reighard — and several other staff members — is the opportunity to teach. Before joining Penn State, Dugan worked for a local network TV affiliate while Reighard worked for a radio station in State College. Their experience and skills were transferable and valuable to students, and administrators wisely recognized the convenience of putting capable, motivated and talented employees in a position to broaden their impact.

Much like the mix of faculty office locations and overall energy, the practice of empowering qualified staff members to teach makes the community stronger. It helps staff members feel more valued and, because they’re high-quality instructors, it enhances interaction and respect between faculty and staff.

All the connections, none of the complacency

As the longest-tenured employee of the Bellisario College, Bob Richards has seen a lot through the years. Richards, the John and Ann Curley Professor of First Amendment Studies, regularly teaches and has served as an associate dean as well as a member of many Bellisario College and University committees.

He’s the founding director of the Pennsylvania Center for the First Amendment at Penn State, as well as the driving force behind the creation and ongoing success of the Penn State Washington Program and the Penn State Hollywood Program.

Like so many colleagues, Richards (’83) never really thought about making Penn State a lifelong home. He earned his bachelor’s degree from the University before building an impressive career path in broadcasting and radio and then pivoting to become a law clerk and earning his J.D. Once he joined the faculty, he found endless opportunities and support.

“When we’ve considered doing things to benefit students, there has always

been support,” Richards says. “As a faculty member, that’s gratifying. We’re focused on the students, working to do the best for them, and those ideas have been supported — always.”

Richards has been with the Bellisario College since August of 1998, before most current Penn State students were born. Like many other long-time members of the Bellisario College community, that makes him connected and experienced. He knows who to contact at the University for collaboration and support. Thanks to those endeavors in the nation’s capital and Los Angeles, he also knows how to put students in a position to succeed — and how to avoid any big snowfalls that might impact Happy Valley in November, or any month really.

Bob Martin’s ideas to help students drew almost universal support as well. Martin, the assistant dean for internships and career services and the first staff member hired by Dean Doug Anderson (that new dean Perry referenced) in 1999, was tasked with helping build a connection between students and employers — getting the clearly prepared students from the growing program paired with positions where they could start building careers.

Martin, who considered moving to New York City to continue his career in broadcasting management and sales, instead took a chance on the newly created position at his alma mater. It was a chance to impact students, really put them in a position to succeed, and to make a home for his young family. His wife, Marylou, then pregnant with their first child, was a strong advocate for the Penn State position.

Martin (’87) brought a creative, driven mindset to the job. With his office on one side of the second floor of Carnegie Building and Perry and the advising team on the other, students were sandwiched by an almost inescapable support system. To this day, it’s rare to find a connected, successful student who has not interacted regularly with the advising office, the internship office or Mike Poorman, the Bellisario College’s director of alumni relations.

Martin launched an on-campus internship and job fair, JobExpo.Comm, and a similar session in New York City, Success in the City. The former was created to attract recruiters to campus and the latter was designed to get students into the heart of the Big Apple — making it easy for big-time communications companies to connect with students without having to travel.

By any measure, the approach and events have been a huge success during the past 23 years. Martin and his team, which has grown from his one-man operation in 1999 to a three-person team in 2022, try to measure, or at least



Jamey
Perry



Mike
Poorman

track, as much as they can.

“The numbers give us a baseline and context, and through the years they’ve changed at times, but we always want to strive to do better and do more,” Martin says.

“It’s a lot of work, but when you see the connections, impact and opportunities that become

a reality for students, it’s really

motivating. After a long time in the same job some other people might go through the motions or get into a rut, but we challenge ourselves to be a little better each year. Our students deserve that.”

Time flies. The Martins’ first child, Zach, a Penn State senior majoring in finance and broadcast journalism, will graduate next spring. Their second son, Evan, started classes in the Bellisario College this summer.

Consistency and familiarity lead to long-term success

No staff member has worked longer in the Bellisario College than facilities manager Karen Mozley-Bryan, and nobody impacts as many other people as her and the team she manages.

All incoming faculty and staff deal with Bryan (’89) to get their office assignments, ensure internet access on campus, find out their phone number and generally get acclimated and settled. If she’s not the first person newcomers interact with, she’s certainly the most important. Best of all, she treats everyone else as if they were the most important person she’s ever met.

“One of the reasons why I ended up staying is that I felt comfortable here. Comfortable for some people could be a bad thing, because you get complacent. I don’t feel I’ve gotten complacent. I’m just comfortable with my communications family,” Bryan says. “There’s a line of respect you get from your co-workers.

“I feel it’s my responsibility to make people comfortable because I’m often the first person they meet or get to know. I think things run smoothly when we help people. I just think it’s wrong if you choose not to help someone.”

Again, collegiality and community. And not surprising coming from Bryan, who was a Lion Ambassador and a resident assistant as an undergraduate student.

Plus, like others, the job has changed around her with many unexpected opportunities. For Bryan, that included a key role as a liaison between the Bellisario College and the construction team when the Bellisario Media Center was

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One of the reasons why I ended up staying is that I felt comfortable here. ... I’m just comfortable with my communications family.

”

— Karen Mozley-Bryan (’89)

designed and built.

She says the best part of her job is the unexpected. Every day. Plus, like others, she has had flexibility and value-added opportunities, including freelancing on live broadcasts — which allows her to keep her broadcast skills sharp. Her initial plan was to work a couple years on campus before heading home to Pittsburgh to pursue a production career. Instead, Penn State intervened — and, like it has for others, become a commitment.


Bryan is one of a half-dozen Bellisario College alumni among those long-time employees. The group includes Poorman, Richards, Steve Manuel (’84, ’92 MA), Martin, Dugan and Steve Sampsell (’90). While others in that group have worked in the Bellisario College longer, Poorman takes a slightly different view of the long-term relationships.

Poorman, the Bellisario College’s director of alumni relations, earned his bachelor’s degree in 1982. He started his undergraduate studies in 1979 — giving him a 43-year relationship with the program. He’s been a student, an alumni board member and volunteer, an employee, a donor, a mentor to students, an instructor, and more. These days, his primary duties make him the one-person driving force behind interactions with nearly 32,000 Bellisario College alumni.

Because of those many perspectives, he thinks he knows why people remain here for so long.

“For so many of those people, it’s almost a calling. They

care and they're committed," Poorman says. "We're small enough that you can make a difference every day, and you're aligned with people who want to make a difference."

"Plus, when you combine the fact that we have alumni, as well as many who have been here a long time and care immensely, we have great expectations of ourselves and the college as a whole. It's a mission and a passion and a responsibility for many of us. It's not just checking a box for your job. It's making a difference in these students' lives." 



Karen Mozley-Bryan

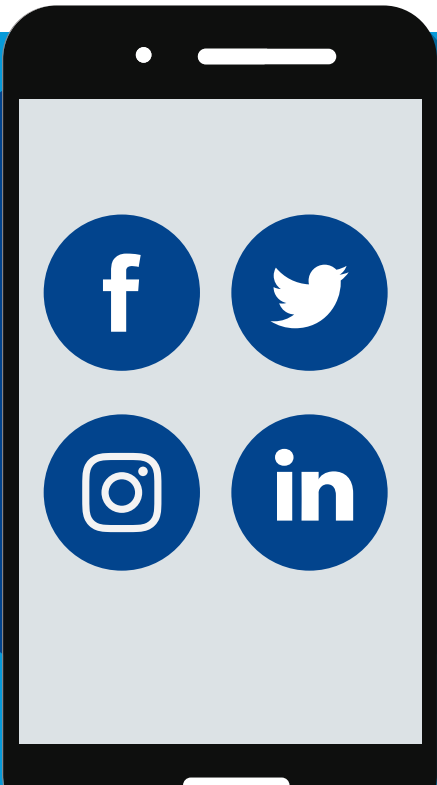
Community leaders

Longest-serving Penn State employees in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications.

Robert Richards ('83)	August 1988
Karen Mozley-Bryan ('89)	August 1989
Anthony Olorunnisola	August 1994
Marea Mannion	May 1995
Ann Marie Major	August 1995
Ford Risley	August 1995
S. Shyam Sundar	August 1995
Jim Dugan ('94)	August 1996
Steve Manuel ('84, '92 MA)	August 1996
Maura Shea	August 1996
Anne Hoag	January 1997
John Sanchez	August 1997
Steve Reighard	January 1998
Matt Jackson	July 1998
Mary Beth Oliver	July 1998
Russell Frank	August 1998
Jamey Perry ('87)	June 1999
Krishna Jayakar	August 1999
Rod Bingaman	August 1999
Kevin Hagopian	August 1999



Steve Sampsell ('90) has served as the director of strategic communications for the Bellisario College since 2001.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

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Donor's gifts fuel innovation and entrepreneurship, support students with space in Bellisario Media Center

Keiko Miwa Ross, a State College resident and Penn State's 2020 Philanthropist of the Year, has made new gifts — including support of the Bellisario Media Center — that will fuel innovation and entrepreneurship among Penn State students and citizens of the region.

In celebration of her \$850,000 commitment for economic development initiatives and programming, which will receive a 1:1 match from Penn State's Economic Development Incentive Matching Program, the University has named, in her honor, the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Green Roof and Gathering Space, the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Entry Plaza and Garden, and the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Coworking Commons in the Innovation Hub located in downtown State College.

Her \$1.04 million gift to support the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications is recognized by the naming of the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Open Newsroom and Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Student Lounge, both key spaces in the state-of-the-art Bellisario Media Center.



Keiko
Miwa Ross



Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Open Newsroom



Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Student Lounge

Ross's commitment to the Bellisario College of Communications will assist in capitalizing on the momentum created by the 2017 naming gift from Donald P. and Vivienne Bellisario and by the official opening last fall of the Bellisario Media Center.

The state-of-the-art facility, created through a \$43.5 million renovation in the Willard Building on the University Park campus, offers spaces and opportunities for collaboration among students pursuing studies in both traditional and new media.

The Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Open Newsroom is at the heart of the Bellisario Media Center, with technology essential to the production of video journalism, media course projects, and more. Large-scale television monitors stream news updates as student organizations and academic groups gather in the facility.

Nearby, the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Student Lounge offers space for informal interactions, one-on-one meetings, and community-building among the more than 2,500 students enrolled in the college's programs, which include degrees in advertising/public relations, film production and media studies, journalism, and telecommunications and media industries.

“The resources that Dr. Ross has offered our college will allow us to evolve our programs and anticipate exciting changes in communications and media.”

— Dean Marie Hardin

“The communications industries depend upon professionals who have both the collaborative and technological skills to thrive in a fast-paced, interconnected, and ever-changing world,” said Bellisario College Dean Marie Hardin. “The resources that Dr. Ross has offered to our college will allow us to evolve our programs and anticipate exciting changes in communications and media, and the spaces she has named will be the site where our students come to understand and embrace their full potential as contributors and collaborators in their fields.”

“We are deeply appreciative of her support as we prepare our students for challenging and rewarding careers.”

Alumna's \$2 million bequest creates named chair

Gift establishes the Elizabeth A. Fetter Chair in Ethics and Strategic Communication

A Penn State alumna whose contributions and support have been integral to the growth and success of the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications has made a commitment to the University that will ensure the strength of its academic programming for years to come.


Elizabeth Fetter made a \$2 million bequest that will establish the Elizabeth A. Fetter Chair in Ethics and Strategic Communication. When fully funded, this endowed faculty chair will provide a professor in the Department of Advertising/Public Relations the opportunity to expand their contributions to teaching, research and public service in the areas of ethics and strategic communication.

Fetter ('80), who was honored as a Penn State Alumni Fellow in 1998, is a longtime University donor and volunteer, including participation in Penn State's Campaign Executive Committee and membership on the Bellisario College's Dean's Advancement Council. She has previously established a number of scholarship funds at the University.

"I am delighted to support Penn State's Bellisario College of Communications in this important and timely area of ethics and strategic communications," Fetter said. "This bequest allows me to further support the college in a long-term way."

Fetter is a seasoned corporate board member and CEO with broad experience leading companies in software, telecom, equipment, tech services and real estate. She has served on 15 corporate boards of directors since 1994. She currently serves on the boards of McGrath RentCorp, Fox Factory and Cloudastructure Inc. In addition, her not-for-profit board experience spans the last 20 years, including serving on the NorCal NACD Board and as former chair of the Board of Trustees for Alliant International University. Fetter has also been CEO of three public companies and has run businesses ranging in size from start-up to \$5 billion in revenue. She received a master of science in information assurance from the Tepper and Heinz

Schools of Carnegie Mellon University. In 2019, she was named one of the Most Influential Corporate Board Directors by Women Inc., and is a popular speaker and panel member on a variety of business topics.

"The Bellisario College has long been a beneficiary of Liz's passion, determination and commitment," Dean Marie Hardin said. "She's a leader with expertise in a variety of endeavors and industries. Her ideas and talent enable her to make an impact in all she does. Through past commitments to students through various scholarship endowments as well as support of CommAgency and CommVentures, she's certainly making an impact across the Bellisario College. Through these endowments and now the bequest, this legacy will continue for generations of students to come." 

“

The Bellisario College has long been a beneficiary of Liz's passion, determination and commitment.

”

— Dean Marie Hardin



Dean Marie Hardin with Liz Fetter.

TENACIOUS CURIOSITY



Halloween 2021: The Myrick family gets set for a night of trick or treating.
IMAGE: Provided

Jessica Gall Myrick credits her support system and self-motivation for maintaining a high level of scholarly work, all while starting a family during a global pandemic

By Jonathan F. McVerry ('05)

A report on the health of dogs who swam in a polluted lake that took months to produce or a news piece on a cooking event where local chefs used every part of a pig — which story got more views?

The answer: the cooking event. And it wasn't close.

These stories aired back in 2009. The reporter was Jessica Gall Myrick, a multimedia journalist for Indiana Public Media out of Bloomington, Indiana. She was baffled and a little aggravated that the story about the lake, which she worked hard on, barely moved the needle.

She became increasingly curious about how her audience interpreted and responded to her reporting — particularly the stories about health and science. She signed up for media studies journalism graduate courses and her career path veered toward a life in academia.

"I learned that how topics are communicated motivates people in different ways, which is very important at the societal level," she said. "Plus, I got tired of lugging around a camera. Those things weighed a ton."

Today Myrick is a professor of media studies in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications and has made a name for herself as a premier researcher in her field with a knack for timely studies that often go viral.

“My journalism training taught me that ‘new’ is a news value,” she said. “I am really interested in the type of popular media that lots of people are consuming and has a big impact on them. If it’s happening now, that’s what gets me motivated.”



Some graduate students have called me a ‘supermom.’ They don’t see how messy it can be. It’s just a sign that there’s a system and a motivation to do good work.

“

”

– Jessica Myrick, professor of media studies

Early in her academic career, Myrick published research about how watching online cat videos can help improve mood and boost energy. That laid the groundwork for studying social media, memes, public figures, and messaging that affects human emotions, health and individuals’ understanding of science.

Some of Myrick’s recent articles examined how Tom Hanks’ COVID-19 diagnosis influenced public understanding of the virus, how former President Donald Trump’s diet affected people’s food choices, and how illnesses of contro-

versal celebrities influenced public health. Among colleagues, Myrick has garnered a reputation for having a friendly and high-energy work ethic. She has received numerous awards, including the 2022 Lewis Donohew Outstanding Health Communication Scholar Award. Last year, she was named full professor. She continues to publish extensively, teaches and sits on committees for master’s and doctoral students.

“Jess came to Penn State as an extremely productive scholar and remains so. She has, however, extended her range,” said Matt Jordan, associate professor and head of the Department of Film Production and Media Studies at the Bellisario College. “She is able to think through a wide variety of theoretical and methodological issues, which is why she has such range and has written about so many different issues.”

Five months before the COVID-19 pandemic shut the world down, Myrick and her partner Scott welcomed their daughter, Frankie. As a new parent, Myrick learned a lot about time management and prioritizing responsibilities as she maintained a busy academic schedule, which was good, because a year later twins Lincoln and Quincy arrived. Three kids. All under 3 years old. During a global pandemic. Myrick says she is lucky. She loves what she does, and she has the focus and support system, including her Bellisario College colleagues and other friends and neighbors in State College, to make it all happen. She admits to being tired and sometimes forgetful, but Myrick carves out time for her family (including her two pugs) every day. She makes sure her advisees and students have what they need to succeed. And she is impressively good at replying to email.



“Some graduate students have called me a ‘supermom,’ but I am no superhero,” Myrick said. “They don’t see how messy it can be. I want them to know that being productive isn’t a sign of one’s self worth. It’s just a sign that there’s a system and a motivation to do good work.”

COVID-19 proved to be a model case study for media studies and science communication research. The global impact and political divisiveness created a chaotic media landscape rife with mixed messages and misinformation. Communicating about public health and strengthening the public’s respect for science gained new meaning for Myrick, as a new mother of three.

Myrick frequently shares photos of her children and dogs on Instagram and Facebook. She finds herself doom-scrolling social media just like everyone else. One big difference, however, is that the stories that fill up Myrick’s news feeds sometimes lead to research projects.

Friend and colleague Jessica Fitts Willoughby has collaborated with Myrick on a number of projects since they were both doctoral students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She says the two scholars share a “thoughtful curiosity,” which often leads to unique research ideas.

“One of us might hear or see something in the media and then text the other ... and the next thing I know we are brainstorming survey questions and running another project,” said Fitts Willoughby, an associate professor at Washington State University. “Jess has an innate ability to think through

some of the different aspects of the approach or the constructs we should be considering.”

Their process can happen fast and in a variety of ways, she added. The original text message leads to emails, Zoom calls, data gathering and, hopefully, a strong research study ready for publication.

“I am glad our paths crossed at UNC,” Fitts Willoughby



Skin cancer interventions affect sun-safety attitudes

More people are diagnosed with skin cancer in the U.S. than many other cancers combined, and it is one of the most common cancers among young women. Penn State researchers are testing social media interventions aimed at this demographic to encourage them to avoid UV exposure.

“Social media often promote tan skin as the cultural ideal,” said lead researcher Jessica Gall Myrick, professor of media studies in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications. “Because skin cancer affects more young women than men, it is vital we develop social media-based interventions that target this demographic.”

Myrick worked with Rob Turrise, professor of biobehavioral health and Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) cofunded faculty member, to apply his skin cancer research to address tanning rates in an Instagram format. “Our goal was to see if we could motivate young women to avoid tanning via a social media intervention and to determine if the intervention could shape attitudes and visual attention,” Myrick said.



Read the Full Story

said. “Jess is incredibly knowledgeable and an amazing researcher. She builds people up, which is so important in a field where people experience a lot of rejection.”

Myrick’s research has resulted in more than 60 peer-reviewed journal articles. Her work can be found in book chapters, encyclopedia entries and a book she authored. She sits on 20 dissertation committees both inside and outside the Bellisario College. She is also the lead adviser for six doctoral students.

One of her doctoral advisees, Nicholas Eng, says Myrick’s drive and dependability never cease to amaze him. As a collaborator, he is “100 percent” confident their work will be stellar. As an adviser, Myrick is as reliable as she is inspirational.

“I don’t think anyone could get to where Jess is without being tenacious, driven and creative,” Eng said. “She has a wealth of knowledge, and she always has my back. She never fails to support me in the opportunities I find.”

Eng said he was humbled to recently coauthor a study with Myrick and Robin Nabi, a professor at University of California at Santa Barbara, about how COVID memes influenced stress levels during the pandemic. “Here I was collaborating with two scholars that I cite so often in my work.”

Myrick enjoys working with both academics and professionals. She says her research “is not all cats and memes

and celebrities.” She also conducts long-term studies that capture a broader view of health and science communication in the public sphere.

“The psychology of how our media use and emotions intersect is really important to all different aspects of the communication profession,” she said. “I hope to get the word out that we can use media psychology to help improve public health and well-being.”

Looking back at how she communicated as a reporter, Myrick says that her 2022 researcher self would tell her 2009 journalist self to use more story-telling elements in her news pieces.

“There needs to be a protagonist and a plot line,” she said. And to get more views on the water pollution story?

“More pictures of dogs.” 🐕



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Check out our YouTube page, and subscribe!



FACULTY LEADERSHIP



Krishna Jayakar
Big Ten Academic Alliance
Department Executive
Officer Fellow

FACULTY PRODUCTIVITY

CONFERENCES

Association for
Education in
Journalism and
Mass Communication
(August 2021)

20
graduate students

18
faculty researchers

International
Communication
Association
(May 2022)

33
graduate students

17
faculty researchers

OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY

91
journal articles

11
book chapters

7
books written

Bellisario College researchers light up ICA conference in Paris



IMAGE: Adobe Stock

Alumni, faculty members and graduate students from the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications had a major presence at the 72nd annual International Communication Association (ICA) conference in Paris.


Embracing the theme “One World, One Network,” the 2022 conference, conducted May 26-30, was a hybrid with both virtual and in-person sessions. Nearly 20 faculty members from the Bellisario College’s four departments took part as panelists and presenters. Nearly three dozen graduate students also participated, as well as many Penn State alumni who are now at other major colleges and universities.

The event was the first ICA conference to meet in person since 2019. Members of the Bellisario College were a major part of the four-day event, providing in-depth insights into important communications topics, including activism, artificial intelligence, crisis communications, diversity and inclusion, emotions, gaming, law, misinformation and more. Thousands of experts, researchers and scholars representing a wide range of communications areas attended the conference.

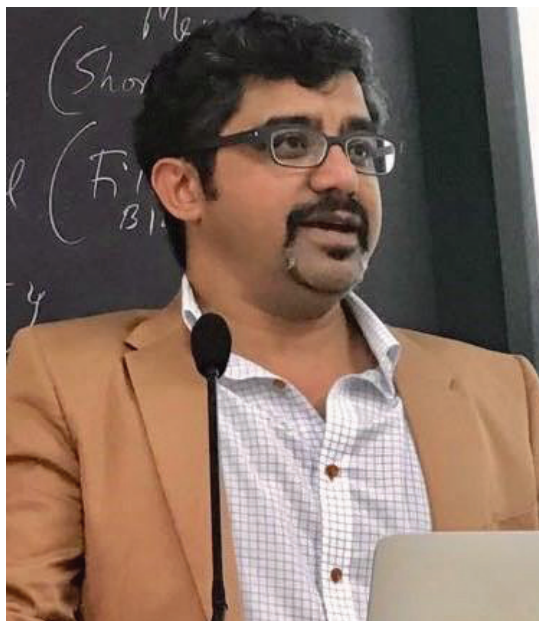
Donald P. Bellisario Professor of Media Studies Mary Beth Oliver is the ICA’s president. She is also an ICA fellow along with two colleagues from the Bellisario College — Homero Gil de Zúñiga, professor of journalism and media studies, and S. Shyam Sundar, the James P. Jimirro Professor of Media Effects.

Bellisario College graduate students Annie Dooley and Magdalayna Drivas earned a “top paper” designation from the ICA’s Game Studies Division for their study titled, “It’s Called a ‘Controller’ for a Reason: The Role of Control and Identity in Mod Use.”

The ICA is an academic association for scholars interested in the study, teaching and application of all aspects of communication. The Bellisario College has been well-represented and active in the organization for years.

ICA was founded more than 50 years ago as a small association of U.S. researchers and is now an international association with more than 6,000 members from 80 countries. It aims to advance the scholarly study of human communication by encouraging and facilitating excellence in academic research worldwide. Since 2003, ICA has been officially associated with the United Nations as a nongovernmental association. 

S. Shyam Sundar named director of the Center for Socially Responsible AI




S. Shyam Sundar

S. Shyam Sundar, James P. Jimirro Professor of Media Effects in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, has been named director of the Penn State Center for Socially Responsible Artificial Intelligence (CSRAI).

In this role, Sundar leads the center, which advances the thoughtful development and application of AI and studies its impact on all areas of human endeavor. In addition to supporting research focused explicitly on AI for social good and mitigating threats from its misuse, CSRAI advances Penn State's objective that all AI research and development activities consider social and ethical implications, as well as intended and possible unintended consequences.

"A socially responsible approach to AI should be centrally concerned about human affairs at all levels, from the psychological to the cultural, with a strong emphasis on promoting human values and institutions," said Sundar. "Social, economic and environmental concerns should be the driving forces behind emergent AI technologies, with an emphasis on human welfare. Social responsibility is not simply about social accountability of these technologies, but rather about social consciousness fueling and incubating new AI applications."

Sundar, who also serves as co-director of the Media Effects Research Laboratory and is an affiliate of the Institute for Computational and Data Sciences, is charged with strengthening CSRAI's contributions as a member in Penn State's AI Hub, an initiative that is bringing together the University's AI-related resources and talent to advance its position as a global leader in the space.

Sundar's research investigates social and psychological effects of interactive media, including mobile phones, social media, chatbots, robots, smart speakers and algorithms. His experiments investigate the role played by technological affordances in shaping user experience of mediated communications in a variety of interfaces. His current research pertains to fake news, chatbots and smart speakers; AI algorithms; online privacy; social media uses and effects; persuasive aspects of human-computer interaction; and the strategic use of communication technologies for motivating healthy and prosocial human behaviors. 

Outage outrage: Facebook outage may reveal depth of social media dependency

Users typically react to social media outages with angry tirades and barbed jokes. But researchers suggest that this lack of social media access offers a glimpse into the importance of social media not just as a tool to socialize and entertain, but as a utility comparable to gas and electricity.

In a study of user reactions to a six-hour Facebook outage in the fall of 2021, the researchers said that members of the site flooded rival Twitter with nearly a quarter million tweets about the outage, quickly making #facebookdown a top trending topic. While many comments reflected anger about the situation and others ridiculed Facebook, users also expressed a need to find other social media outlets, according to S. Shyam Sundar, James P. Jimirro Professor of Media Effects in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications and co-director of the Media Effects Research Laboratory at Penn State.

"Most media effects research is about showing people media and seeing how they react, but in this study we see that removing media can actually be more informative," said Sundar, who also is an affiliate of Penn State's Institute for Computational and Data Sciences (ICDS). "This kind of outage provides us an opportunity to see how people reflect on their access to social media, and what we see is that social media has become so important that it's almost a utility."



[Read the Full Story](#)

Bellisario College honors faculty, staff with Deans' Excellence Awards

Seven faculty members and three staff members earned awards for their work in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications during the 2021-22 academic year.

As the Bellisario College was "Celebrating Community," with its first in-person awards event in two-plus years, the awards recognized faculty for teaching, research, service and integrated scholarship. Staff were recognized for excellence.

Honorees were:

Deans' Excellence Award for Staff

- Julie Miller, manager of internships
- Michael Zelazny, equipment room and lab coordinator

Deans' Excellence Award for Teaching

- Katie O'Toole, lecturer, Department of Journalism

Deans' Excellence Award for Research

- Heather Shoenberger, assistant professor, Department of Advertising/Public Relations
- Chris Skurka, assistant professor, Department of Film Production and Media Studies

Deans' Excellence Award for Service

- Anne Hoag, associate professor, Department of Telecommunications and director of the University's intercollege minor in entrepreneurship and innovation

Deans' Excellence Award for Integrated Scholarship

- Shaheen Pasha, assistant teaching professor, Department of Journalism

Outstanding Faculty Affiliate

- Steve Sampsell, director of strategic communications who teaches journalism classes
- Deepak Sethi, a television writer who teaches in the Penn State Hollywood Program

Djung Yune Tchoi Graduate Teaching Award

- Olivia Cohen

Pasha selected winner of Emerging Faculty Award for Engaged Scholarship

Shaheen Pasha, an assistant teaching professor of journalism in the Bellisario

College, received the 2022 Outreach and Online Education Emerging Faculty Award for Engaged Scholarship.


The Emerging Faculty Outreach Award is a University-wide honor that recognizes

early-career tenure-track and nonten-

ure-track faculty members whose work has significant potential to advance engaged scholarship through teaching, research and/or service. Their engaged scholarship work shows significant potential to influence societal issues on local, regional or national levels.

Pasha was honored for her commitment to the Prison Journalism Project, an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan national initiative launched at Penn State designed to train incarcerated writers to be journalists and publishes their stories, so they can shift the narrative and help shape criminal justice policy. The goal of the project is to give incarcerated people an outlet for creative expression, strengthening their communications skills and allowing them to shed light on news, stories and lived experiences about incarceration and the issues related to it to the general public. Pasha is co-founder and co-executive director of the project that was recognized by the Nieman Lab in its "Predictions for Journalism 2021."

Pasha said meaningful criminal justice reform can take place only after we gain this invaluable inside perspective on the realities of the more than 2.3 million people incarcerated in the U.S.

Nominators said the project gives "voices to the voiceless" and is a "powerful example of journalism that privileges not the storytellers, but truthful, fact-driven storytelling." They also praised the project's impact on education for Penn State students. 



Shaheen Pasha



Gil de Zúñiga earns Faculty Scholar Medal

Homero Gil de Zúñiga, a professor of media studies in the Bellisario College, was one of six University faculty members who received 2022 Faculty Scholar Medals for Outstanding Achievement.


Established in 1980, the award recognizes scholarly or creative excellence represented by a single contribution or a series of contributions around a coherent theme. A committee of peers reviews nominations and selects candidates.

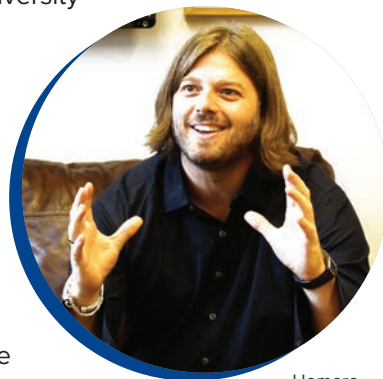
Nominators said Gil de Zúñiga, selected for social and behavioral sciences, researches some of the most vexing “grand challenges” of our time. His work explores political communication, digital media and “fake news” and voter engagement.

Gil de Zúñiga uses his rich ties to researchers in the U.S., Europe and South America. He and his global collaborators look at how online and social media sources are changing the way people consume information. His research shows patterns of political information consumption and action in a way that helps make sense of today’s rapidly shifting political landscape.

“At a time of increased political polarization, Dr. Gil de Zúñiga has established a global reputation as a scholar whose work brings together political communication research with communication technology research to understand our changing political landscape,” a nominator said.

One massive study, led with one of his colleagues out of New Zealand, has collected a trove of data on social and political behavior in 20 countries. Nominators said surveys of this scope are uncommon and illustrate his ambition and reach. The work examines system justification, social dominance, social capital, civic engagement and political participation, among other findings.

Gil de Zúñiga is a prolific researcher, securing more than \$4 million in grants while publishing more than 150 articles and books. He serves on the editorial board of 20 journals. In 2020, he was selected as a Web of Science Highly Cited Scholar, a designation achieved by only the top .1% of researchers in 21 research fields. 



Homero
Gil de Zúñiga

Nichols recipient of 2022 Barash Award

Renea Nichols, an associate teaching professor of advertising/public relations in the Bellisario College, was the 2022 recipient of the Barash Award for Human Service.


Created in 1975 by the family of the late Sy Barash, the award honors a full-time member of the faculty or staff or student body on the University Park campus who, apart from his or her regular duties, has contributed the most to human causes, public service activities and organizations, or the welfare of fellow humans.

Nominators said Nichols is an engaged member of her community who is committed to helping its organizations and residents.

Nominators said, Nichols lends her energy and creative talents to fundraisers and other calls to action. Her efforts to help service and faith organizations have earned her the reputation as the right person for generating funds and other support for worthy causes.

Nichols works with nonprofit organizations such as the Bellefonte Art Museum, which houses the site for a stop on the Underground Railroad. Nichols is working with the museum’s board to draw attention to the site and have it placed on the National Registry. A resident of Bellefonte, she also sits on the board of the Bellefonte Union Cemetery, Children and Youth Service Advisory board, The Crooked House in Milesburg, and assists the Eagle Iron Works and Curtin Village with programming and social media. Before the pandemic, Nichols ran two summer teen writing workshops in the community.

In addition, Nichols’ community service efforts frequently become learning opportunities for her students.

One example is a partnership with Penn State Outreach to rebrand and revitalize the Homewood and Hill Districts in Pittsburgh. Nichols also worked with the nonprofit Interfaith Human Services, based in State College. A nominator said Nichols’ approach was simple, “Get involved, and empower others to be involved, too.” 



Renea
Nichols

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES



IMAGES: Steve Manuel (4)



IMAGE: Shared by Tara Wyckoff

Commencement Celebrations

As Bellisario College students — and faculty (above) — proved during and after commencement exercises in May, the culmination of a college career leads to heartfelt celebrations.



A POSITIVE APPROACH



Michael Smedley was one of only five blind students at Penn State during the 2021-22 academic year.

Michael Smedley achieves abundant academic and career-related success despite barriers along the way

When Michael Smedley crossed the stage during Penn State commencement exercises in May, he completed a statistically unlikely journey. Once you meet him, though, there's no doubt his journey would finish as it did — and there's no doubt he's on his way to accomplishing much more during his career.

Smedley, blind since birth because of a rare genetic disorder, completed his undergraduate career at Penn State with a bachelor's degree in telecommunications, a bachelor of fine arts in theatrical sound design, minors in business law and music technology, and a certificate of business fundamentals.

While just 11% of blind people in the United States earn a bachelor's degree, Smedley was not content with one degree. In fact, statistics alone have never been limitations for Smedley, who only seems content when he's busy.

“On a campus this big with 40,000 undergrads there’s a lot of opportunity and always something new,” he said. “People here are always jumping at the opportunity to help other people succeed. Penn State has taught me a lot about what it means to adapt and just kind of roll with the punches, which I think is going to be extremely important coming out of this University at this time.”

Along with his classes, Smedley mixed, designed and even composed shows for the School of Theatre. He was part of a team that collaborated with Penn State Athletics and video game maker EA Sports, which makes “Madden NFL,” to develop an approach to crowd noise for Penn State football games in a mostly empty Beaver Stadium during the 2020 season.

“

The best thing blindness ever did for me was wipe out what I thought Michael should be and it gave him space to be all he could be. It’s amazing. He’s done what I thought he would times 10.

”

— Kristin Smedley, Micheal Smedley’s mother

Long before he came to Penn State, Smedley, 22, was overcoming challenges big and small to succeed and thrive. He was also pulling others along with his ever-positive mindset.

While he played Little League baseball, football in middle school, wrestled in high school and honed his skills as keyboard player, he was ever mindful of others — something that has guided his approach, and impact, since birth.

“He was the first blind person I’d ever met,” said his mother, Kristin Smedley. “I’m not proud of how my journey started. I wasted a lot of time trying to pray his blindness away while Michael spent every day so upbeat, at the most inconvenienced a little bit by being blind. He eventually convinced me to suck it up and come along with him on the ride.”

Michael’s rare genetic disorder, something that does not present on either side of his family, also impacted his younger brother, Mitchell, a student at Kutztown University. They also have a younger sister, a rising high school senior, who is not blind.

In large part because of her sons, Kristin, who was a third-grade teacher, eventually left teaching and started a nonprofit organization (Thriving Blind Academy) to help families with blind children.

While the organization helps others, she admits she regularly drew energy and inspiration from Michael.

Smedley started his college career at Belmont University with a music business major in mind, but in a search for more opportunity and support, he transferred from that 72-acre campus to Penn State University Park, with its 7,958 acres and 275 majors. Penn State also had more resources, including easier access to braille texts and a larger Office of Disability Services. Despite the fact that he got an “A” in a 200-level statistics course at Belmont without having a textbook, the bigger community and support were a welcome boost at Penn State.


Smedley, one of just five blind students on campus during the 2021-22 academic year, also served as a teaching assistant for a communications law course. He left the faculty member, who had selected him for the role because she knew he was a good student, impressed.

“He’s so incredibly smart. Most TAs do a brief presentation in front of the class, some narrow focus on a topic,” said Cindy Simmons, an associate teaching professor in the Department of Journalism. “He said he wanted to do something on intellectual property. I was not expecting him to teach the whole class.

“He came up with an hour and 15 minutes of slides based on his knowledge and research as well as up-to-date nuances for the presentation. It was engaging, just terrific.”

Smedley’s plans after graduation were focused on music, with a role as a sound engineer for a touring band atop his list. He had to put that on hold when he accepted a post-graduate internship.

He started his duties as an audio system design professional intern with Disney in Orlando in June. He will be part of the team that addresses how every aspect of the company’s theme parks, cruise ships and attractions sound. He said the company’s commitment to an immersive experience, activating all five senses when people visit, offers an exciting challenge.

Likewise, interviewers from Disney were impressed with Michael’s ever-positive mindset, which has been the differentiator and driving force during his journey before and during Penn State — and likely for years to come. 

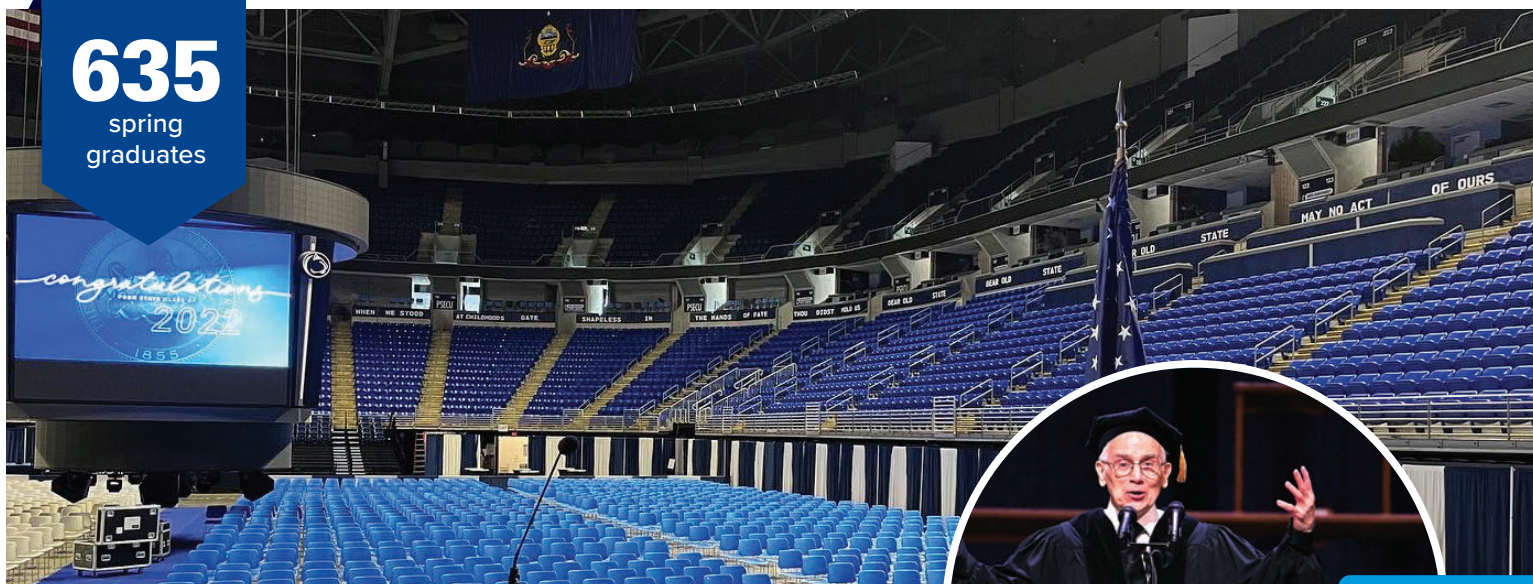


Michael Smedley



Smedley Q&A

635
spring
graduates



“
Dream big. Beat Michigan. And go get ‘em.
You are Penn State graduates.

”

– Don Roy King ('69), commencement speaker



Watch the Speech

ACADEMIC OFFERINGS

RESIDENT INSTRUCTION

Undergraduate Majors

Advertising/Public Relations
Film Production
Journalism
Media Studies
Telecommunications and Media Industries

Minors

Digital Media Trends and Analytics
Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Film Studies
Information Sciences and Technology
for Telecommunications
Media Studies

Graduate Degrees

Master's Degree, Media Studies
Ph.D., Mass Communications

ONLINE

Majors

Digital Journalism and Media
Digital Multimedia Design
Strategic Communications

Minor

Media Studies

Graduate Degree

Master of Professional Studies in
Strategic Communications

STUDENT MARSHALS



SUMMER 2021
Carson Spence



FALL 2021
Cecilia Koncerak

SPRING 2022



Jade Campos,
Overall



Grace Puy,
Advertising/Public
Relations



Zi Ye,
Film Production



Rachel Rubin,
Journalism



Megan Bunke,
Media Studies



Michael Smedley,
Telecommunications and
Media Industries



Our student driven newscast, "Centre County Report," was honored as the nation's Top Newscast by the Broadcast Education Association, and we had a team of faculty/staff and students on hand in Las Vegas to accept the award, including (from left) Brian Shoenfelt, Connor Kanto, Derek Heid, Andy Smith, Jack McCune, Steve Kraycik.



Preston Shoemaker

Golden Boy

Senior Preston Shoemaker accepted an individual award for a long-form story and was on hand to accept on behalf of the Bellisario College for numerous group awards earned at the annual Golden Quill Awards in Pittsburgh. Shoemaker also earned a Keystone Press Award this year.



10 Students

Completed internships with the NFL or worked as part of a media partnership with The Associated Press at the Super Bowl in February.



15.5% increase

in number of for-credit internships
(355 in 2021-22 over 2020-21)

JOB FAIRS

Both in-person and virtual components for each of three internship and job fairs provided abundant opportunities for students in 2021-22.

COMM Careers
in the Capital

35

companies

141

students

JobExpo.Comm

(all virtual, snowstorm)

69

companies

161

recruiters

213

students

Success in the City

83

companies

153

recruiters

213

students

Public relations program one of five national finalists

Student-driven entry earns recognition for second time in three years

The advertising/public relations program at Penn State was selected as one of five national finalists for the designation of Outstanding Education Program by PRWeek.

This marks the second time in the past three years Penn State's program was named a finalist in the highly competitive national program — and its entry was entirely student driven.

Advertising/public relations majors in a capstone public relations course put together the extensive nomination packet, which included an overview of the program as well as a video portion and interactions with alumni and industry professionals.

The real-life project provided students with an educational experience and a better understanding of both the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications and Penn State. Administrators and staff, along with alumni in the professions, provided support and information.

Faculty member Tara Wyckoff, an associate teaching professor in the Department of Advertising/Public Relations, initiated the idea and students in COMM 473 Public Relations Campaigns embraced the real-world opportunity.


"This project challenged the students' strategic communications skills, as well as the soft skills needed to collaborate effectively across a team of 20 under a tight deadline," Wyckoff said.

Students appreciated the challenge, too.

"Working with the class on this project was rewarding because it allowed all of our individual communication strengths to come together and shine," said Morgan Sheedy, a senior advertising/public relations major. "It wasn't a group project; it felt like a real-world work environment."

Penn State was shortlisted as a finalist after all entries were discussed, reviewed and scored by a panel of judges.

The award submission represented a thorough overview of advertising/public relations offerings on campus as well as their impact far beyond campus — all reflecting the quality of the program, which is the largest undergraduate major in the Bellisario College and one of the 15 biggest at Penn State.

Other finalists were Alabama, DePaul, Florida and Syracuse. 



TV TIME: Students in an advanced production class produced a live sketch comedy show in front of an audience inside the Bellisario Media Center during the spring semester.

Three students among finalists for PRWeek Outstanding Student of the Year

Students stress preparation, research as key to success in national competition

Three Penn State students earned spots among five finalists to be selected PRWeek Outstanding Student of the Year 2022 — a highly competitive national distinction.

Senior advertising/public relations majors Colton Breon, Margaret Pfeifle and Morgan Sheedy advanced as finalists in the competition.



Finalists were Colton Breon, Margaret Pfeifle and Morgan Sheedy.

This year's realistic and timely challenge was creating a plan for NBC and its coverage of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics that increases viewership by improving the user experience and spotlights athletes in innovative ways while preparing for the reputational issues with holding the games in China.

"It was a lot, and sounded daunting at first, but if you broke it down and focused on the pieces, ideas started to come together," Pfeifle said. "With such an amazing opportunity, I really wanted to invest my time and give it my all."

Penn State students were introduced to the challenge midway through the fall semester. They had a few weeks to formulate individual plans before offering feedback to each other. Final submissions needed to meet a December deadline.

Breon focused a lot of time early in his process on research.

"I really wanted some bullet-proof research," he said. "It took a while, and it felt like there initially might not be enough time to write and pull it all together, but doing all the research made the parts after that easier."

He offered a campaign to "gamify" the Olympics. His submission, "League of Olympians," focused on the popularity of gaming and esports among millennial and Gen Z viewers. His theme of competition sought to connect the classic competitions that play out during the Olympics with a modern focus on the interactivity of digital media and influencers in the gaming space.

Pfeifle's campaign, titled "Together We Can," focused on Gen Z's deeply rooted expectation of inclusivity and equity when it comes to a brand's promise. Her campaign focused on brand activations and TikTok influencer tactics that

sought to help a diverse generation of new Olympic viewers "see themselves" in the Olympics.

Sheedy's campaign, "See the Olympics Like Never Before," focused on fan engagement through a fun TikTok dance challenge. Her idea focused on celebrity influencers like the Jonas Brothers and leveraged NBC's suite of news platforms to earn the campaign media.

After the students submitted their campaigns, they waited to hear about the results.

When they received emails notifying them of their finalist status, their responses were unified as well — with them calling parents, friends and faculty member Tara Wyckoff almost immediately. Wyckoff, an associate teaching professor of advertising/public relations in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, regularly presents the PRWeek challenge to her students.

"All of the submissions were strategic, streamlined and professional," Wyckoff said. "They were error-free, focused on their target audiences and well-designed. They were realistic, defining tactics without taking on too many related tasks. Overall, they were representative of what I would expect from professionals."

Penn State also had three national finalists last year and has had at least one national finalist in each of the past four years.

"It was the most real-world experience I've ever had, and my classes here had prepared me for that," Sheedy said. "You just had to jump in quickly and make your pitch, with questions coming right back at you. "It was really a good experience because I had never worked on a campaign from the ground up. All that went into it are things I'll be able to take with me into my career." 🛡️

CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIER

Photojournalism student embraces opportunity to compete for championship

Noah Riffe has found, and earned, many opportunities during his time as a Penn State student, and the most recent might be among the best — an all-expense-paid trip to San Francisco for a week to compete for a national championship.

Riffe, a senior photojournalism major and political science minor, was one of six students from across the country who qualified for the individual national championships of the 62nd annual William Randolph Hearst Foundation's Journalism Awards Program.

He and the other competitors were in San Francisco for a week in May for the competition. After orientation on the first day, competitors were challenged to produce a single photo story during the week.

Riffe is the 22nd national finalist from Penn State since 2007, and the first in photojournalism since 2014. Last year, Penn State's Melissa Manno, a journalism major who graduated in May 2022, earned the individual national championship in the writing competition. After a series of monthly competitions during the academic year, the Journalism Awards Program concludes with individual championships each May.

"With COVID and everything over the past two years, it's been difficult to shoot a lot of things. With all of that, it's pretty cool to be selected as one of the top six in the country," Riffe said. "It's a tough competition, so I wasn't expecting much."

Riffe earned his spot in the individual national championship based on two rounds of judging. He placed third overall in the first entry period, which included individual news and feature

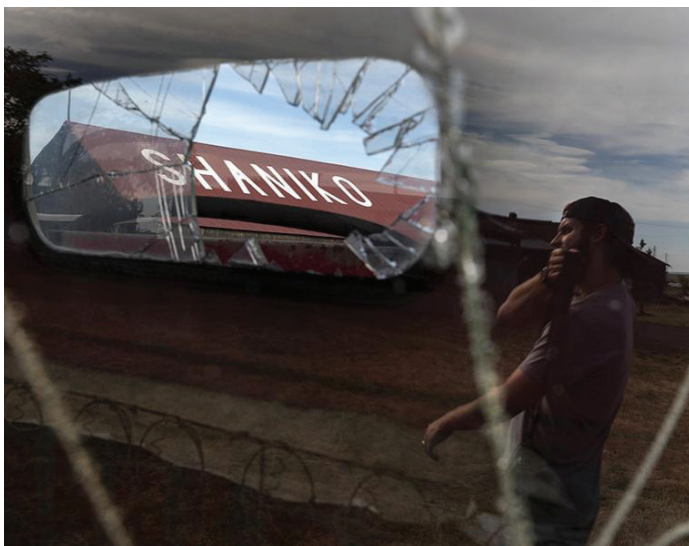


Photojournalism major Noah Riffe represented Penn State as a national finalist during the 62nd annual William Randolph Hearst Foundation's Journalism Awards Program championships, which were conducted in San Francisco.

photos. He then advanced and submitted two years worth of work. He placed in the top six among 10 semifinalists — earning his spot in the championship round.

Riffe, who said he was happy "Penn State took a chance on me" as a freshman, has combined his ample freelance portfolio — he's often busy with international news clients as well as major sporting events — with input from Penn State faculty to hone his shooting skills. 🛡️

Some photos from Noah Riffe's award portfolio:



Chase Seabolt, 21, of Lubbock Texas, is reflected in a broken down car window in the Shaniko Ghost Town on June 1, 2021, in Chaniko, Oregon.



Penn State men's soccer members lift the Big Ten Tournament trophy after winning the tournament final against Indiana at Jeffrey Field on Nov. 14, 2021.



James Shin, of State College, holds a Ukrainian flag during an anti-war protest hosted by the Ukrainian Society at Penn State in front of Old Main on March 3, 2022.

Curley Center students earn top-five finishes in national competition

Sports writing awards add to overall success in 'Pulitzers of college journalism'

Two Penn State senior journalism majors finished in the top five of the sports writing competition as part of the 2021-2022 Hearst Journalism Awards Program, often referred to as the "Pulitzers of college journalism."

Sebastien Kraft, who wrote about playing club baseball in Paris and trying out for the French national team, finished second and Andrew Destin, who wrote about the team from Hawaii at the 2021 Little League World Series, finished fifth.

The sports writing competition was part of a yearlong series of monthly journalism competitions. The Journalism Awards Program, now in its 62nd year, also includes two photojournalism, one audio, two television and four multimedia competitions. The program offers up to \$700,000 in scholarships, matching grants and stipends annually.

Both Kraft and Destin are members of the John Curley Center for Sports Journalism at Penn State. The Curley Center, established in 2003 and housed in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, explores issues and trends in sports journalism through instruction, outreach, programming and research.

The Curley Center's undergraduate curricular emphasis includes courses in sports writing, covering the business of sports, sports data, sports broadcasting and sports information. Along with core courses, the Curley Center places an emphasis on internships and hands-on experience with broadcast, multimedia and print outlets as well as with league, sport and team publicity operations.

Kraft and Destin earned scholarships for their success, and the Bellisario College earned matching grants as well. There were 119 entries from 66 schools submitted for the sports writing competition.

Taking a slightly longer view, Penn State students have earned more combined points than any other school in four of the last six years in Heart's sports writing category. 🏆





Faculty member Steve Manuel enjoys helping students succeed — and making them a little uneasy too.

In the spring of 2005, Michael Robinson called two of his Penn State teammates with a proposal. Both players, Tamba Hali and Alan Zemaitis, had studied communications just like Robinson, the popular Nittany Lions quarterback.

“Guys, want to go sit in and check out this wild class I heard about?” he asked.

“Uh, no, actually,” they replied. Like any good college students, extra classes sounded like ... extra classes.

But Robinson kept making his case. The class was a public relations course taught by longtime Bellisario College associate teaching professor Steve Manuel. Robinson loves Manuel, a former Marine who completed a 28-year decorated career as a military spokesperson before coming to Penn State.

Robinson had heard reports about a specific, dreaded assignment called “The Hot Seat” that sounded an awful lot like what football players had to sit through after a bad loss or critical mistake.

“You gotta come with me,” Robinson told Hali and Zemaitis. “Every student has to get up and deal with the media and answer a bunch of really hard questions. And you know who gets to ask the questions? We do!”

Robinson is a charismatic speaker and leader, a big reason why he has become a prominent voice that you can see on the NFL Network’s “Good Morning Football” on a regular basis. And so, Hali and Zemaitis eventually said sure, they’d go with Robinson. (’04, ’06).

Now Robinson just had one more tiny little detail to sort out: He hadn’t actually asked Manuel if he could crash the class.

Steve Manuel never liked school.

Like, he really didn't like school. He still remembers how angry his parents were when they asked him what happened to his algebra book in junior high school. He had to sheepishly tell them that he hated algebra and was struggling with it and he didn't really know what to do with all the frustration he was feeling so ... he had buried the textbook in the backyard.

It wasn't that he got bad grades or wasn't popular—he did fine, both with academics and with his peers. He was a good athlete who was student council president and had plenty of friends. But he didn't like it very much. He's a slow reader, and his backyard algebra graveyard is Exhibit A of how he feels about math. So when he talks about getting good grades but despising being a student, he sounds like one of those guys who's really good at unclogging toilets but doesn't want to be a plumber. School just wasn't for him.

And yet, go figure: Somehow he's become a beloved member of academia at Penn State. But that's where life took him after his lengthy military career. He'd joined the Marine Corps at age 17, as a 5-foot-7, 125-pound human javelin, and he thrived. Manuel loved the military life—he's a fun, opinionated person with a serious artistic streak as a longtime sports photographer, but he also has a significant part of his personality that appreciates the disciplined, straightforward rigors and rewards that the military presented. He liked how military life often didn't have many gray areas. There were standards he had to live up to, and it was up to him whether he lived up to them or not. It's the same way he teaches—he tells students what they need to do, teaches them how to do it, and then it's up to them if they do it or not.

When active duty was over, Manuel built a successful career as a public affairs officer for the Marines and for the Secretary of Defense. He ended up seeing large swaths of the planet, ranging from Vietnam and Okinawa to Hawaii, Cuba and Afghanistan.

He'd married his wife, Jaylene, in 1973, and

she'd gone on the wild, globe-trotting ride with her husband for two decades. They'd originally met on a blind date, went to a Tiny Tim concert a week later and got married the next month at the Justice of the Peace. (In case you're struggling to keep reading because your eyebrows are still raised about the Tiny Tim concert, you should know they both loved it. "He played the ukulele and sang, and it was great," Manuel says.)

By the mid-1990s, with four kids who wanted to anchor down somewhere, Manuel got an opportunity to come back to Penn State and teach PR, and it felt like a great fit. It has been.

Steve Manuel really loves teaching.

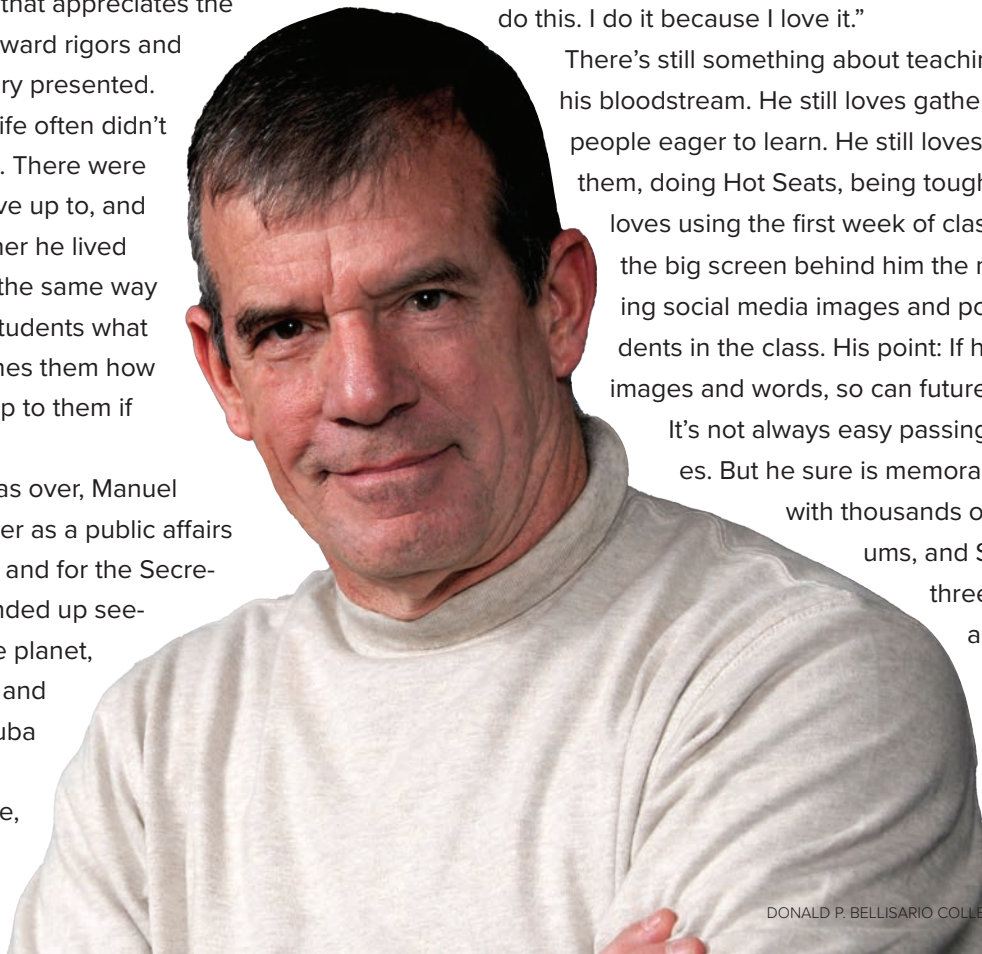
Even from his first days on campus, Manuel's courses were built like him and liked by students because they were like him. Eighteen years later, his approach remains consistent. He still loves teaching, and at age 70 he's planning to do it for the foreseeable future. He'd always said he wouldn't teach past 70, and says he enjoys his photography, playing tennis, hanging out with his grandkids, and making tiffany lamps and stained-glass windows in his spare time. "If I don't like a movie, I get up and leave," he says. "When I don't enjoy this anymore, that's what I'll do. I don't need to do this. I do it because I love it."

There's still something about teaching that gets into his bloodstream. He still loves gathering with young people eager to learn. He still loves challenging them, doing Hot Seats, being tough but fair. He still loves using the first week of classes to post on the big screen behind him the most embarrassing social media images and posts from students in the class. His point: If he can find those images and words, so can future employers.

It's not always easy passing Manuel's classes. But he sure is memorable. "I interact

with thousands of Bellisario alumni, and Steve's in the top three that people talk about," says Mike

Poorman, director of alumni relations for the Bellisario College.





“That’s the highest compliment you can pay to a professor. It can be years and years since they’ve been in Carnegie Building, but they all seem to remember Steve.”

Manuel’s founding principle of public relations is one of the founding principles of him: Tell the truth, even if the truth hurts. On a phone call discussing his life and career, Manuel parachutes into the middle of a question that included a mention of the concept of “spin” in the PR field. “You know, spin is a four-letter word,” Manuel says. “It’s a fancy way of lying. It really is. You can’t spin bad news. Bad news is bad news. If you’ve done something wrong, own it. There will be pain. But it won’t be as painful, for as long, if you own it.”




Steve Manuel complements his high quality work teaching public relations with another love — shooting Penn State sporting events. IMAGE: Mark Selders

He began agitating as early as his first year on campus that Penn State should be teaching crisis communications, which is essentially how to deal with really bad news. Actually, it's worse than really bad: Manuel believes every business, every school, every nonprofit should have a plan for horrific news, the kind that nobody wants to make a plan for but is, according to Manuel, much more likely than CEOs and PR flaks want to even consider. Or, as Manuel himself describes it: "Crisis communications isn't what is bad for business. It is what will end your business."

In his view, every business—including Penn State—has a handful of catastrophic things that can happen in which some smart group of people should have spent some time working through, even if it is stashed away in a vault somewhere. Do most businesses think like Manuel? Nope. "The thing you hear is, 'That stuff always happens to the other guys, to the other company, to the other school,'" Manuel says. "Those businesses are virtually guaranteed to completely botch handling any kind of bad news. It's not the real world."

It took years of Manuel agitating, but he eventually got his wish and the school greenlit a crisis communications course. The first year he offered it, Manuel had 25-30 students. But enrollment spiked past 100 students the next few years as word spread quickly about the uniqueness of the class, how challenging it could be, and how Manuel was interesting and blunt and funny and tough, sometimes all within the same sentence. Manuel eventually realized that the ballooning number of students had diminishing returns, saying it turned an intimate experience into a lecture class, so he has kept it at its original size for the past 10 years or so. "I want kids to have a hands-on experience," he says.

And nothing has been better for business than rumors of a certain assignment from the class. An assignment so tense, so difficult, so oh my god, maybe PR isn't for me after all, that it had to be seen to be believed.

Its name? The Hot Seat. 



Ryan Hockensmith ('01) After graduating from Penn State in 2001 with a journalism degree, Ryan Hockensmith got an internship at ESPN The Magazine and has never left.

From 2018, he gradually wrote more and more, culminating in moving full time to a writer role in March 2022.

Hockensmith is a survivor of bacterial meningitis, which caused him to have amputations on both feet. During his 20-plus years at ESPN, he has emerged as a proud advocate for coverage of those with disabilities and addiction issues.

Promotion?

Married?

A family addition?

Submit an
Alumni Note and
let us (and your
classmates and
friends) know!



communicator.bellisario.psu.edu/alumni-notes/submit/

Faculty member named inaugural Bellisario Professor of Advertising

A faculty member with a global reputation for expertise in integrated marketing communications, health-related messaging, and social media campaigns who is also an academic leader at Penn State has been named the inaugural Donald P. Bellisario Professor of Advertising.

Fuyuan Shen, professor and head of the Department of Advertising/Public Relations, became the first faculty member in his discipline to move into a professorship named for Bellisario, the distinguished alumnus who provided a \$30 million gift to the University in 2017.

“Part of Don’s vision for his transformative gift was to support the work of faculty members who are among the most gifted teachers and researchers in the field,” said Dean Marie Hardin. “Dr. Shen is the perfect match for that vision because of the quality of his work and his impact as a teacher.”

The designation of Shen for the Bellisario professorship will enhance Penn State’s already strong reputation as a leader in the field of advertising, Hardin said.


“I am deeply honored by this appointment. I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to work with our talented faculty and students,” Shen said. “With support from the endowment, I hope to expand my research in both traditional and emerging areas that I believe can deepen our understanding of advertising and media messages.”

Shen’s research and teaching have been recognized with the Deans’ Excellence Awards for Research and Integrated Scholarship in the Bellisario College. He has also been recognized with association-wide awards for his scholarship and service. As editor-in-chief of the publication *Mass Communication and Society* from 2017 to 2020, he helped shape the direction of research across communication-related disciplines.

Shen, a senior research fellow with the Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Communication, housed in the Bellisario College, is author of more than 50 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, and his edited book, “Social Media News and Its Impact,” was published by Routledge in December.

An affiliate faculty member of the Media Effects Research Laboratory, also housed in the Bellisario College, Shen is interested in studying the effects of ads and other messages, in both traditional and new media, on individuals’ information processing and attitudes. His previous research has examined the impact of message frames and emotions on individuals’ attitudes, risk perceptions, and other cognitive or affective responses.

He teaches undergraduate classes in advertising as well as a graduate research seminar in strategic communications. He has also taught as a visiting professor at Hong Kong Baptist University and the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Students praise Shen as accessible, caring and effective.

Funding for the professorship was part of the \$30 million gift from Bellisario and his wife, Vivienne. At the heart of that gift was a scholarship fund for communications students, with first preference given to undergraduates who are U.S. military veterans, active-duty service members, reservists and members of the National Guard. 



Fuyuan Shen

Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications Presents



COMMversations

A podcast focused on the people and programs of the Bellisario College.



bellisario.psu.edu/alumni/podcasts

George Barron selected as director of development

A fundraising professional with a decade and a half of higher education and nonprofit experience has joined the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications as its director of development.

George Barron officially joined the Bellisario College in January of 2022, after most recently serving as director of campus development at Penn State Greater Allegheny. During his tenure at Penn State Greater Allegheny, Barron partnered with academic leadership to secure the largest seven-figure gift to Penn State Greater Allegheny's portion of the "A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence" campaign.

Barron brings his results-oriented track record to the Bellisario College, which is noted for its collegiality among faculty and staff, as well as its focus on supporting student achievement, experiences and success.

Major gifts in recent years have bolstered the communications program with facilities as well as programmatic and scholarship support. And, as the opportunities that support makes possible grow, so does the need for additional financial support.

"I'm excited to join the Bellisario College and work with alumni and friends to support student success," Barron said. "My ability to formulate comprehensive development strat-




George Barron

egies and to effectively liaise with supporters in person and virtually will be a part of the process that helps us continue ongoing success and explore opportunities across all majors to make the Bellisario College the best it can be."

Barron previously served as director of development for Disability Rights Pennsylvania and as a major gifts officer for the Coalition for Christian Outreach in Pittsburgh. He also served as a corporate relations manager for the United Way of Allegheny County and started his career with the Boy Scouts of America, Greater Pittsburgh Council. His varied experience includes work with individual donors as well as with corporations and funding organizations.

"George is driven to secure significant funding in support of critical initiatives that align with the University's values, strategic plan and goals," said Marie Hardin, dean of the Bellisario College. "He's an exciting addition to the Bellisario College and will play a vital role as we continue to meet our own goals of being creative and entrepreneurial while serving students and preparing them for communications-related careers."

Barron is pursuing his master's degree in strategic management and executive leadership from Penn State.

A Pittsburgh native and the oldest of four brothers, he earned his bachelor's degree from California University of Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Faye, have one child, a daughter, Layla. 

Development assistant joins Bellisario College team

Meaghan Schadle has joined the Bellisario College as a development assistant.

She previously served as an administrative support assistant reporting to the vice president of development administration at Penn State. She planned and organized activities for a five-member team and supported the unit's summer internship program. She'll support the development team led by George Barron. 



Meaghan Schadle

Join us on

LinkedIn 

Join the groups and connect with fellow alumni

**Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications,
Penn State – Alumni**

**Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications,
Penn State – Ad/PR Network**

A LEGACY OF IMPACT



Curt Chandler (right) watches a multimedia reporting project with then-student Min Xian in 2016. IMAGE: Will Yurman

Curt Chandler's passing prompts flood of memories

Award-winning, beloved Penn State faculty member Curt Chandler — who consistently supported students and worked tirelessly to ensure their success — died Monday, Jan. 31, after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Chandler, an associate teaching professor in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, was 64.

His approach, demeanor, impact and even his laugh, will affect students and friends for years to come. In the wake of the news, alumni and friends shared testimonials on social media. The examples of Chandler's dedication and his student-centered methods for success led to dozens of messages. Organizers of a memorial service on campus, which was streamed online and watched by viewers all over the country, were blessed with dozens of shared videos to choose from while compiling prerecorded segments of the service.

Chandler, a member of the Department of Journalism, joined Penn State after compiling more than 25 years of newsroom experience. He was a storyteller at heart — consistently striving to find the best platforms to entertain and inform people. Chandler was committed to providing real-life opportunities for students and consistently brought a can-do, upbeat approach to his work with students.

As a teacher his areas of expertise included multimedia reporting, journalism entrepreneurship, newsroom management and engaging news audiences across multiple platforms.

"We are heartbroken about this great loss to the Bellisario College. Curt was an incredible example of what it means to be passionate about his teaching and centered on student success. He changed lives with his absolute belief in students and his dedication to helping them achieve their potential," said Dean Marie Hardin. "Everyone who interacted with him was fortunate."




Watch Curt
Chandler's
memorial

He and his wife, Stacie, helped make the Centre Film Festival a reality, and two of their children graduated from the Bellisario College — Vincent, who earned his journalism degree in 2012, and Madeline, who earned her media studies degree in 2014.

“Curt’s enthusiasm for journalism was matched only by his enthusiasm for his students. He was full of great story ideas, and he pushed his students to do their best work,” said Russ Eshleman, former associate teaching professor and head of the Department of Journalism. “No matter if it was along a rural stretch of Potter County, in the hubbub of a Baltimore neighborhood or the streets of Hong Kong, he always looked for ways to help students succeed.”

Before joining the University, Chandler was the editor for online innovation and director of photography for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. He also taught photojournalism at Duquesne University from 1998 to 2005. Chandler’s professional background included working as a photographer, writer and editor for the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Ogden Standard-Examiner in Utah and the Pueblo Chieftain in Colorado.

In January 2015 Chandler was a fellow at the Scripps Howard Journalism entrepreneurship Institute at Arizona State University’s Cronkite School of Journalism. He previously participated in the Poynter Institute Picture Editing and Newsroom Leadership workshop. He helped to organize seminars for the Online News Association, the National Press Photographers Association and the Vatican press corps. He also presented to the Society for News Design, the Inland Press Association, the American Press Institute, the Satellite News Network and many other media organizations.

Chandler was a founding faculty member of Penn State’s Keystone Multimedia Workshop, the University of Kentucky’s Picture Kentucky workshop and the Kent State Multimedia Workshop. He was a coach for many years at the NPPA Multimedia Immersion workshop. Chandler also edited two books on photojournalism. 

Honoring Curt Chandler’s legacy

As a tribute to his impact and legacy, Chandler’s family, friends and the Bellisario College have established the “Chandler Grant for Storytelling,” a nonendowed fund intended to provide support for multimedia storytelling activities and programs, both domestic and abroad, for students. Gifts may be made to the fund to honor Chandler and provide a way to continue his impact and influence with students.



Give to Curt
Chandler’s fund

Western Pa. media honor Chandler’s work


Curt Chandler’s impact went far beyond Penn State, and that was long before he came to the University.

Part of that impact was recognized in May 2022 when the Press Club of Western Pennsylvania posthumously honored Chandler with a Service to Journalism Award during the 2022 Golden Quill Awards in Pittsburgh.

He was one of two recipients of the award as longtime Pittsburgh TV and radio journalist Lynne Hayes-Freeland was similarly honored.

Chandler was well known in Pittsburgh media circles for his work as the editor for online innovation and director of photography for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

His recognition — which included comments from John Affleck, head of the Department of Journalism who worked closely with Chandler on many projects — drew a standing ovation from those in attendance.

Chandler’s son Toby and his wife, Kate, accepted the award. 



Media Center a Magnet for Activity

The Bellisario Media Center opened for classes at the start of the 2021-22 academic year and the facility fulfilled its promise as a place that encourages collaboration and community, entrepreneurship and excellence.

Students flocked to the media center and embraced its bright, open floor plan that allowed interaction in small teams or bigger groups. Groups and organizations conducted both impromptu and regular meetings. Tour groups, whether gawking alumni or similarly impressed prospective students, were a daily fixture.

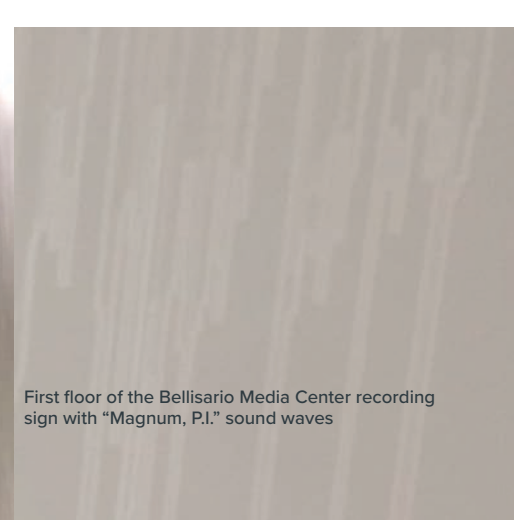
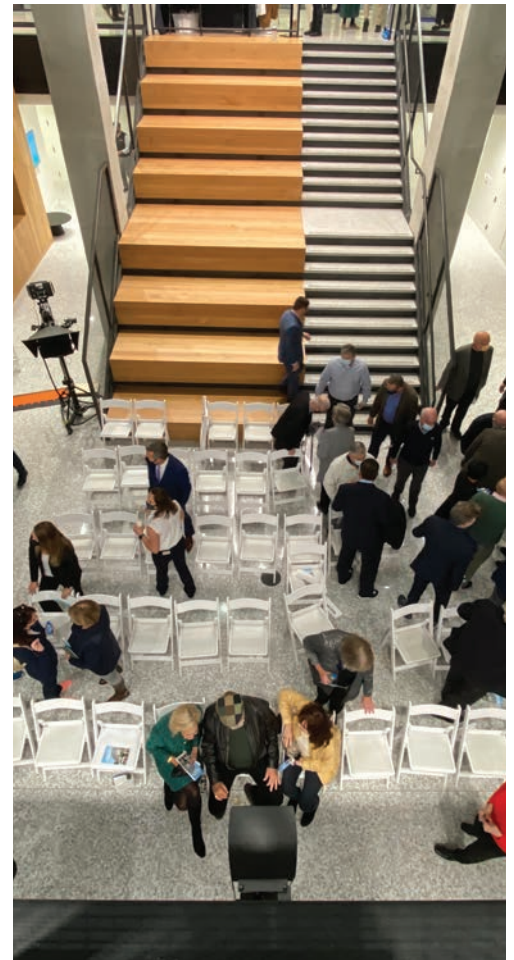
And, special events were appropriate and common — from the grand opening and ribbon cutting in the fall the campaign close and students awards in the spring.



Donald P. Bellisario prepares to cut the ribbon marking the opening of the Bellisario Media Center, along with his wife, Viv (right), longtime friend Sue Paterno (left) and Dean Marie Hardin.

Sight and Sounds

Walls on all three floors of the Bellisario Media Center feature sound waves as part of the design. They're not just any waves, though. Those on the ground and first floor are taken from episodes of "Magnum, P.I." one of the time-tested TV shows created by alumnus and benefactor Donald P. Bellisario. The sound waves on the third floor, just outside the studio used by students for weekly newscasts, are from an episode of "Centre County Report" — the award-winning student newscast that airs across a large portion of Pennsylvania on WPSU-TV.



First floor of the Bellisario Media Center recording sign with "Magnum, P.I." sound waves



Linda Yaccarino delivers her acceptance speech (above) and Diane Salvatore (right) accepts her award with President Neeli Bendapudi.



IMAGE:
Steve Tressler

Some patience and a first for two Distinguished Alumni Award winners

After a pandemic-imposed wait, alumna Linda Yaccarino was recognized as a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award — and it was worth the wait.


For Diane Salvatore, the wait was not as long and the award was just as special.

The Distinguished Alumni Award is the highest possible honor for a Penn State alumnus.

Yaccarino ('85) was one of eight recipients announced as a 2020 winner in late 2019, with a planned presentation just a few months later. Of course, the coronavirus pandemic altered those (and subsequent) plans before a presentation took place in the fall of 2021 on campus.

Yaccarino, a longtime supporter of Belliaro College programs, including Success in the City, the internship and job fair conducted in New York City, serves as chairman of advertising and partnerships for NBCUniversal.


Meanwhile Salvatore ('81) received her Distinguished Alumni Award in May 2022 as the first class of honorees to be recognized by Penn State President Neeli Bendapudi.

Salvatore is the director of consumer product development for Lee Enterprises. An award-winning content strategist, her distinguished career includes leadership roles with magazines such as Consumer Reports, Prevention and Ladies' Home Journal and Marie Claire. 

Mutchler honored as an Alumni Fellow

Terry L. Mutchler ('87) was honored in the most recent class of Alumni Fellows, the highest award presented by the Penn State Alumni Association.

Mutchler, chair of Obermayer's Transparency and Public Data Practice, was the first director of Pennsylvania's Office of Open Records, which enforces the commonwealth's Right to Know Law. A former award-winning journalist at The Associated Press, she created the office from the ground up, writing more than 10,000 units of state and local government that are utilized to this day.

She is a nationally recognized expert in privacy issues, having delivered more than 1,500 speeches and training sessions to government officials, businesses, reporters and citizens. 



Terry L.
Mutchler



Organizers and participants of a for-credit career exploration opportunity in Philadelphia this spring included: (seated, left to right) Beatrice Gauthier, Janelle Burrell ('05), Heidi Canales ('22), Dean Marie Hardin, Ngozi Nwokeukwu, Rylee Curry, (standing, left to right) DeAndre Malcolm ('22), Assistant Dean Emeritus Joseph Selden, Sheil Kapadia ('05), Jordan Hession ('22), Gavin Boston ('22), Jerome Taylor ('19), Sam Rogers ('81) and Assistant Dean Gary Abdullah ('03, '07 MA). The session was created to build a connection between alumni and recent graduates, and to give those about to enter the workforce some necessary perspectives for success.

Pardi earns Alumni Achievement Award

Melissa Pardi was one of 11 prominent young alumni honored by the Penn State Alumni Association at the Alumni Achievement Awards Ceremony in the spring.

Pardi ('13) is the senior director of social responsibility for the National Football League.

Alumni Achievement Award recipients are nominated by an academic college or campus and invited by the president of the University to return to Penn State to share their expertise with students and the University community. Honorees demonstrate to students that Penn State alumni succeed in exceptional fashion at an early age. 🏆



Melissa Pardi

ALUMNI EVENTS/INTERACTION

BellisarioBack2020 — honoring the Class of 2020

Bellisario College Connections — alumni-student mentoring effort

Donor Recognition Reception

“How 9/11 Changed American Journalism” — alumni panel

Student Learning Assessment

“True Life: Media in 2022 & Beyond” — alumni panel

Maymester 2022

We Are ... Networking in NYC — alumni from 2010-2022

1,071

Bellisario College alumni participants

8

events and special alumni programs



Award winners (from left) Edgar Ramirez, Jordan Hyman, Suzanne Graney, Maura Shea and Tom Verducci.

Alumni Society Board honors excellence, success

Five alumni and one faculty member were honored with awards from the Bellisario College Alumni Society Board during a special event on campus this spring. Award winners may be nominated by anyone, with final selections made by the alumni board. This year's honorees were:

Outstanding Alumni Award

Tom Verducci ('82 Journ), senior writer, Sports Illustrated, and analyst, Fox and MLB Network

Achievement Award

Jordan Hyman ('99 Journ), senior vice president, head of sales and marketing, Magnet Media Films

Emerging Professional Award

Edgar Ramirez ('11 Journ), opinions social media editor, Washington Post

Douglas A. Anderson Communications Contributor

Suzanne Graney ('91), executive director, Four Diamonds, and Rob King, senior vice president and editor-at-large, ESPN

Excellence in Teaching

Maura Shea, associate teaching professor and associate head of Department of Film Production and Media Studies

Ad/PR Alumni Board honors three with initial awards

There's something special about being the first at something — and three alumni added a special first to their resumes when they were honored by the Ad/PR Alumni Board with awards.

Honorees were selected earlier and presented with awards at a special event on campus this year.



OUTSTANDING ADVERTISING ALUMNI

Marc Brownstein ('81), president and CEO, Brownstein Group



OUTSTANDING PUBLIC RELATIONS ALUMNI

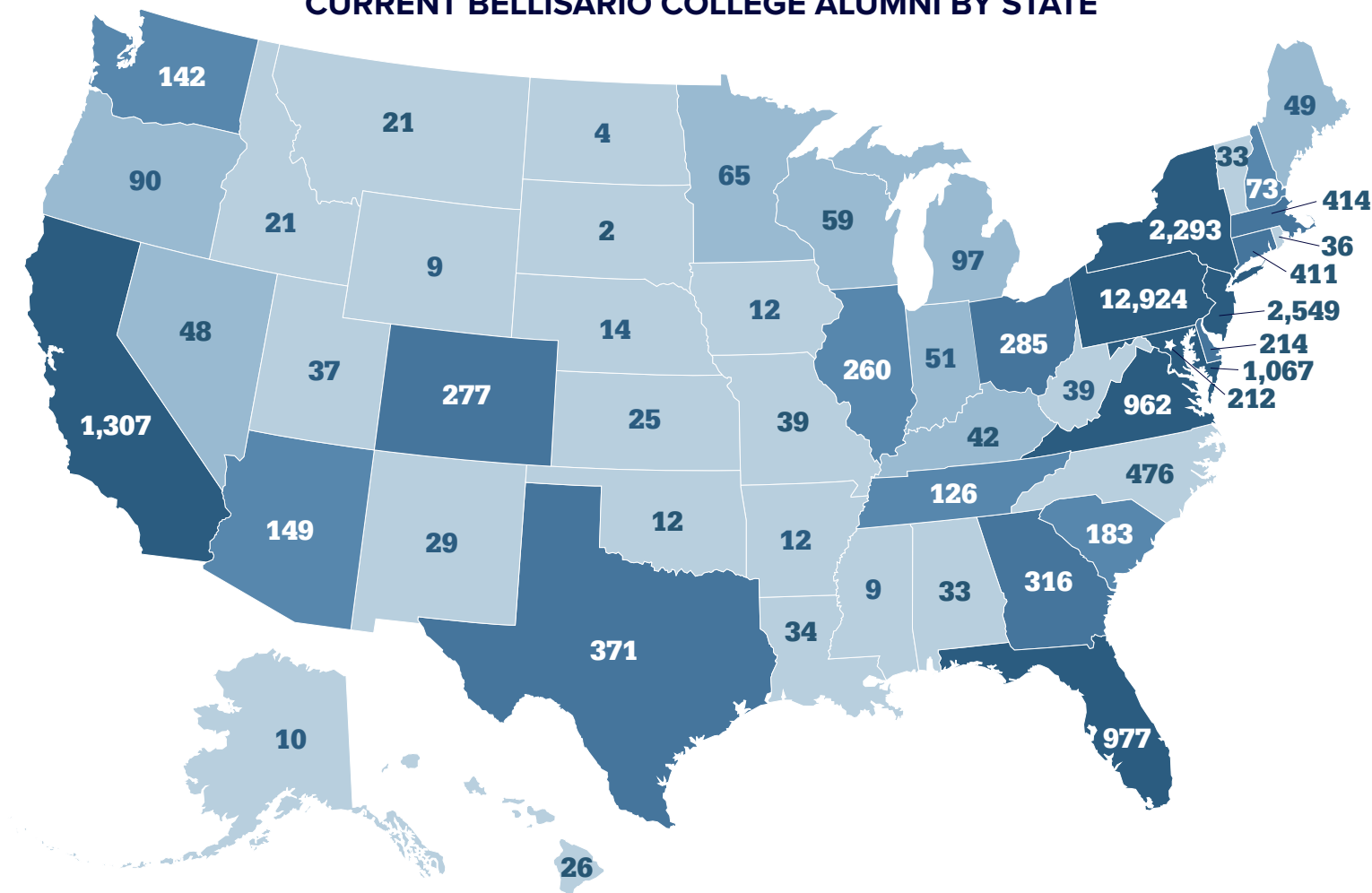
Kerry Ford ('89), president and chief storyteller, Kerry Ford Public Relations



AD/PR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Eric Rabe ('68), principal, ERCS, Management and Organization Consulting

CURRENT BELLISARIO COLLEGE ALUMNI BY STATE



US Territories 26

ALUMNI BOARDS

Ad/PR Network Board

Joe Berwanger
 Katie Blitz, *secretary*
 Gladys Charity
 Lauren Connolly
 Kathy Heasley, *immediate past president*
 Becky Kitlan
 Steven Lampert, *president*
 Scott Nulty
 Amanda Oey
 Tom Resau
 Suzanne Schulner, *vice president*
 Tara Smith
 Rachel Steinberg
 Robert Strang
 Bailey Templin

Students:

Gabriela Moreas De Paiva
 Phoebe Sebring

Alumni Society Board

Ron Balasco
 Josiah Bates
 Hannah Biondi
 Patrick Bunting
 Amanda Cramer
 Kevin Flintosh, *president*
 Alex Gilliland
 Carol Gosser
 Katherine Hansen, *secretary*
 Taylor Harrington
 Pam Hervey, *immediate past president*
 Ali Ingersoll
 Willie Jungels
 Madeliene Maggs

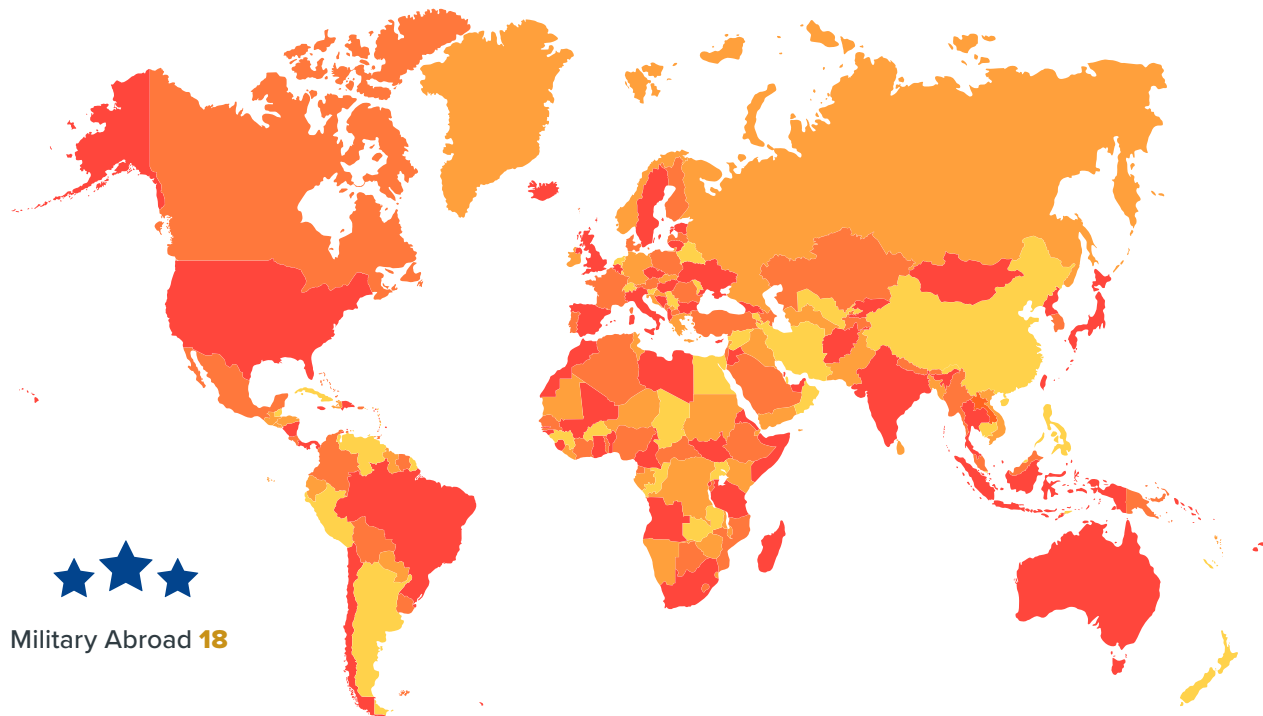
Ebony Martin, *president-elect*

Maddy Pryor
 Linsey Shea
 Stephanie Shirley
 Daniel Solomon
 Halle Stockton
 Erin Stranges
 Cindy Viadella
 Ron Wagner

Students:

Kaitlin Jean-Noel
 Abigail Johnson
 Sebastien Kraft

CURRENT BELLISARIO COLLEGE ALUMNI BY COUNTRY



Australia 7	Finland 1	Jordan 2	South Korea 112
Austria 1	France 2	Kazakhstan 9	Spain 4
Bahrain 1	Germany 4	Kuwait 2	Sweden 1
Bangladesh 1	Ghana 1	Malaysia 11	Switzerland 3
Bolivia 2	Greece 2	Mexico 3	Taiwan 42
Brazil 2	Grenada 1	Netherlands 2	Thailand 8
Brunei 1	Guatemala 2	New Zealand 2	Turkey 1
Canada 24	Hong Kong 20	Nigeria 2	Uganda 1
Cayman Islands 1	Hungary 1	North Korea 2	Ukraine 1
China 345	Iceland 1	Pakistan 1	United Arab Emirates 6
Colombia 1	India 21	Panama 2	United Kingdom 22
Cyprus 5	Indonesia 2	Philippines 2	United States 26,990
Dominican Republic 2	Iran 1	Poland 2	Venezuela 4
Ecuador 4	Ireland 1	Qatar 1	Zimbabwe 2
Egypt 1	Israel 1	Romania 1	
England 2	Italy 4	Saudi Arabia 2	
Fiji 1	Japan 17	Singapore 5	

ALUMNI LEADERS

Advancement Council

Marc Brownstein
Elizabeth Fetter
Daniel Hartman
Michael Marcus
Mary Meder
Terry Mutchler
Eric Rabe

Sean Reardon
Jordan Rednor
Joanne Ryder
Jacqueline Jamieson-Szafara
Carolyn Yu
David Yadgaroff

Hollywood Program Board

Gerald W. Abrams
Mary Lou Belli
Robin Bronk
Terry City
Bradley Gallo
Cheryl Fair
Daniel Hartman
Mark Hoerr

Suzanne Kaminer
Melissa Stone Mangham
Mike Marcus
Michael McIntyre
Tom Ortenberg
Hal Sadoff
Paul Schaeffer
Darren Schillace

PANDEMIC PIVOT



Deanna Figurito and her husband Miguel Gonzales recently hiked Machu Picchu. IMAGE: Deanna Figurito

New country, new company, new arrival for alumna

When it comes to embracing pandemic-related change, one Penn State alumna has done it well.

In the past couple of years, Deanna Figurito left her job, started her own company, moved to a different country and got married. Oh, she had a baby, too.

“When I made this pivot, maybe it was a little scarier than things I had done earlier in my career because at this point, I knew what I didn’t know. Plus, there were a lot of doubters,” said Figurito, who earned her bachelor’s degree in advertising/public relations in 2006. “But, when you open your mind up to the possibilities, you realize you can do the things you want.”

Figurito, who had worked in the corporate advertising world for 13 years, left her job two years ago. She had previously launched a side business running luxury yoga retreats, and her experience mentoring and supporting clients and colleagues helped her formulate a plan to pursue her passion.

Figurito launched DFig Connects Coaching and Consulting, an executive coaching group, in March 2020. The company is based in New York City and she works with clients in the United States and Europe — often high-achieving leaders making career transitions. And, while the coaching space might seem crowded to some, and a challenge to navigate for a start-up company, Figurito’s optimism defines her approach.

“Whether it be for your career, a career transition or ‘up-leveling’ in your current company — whatever it is you want

to do — I think there’s a lot of space for coaching,” she said. “Plus, it’s how you think about competition. I live in an abundant mindset. I think there’s enough out there for everyone.”


Figurito met her husband, Miguel Gonzales, who’s from Peru, on one of her yoga retreats. Because she was making a career change, the personal change seemed logical as well. She’s living in Peru and the family’s first was born in June.

She said the lifestyle in Peru, with an emphasis on creativity and entrepreneurship, has been helpful and supportive.

There have been hurdles, though. “It is tougher than I anticipated because I was so used to having my hand held by corporate in my previous positions,” she said. “But you figure things out.”

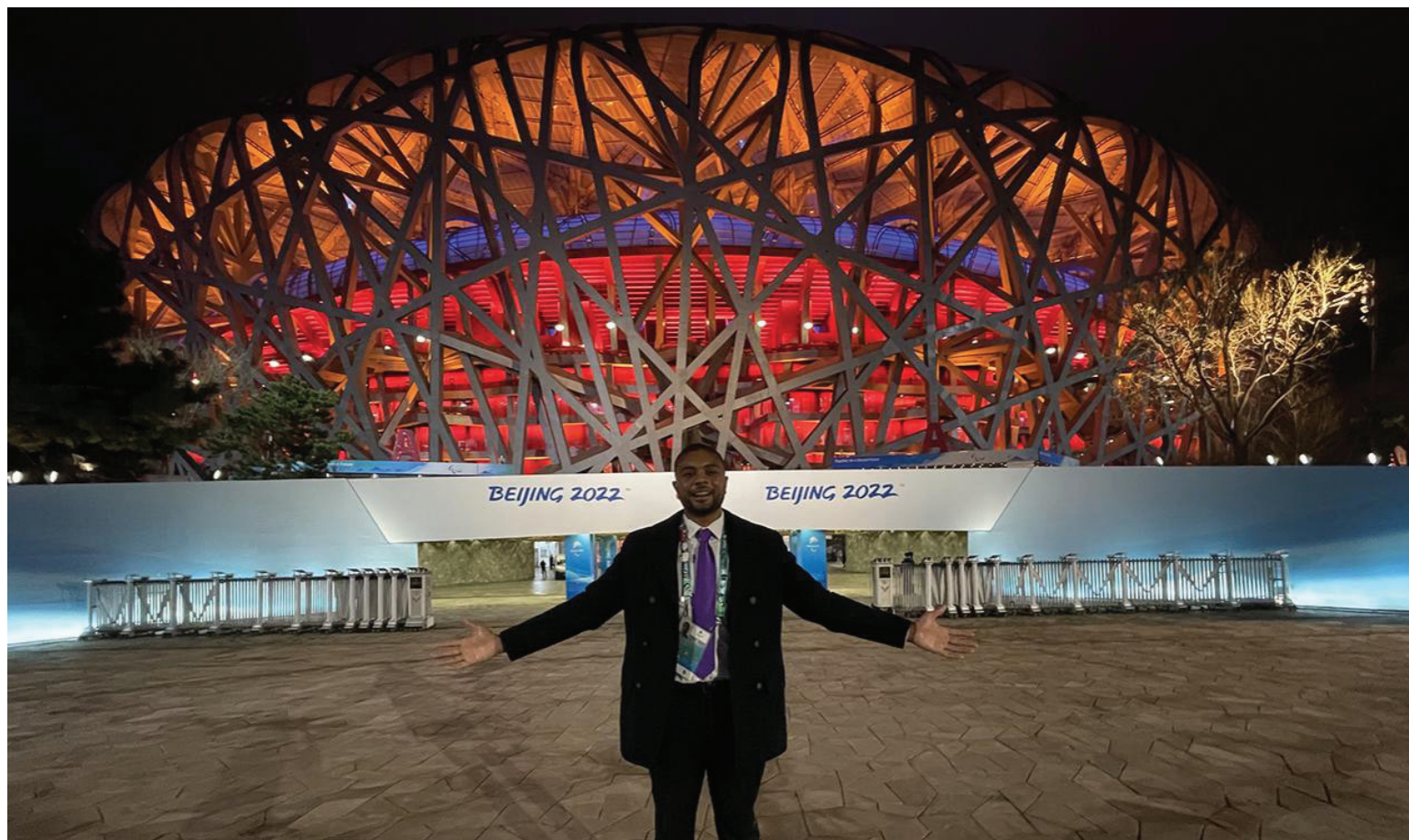
Once she made her decision, she studied, got certified and started building her client base. The career change — as well as the location change and motherhood — helped improve her positivity and productivity, she said.

In many ways, the moves were well-timed. More consistent use of technology by companies and individuals has made her location less important than it would’ve been a just a few years ago, and her business model allows her to potentially grow her coaching firm with young professionals interested in the gig economy seeking flexibility themselves.

How a small company deals with its founder and leader’s maternity leave represents the next challenge, but Figurito does not shy away from those kinds of things. She sees them as opportunities. 

SUCCESS AT CITI

Mikel Jones, vice president of corporate communications at Citi, credits opportunities and support at Penn State for jump-starting his career



Alumnus Mikel Jones traveled to Beijing for the Paralympics in his role as vice president of corporate communications at Citi. IMAGE: Mikel Jones

Most people are only responsible for the messaging of their own brand, but one Penn State alumnus whose job protects the reputation of a major Wall Street bank enjoys the challenge of influencing perceptions.

Mikel Jones, vice president of corporate communications at Citi, focuses on branding and sponsorship communications, including the company's partnerships with the New York Mets at Citi Field, various art and entertainment experiences, and athletes from around the world who compete in the Paralympic Games.

"Our sponsorships are a powerful tool that can be used to build and reinforce Citi as a world-class brand," Jones said. "We work closely with our global marketing team to raise awareness and showcase how we're enabling growth and progress for our customers, colleagues and the communities we serve."

Jones, who earned his bachelor's degree in journalism in 2015, was recently promoted to his role as vice president. He has been with Citi since September 2020, joining the company just before its Action for Racial Equity announcement — a \$1 billion strategic initiative to help close the racial wealth gap and increase economic mobility in the United States.

Jones and his broader team are responsible for internal and external communications for the leading global bank while also supporting executive communications and social media campaigns. In addition to publicizing Citi's initiatives, their goal is to highlight the impact the financial services company is having in areas such as the environment and governance as well as diversity, equity and inclusion.

One goal of the company's Action for Racial Equity initiative is to expand banking and access to credit in

communities of color. Jones led an Instagram campaign last year to show how Citi is collaborating with Black-owned banks and other “minority depository institutions” to provide equity investments and curated engagement.

“For me, the best part of my job is connecting our brand and sponsorships to how we are making a societal impact as well as leading conversations on diversity and inclusion. Citi is a leader when it comes to pioneering all these practices,” Jones said.

In the past year, Jones has traveled to both Tokyo and Beijing for the Paralympic Games to help drive owned and earned media opportunities with Citi’s para athletes, more affectionately known as Team Citi.

While social media provides an abundance of daily challenges, Citi finds success with campaigns that require action, not just words. The company’s Stare at Greatness campaign, which launched in June 2021, highlights the talents and accomplishments of the disability community to help change perceptions of people with disabilities.

“Creating an inclusive environment is not only important, but a priority to Citi,” said Jones. “Disability inclusion enables us to deliver with excellence.”

Jones came to Penn State from southern Florida. Both his parents originally grew up in Philadelphia and they encouraged him to venture outside of the Sunshine State. He embraced the opportunity and committed, but never actually saw the University until his official orientation visit.

“I of course heard so much about Penn State before applying,” Jones said. “It was important for me that my undergraduate experience make me step outside my comfort zone. After arriving in University Park for the first time, I could tell I was about to get my wish.”

Jones was inspired by his initial visit, deciding then to become involved in multiple student activities, and he remembers the start of his first fall semester vividly.

“Although I was far from the place I called home for 18 years, it occurred to me immediately I found a new one,”

he said. “From Day One I decided I was not only committing to an education, but to an experience.”

In his time at Penn State, Jones was a Lion Ambassador, a captain for the Penn State Dance Marathon, and even held a part-time job as head lifeguard at the McCoy Natatorium.

Monthly meetings with then-Assistant Dean Joseph Selden from the Bellisario College helped Jones navigate his success as a student.

“As a Black male student at Penn State, Dean Selden was a terrific role model for me and many other students of color on campus,” said Jones, who attributes part of his academic success to Selden’s support, as well as that of the advising office led by Assistant Dean Jamey Perry and the internship office led by Assistant Dean Bob Martin.

Plus, Jones’ connections on campus, and his interactions with other students, helped him realize the support was earnest and special.

“Every time I walked into Carnegie Building, I felt the staff was rooting for me to succeed — and I didn’t take that for granted,” he said.

Jones, who completed a sports production internship with WPSU-TV, as well as summer internships with TV stations in West Palm Beach, Florida, and Washington, D.C., worked in the heart of New York City after graduation. He took a retail position at the Apple Store in Times Square.

It was not the career he initially considered, but he said it was a valuable experience and he continues to use many of the skills he learned in that role for his current day-to-day responsibilities.

“Each of us has our own unique path when it comes to our career and I’m proud of the journey I have taken to get where I am today,” Jones said.

He’s proven he was prepared for the move, and his thoughtful approach continues to make an impact on a daily basis. 🏆



Every time I walked into Carnegie Building, I felt the staff was rooting for me to succeed — and I did not take that for granted.

– Mikel Jones ('15)

Hammel family honors late brother, journalist, with scholarship

Brothers Victor, Robert and Steven Hammel have committed \$100,000 to create the Lee M. Hammel Memorial Scholarship in honor of their late brother, who was an award-winning journalist in Massachusetts. The scholarship will be awarded to graduates of Pottsville Area High School attending any Penn State campus, with a preference for students studying journalism or communications.

The four brothers grew up in Pottsville and attended Pottsville Area High School. Lee Hammel subsequently studied at Boston University and pursued a distinguished career in journalism, working as a newspaper reporter for the Worcester Telegram and Gazette for 40 years. He passed away unexpectedly of a heart attack in 2017.

“Lee had a true passion for journalism,” said Steve Hammel. “He worked extremely hard at his craft, putting in long hours and often working weekends and holidays. And he cherished journalism as the bedrock of our democracy. Whatever issues he was covering — politics, public transportation, mental health, teen addiction, prisons — he was always driven by his fundamental honesty and his commitment to getting at the truth of the matter.”

It was to honor Lee’s dedication to excellence in journalism, and to inspire a similar dedication in future journalists and communications professionals, that the surviving brothers chose to create a scholarship in his memory. While Lee himself did not attend Penn State, both Vic and Bobby Hammel are alumni.




Lee M. Hammel, pictured here in the newsroom, worked as a newspaper reporter for the Worcester Telegram and Gazette for 40 years. IMAGE: the Hammel Family

“Bobby and I can attest to how important Penn State has been to our lives,” said Vic Hammel. “It provided us with a solid educational foundation for our careers, and in my case, I also met my wife, Dena, while we were both students there. But our affection for the University is not just sentimental. We recognize the tremendous quality of the institution overall and of the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications in particular. So we believe this is the perfect way to invest in the success of future journalists and communicators.”

The Hammel brothers said they also understood that Penn State is a popular choice for Pottsville Area High School graduates, but these students, like most of the University’s undergraduates, typically have to rely heavily on loans and other types of financial aid to afford that education. A scholarship at Penn State allowed them to honor their family’s connection to the city as well as to memorialize Lee.

“Pottsville is where we all started,” said Bobby Hammel. “We fondly recall our days growing up there and attending Pottsville High, and Lee did, too. We wanted to give back by providing Pottsville graduates with the chance to have even greater experiences at Penn State than Vic and I had. We hope this scholarship will allow them to focus more on their academic and co-curricular activities and spend less time working to meet their expenses, while also minimizing their college debt.”

“Scholarships are crucial to Penn State’s mission of educating promising students regardless of their financial background, especially in fields like journalism that need to reflect a wide range of voices and experiences,” said Dean Marie Hardin. “It is doubly exciting that this scholarship bears the name of someone like Lee Hammel. Lee exemplified the values that define true communications professionals: excellence in our work, ethical and engaged participation in a multicultural society, and the responsible use of communications in service of the greater good. I am honored that the Hammel brothers have entrusted Penn State with Lee’s legacy in this way, and I look forward to seeing the impact that the Lee M. Hammel Memorial Scholarship recipients ultimately have on their fields.”

The Hammel brothers said they hope that the recipients of the scholarship strive to display the values and dedication to their work that Lee embodied in his career. 

Alumnus makes gift to the University as part of a thank-you effort

Jeff Ballou's support honors faculty, academic and
volunteer experiences that shaped him

His career has enabled him to work with national and international newsmakers and powerbrokers, but Jeff Ballou often finds power in two simple words, and he's proud to shout out a "We Are ..." when the moment calls for it.

Ballou, a Penn State alumnus and longtime supporter of the University, works as a news editor for Al Jazeera Media Network based in Washington, D.C. He's a past president of the National Press Club — the first African American man to hold that position, and the first person from a non-U.S. and non-Western-based television network to serve in that role. Ballou earned his journalism degree from the University in 1990 and started his career as a student with journalism and media-related internships.

A recent financial commitment of \$26,000 provides a tangible testament to Ballou's areas of interest at Penn State. Specifically, the gift includes:

- a donation to the Irvin "Chappie" Hill '56 Scholarship, named after his late maternal cousin and administered by the Penn State Alumni Association's Greater Pittsburgh Chapter;
- a contribution to the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications Scholarship and Student Support Endowment;
- a commitment to the endowed Lawrence Young Scholarship, which awards support to students with high academic achievement, significant unmet financial need, and leadership in a Greek organization within the National Pan-Hellenic Council;
- a contribution to the Greater Pittsburgh Chapter's Fast Start endowment, which supports a program that matches first-year students with two mentors, one a faculty or staff member and the other an alumnus, to help the students get off to a "fast start" at Penn State;
- a paver in the Hintz Alumni Center's plaza; and
- donations to the Nittany Lion Club and WPSU-FM.


"This gift to Penn State represents both a modest thank you to some of the impactful family, academic and volunteer experiences which shaped me as a student and later as an alumnus," Ballou said. "Like my late maternal cousin Chappie Hill, 1956, who helped lead the fundraising charge for the lettermen's lounge, I want to pick up the torch and begin leaving some tangible gifts of my own. Hopefully, the gifts will help future generations of Penn Staters who look like me and come from humble beginnings, get a helping hand to attend, make an impact, graduate, then improve both the journalism profession and the world at large."

Ballou previously earned the Ronald & Judith Davenport Alumni Achievement Award, which recognizes alumni who have made notable progress in their careers including long-term leadership. He previously served as a member of the Alumni Association's Alumni Council.

Ballou, a Pittsburgh native, has been a journalist for more than 30 years. He started his journalism career at KDKA, where he worked as an intern for several summers while attending Penn State. After graduation, he worked for WTTG-TV/FOX 5 in the nation's capital. During his career he has covered the White House, Congress, and the State Department.

As a Penn State student, Ballou worked for WPSU-FM, was a member and leader of Undergraduate Student Government, participated in the Penn State Dance Marathon, and served on several search committees for faculty, staff and administrators.

He complemented his Penn State degree with a master's degree from American University focused on journalism and public affairs.

"Jeff has always been an enthusiastic and passionate supporter of our programs and students," said Dean Marie Hardin of the Bellisario College. "He's been involved, and it's always clear he cares. The varied nature of this gift and the many areas it impacts provides a perfect tangible representation of Jeff's passion for Penn State." 



Jeff Ballou works as a news editor for Al Jazeera Media Network based in Washington, D.C. IMAGE: Jeff Ballou

Amanpour, Chenault and Polansky earn Page Center's sixth annual integrity awards


The Arthur W. Page Center in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications honored Christiane Amanpour, chief international anchor at CNN; Ken Chenault, chairman and managing director of the venture capital firm General Catalyst and former chairman and CEO of American Express; and Andy Polansky, chairman and CEO of IPG DXTRA and executive chairman at Weber Shandwick, with its sixth annual awards for integrity. The virtual event was held in February.

Honorees receive a Larry Foster Award for Integrity in Public Communication, which is given to professionals who have become trusted voices in a number of fields, including business, journalism, public relations and the public sector. Honorees participate in a Q&A session and discuss how integrity played an important role in their success as communicators.

"There is a great urgency to find leaders who set examples for others to follow," said Bill Nielsen, Page Center advisory board chair and former corporate vice president of public affairs at Johnson & Johnson. "Each year we build the case that integrity is essential to earning trust and successfully communicating with the public."

Hosting the event virtually was an opportunity for the Page Center to share its mission of "enhancing ethics and responsibility in public communication" to a global audience.

"The Page Center Awards have become a forum for teachers, professionals and, most importantly, students to gather and learn from inspiring leaders," Page Center Director Denise Bortree said. "The fundamental need for truth and integrity transcends our industry. It's an important message for everyone to hear."

The Page Center, housed in the Bellisario College, is a research center that advances integrity in all forms of public communication. 

2022 Honorees:



Christiane Amanpour

Amanpour is chief international anchor of CNN's award-winning flagship global affairs program "Amanpour," which also airs on PBS. She is based in the network's London bureau. Amanpour's fearless and uncompromising approach made her popular with audiences, and a force to be reckoned with by global influencers. She has become a trusted voice in journalism and has been recognized for coverage of many historic events over her near 40-year career, including the Gulf War, the trial of Saddam Hussein, genocide in Bosnia, and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.



Kenneth Chenault

Chenault is the chairman and a managing director of the venture capital firm General Catalyst. Prior to joining General Catalyst, Chenault was chairman and chief executive officer of American Express, a position he held from 2001 to 2018. Upon Chenault's retirement from American Express, Warren Buffett, the company's largest shareholder, stated, "Ken's been the gold standard for corporate leadership and the benchmark that I measure others against." At General Catalyst, Chenault focuses on investing in fast-growing companies that have the potential to become large, fundamental institutions. He also provides invaluable guidance to portfolio companies, particularly to those with an eye toward global markets and responsible innovation, as they scale their teams and products.



Andy Polansky

Polansky is the chairman and chief executive officer of IPG DXTRA, a global collective of marketing services and public relations firms that includes Weber Shandwick, Golin, Rogers & Cowan PMK and FutureBrand. Polansky also is executive chairman of Weber Shandwick, after serving as CEO from 2012 to 2019. Under his leadership, Weber Shandwick was named Agency of the Decade by PRovoke Media and was PR Week's Global Agency of the Year from 2015 to 2018. Polansky has a passion for engaging with students and young professionals as they plan their careers and is a trusted global leader in the public relations industry.

Bellisario College continues opportunity to support equipment fund

Gifts starting at \$250 will be recognized on permanent digital donor wall

A transformative \$30 million gift from Penn State Distinguished Alumnus Donald P. Bellisario helped create opportunities for faculty support, student scholarships and the state-of-the-art Bellisario Media Center.

Now alumni and friends can join in that support — and have an ongoing presence in the media center — with their own gifts to the Bellisario Media Center Equipment Fund.

All alumni and friends who make gifts to support the effort at \$250 or above will be recognized on the media center's digital donor wall, consistently reminding students they are part of a community invested in their future.

Three options exist for donors:

- Level 1: \$250 – Gifts recognized by a digital brick
- Level 2: \$500 – Gifts recognized by a digital plaque with a personalized message
- Level 3: \$1,000 – Gifts recognized by a digital portrait with a personalized message and photo.

Gifts may be made online or by utilizing a downloadable printed form. After gifts are made, donors will receive instructions for personalizing their digital brick, plaque or portrait.

With the media center open and a hub of student activity, gifts from alumni and friends can provide necessary hands-on equipment to encourage collaboration, innovation and storytelling across disciplines and platforms at the University.

Examples of what support for the equipment fund could provide include: audio

equipment such as camera-mounted microphones and boom-pole kits, drones, gimble sticks, and 360-degree cameras for pop-up newsrooms, design software packages; professional lenses, a mobile public relations lab for presentations and contests; and a media database and monitoring tool. 🛡️



Make
Your Gift
Today

EXAMPLE DONOR PLAQUES

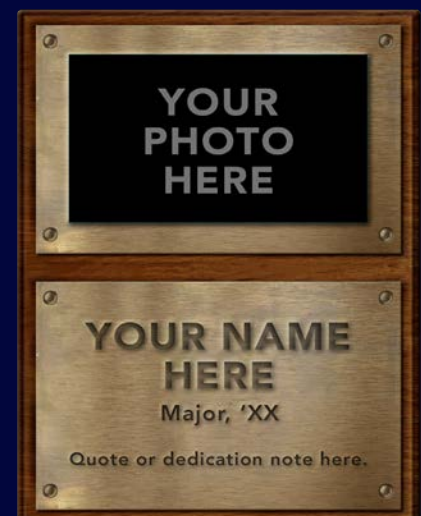
Level 1: \$250



Level 2: \$500



Level 3: \$1,000



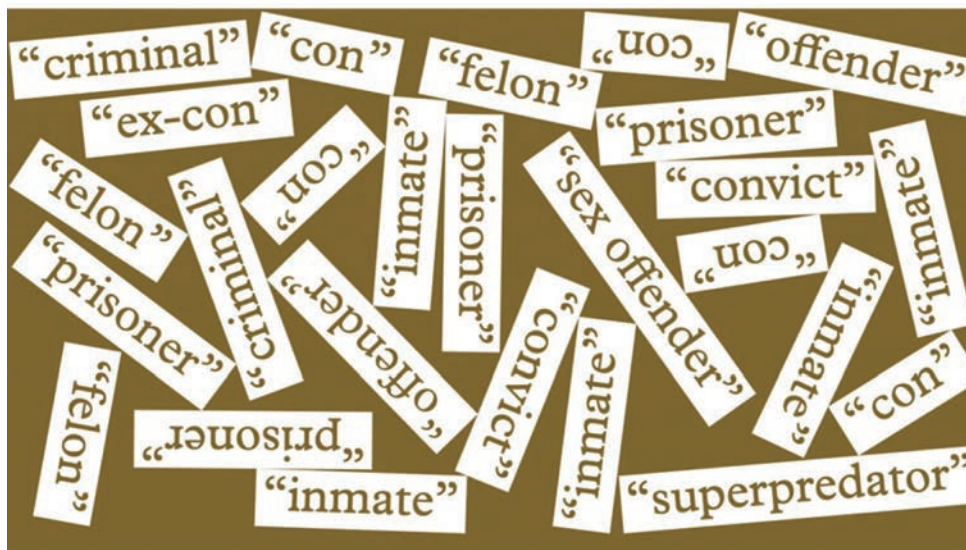
Curley Center honors ESPN with award

A team of journalists from ESPN was honored for an exhaustive investigation and series of stories about a track coach who molested dozens of boys and young men over a period of nearly 40 years, concluding when that man was arrested in 2021.

Reporters Mark Fainaru-Wada and Mike Kessler, leaders of the ESPN team, earned the Award for Excellence in Coverage of Youth Sports for their work. The nationally competitive prize is presented annually by the John Curley Center for Sports Journalism at Penn State. It was presented on campus in April 2022.

Fainaru-Wada and Kessler followed an initial tip about a former Olympian, Conrad Mainwaring, said to have molested a young boy in the 1970s and who had reportedly molested dozens more through the years. They found him still coaching, and eventually uncovered more than 50 men who described being physically abused and mentally manipulated by Mainwaring.

The allegations covered activities in the United Kingdom and at least four U.S. states. Despite competing in the 1976 Summer Olympics and then later training a two-time Olympic gold medalist, Mainwaring stayed one step ahead of his accusers and the law — until ESPN's reporting led directly to his arrest in California. He currently faces more than a dozen charges. 🏆



The Marshall Project

Bart Richards Award recognizes 'provocative, outstanding' project

The Marshall Project, an award-winning nonprofit journalism organization covering the U.S. criminal justice system, earned the 2021 Bart Richards Award for Media Criticism for its work on The Language Project. Praised by judges as "provocative," "outstanding" and "special," The Language Project encourages media to cover criminal justice issues more fairly and responsibly by enhancing the accuracy of words used to describe people and incarceration.

The Language Project was designed to give journalists the incentive and tools to replace common descriptors such as "inmates," "felons" and "offenders" with "people first" alternatives such as "incarcerated people," "people convicted of felonies" and "people charged with sex offenses."

For example, the word "inmate" is regularly applied to anyone held in a correctional facility. The Language Project pointed out that 74% of people in U.S. jails have not been convicted of a crime. So, calling someone in jail an "inmate" in an article consigns them to a criminal identity, even if they are innocent. And that article will likely be the first result in an internet search of that person's name.

"Traditional police and crime reporters tend to shy away from anything that suggests they are sugar-coating crime or humanizing criminals out of respect for victims and survivors," said Susan Chira, editor-in-chief of The Marshall Project. "Ultimately, The Language Project advocates for an incontrovertible fact — that people in prison or jail are people. Journalism is a discipline of clarity. If we fall back on labels, we are not doing our best work."

The Bart Richards Award, presented annually by the Bellisario College, is intended to recognize constructively critical articles, books, and electronic and online media reports; academic and other research; and reports by media ombudsmen and journalism watchdog groups. The award was presented in May 22 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. 🏆

COLLEGE VISITORS

Raig Adolfo, *president and chief strategy officer, Saatchi & Saatchi NY*

David Arroyo ('19), *production assistant, ESPN Next*

John Barr, *reporter, ESPN*

Michelle Borgese, *vice president/marketing, The Human Bean*

Brandon Boyd, *education programs manager, Concussion Legacy Foundation*

Judson Burch ('92), *senior coordinating producer, ESPN*

Sarah Carberry, *acting head of North American Google Play partnerships, apps and monetization, Google*

Caty Borum Chattoo, *researcher and documentary producer*

Dmitry Chernobrow, *lecturer, University of Sheffield*

Erica Cizek, *assistant professor, University of Texas*

Tina Clabbers ('08), *global consumer public relations director, Whole Foods*

Teresa Correa, *associate professor, Universidad Diego Portales*

John D'Anna, *investigations editor, The Press Democrat of Santa Rosa, California*

Guido D'Elia, *CEO, G Consults*

Scott Dodd ('94), *editor on the national desk, The New York Times*

Erin Dolan ('18), *betting analyst, ESPN*

David Epstein, *president, Intelligent Staffing*

Mark Fainaru-Wada, *journalist, ESPN*

John Fisher ('03), *director of research, CBS Sports*

Rachel Ferguson ('04), *chief innovation and global diversity officer, Visit Philadelphia*

Shawn Fox ('18), *marketing specialist, Peacock TV*

Shannon Furman ('03), *producer/director, NFL Films*

Robert Gibbs, *former White House press secretary*

Bianca Guimares, *partner/chief creative director, Mischief USA*

Nikol Hannah-Jones, *creator, 1619 Project*

Bernice Hausman, *chair, Dept. of Humanities, Penn State College of Medicine*

Jaimie Hefelfinger ('08), *account lead, Centro*

Jim Ivler ('90), *partner, Sportstars*

Ricky Jacobs, *senior vice president/managing director, FCB Canada*

Anna James ('18), *account supervisor, Saatchi & Saatchi*

Kai Jang ('20), *technician/colorist, CarStage*

Brad Keen, *senior manager, LEARFIELD*

Mike Kessler, *writer/editor, The California Newsroom*

Katherine Lanpher, *editor in chief, High Country News*

Michele Lake ('18), *senior art director, Harrison and Star*

Tim Livingston, *host, 'Whistleblower' podcast*

Lawrence Lokman, *vice president of strategic communications, Penn State*

Mary Beth Long ('85), *former assistant secretary of defense for international affairs*

Tami Luhby, *senior writer, CNNMoney.com*

Christine MacDonald, *Investigations reporter, Detroit Free Press*

Adam Math, *vice president, Whitman Insight Strategies*

Karisa Maxwell ('13), *multimedia producer, The Sporting News*

Weeda Mehran, *lecturer, University of Exeter*

Zlati Meyer, *newsletter writer, Wall Street Journal*

Malcolm Moran, *director/Sports Capital Journalism Program, IUPUI*

Brian Napoli, *vice president/corporate partnerships, Philadelphia Eagles*

Serena Namgoong ('19), *beauty sales assistant, Meredith Corp.*

Joseph Niedziejko ('18), *account executive, Maven Communications*

Mike Olejniczak, *account director, GMR Marketing*

Jay Paterno ('91), *president, Blue Line 409 LLC*

Vince Paventa ('11), *senior account executive, Amazon*

Glenn Proctor,
founder, REDDjobbLLC

Rich Russo ('84), *producer, FOX Sports*

Stephanie Saul, *national reporter, The New York Times*

Jim Schaefer, *senior news director, Detroit Free Press*

Jerry Schwartz ('77), *editor at large, The Associated Press*

Kate Snow, *senior national correspondent, NBC News*

Daniel Solomon ('04), *senior manager, LEARFIELD*

Brain Tripp ('11), *play-by-play/reporter, Big Ten Network/Westwood One*

Robert Tutman, *camera operator (retired), CBS*



Joe Putnam, *director of communications, State College Spikes*

Brittany Ramos ('11), *leadership communications manager, EATON Corp.*

Rite Reis, *doctoral candidate, University of Lisbon*

Trevor Robinson ('21), *CMO, Limitless NIL*

Erin Rogers ('17), *social media manager, 360i*

Katie Rudy ('12), *director of strategy and operations, EngageMint Partners*

Scott Walker, *general manager, State College Spikes*

Simone Weichselbaum, *national investigative reporter, NBC*

Judi Weiss ('89), *producer, ESPN College GameDay*

Rhema Zlaten, *assistant professor, Colorado Mesa University*

OBITUARIES

BILL JAFFE ('60) APRIL 4, 2022



Bill Jaffe was an alumnus and volunteer whose service and philanthropy spanned more than half a century and impacted units across the University. Jaffe, a 1960 Penn State graduate who rose through the ranks of the consulting industry to found his own firm, died on April 4, 2022, at his vacation home in Palm Springs, California. He was 83.

Jaffe made his first gift to the University — a modest \$5 — in 1961, and across the ensuing six decades, he, along with his late wife, Honey, went on to direct significant philanthropic support to multiple areas of the University, including Intercollegiate Athletics, the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications and the College of Arts and Architecture.

He established nearly 20 scholarships and endowments in a coordinated effort to boost student success, often pairing his giving with hands-on volunteer service across the University. In recent years, he placed a particular emphasis on marshaling support with a lead gift to the new Palmer Museum of Art, complemented by leadership service on its National Advisory Council.

Jaffe received much recognition and many awards from units across Penn State for his service on advisory boards, alumni societies and organizational councils. He served as chair of the Intercollegiate Athletics committee in the University's current fundraising campaign, "A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence," and he was involved as a volunteer in the Bellisario College of Communications Alumni Society, the All-Sports Museum, Penn State Hillel and many other activities.

The Penn State Alumni Association named him an Alumni Fellow in 1996 and Volunteer of the Year in 2000. He also received the Lion's Paw medal in 2007 in recognition of his service to the University. He was appointed President's Club Chair in 2008, and in 2013 he earned the Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest honor bestowed by the University upon an outstanding alumna or alumnus.


"Penn State meant the world to my father," said Bill's daughter, Robin Jaffe Goebel. "He was always stepping forward to mentor students, spearhead fundraising efforts, cheer on a team or sponsor the performing and fine arts. He used to say that he gave to Penn State and Penn State gave back to him, and that bond of trust meant everything to him, as it always will to my family."

Jaffe and his wife were named the Penn State 2011 Fundraising Volunteers of the Year for their service during "For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students," an award that highlights alumni and friends who built networks that secured philanthropic support for the University. The award recognizes an individual, couple or group who has served as fundraising volunteers, teachers or mentors while demonstrating exceptional commitment and leadership in building philanthropic support for the University. The couple was admitted as Laurel Circle members of the Mount Nittany Society.

Prior to the news of his death, Jaffe was scheduled to be honored at the 2022 Palmer Museum of Art benefit gala and auction on May 21, at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, an event that marked the 50th anniversary of the museum's founding in the buildup to the opening of the new Palmer Museum currently under construction at The Arboretum at Penn State. He had been slated to receive the Palmer Philanthropic Service award for his extensive philanthropy and personal engagement with the museum.

Part of what set Jaffe apart as a philanthropist was the breadth of his giving across the University. Beyond his marquee priorities, he also created endowments to support women's volleyball, jazz musicians, musical theatre, interns, field hockey players, WPSU and Blue Band, among others.

Born June 21, 1938, in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, William A. Jaffe was part of a Penn State tradition that cut across three generations. His father, Reuben Jaffe, was a 1922 graduate in the College of Engineering. Bill's son, Matthew H. Jaffe, studied film in the Bellisario College in the early 1990s, and his daughter, Robin, earned her degree in speech communication in the College of the Liberal Arts in 1995. His cousin, Simon Ziff, graduated in 1987 with a degree in finance and built a career in real estate.

In addition to his two children and cousin, Jaffe is survived by his sister, Elaine Altshuler, and his partner of recent years, Jane Zimmerman. 

BRIAN WINSTON APRIL 9, 2022

IMAGE: University of Lincoln

Documentary and media professor Brian Winston, who served as the first dean of the communications program at Penn State, died April 9, 2022. He was 80.

Winston, who was selected to lead the then-School of Communications in 1987, authored more than 20 books addressing questions of media history, technology, aesthetics and ethics, particularly freedom of expression.

He worked in the field for almost 60 years, from a post-college traineeship in 1963 with the newly launched *World in Action*, Granada television's provocative investigative affairs series; and in academia for 50, having turned to media teaching in 1971, and taken his first lectureship at Bradford College of Art the following year. He was based at the University of Lincoln, where he served as professor of communications, pro-vice chancellor (2005 to


2006) and inaugural Lincoln Chair from 2007 until his retirement this March. 

DAVID MULLER PELLNITZ ('53) MARCH 6, 2022

David Muller Pellnitz, who became a Penn State student after serving in the National Guard during the Korean War, and whose career in journalism spanned more than 50 years, died March 6, 2022. He was 91.

He was a correspondent for his local paper while he was in the military and after graduating from Penn State he started working for the *New York World - Telegram and Sun*, first in market research and later in advertising sales. He joined the sales staff of *Haddon Craftsman* in 1966 when the paper closed and when that company was bought by R.R. Donneley & Sons in 1993, he joined their staff. He worked in sales with them until his retirement in 1997. He was called back as a consultant in 1998 and later worked as a freelance proofreader for W.W.

Norton, an independent New York publisher.


A longtime resident of New Jersey, Pellnitz and his wife, the former Elizabeth Wedlick, who preceded him in death in 2016, moved to South Carolina in 2013. While there, Pellnitz continued playing bridge and developed a love of bocce, which he played two or three times a week. 

B.J. REYES ('95) JAN. 15, 2022

IMAGE: High Rep UN Media

B.J. Reyes was a consummate journalist and a passionate advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. A 1995 graduate of the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications and a former sportswriter and editor at the *Daily Collegian*, B.J. began his journalism career with the Associated Press. He spent a decade with the AP, working in Charleston, West Virginia, Detroit, New York, and Honolulu, before joining the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and then the *Star-Advertiser*, where he covered state government and politics. In 2015, he returned to his alma mater as the associate editor at the *Penn Stater*, the University's alumni magazine. Back on campus, B.J. led diversity and inclusion efforts in the Division of Development and Alumni Relations, serving on the division's DEI committee and helping shape the DEI plank in the division's strategic plan. His commitment to great journalism was

matched by his dedication to ensuring equal opportunity for all.

As a tribute to his impact and legacy, B.J.'s family, friends, and the Bellisario College have established the **BJ Reyes Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award**, an endowed fund to provide support to undergraduate and graduate students who advance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications community. Gifts may be made to the fund to honor B.J. and provide a way to continue his impact on others. 



Donate to the Fund

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Our alumni and friends made 1,754 gifts totaling \$6,246,911 during the period from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, to support the Bellisario College and its students. The Honor Roll recognizes those who made gifts of at least \$100 during the fiscal year.

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Film festival adapts to deliver more success

Making a film requires a plan as well as the patience and persistence to adapt when things go awry, and faculty filmmakers in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications know that process well.

That's why their support and vision for the annual Centre Film Festival helped the event complete its third year strong despite challenges. The festival was conducted Nov. 1-7, 2021, with three delivery methods for its 18 documentaries, eight feature films, numerous shorts and more than a dozen related discussions and

question-and-answer sessions with filmmakers and local activists.

Faculty member Pearl Gluck said the festival included a variety of approaches to storytelling as well as myriad film genres.

"We had films that educate, films that entertain and films that did both," said

Gluck, an associate professor in the Department of Film Production. "It's exciting to think about what's to come in the future."



SAVE THE DATES
Centre Film Festival
Oct. 31-Nov. 6, 2022



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