Inside: Transforming Communication and Other COM Updates
The year of curriculum

Say the word curriculum around a university and you will get varied reactions ranging from distaste to enthusiasm. Whether they love or loathe curriculum, all the faculty at CSU nevertheless immersed themselves in curricular review and examined courses, majors, minors, and interdisciplinary programs.

Some departments at CSU chose to reproduce their majors in a three credit hour form that was as close as possible to the former four credit hour format. In Communication, however, our careful curricular reviews led to significant changes in our two largest specialized majors, Film and Digital Media (FDM), and Journalism and Promotional Communication (JPC). As the articles in this issue of Multichannels discuss, the faculty in FDM and JPC had extended discussions leading to proposals to thoroughly revamp these majors. In both cases, changes in the FDM and JPC curricula reflect the ongoing need to help our students learn and adapt to emerging technologies and methods of production.

Because the School of Communication took curricular review so seriously we have developed new sequences in our majors that helped us reconceptualize what we wanted to accomplish in our majors.

All of our revisions were driven by the need to determine how we could best serve our students and prepare them for their future careers. This issue of Multichannels also showcases some COM faculty accomplishments and recognitions, as well as some COM alumni highlights. For many of us on the COM faculty, the 2013-2014 academic year was like no other. We learned a lot, we accomplished much, and now we are poised to fully implement our new curriculum.
"The Big Switch"

Four-to-three credit conversion now complete

By Emily Scharf

The ‘Big Switch’ has taken place and the majority of four-credit-hour courses at Cleveland State University have now been converted to three credit hours. Coinciding with the conversion is a decrease in the credit hour requirement for graduation. Instead of requiring 128 credits for graduation, the curriculum will now require only 120 credits, as recommended by the Ohio Board of Regents.

The School of Communication now offers Baccalaureate degrees in Communication, Communication Management, Film and Digital Media and Journalism and Promotional Communication. The school also offers a minor in Communication and certificates in Journalism, Multimedia Advertising and Science Writing.

To meet the fall 2014 deadline, all courses and programs had to be approved by Feb. 1, according to Dr. George Ray, director of the Communication school.

“I can’t claim it’s completely smooth and it’s not messy,” Ray said. “There are some issues, but basically, it has been approved and is proceeding as planned.”

CSU President Ronald M. Berkman spoke to the City Club of Cleveland on Friday, March 28 about changes in the university and higher education as a whole.

He highlighted that the conversion will align Cleveland State with the rest of the universities in the state of Ohio by converting to a three-credit hour model.

Berkman noted that in the past, many students had been taking too many credits.

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"Our average student last year graduated with an average of 142 credits, which often meant for students an additional two years of college, and an additional two years of tuition," he said in an address last year to the City Club audience.

Berkman confirmed the state will change the funding formula during his City Club speech.

Berkman said going forward, 50 percent of funding will be based on the number of students who graduate and 50 percent of funding will be based on course completion.

"It is no longer an input model," Berkman said. "You can no longer just bring students in and have the dollars follow students. Now the dollars will follow success, the dollars will follow completion, the dollars will follow progress."

He attributed this change as one of the reasons for the conversion being made at CSU.

"If you can get 30 credits in three semesters, you’re making really good progress. There’s nothing that really fuels a desire to finish than making good progress while you’re there," he said in response to a question from the audience.

Through all of the confusion and hard work from faculty, staff and students, Berkman remains confident about one thing -- students will be held harmless in the midst of the credit conversion.

"Everywhere I go and in every administrative meeting, I make clear that my first and most abiding goal right now is that we make this transition from a four-credit model to a three-credit model without students being hurt," Berkman said.

He added that students must help by seeing their advisers, asking questions and participating in the change.

According to Ray, the general Communication major, which used to consist of 10 four-credit courses, has become 13 classes of three credits each.

For Communication, more than 50 percent of classes that were four-credit hours were revised into a three-credit format by reducing content.

"One example, in a course I teach, we read four books," Ray said. "Now we’re going to read three books. So, reduce assignments, and reduce content."

Ray said that ultimately, the conversion should help students proceed more smoothly through their major, which, in turn, could speed up the graduation process.

Ray added that among the Communication sequences, Communication Management has changed very little in the conversion.

"They had one sequence and they are still with that one sequence," Ray said.

Dr. Jill Rudd, director of the divisions of Communication and Communication Management, said no content had to be cut from the Communication Management division, but rather, the track will have different skill areas, such as Health and Mediation, and Organizational and Leadership Communication.

She also mentioned that the credit requirement has decreased from the previous 40-credit hour requirement to a 36-credit hour requirement.

Rudd speculated that more than half of the students in Communication and Communication Management have stopped in for advising on the new curriculum, and she noted that percentage also includes those students who will be graduating soon and are not required to seek advice.

As far as changing to the new curriculum versus sticking with the old degree map, Rudd said that there is a surprising mix of students choosing one path or the other.

"Whatever works the best for them is what they do," she said, explaining that each adviser is to sit down with the students individually and explain both degree maps — the new and the old — to students, and let them choose their path, while giving advice to which path they think is best for the student.

She noted that every adviser is to review each student’s file and make adjustments as needed.

"It’s a two-phase model," Rudd said, referring to the school’s recommendation for the path each student should take and the actual advising appointment students make with the division directors.

Rudd said that in the long run, the conversion will be better for transfer students, as CSU will be in sync with
the other state universities now running on a three-credit system.

She said it is key that students understand they won’t be spending any more time in the classroom; they will just have more subjects within the same amount of time.

“They’ll get less information within a class, but they’ll get more diversity of information — because they have to take more classes,” Rudd added.

As far as whether she believes the change will be beneficial to students, Rudd said, “We’ll wait and see.”

According to Dr. Gary Pettey, director of the Journalism and Promotional Communication division, the JPC major has been completely revised.

“We modified the entire major, so the Advertising and PR sequences have merged and the Journalism sequence has become much more similar to the new Promotional sequence,” Pettey said. “There is a lot more commonality among everything now.”

Pettey explained that the faculty was instructed to cut 25 percent out of every course they taught.

“Our old major was 44 hours which was 11 courses, so we cut out 11 credits worth of material,” Pettey said. “So we’re already short in terms of the things we needed to teach, so we had to figure out a new way to rearrange it.”

According to Pettey, the School of Communication has added more content classes to the Journalism track and more production courses to the Promotional track.

For example, he added that Editing and Graphics (COM 425) will now be required for all tracks, where as previously Advertising majors were not required to take it.

“It was way too big of a course before under four hours, so now under three it would be unmanageable,” Pettey said, adding that now the course will have a different name and much of the production material will be moved to the new COM 447 course.

Ray agreed, saying the Journalism faculty felt there was a lot already crammed into that class.

“For years, we’ve had Media Writing (COM 225) as four-credit hours,” Ray said. “So to cut that down to three, you just couldn’t do it.”

Pettey elaborated on these changes, also explaining that students in COM 425 will learn the Adobe Suite, and COM 335, Multimedia Storytelling, will teach students simple videography skills.

As for other courses, Pettey said the department has added a new introductory course, COM 224, which has some similarities to the current COM 231, but he said it is more of a history of journalism and promotional communication.

“It’s more of a traditional introduction to mass communication,” he added, saying that COM 224 is more of a conceptual class which has theories and principles to complement COM 225.

Another piece that is new on the curriculum, according to Pettey, is a new communication production course, COM 363, which he said is a one-credit piece that goes with the student’s capstone.

“Because there’s so much outside work done in the capstone, they will take COM 363 with it as well.”

Students will not meet as a class in this one-credit course, but will receive the credit in recognition of work they have completed outside of the classroom, which will make up the one credit lost in the conversion.

When it comes to the electives, Pettey said that some electives may not be offered every year.

“So if there’s an elective you want, you better take it, because if it’s offered this year, it probably won’t be offered the next year,” he said, adding that the Promotional majors do not have any electives — only the Journalism majors do.

Pettey said in terms of the JPC track, there is no old program anymore. If a student is close to finishing his degree under the old degree map, he can choose to do so, but many of the courses may not exist, or may have been modified.

He explained that if a student has one more class to take — assuming that class still exists — that he will take that class and the department will waive the one credit the student would be short. He said the same applies for two courses, however, anything more than two courses would make the student...
need to fulfill one more course requirement.

“Anybody who is going to take courses beyond summer, it’s all different,” Pettey said.

As the director of JPC, Pettey also advises majors on the track.

“We’ve been advising for the past six months, and we still are advising,” he said, adding that only about half of the total JPC students had stopped in to see him in the spring.

“The rules that we were supposed to live by were to hold the students harmless, and we have to figure out what that means,” Pettey said. “What that means is that you’re going to get credit for every credit you’ve taken, but the classes are going to change.”

Pettey said the biggest adjustment for students will be coming to the realization that instead of taking four courses worth 16 credits, now five classes will be worth only 15 credits.

“That’s going to be a big adjustment for students to start thinking that way — that they’ve got to schedule five classes in between their jobs. And another set of books on top of that.”

Media Arts & Technology

According to Dr. Evan Lieberman, director of the Media Arts & Technology division, the Film and Digital Media major at CSU previously had three sequences, that will become one.

The previous tracks were Film, Digital Media, and Media Studies, and have merged, which Lieberman said reflects changes in the industry.

“There is so little difference now between the movie industry, the television industry and even the gaming industry, that not having students ready to go out and work in any of these is not realistic anymore,” Lieberman said.

Lieberman added that the new program is giving students a more complete and educationally fulfilling experience.

Lieberman noted that he is mostly concerned about the shorter class periods.

“In film production classes, I’m going to have to compact a lot more stuff into much less time,” Lieberman said. “There is some stuff we’re not going to be able to do; some of it is going to get shoveled off to other classes; and some of it is going to be done as outside reading.”

Overall, Lieberman said the four-to-three conversion will be overwhelmingly positive for students. He said he has only had one or two students be negatively affected by the change, with most students on track to graduation or even able to finish sooner.

He also said that he has a great experience with helping students navigate through the change, and has learned a lot about his own division in the process.

“You think you know your program, but until you’re working students through it, you don’t know your program,” he said. “I didn’t know my students, I didn’t know my program as well as I thought I did, and now I have such a deeper understanding of the program and the students.”

Lieberman mentioned that his advising appointments had been just as beneficial to him as they were to students because he could hear the students’ viewpoints and planned changes accordingly, such as where students thought there was too much overlapping of material, or things they wished were different about the program.

“We’ve been able to adjust our curriculum based on student feedback,” he said. “That’s one of the things that people don’t think about when they talk about this advising. It’s not just us advising the students — which is important — but the students advising us on how our program is working.”

Lieberman said the more the divisions communicate with areas such as the Registrar’s office and the advising offices, they will develop more of an integrated understanding of how the university operates, and be able to pass that knowledge on to students.

“It’s a lot of work and a lot of advising, but it’s been great,” Lieberman said. “I have no complaints about it.”

Berkman, on behalf of the university, has said multiple times that he is committed to the academic success of students, making it known that current students have the choice between switching to the new catalog or remaining under the catalog rights in place when they arrived at CSU.

“I can assure you that I remain incredibly interested and engaged in making sure that this transition does what it was intended to do, and that is to help the students at Cleveland State,” said Berkman to an audience of students, faculty and community members at the City Club in March.
Social media take on new role in Communication curriculum

By Brendan Samsa

Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Tumblr, and Instagram along with many other social media websites have become a part of modern culture. So much so that the ever-expanding field of communication has begun implementing these different facets of social media into its professional fields.

The Cleveland State University School of Communication realizes the practical application and appropriate uses that social media can have for students now and in the future.

With the ability to instantaneously reach the public, social media have the ability to reach a number of audiences very quickly. With the emergence of smart phones, tablets and laptops, direct access to the Internet anywhere, anytime, has become a reality for most of the population.

In the field of communication it’s the responsibility of professionals such as journalists, public relations and advertising professionals and others, to release information to the public as quickly and effectively as possible. In today’s working world it has become an essential aspect of communication-based jobs to survive.

“It’s a force that is changing, or at least making a difference in the way people communicate,” said Dr. George Ray, director of the School of Communication. “I think we need to study it, as it has a fairly wide application across the field. I am not really sure if I know anyone who doesn’t use it.”

Across the three divisions in the School of Communication, courses have either begun to implement social media uses in classwork or will do so in the near future.

Journalism and Promotional Communication (JPC) tends to focus on social media’s ability to promote and reach audiences on a grander scale, as well as targeting specific audiences that may lend themselves to the use of social media better than others.

“We want students to understand how it works, where it works, what works in it, what we can do in social media, and what doesn’t work so well in it,” said Dr. Gary Pettey, director of Journalism and Promotional Communication.

JPC majors in recent years have been urged to promote themselves as well as others by using social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook. In some classes they have been required to use specific sites such as Tumblr so they will understand and be familiar with how they can use the capabilities of the sites efficiently and effectively.

The profession of Communication Management (CMGT) may be on the upswing during the next decade. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the field to grow 13 percent between 2012

All of the most popular social media outlets will soon be in use at CSU.
and 2022, which is among the fastest of all occupations. With a need for health service managers and public relations management, companies may use social media to maintain their public images.

As social media continue to expand and new websites allow for more user interaction and public access to information, the need for technologically savvy management will be at an all-time high as social media have the ability to influence millions of viewpoints in an instant.

Students will learn how to be competent communicators as well as the appropriate ways to use social media, according to Dr. Jill Rudd, director of Communication Management.

“Social media exists in the curriculum as it is part of the research aspect,” Rudd said. “We teach how it’s used in relational development, its uses in conflict resolution, strategic moves, direct messaging, and how it affects personal relationships.”

Knowing how social media affect the public allows for understanding how to use them properly to put messages across to a target audience.

Media Arts and Technology courses allow students to apply digital media to social media. From creating films to the application of new media technologies, social media can be a fantastic tool for the field.

“I believe we are on the cutting edge of understanding social media, at least from a critical and analytical perspective,” said Dr. Evan Lieberman, director of the Media Arts and Technology division. “Next year we expect to have a new professor who will teach our Interactive Media course, and at that time we will be able to integrate social media more into our program.”

As well as the yet-to-be-determined new Media Arts and Technology professor, the School of Communication also has another new addition to the Communication program coming next Fall semester of 2014.

Dr. Kathleen Stansberry, who has been a professor at the University of Akron, will bring her expertise in social media and its multifaceted uses to CSU. It is expected that Stansberry will incorporate a strong emphasis on the topic in her classes.

In today’s working world, employers want to see social media literacy and proper social media skills from their applicants and employees alike.

Even if never used for recreational purposes, social media literacy can go a long way in its professional uses as well as in the classroom. Considering how cutthroat the professional job market is these days, knowledge of how to use social media certainly can’t hurt a student’s resume.

A poster in the COM building shows that CSU also uses social media.
Communication technology field changing how students learn

By Hannah Corcoran

From snail mail to email, landlines to iPhones, diaries to blogs and projectors to Power Points, the way society transmits and receives information, messages and entertainment continues to evolve. The way society communicates has changed as well because of technology.

Information is being shared faster than ever, which may affect how students learn about communication and how professors teach courses in communication.

Dr. Evan Lieberman, director of the Media Arts & Technology (MAT) division, said he worries that because more information is out there than ever before, an individual’s ability to process information is not keeping up with rapid changes caused by technology.

Lieberman said he finds some technological changes to be both harmful and beneficial. A positive change is the emergence of new areas within the field, such as new data analysis methods, he said.

He also noted the benefits technology has on filmmakers and actors.

“For filmmakers, it means you can promote your work in a very direct way that was never possible before,” he said.

Some technological advances have also provided filmmakers with less expensive editing software and tools. A caveat of technology, Lieberman said, is that new ways of communicating with one another and to larger audiences has caused greater competition in filmmaking.

Lieberman is also interested in how social media affect human interaction.

“I think social media are making our jobs more difficult and more interesting," he explained. “It has forced us to try and reckon with this new monster.”

He said he worries that some social media have impaired interpersonal communication.

“In some ways I fear we may be getting worse at communicating, one-on-one, face-to-face in the presence of another person,” he said. However, he feels compelled to keep up with the changing technology. “If I don’t do it, I feel like I’m doing a disservice to my students,” he said.

Lieberman also noted that communication through social media makes it harder to interpret others' messages. Social media do not involve tone, immediate feedback, and nonverbal communication such as body language, as well as social cues the other person or people may send. These characteristics can be lost when communicating through social media, according to Lieberman.

“It’s [social media] really a little scary…we have more information, but we’re less able to contextualize it,” Lieberman said. “As a field, we’ve only begun to scratch the surface in understanding these changes.”

Dr. Cheryl Bracken, a professor in the Journalism and Promotional Communication (JPC) track, discussed society’s push to having bigger and better electronics, as well as the increasing interconnectedness new technologies cause.

“We’re essentially always connected,” Bracken said. “Any entertainment we want, such as games, television shows and movies, is available to us wherever and whenever we want.”

“We’re no longer constrained,” she continued. “Now we can go out and be free and experience the world and create our own entertainment.”

Bracken teaches courses in Promotional Communication and Advertising. She noted that the “Big Switch” is an opportunity to “freshen up the curriculum.” This freshening will involve teaching online publishing across several classes, as well as lessons on Google and social media.

Bracken teaches Media Metrics and Analytics, Psychological Processing of Media, and Technology and Social Change.

“Convergence is a theme across the whole program,” Bracken said.

She discussed potential problems of using too many electronics at once and how it can affect students’ ability to filter information and learn.

“Spending at least some of the day doing one thing is less stressful for our brains,” she said.

She suggests doing one activity for 15 to 20 minutes instead of using multiple electronics at one time.

Further, when one only uses the Internet for finding out information, it is difficult to tell if the information is reliable, Bracken said.

“If we’re going to become solely reliant on information from the Internet for a short time…that’s not learning,” she said. “We have to make informed decisions about how to use them [different technologies] whether we are the consumer or the content producer.”

Bracken said she also worries about a psychological and physical dependence on different technologies.

“We’re always waiting for that response,” she said.
Independent filmmakers address the use of technology in movie marketing

By Laurie Dawson

Cleveland State University’s School of Communication and its faculty members, in conjunction with filmmakers and COM 321 students hosted the 2014 filmmaker panels for the 38th Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF).

Media Arts & Technology (MAT) division instructors, Dr. Evan Lieberman, Dr. Kimberly Neuendorf and Lecturer John Ban hosted the panels. Each of them participated in the program as moderators for filmmakers expressing their opinions and experiences in filmmaking.

“We got names and started researching everybody. We went for more experienced people,” Neuendorf said. “That’s how we were able to get some amazing people for the panels this year.”

Neuendorf said Film and Digital Media majors have been required to do production since the major was instituted in 2005. COM 321 students researched panelists’ backgrounds and helped film the panels, including sound production.

The panels also offered students networking opportunities with current filmmakers and judges, and Neuendorf strongly encourages students to take initiative in career development and volunteer anywhere they can.

“One of my students collected (business) cards after the panels and maybe might get an internship or maybe might get a job,” she said.

Experience is a factor in students positioning themselves as filmmakers in a competitive and expanding job market. She explained students really have to carve out a career for themselves. She encourages them to take advantage of internships, even if they are unpaid.

“It is kind of hard in this field. It’s a glamour industry,” she said. “If you don’t want the job, someone else will take it.”

Audience

Panelists gave the audience specific information about how filmmaking works and why they submit a film to a film festival.

The distribution and exhibition panel discussed the importance of finding the right audience for your film. They discussed key factors that play a role in getting a film noticed by an audience. Part of being noticed is using technology to your advantage. Filmmaker Angela Tucker, director of “The New Black,” emphasized that “word of mouth” goes far, but the use of networking and social media go to an audience faster in larger numbers.

Distribution

The panelists made it clear that it often takes multiple submissions to different festivals to be noticed. More specifically, students who want to have their work seen and heard in a rapidly changing diverse film market must adopt digital marketing as one of their distribution methods.

One of the filmmakers, Milton Matthew Horowitz, director of “Moonshine Kingdom” and CSU film program alumnus, had the movie first shown at the American Film Market in 2013. It was also picked up by CIFF. His team took its film to companies like Sony and to the American Film Market Convention, but it had trouble being noticed by studio executives.

Technology

NanoTech Entertainment, a technology-based company, bought rights to the film. The company streamed the film entirely in 4K, indicating approximately 4,000 pixels in every horizontal line of an image, providing four times the picture resolution of the existing system. This new technology offers increased detail and clarity of movement.

Horowitz said 4K is being used more frequently in filmmaking today and will continue to grow in its use. “Moonshine Kingdom” is the first film to be streamed entirely in 4K using NanoTech’s NP-1 device made by Nuvola Inc., which made the world’s first 4K streaming media player.

4K resolution is another example of how technology is always changing the realm of digital media. Today what is most commonly known as high definition or HD, is approximately 2,000 pixels per horizontal line. This common format is slowly being supplanted by 4K resolution, which today is available to viewers chiefly in film theaters.

4K is also supported by major sites such as Netflix, YouTube and Amazon for online viewing. But after 4K gains widespread acceptance, it may well take over for the HD cameras and recording devices that have been predominant in the past decade in feature films, sporting events and television.

The panelists said that technology use and digital media venues are becoming more instrumental in allowing a film to be viewed across multiple platforms, and that a film fest is just one of many ways to reach mass audiences.
The School of Communication fared well in a recently released program review, which was initiated in 2012. Results announced by Deirdre M. Mageean, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, in fall 2014 designated the programs of the School of Communication as worthy of continued support.

According to Mageean in her letter to the faculty releasing the report on Oct. 14, results of the review will “provide a framework for the ongoing allocation of faculty positions and other resources including space.” She did note, however, that future budgetary issues may require revising the recommendations.

Dr. George Ray, director of the School of Communication, saw the results of the review in a positive light. “We believe that the university determining that the program should be maintained will allow the School to fill faculty positions that have been on hold for three years,” he said, “and the School will receive adequate ongoing funding to support the program in a consistent and substantial manner.”

Ray described the review as a way of determining the overall and specific strengths of Cleveland State, and indicating how resources should be allocated.

Mageean noted in her letter that the review will be used to ensure that resources are available for programs where there is “both demand and strength of offering.”

Noting that the School of Communication has the greatest number of majors in the college, Ray indicated that the process involved several sources of information, including an assessment undertaken by the deans of the colleges in the university one year ago. The recent review relied on several measures to evaluate the university’s programs, including five-year enrollment trends, student credit hour production, graduation rates, internal demands, external demands, faculty scholarship and alignment with college and university strategic priorities.

Internal demands examine that number of students taking courses in the program, the number of majors and the number of graduates from the program. External demands recognize the number of graduates as well as the number of graduates who secure employment in the major.

Additionally, the Book of Trends, CSU’s internal source book prepared by the Office of Institutional Research that provides data on CSU students, majors and demographics, figured into the analysis, as did Academic Analytics, Bureau of Labor Statistics and data from the State of Ohio.

Reviewers also consulted the Delaware study, a compilation of data from American colleges and universities that compare department size and allocated resources for those departments.

Mageean said the data did not determine the final results, which were evaluated with regard to college strategic plans and discussions with the college deans, describing it instead as “data informed but not data driven.”

All university programs were evaluated in terms of whether they should be provided additional resources, enough resources to maintain the program or whether the program should be discontinued or reconfigured.

Although the Communication program did not receive a high enough rating to allow additional resources, its programs netted only three criticisms: declining enrollment in the Communication Management and general Communication majors and small enroll...
Digital media lab to update facilities

By Kevin Liszka

The School of Communication’s Media Arts & Technology division received a $300,000 award toward improvements to its digital media lab.

The funds are allowing for upgrades to two critical components — the installation of a new video switchboard and the addition of a 64 terabyte video server — as well as other practical renovations to the lab.

“It’s a start,” Richard Pitchford, director of Broadcast and Computer Engineering in the School of Communication, said. “We’re coming into this century.”

This money is part of a larger amount, $500,000 in total, awarded earlier this year from the Provost’s Office for investment into the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS).

Pitchford explained that the different departments within CLASS could petition for a portion of this money by demonstrating a substantial need.

Dr. George Ray, director of the School of Communication, said he believes this amount of financial investment is making the program relatively competitive in the region.

However, Ray said that it is difficult for CSU to keep up with other communication schools in terms of digital technology.

“Yes, by CSU standards, [the amount of funding] is appropriate,” he said, “but by broader standards, I don’t believe so.”

He added that with the speed of technological change, it is difficult to consistently get the funds necessary to be a top digital communication school.

“Oftentimes, new equipment is obsolete within five to 10 years,” Ray said. “You really have to make the financial commitment if you want to be one of those top schools.”

The majority of the lab had equipment that dated back to the early 90s and students were producing content in grainy standard resolution.

“I have had students working with equipment that is older than they are,” Pitchford said.

The new digital video switchboard that has been installed in the studio and the new video server are giving students the ability to produce higher quality, high-definition final content.

“We’re stepping into the digital age,” Pitchford said.

Ray explained that as the process unfolds there will be opportunities for feedback from all faculty and staff, and it is expected that refinement will take place in the evaluation of the university’s programs.

Previous attempts to identify areas of strength took place across several programs at a time on a rotating year-by-year basis.

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Mageean noted the initial report will be discussed and reviewed in several processes, beginning with a series of meetings to discuss the results in each of the university’s colleges.

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“Throughout its history, faculty in the Department/School of Communication have maintained a strong program of research,” Ray said. “We continue to take great pride in our research, which is characterized by a steady stream of books and articles that are numerous but are also recognized as having high quality.”

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COM students explore career options

By Jordan Smith

For most students, the first step in a career comes during college in the form of an internship. Juniors and seniors may begin looking for internships after attaining a minimum 3.0 GPA in communication coursework and taking 300-level coursework relevant to the internship. Students with GPAs between 2.5 and 2.99 need two recommendation letters from School of Communication faculty along with the permission of the internship director. After students are hired and the internship is approved, they may register for Internship in Communication (COM 490).

The School of Communication recommends that students begin their internship at least one semester before they graduate. After building a resume and cover letter, CSU Careerline is a resource that many students find helpful in the internship hunt. Students also find internships without the help of CSU. Recently, students have ventured on their own to find placement with the Cleveland Cavaliers, Lake Erie Monsters, WYSE Advertising, Cleveland Magazine, ClearChannel Media & Communication and WKYC-TV.

Students may also complete internships without the intention of receiving credit. When it comes to non-credit internships, CSU faculty request students report their internships as the school tries to build long-term relationships with organizations where students intern.

The internship program with television station WKYC, for instance, has been ongoing for the past five years. One student each year receives the internship and a $1,000 stipend. The prerequisite for the internship is Multimedia Journalism (COM 405) which students usually take in the fall so they can do the internship in the spring.

Professor Michael Rand, who teaches COM 405, said students receive a flyer with the work they need to apply for the internship, hand it to him, and then hand in a portfolio that is evaluated by faculty at CSU before it goes over to the station. The internship at WKYC requires students to be in the newsroom for about 10 to 15 hours per week, working with reporters on social media and writing stories for the Internet.

According to Rand, students typically begin the paperwork for the internship in late October and interview around the time of finals. “They’re looking for good dynamic writers who have a little TV work,” Rand said.

He also noted that students are sometimes chosen to participate in the internship without the stipend, if their work is good enough. Two CSU alumni now work at the station full time.

Students who are interested in internships should contact the School of Communication director, Dr. George Ray.
Advisers suggest planning ahead

By Adrian McLaughlin

The four-to-three credit conversion at Cleveland State University, better known as “The Big Switch,” has been one of the most talked about yet misunderstood topics around campus.

In fact, this has been one of the biggest changes regarding overall scheduling and classes since fall 1998 when the university switched from quarters to semesters.

Promotions for the Big Switch promise that “student success at CSU is top priority and the university is committed to ensuring that no student who meets with an adviser before registering for classes in the 2015 academic year is adversely affected by the changes.”

In the past, students at CSU were only required to speak to their advisers near their expected graduation date. They would sit down with their major adviser who would complete a checklist of the fulfilled major requirements, then speak to their general education adviser who would complete a checklist for those requirements.

For Communication majors, general education advising is done by Jennifer Novy, a College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences adviser who only deals with Communication students.

In the School of Communication, the three division directors act as the advisers for each major. Dr. Gary Pettey is the division director for Journalism and Promotional Communication (JPC); Dr. Jill Rudd, division director for Communication and Communication Management (COM and CMGT), and Dr. Evan Lieberman, division director for Media Arts and Technology (MAT).

Having close communication with Jennifer Novy as well as the student’s division director is important in ensuring a timely graduation because of their knowledge of requirements and class scheduling. Faculty members are recommending that students stop to see each of their advisers at least once a semester, beginning freshman year.

“We recommend students start taking major classes in their first year at CSU and should speak to their major adviser in the first year along with any other advisers,” said Pettey.

However, because the university does not require advising, many students go years without seeking the advice of one or more of these people. With advising tools such as the Grad Express Degree Audit which provides students with an automated checklist, some students say they are able to properly plan for each semester on their own.

Lieberman said he finds the Grad Express Degree Audit a useful resource for students as well as faculty.

“I love the Grad Express Degree Audit,” he said. “I think it helps students keep track of where they are in the program, and it makes our jobs easier when they come to see us.”

Pettey agreed that the Grad Express Degree Audit was a helpful tool, adding that he feels that students should plan ahead to get its full benefits.

“If you really want to, go without advising, use your Grad Express Degree Audit,” Pettey said. “But you need to be planning two years ahead. “If a student is not planning at least two years ahead, he is not planning far enough ahead.”

Planning two years ahead will give students time to prepare for any schedule changes they need as well as giving them a more accurate idea of their expected graduation date.

With “The Big Switch” taking effect in Fall 2014, students faced changed curriculum, making it difficult to plan, which is why advising is necessary now.

The 2014-15 academic year schedules went online in the spring of 2014. Courses were in the process of being revised to remain effective while cutting class hours about 25 percent.

The university has ensured that each student is given credit for every credit taken at CSU.

“I’ve noticed a lot of uncertainty among students in regards to the Big Switch,” said Pettey. “The two big questions asked by students are: ‘Will this delay my graduation?’ and ‘Why is CSU doing this?’

“I love the Grad Express Degree Audit. I think it helps students keep track of where they are in the program, and it makes our jobs easier when they come to see us.”

Evan Lieberman

Continued on next page
Pettey said the answer to if the “Big Switch” will delay graduation is almost universally no, but he said it is more difficult to explain exactly why the university is making the change.

Lieberman said that the change was in part to make the university more compatible with other state universities, which would make it easier for students to transfer credits.

Because of these changes and the way they affect every student at CSU, the university has promoted incentives such as being entered into an iPad giveaway for all students who scheduled classes before March 25, 2014.

Divisions with the most changes to specific majors — for example, JPC — required students to meet with an adviser to complete their degree.

Still, some students did not take the opportunity to have an adviser review their transcripts and help plan for the upcoming changes. However, meeting with both CLASS and faculty advisers will be critical to ensure a smooth transition, especially for students well into their major programs.

Evan Lieberman conducted advising over the summer term, as did Dr. George Ray, director of the School of Communication.

Most advisers recommended that students review their Grad Express Degree Audit before attending an advising session. This gives students an overview of their requirement fulfillsment based on their majors.

The Grad Express Degree Audit shows overall completion for both university and college requirements, but speaking to both a CLASS and faculty adviser is still suggested to be sure all requirements are met.

“I’ve noticed a lot of uncertainty among students in regards to the Big Switch. The two big questions asked by students are: ‘Will this delay my graduation?’ and ‘Why is CSU doing this?’”

Gary Pettey

Photo by Jake Hastings

Junior Alyssa Whitner, a Communication major, schedules her fall classes in the Student Center computer lab.
Trio reflects on school’s history

By Jake Hastings

In 1974, Sidney Kraus, the first chair of what would become the School of Communication, and his colleagues established a Communication Theory and Methodology center so that students and teachers could come together to study the art and social science of communication.

Since then, many professors have walked the halls of the School of Communication and changed the direction of their students’ lives. Many of those professors have also gone as well, off to other opportunities and universities.

But a few of those educators have chosen to make Cleveland State University their long-time home.

Dr. George Ray, Dr. Eileen Berlin Ray and Dr. Richard Perloff have been at CSU to experience much of the evolution of the School of Communication as well as maintain the school’s foundations.

Perloff arrived at CSU in 1979 when Communication shared space on the 16th floor of Rhodes Tower with the Speech and Hearing Department. Perloff recalled the “terrible” elevator that would rattle him up to the 16th floor.

“It was kind of a depressing place to work,” he commented.

But he remembers another side to the School of Communication that contrasted its cramped quarters. He reported the faculty was exceptional; hard-working professionals surrounded him.

“The faculty and Sid Kraus were very scholarly,” Perloff said. “It was paradoxical, the claustrophobic space but nice faculty.”

Berlin Ray had some different memories of the cramped quarters of Rhodes Tower when she arrived with her husband, Dr. George Ray, in 1987. “Being in Rhodes allowed us to meet other faculty outside of COM,” recalled Berlin Ray. “I miss just running into people.”

Berlin Ray also commented that when she first arrived, she met a professor who had been there more than 12 years. Her response was “I’ll never be in one place that long.” But she has stayed more than 25 years at this point and says she doesn’t have plans to go elsewhere.

Ray recalled his first impressions of CSU fondly. He came to CSU in the fall of 1987 because of its reputation for communication research.

“It was a department known for research activity and that’s what I expected, and when I came here, that’s what I discovered,” Ray said. “Everybody was very active in research. It was the norm.”

Ray said he was pleased to find that CSU was indeed committed to research and still holds it as an important aspect of education today.

The professors also praised the evolution of CSU’s communication degree. Perloff and Ray both attested to the strides the department has made. Berlin Ray was also the undergraduate director when the school changed from quarters to semesters.

Originally there was just one general communication degree but over time it evolved into three separate majors. Communication Management, Journalism and Promotional Communication, and Film and Digital Media have all become specialized tracks.

“Students could now get a practical, professional degree at CSU,” Perloff remarked.

The professors also talked about the growth of technology in their classrooms.

Both Ray and Perloff agreed that the introduction of new technologies has helped make for better teaching.

Ray noted that having computers and projectors stationed in each classroom was much easier than having to sign pieces out from the AV department every time he needed a visual aid.

Technology hasn’t won them over totally, though. The rise of cell phones and texting in class has become “the bane of every teacher’s existence,” according to Perloff.

Ray said that he has never taught an online class and still doesn’t use CSU’s BlackBoard service either.

Berlin Ray added that with all the technology it is easy to miss the “scribbling and connections” you could draw when simply writing on the chalkboard.

“It’s easy to become reliant on the tech and the PowerPoints,” Berlin Ray said. “The actual teaching can become a subordinate activity.”

Ray, Berlin Ray and Perloff had many positive things to say about the progress of the School of Communication over the years. These changes have helped make CSU a “cooler place to go to school,” according to Perloff.
By Kevin Liszka

In 2013 Dr. Robert Abelman wrote a book released through Peter Lang Publishing titled, *Refereeing the Muses*, a textbook intended to be a tool for anyone looking to advance his critical thinking and critical writing skills to engage more effectively in arts journalism.

Additionally, he contributed to seven scholarly publications that included two entries in Sage Publications‘ *The Encyclopedia of Media Violence*, as well as writing a chapter for an IGI-Global textbook *Communication and Language Analysis in the Public Sphere*.

In a related area, The Cleveland Jewish News also recently hired him as a theater critic.

This past year, Dr. Kim Neuendorf received a Summer Undergraduate Engaged Learning Research Award from the Provost's Office to advance her research.

In May, Neuendorf was very excited that two of her papers received recognition as top papers at the 2014 International Communication Conference in Seattle, one for her work on the influence of communication and cosmopolitaness on quality of life perceptions, and the other on the impact of race and ethnicity in communication.

In the summer of 2014, she and Dr. Jill Rudd used the funds from another research award to continue their research into the impact documentary films have on audience knowledge gain and attitude change.

Dr. Cheryl Bracken was awarded a Faculty Scholar Initiative Award for the 2013-2014 academic year that funded her investigation of how older and younger adults use mobile media.

Bracken also spent a substantial amount of time working with graduate students Jennie Ford, Jen Pollard and Hocheol Yang on an experiment comparing levels of sexiness in print advertising to an audience’s brand recognition.

Last summer Bracken continued conducting research with School of Communication undergraduates with funds from a Summer Undergraduate Research Award.

John Ban’s 2013 COM 352, COM 401 and COM 403 classes collaborated to help promote The Cleveland Blues Society, by producing a promotional video for the organization along with two Blues Hall of Fame induction documentaries.

This past Spring Ban’s COM 352 and COM 403 classes collaborated again. With help from Little Fish Records hosts Carlos Jones and Robin Stone and two outside producers, Ban and his students created a broadcast pilot they call “The Cleveland Beat.” It is a show focused on the local music scene, area happenings and historical look backs.

Ban is focused on making the show a long-term programming effort with the school.

Dr. Edward Horowitz’s began his third year as director of Polish Studies at CSU in 2013. The 2013-14 year celebrated the arts, and included a visiting Polish scholar (a sculptor who created a special exhibit at the CSU art gallery this past fall) and hosting a concert featuring the music of Polish composer Frédéric Chopin.

This fall, Horowitz served as the moderator for a debate between candidates running for the mayor of Beachwood.

In November, 2013, Dr. Richard Perloff published a theoretically focused lead article in the scholarly journal *Communication Theory* that offered compelling criticisms and critiques of mass communication research appearing earlier that year in the journal.

In 2014 he published his book on political communication titled, *The Dynamics of Political Communication: Media and Politics in a Digital Age*. The book offers a scholarly account of normative theories as they relate to political communication, political socialization, framing, agenda-setting, and campaign advertising.

During 2014 Professor Mike Rand made progress on his documentary project, “Southern Gentleman.”

Rand also continued his work with help from Leo Jeffres and David Akin on an expanded article on American’s attitudes toward video piracy. He had originally begun that work with the late Paul Skalski.

He also has an article under review by *Cyberpsychology*. 
Communication alumni talk useful COM classes, skills

By Adam Scraga

Getting a degree can be a daunting task. Sometimes it can feel overwhelming. It is easy to forget lessons and skills taught with so many required classes.

Yet some classes are much more useful than others in teaching essential skills to find a job. Several Cleveland State University alumni working in the communication field have discussed which classes they feel teach the most necessary skills to get an entry-level COM job, and where they see the future of communication going.

Cody Peck is one of those alumni. Peck graduated from CSU in 2009 with a marketing degree. He then interned with a public relations agency and worked as a reporter for two years. Now, Peck works at CSU as a marketing and digital communication representative, a job he began in October 2013.

“Media Writing (COM 225) was really beneficial for me, because it was my introduction in how to write succinctly and for news dissemination, which really transcends all fields of communication,” Peck said. “Also, Mass Media and Society (COM 226) opened my eyes to the power of persuasion and how events that happen can change huge masses of people. It’s kind of a foundation for everything going forward.”

Another recent graduate is Kristen Mott. Mott graduated in May 2013 with a journalism degree. She started working part-time for the Cleveland Jewish News in March 2013 while taking CSU classes at the same time. After graduating, she was offered a full-time position.

“Media Writing was just really helpful in teaching us the basics of reporting, like AP style, how to format, writing leads, and putting a news story together,” Mott said. “The other class that was very useful was the Cleveland Stater lab (COM 426/427). That shows you what a newsroom is like and gave responsibilities such as setting up interviews. Professor Kumar also worked really close with students to help teach InDesign and Photoshop.”

Milton Horowitz graduated from CSU in fall 2013 with a film major and minor in foreign film. He recently sold the rights to his first major feature film, “Moonshine Kingdom,” to a Hollywood distributor called NanoTech Entertainment.

“I would say the most useful skills for film are taught in Production 1 and 2 (COM 410/411),” Horowitz said. “Editing is also a really big part of film making, and John Ban’s editing classes (COM 352/402) were great as you learn how to tell a story with pictures. Film production teaches the discipline while editing complements it.”

As the communication field is always evolving, Peck advised that upcoming COM graduates should always work hard and not be afraid to put themselves in new, uncomfortable situations.

“The future is really bright for COM students if you’re willing to work hard at it,” Peck said. “Public relations graduates especially have a bright future in Cleveland as social media have companies becoming more transparent, which increases the need to manage perception.”

Mott thinks this is a challenging
time for COM students since there is an ongoing shift from print media toward online. However, she said that it provides more opportunities for interaction with people across the country and world.

“When you are in school, try and get as much experience as possible,” Mott said. “I took an internship with IdeaStream as well as wrote for The Cauldron all four years, becoming editor-in-chief in my senior year. Experience — especially when you are applying for a job — is very important as employers always ask for writing samples.”

Horowitz said that the future of COM as a whole is looking bright, but it all depends on what students put into it. He also said he believes that since there are so many recent graduates with COM degrees, students need to do something to stand out.

Alumnus describes new role for tech in PR

By Akeem Whittaker

Fall 2014 marked the 50th anniversary of Cleveland State University. In that span of time, technological advances have changed the way communication professionals work.

Jim Sweeney, a CSU communication alumni and CEO of Sweeney Marketing & Public Relations, described how technological advances have changed and affected his business.

Sweeney graduated from CSU in 1980. He opened Sweeney PR in 1986 with its headquarters in Cleveland and a second office in Wilmington, N.C.

When asked how technology has changed the way he communicates, Sweeney said, “When I wanted to talk to clients 25 years ago I would call or visit them in person.” Technology has changed this dynamic.

"Instead of flying or driving, I can call, text, instant message or simply get on Skype and have a meeting,” he said. “The hours that we save in travel time can make us more productive as a business.

“On the flipside,” he continued, “the travel time I would have used for creative or strategic planning now has to be scheduled.”

He said the practicality of computer technology and the Internet has helped him run his business more effectively and efficiently — so much so that he can now operate his business 24 hours a day from virtually any location.

He recalled what it was like to start a business at the beginning of major technological change. When talking about technological advances, he said, “The growth of technology became exponential -- as you were installing a new device, something newer or faster or simply different would become available.”

He said that as technology changed, the agency adopted some innovations and passed on others depending upon their value to the business.

Sweeney said the agency’s first copy machine -- which did not more than make copies -- was the size of a kitchen appliance.

“And prior to that,” he recalled, “we were required to use carbon paper to create additional copies of a document or have a clerical person type up additional copies.”

Sweeney noted that just three decades ago, “research required going to the library -- often for hours -- to find information. Now you can reach for an iPhone and secure the same information in a matter minutes.”