

# THE OUTLET

## The Department Reflects on the Effects of Coronavirus

Professors adapted all classes to online, department activities were cancelled and interns scrambled to finish or work remotely.

## Winthrop Converts to Online Learning

"What was most uncomfortable for me was the lack of personal, face-to-face interaction."  
- Dr. Guy Reel

## Recognition Dinner Cancelled

The department is looking forward to announcing this year's awardees with online methods.



# Message from the Editors

We would like to thank everyone who helped us put together this newsletter. Without you The Outlet would not have been a successful reflection of the unique events we have experienced this semester. We hope you enjoy these articles and stories of the Department Mass Communication students who worked through adversity and our brief look at life on Winthrop's campus and beyond.



## **Copy Editor** Gabby Gardner '21

"I enjoy adventure, emerging myself into different cultures and discovering and traveling to new places. Life is all about looking at things with a different perspective."

## **Copy Editor** Madeline Milne '20

"I'm studying for a career in event marketing for wedding venues after graduation in May of 2020."

## **Layout Editor** Mariah Jurow '20

"I was first introduced to marketing and advertising in high school and fell in love with it immediately. When applying for college, Winthrop University was the path I wanted to take and I haven't looked back since."

## **Layout Editor** Joseph Robinson '20

"I've spent my time at Winthrop building experience working in my field. I've enjoyed lots of opportunities to do this through coursework, internships and positions with campus departments."

Photos above courtesy of each editor.

All other photos courtesy of Corey Nolen ([coreynolenphoto.com](http://coreynolenphoto.com)), unless otherwise noted.





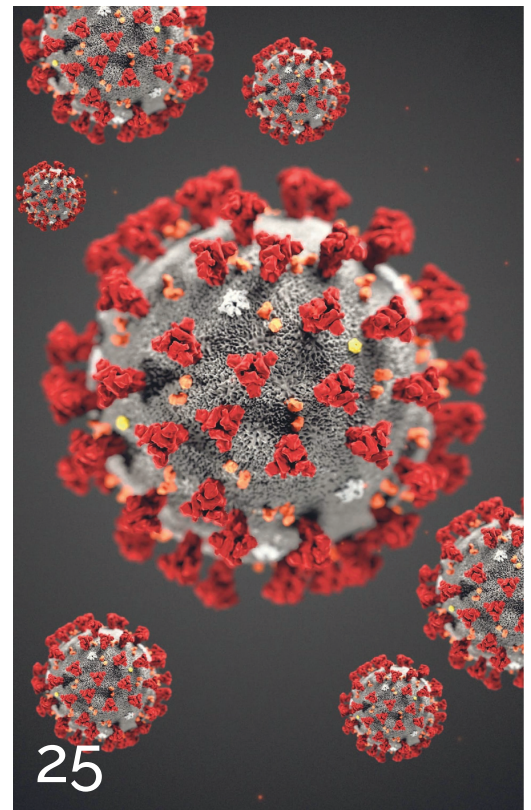




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Photos courtesy of Chelsea Brown and Malenia Swinton



## Advice for Graduates, From Alums

Izzy Schmidt

Two mass communication alumnae, Chelsea Brown and Malenia Swinton, hosted a workshop for Department of Mass Communication students. The main goal of the workshop was to introduce students to career pathways in the industry sector of nonprofits and philanthropy. The speakers addressed some of the myths about a career in nonprofit organizations (NPO): nonprofits can't make a profit, they are volunteer organizations, and employees are less competitive.

In the workshop Brown and Swinton discussed their experiences working in nonprofit organizations, talked about what a nonprofit organization would be like for potential employees and identified skill sets needed to work for an NPO.

Swinton addressed the pay range of an NPO, addressing the idea that nonprofit employees work as volunteers or that they don't get paid sufficiently for their contributions. "More than 80% of nonprofit employees are paid and paid well," Swinton said.

When looking for a nonprofit job, Brown suggested students go about the task just as if they were looking for any job. "Don't sell yourself short," Brown said. Brown said her work for an NPO was very fulfilling. She was challenged with a project to persuade high school seniors to enroll in a study abroad program. She found that by pushing herself and relying on the skills she had learned, she was able to enroll 40 students.

At the beginning of the workshop students were given a small workbook that included; the definition of a nonprofit, career opportunities, resources for jobs in the nonprofit sector and an exercise called "passion to actions."



**Continued/Nonprofits**

Students were tasked with writing down their current skill sets, skills they believed they would need for their careers, and the skills they felt they were lacking. The activity gave students a deeper understanding of what nonprofit sectors they can look into with the skills they have now or hope to have in the future.

**“More than 80% of nonprofit employees are paid and paid well . . .”**

-Malenia Swinton

## Companies and websites for nonprofits

Izzy Schmidt

Classy | *classy.org*: Classy is a social enterprise that creates online fundraising software for nonprofits, modernizing the giving experience to accelerate social impact.

National Council of Nonprofits | *councilofnonprofits.org*: The National Council of Nonprofits is a trusted resource and proven advocate for America's charitable nonprofits.

Together SC | *togethersc.org*: Together SC serves South Carolinians dedicated to community service, leadership and caring through nonprofit/philanthropic organizations.

Board Source | *boardsource.org*: BoardSource and its global network of leaders. Provide support to organizations of every size, stage, geography, and programmatic focus.

Idealist | *idealist.org*: Idealist, a nonprofit in New York, works in a spirit of generosity and mutual respect, to build a world where all people can lead free and dignified lives.

LinkedIn | *LinkedIn.com*: LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network has nearly 660+ million users in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

Bridgespan Group | *Bridgespan.org/jobs*: Bridgespan a global nonprofit, collaborates with leaders, organizations, philanthropists and investors to break cycles of poverty.

Nonprofit Times | *careermatch.nptimes.com*: Nonprofit Times supplies breaking news, in-depth reporting and special issue coverage to help nonprofit executives.

Foundation List | *foundationlist.org*: Foundation List, a national nonprofit job board meets the hiring needs of nonprofit organizations, foundations, associations and institutions.

Young Nonprofit Professional Network | *ynpn.org*: YNPN reaches emerging leaders and helps them acquire the skills and awareness they need to be effective changemakers.

# Internship Experience: *Seacrest Studios*

Lindsey Burrell  
lands internship  
with Seacrest Studios  
at children's hospital.

Photo courtesy of Lindsey Burrell

Nicolette Outtrim





Lindsey Burrell, junior mass communication major, spends part of her day as a production intern at Levine Children's Hospital in Charlotte. With 13 other interns, Burrell hosts radio shows in the Seacrest Studios at the hospital. Seacrest Studios provides fun and engaging ways to interact with patients and helps take their minds off of treatments and the difficulties they may be facing.

Seacrest Studios staff takes careful health precautions when interacting with patients. Everything must be wiped down and cleaned of bacteria. Seacrest Studios is a safe space for patients. Patients can request songs, come down to the studio and play games with studio staff and be featured on the radio shows or have shows hosted from their rooms. Bingo, the event patients look forward to the most, happens every Wednesday. Prizes are delivered to patients' rooms by one of the studio interns.

**“This internship has taught me valuable skills moving forward into my future career . . .”**

**-Lindsey Burrell**

Every Thursday Burrell highlights a Disney character and sings the character's most popular song. Burrell often dresses as Disney characters and goes to patients' rooms to surprise them. “Working with Levine has opened my eyes to the day-to-day operations of a children's hospital. This internship has taught me valuable skills moving forward into my future career,” Burrell said.

Being a Seacrest Studios DJ is just one of the many satisfying and rewarding internships that mass communication and integrated marketing communication students can complete during the school year.

# Eight Ways to Secure an Internship

Nicolette Outtrim

1. Prepare a resume and cover letter
2. Create a portfolio
3. Network to identify internship openings
4. Research internship opportunities
5. Set up interviews
6. Practice interviewing
7. Go on interviews
8. Follow up interviews with emails and/or phone calls

Photo courtesy of Anna Sharpe



## South Carolina Journalist of the Year: *Anna Sharpe*

Madeline Milne

The South Carolina Press Association formally announced the winner of the South Carolina Collegiate Journalist of the Year is Anna Sharpe. Sharpe is a mass communication major and was nominated for the award based on her detailed news coverage of Winthrop President Dan Mahony's exit and the Winthrop Board of Trustees. Sharpe recalls the hard work she put into her journalism and stated she never thought she would win such a prestigious award. "It feels surreal right now . . . I am extremely honored to be receiving this award and I honestly didn't think it was going to happen," Sharpe said. Being named the South Carolina Collegiate Journalist of the Year is the highest individual honor that the South Carolina Press Association can award a student.



## 2020 Recipient of the Bittner Scholarship: *Regina Cobb*

Madeline Milne

The Radio Television Digital News Association of the Carolinas announced the 2020 recipient of the Dr. John R. Bittner scholarship is Winthrop student Regina Cobb. Cobb is a broadcasting major and the production director and on-air talent for Eagle Air. Cobb said she feels grateful that she has been recognized for her potential and is thankful for the recognition. "Winthrop has truly set me up for success and I am thrilled to have been chosen for this scholarship," Cobb said.

The Department of Mass Communication at Winthrop University is one of the highest-ranking college departments in the state of South Carolina and continues to celebrate the excellence of its students.

If you are interested in finding out how to apply for the Dr. John R. Bittner broadcasting scholarship, please visit [www.rtdnac.org/scholarships/](http://www.rtdnac.org/scholarships/)

If you or someone you know is eligible to be nominated for the South Carolina Collegiate Journalist of the Year, please visit [scpress.org/news-contest/](http://scpress.org/news-contest/)

## Faculty Experience: *Nathaniel Frederick*

Aaron Grant

Student interns aren't the only scholars benefiting from work outside the classroom at Winthrop University. Associate Professor of mass communication Nathaniel Frederick participated in the Scripps Howard Foundation Visiting Professors in Social Media Externship, a two-week, experiential learning opportunity at WCPO-TV in Cincinnati, Ohio.

"I went to work every day and attended daily morning news meetings and observed newscasts throughout the day," Frederick said. "I also interviewed and shadowed journalists in the newsroom and had the opportunity to go with journalist to cover stories," he said. Frederick feels this opportunity gave him valuable insight about the new ways social media has impacted news gathering. "This experience has already made me a better teacher and I have incorporated information and observations from WCPO-TV into my lesson plans," Frederick said.

Frederick admitted that one of his favorite activities during the externships was exploring Cincinnati and having the opportunity to meet famous musicians Bootsie Collins and Otis Williams.

"I would recommend that all Winthrop professors look for opportunities to participate in externships like this one," Frederick said.



# Communication Agency

A look into the new agency practicum.

Genevieve  
Young

College is the time for students to perfect skills and prepare for the workforce. A strong college education can provide students with impressive portfolios and feelings of confidence in their ability to succeed in the professional world. Dr. Padmini Patwardhan and Mark Nortz have created a practicum designed as communication agency to help Department of Mass Communication students achieve this feeling of confidence in their skill sets. Dr. Patwardhan is a professor in the department and the coordinator for the Integrated Marketing Communication program. Before joining Winthrop University in 2005, Patwardhan worked as a creative consultant. Patwardhan has been awarded multiple awards, with one of her most recent being the Charles H. Sandage Teaching Excellence Award in 2017, awarded by the American Academy of Advertising. Patwardhan's current research focuses on bridging the knowledge gap between college graduates and the advertising industry.

Mr. Nortz is a senior instructor of mass communication. Nortz's areas of specialty include television broadcast and video production. Before coming to teach at Winthrop, Nortz worked at Channel 7 in New York as chief photographer, video editor and segment producer for "7 News This Morning." His production class produces "Winthrop Close Up." Nortz has worked on various marketing and promotional videos for the university.

The communication agency practicum helps students develop practical skills and portfolio content. The students involved in this practicum learn hard and soft skills, including how to use Adobe Suite, social media scheduling tools, content creation, ad copy, teamwork,



organization and design.

Students join this practicum to gain knowledge and skills that will benefit them as they enter the work field, "We work on graphics, videos, content and scheduling posts. It's fun to interview people and learn more about what the Department of Mass Communication is doing," Emma Teel, a student in the practicum, said. "I've learned so much and feel like Dr. Patwardhan guides us in our assignments but let's us develop our personal leadership skills," Teel said.

The communication agency practicum is scheduled to be offered to mass communication students every semester.

## Interview: *Emma Teel* Genevieve Young



Photo courtesy of Emma Teel

Senior Emma Teel, a student in the Communication Agency practicum, gives her perspective on how the practicum class uses experiential learning to expand student portfolios.

**Q:** Why did you get involved with the communication agency practicum?

A: The practicum was a great opportunity to get hands-on experience with great professors like Dr. Patwardhan and Mr. Nortz. I thought that the practicum would be a fun way to prepare me for my future career.

**Q:** What projects do you work on?

A: We work on creating graphics, filming videos, writing content and scheduling social media posts. It's fun to interview faculty, staff and students to learn more about what the mass communication department is doing.

**Q:** What skills does the practicum help you develop?

A: In the practicum I have learned how to post on social media in a professional, yet conversational way.

**Q:** Will the practicum help you in your professional career?

A: Thanks to practicum assignments I have some great material to add to my portfolio, such as creative graphics and data analytics.

**Q:** Do you recommend the practicum for future students?

A: I highly recommend the communication agency. I've learned so much. Dr. Patwardhan guides us while encouraging us to develop leadership skills.

**Q:** What is the biggest hurdle you have faced during the practicum?

A: A big challenge was getting in a scheduling routine with a team. It was hard to find a way for everyone to equally contribute, but we worked it out.

**Q:** What has been your biggest success during the practicum?

A: A success for me was coming up with a visual guide for the social media page. The guide will help our work this semester be more cohesive and will be archived for future practicum students to access.

The communication agency practicum is beneficial for students who want learn through experience. The practicum teaches students what it is like to work for a real client and adds valuable material to students' portfolios.

## Seven Skills Developed in the Communication Agency Practicum

1. Oral and written communication
2. Communication planning
3. Teamwork
4. Video conceptualization and creation
5. Organization
6. Branding
7. Design techniques



# Alumni Experience: *Cheyenne Walsh*

Gabby Gardner

Cheyenne Walsh, Department of Mass Communication alumna, has taken an unconventional route after graduating from Winthrop University. Walsh worked as a social media director at Camp Timberlake for the summer and has recently accepted a position as an au pair in Australia. These are not typical steps towards a career in communication, but Walsh is trying to discover the specific career she wants to pursue. She is taking time to discover herself and follow her heart instead of settling for a job in which she might not be fully invested.

Walsh said the Department of Mass Communication helped her find her voice. "Through Winthrop, I was able to study abroad and realize my love for exploration as a student journalist. I was able to give others a voice through my words," Walsh said. There are opportunities and different paths to pursue in the mass communication field and, although Walsh is still trying to discover the right path for herself, she believes Winthrop gave her the necessary tools to do so. Walsh proves that we all take different paths to get where we want to be in life. "I left Winthrop as managing editor of *The Johnsonian* and, president of SPJ and with multiple awards under my belt. Yet I am pursuing a position as an au pair. I felt I was letting people down. Ultimately, I am the only person who can say if I am a success or a failure, and the definitions of those words are different for everyone."

# Alumni Experience: *Kali Coleman*

Gabby Gardner

Kali Coleman, Department of Mass Communication alumna in print journalism, has progressed in her professional career. Coleman is currently assistant editor for Best Life Online for Galvanized Media, a media brand in New York City. Best Life is a news source for health-minded readers who want to improve and challenge themselves, covering the hottest viral content everyone is talking about to the most important scientific breakthroughs.

Coleman writes content for the Travel, Entertainment, Health, Smarter Living, Relationships, and Home and Garden sections of the online magazine. Along with writing content, Coleman edits and works with the brand's social media platforms. Winthrop gave Coleman a strong foundation to enter into the work place. "I think Winthrop did a good job preparing me in the core areas of any profession by drilling into students the importance of good writing and critical thinking," Coleman said.

Coleman didn't anticipate what the hierarchy in the professional world would be or what skills job titles required. "My advice to anyone ready to start their professional careers is to start networking. Networking with people who have been in the field and with your peers at school can help you get jobs, too," Coleman said.

Winthrop prepares students to enter the workplace and knows that there are different paths to get to their desired destinations.

# On Campus Experience: *"Trash Talk" Radio*



Inspired by  
"rambunctious"  
friendship,

Photo courtesy of the  
"Trash Talk" Team

Joseph Robinson



Encouraged by the Department of Mass Communication faculty and inspired by self-described “rambunctious” friendship, six students brainstormed a new show for Eagle Air radio: “Trash Talk.”

In spring 2019, the “Trash Talk” team hosted its inaugural episode on Winthrop University’s radio station. The original team, Ryen Cohen ‘21, Taylor Evans ‘21, Sadie Glaze ‘20, Spencer Langston ‘21, Caroline Riggs ‘21 and Evan Santiago ‘21, encouraged student discourse through conversations about popular topics. “We covered pop-culture, politics and everything in between,” Santiago said.

“Trash Talk” is still going strong and provides a space for discussing “tough current event topics.” Students have completed nearly three seasons developing a transparent and honest brand. The hosts have built strong relationships with their growing audience.

This bond allows the students to market the show effectively and adapt to their listeners. “Trash Talk” engages with its listeners through Instagram and Twitter accounts during weekly live shows. In one year their show’s Instagram audience reach and posting engagement nearly doubled. In seven months the show has increased followers by about 130%.

Santiago says the show offers a “new perspective” to Winthrop students. The team is proud of the influence it has to call attention to issues on campus. For the show’s third season, hosts Evans and Riggs were temporarily replaced. After auditioning for the open spots, Grace Johnson ‘22 and Tate Walden ‘22 were chosen to join the team.



Instagram @[trashtalk.radio](#)

Facebook & Twitter @[trashtalkmedia](#)

## Interested in a radio broadcasting experience?

- Winthrop students get hands-on experience with Winthrop’s radio streaming station, “Eagle Air”.
- Students serve as show hosts or can be part of the executive staff as station manager, program director or music director.
- Students pitch show ideas and audition for air shifts each semester.
- “Eagle Air” streams on the In Tune ([intune.com](#)) website and mobile app.
- The station is advised by faculty from the Department of Mass Communication.



# Video Production Club

**Behind the Reel**  
Savannah Moore

The Video Production Club (VPC) is one of several student associations in the Department of Mass Communication. VPC is a great organization for broadcast and film enthusiasts to have fun while gaining hands-on experience. Students work together to plan and produce videos, write original scripts and practice video editing.

VPC meets every Thursday during common time in 218 Johnson Hall. Membership dues are \$5 per year to provide funds for branded stickers and pens, as well as to sponsor two free movie nights every semester. Free pizza is provided for members and viewing options are voted on by VPC members. Previous movie nights

**"... members work together on creative short film projects."**

-Jacob Weis

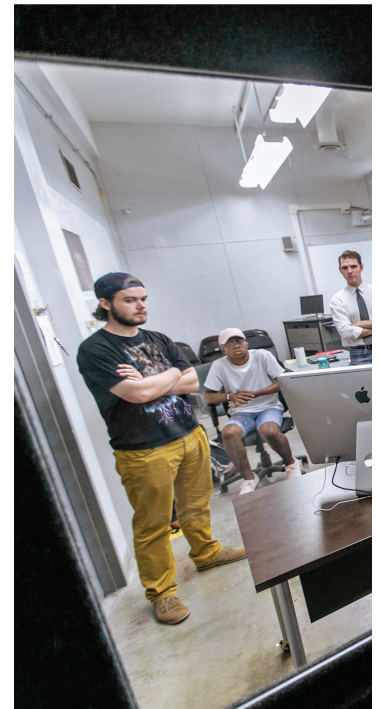
showed the films "Tusk," "Holes" and "Chef." VPC also holds fundraising events to finance video props and other equipment.

President Jacob Weis, Vice President Jack Stanton, Secretary Maddie Demott and Treasurer Kevin Seabrook, head a 15-member club. While this organization is officially housed in the Department of Mass Communication, members represent several majors from across Winthrop's campus.

The Video Production Club's

mission is to provide a relaxed and educational environment that encourages students to explore their creativity through production while having fun. "We really like to have a good time and sometimes get a little goofy. VPC is all about learning the process of content creation. We explore creative ideas and experiment with the equipment that's been provided," Stanton said.

During the semester VPC members work together on creative short film projects. Members brainstorm a premise, write the script, film, act, and edit during weekly meetings. VPC has produced a fake movie trailer and a Ghost Adventures parody that were posted to YouTube.



Jacob Weis serves a VPC president for 2019-2020.

Photo courtesy of Jacob Weis

*For more information about VPC contact faculty advisor: Dr. Mark Nortz at [nortzm@winthrop.edu](mailto:nortzm@winthrop.edu) or follow VPC on Instagram @winthrop\_vpc*





## Faculty Experience: *Bill Schulte*

Daisha Finley

William Schulte has been a professor of mass communication at Winthrop University for eight years, teaching courses in media writing, ethics and multimedia. Schulte received his doctorate from Ohio University and spent 11 years in the newspaper industry.

At Winthrop Schulte instructs students on writing stories and reports that keep audiences engaged. Gabrielle Gardner, junior integrated marketing and communication major, took media writing with professor Schulte. "He is a very interactive professor and always tries to make the class fun and engaging. He truly cares about his students and makes an effort to create relationships and keep in touch, even outside of class," Gardner said.

Schulte also teaches ethics and issues. K'Leasha Liles, senior mass communication major, values her experience in Schulte's class. "Dr. Schulte is a great professor. He really wants all his students to be the best that we can be and challenges us with class assignments and tasks," Liles said.

## Apply for Scholarships

- IMC Summer Internship Scholarship

The Integrated Marketing Internship Scholarship is awarded to an IMC student who enrolls in a 1-credit internship during the summer term. The scholarship is based on the needs of the student.

- Dr. Larry Timbs | Landmark Diversity Scholarship

This scholarship is merit-based.

- Stewart Haas Memorial Restricted Scholarship

A scholarship established in memory of former faculty member, Stewart Haas, to provide renewable scholarships for students majoring in mass communication.

- Jefferson Pilot Communications Scholarship

A merit-based scholarship for a student majoring in mass communication.

- South Carolina Broadcasters Awards

This scholarship encourages students to remain in the state of South Carolina and work for an in-state broadcaster.

*See page 31 for more information about these scholarships.*

Schulte has a positive impact on the students with whom he comes into contact and hopes they take the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to build great careers.

# My Study Abroad Experience: *Seville, Spain*

"I fell in love with the  
people I met and  
the places I saw."

Mariah Jurow







Photos courtesy of  
Mariah Jurow

Mariah Jurow takes a  
break from studying  
abroad in Spain for a trip  
into the Sahara Desert  
in Merzouga, Morocco.

As a young girl, I was fascinated by the wider world. I dreamed of meeting people who spoke different languages and who lived in historically and culturally diverse places. In my early teens, an amazing opportunity to travel to Europe fell into my lap. For three weeks I traveled across western Europe, visiting Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Amsterdam and Liechtenstein. I fell in love with the people I met and the places I saw. From the first rush of excitement, I promised myself that in the future I would seize any opportunity to travel that I could.

Flash forward a couple of years...my friends and I planned to attend the study abroad fair at Winthrop. Before I even walked into Richardson Ballroom where the fair was held, I thought back to the promise I had made myself years ago. I knew studying abroad would enrich my college experience, so I began researching a few countries that offered study abroad opportunities.

As an Integrated Marketing Communication and Spanish double major, I knew I wanted to study abroad in a location that would give me the option to take classes in both academic areas. When I came across Universidad de Sevilla in Seville, Spain, I knew this university would be the best choice for me. After months of preparation, it was departure day. My family drove me to the airport and with tears in our eyes, we said our goodbyes. Three flights, two layovers and many hours later, I arrived at San Pablo Airport in Seville, Spain. I met my program director, Nicole, and other students from across the United States who would be living, traveling and taking classes with me in Spain.

The first few days were difficult and exciting, all at the same time. I saw amazing architecture, met wonderfully kind people and listened to a beautiful language. It was wonderful, but that didn't mean that there weren't obstacles.

On the second day of class, I began to second guess my abilities to speak the Spanish language. I had studied Spanish for almost 10 years, but I began to feel overwhelmed. I sat in my phonetics class unable to understand my professor's thick Andalusian accent.

But after only two weeks, I found that I had adjusted to life as a Sevillian. I began to make friends with natives and had experiences I never thought possible in such a short amount of time.

One of the most memorable things I experienced while studying in Seville, was attending the famous, Feria de Abril de Sevilla. Feria, as the locals call it, is a popular fair that takes place in Seville two weeks after Semana Santa or Easter Holy Week. The fair begins on Saturday night and lasts for seven days and nights. People from all over the world gather in tents to sing, dance, eat and drink with friends and family.

On the last night of Feria, my friend Gonzalo invited me and some of my study abroad friends to come to his family's tent. We spent the entire night singing and dancing. We ate our weight in food and laughed until we cried. It was one of the best nights of my life and a moment I will cherish forever.

A few days later, I returned to my home in Charleston, S.C. Needless to say, I was sad to be back in the States. My study abroad experience gave me memories to last a lifetime. Studying abroad has allowed me to expand my academic horizon, become a better leader and gain a competitive edge in the workforce. In the end, I believe studying abroad set me up for a successful and exciting future.

*Mariah Jurow, '20, is an IMC and Spanish double major from Charleston, S.C.*





Photos:  
Río Guadalquivir in Seville, Spain (top left),  
Feria de Abril in Seville, Spain (top right)  
Lagos, Portugal (bottom).

**"... after only two weeks, I found that I had adjusted to life as a Sevillian. I began to make friends with natives and had experiences I never thought possible in such a short amount of time."**

- Mariah Jurow





Photo courtesy of  
Winthrop University  
Department of  
Mass Communication

## Out with the Old, In with the News

### Winthrop Close Up's New Studio Set

Morgan Matthews

The Department of Mass Communication boasts about having a grand, updated news set in its Johnson Hall TV studio.

Guy Reel, department chair and professor of mass communication, worked with faculty to research news set layouts and come up with a basic design concept that could be put out for bids. Studio Displays of Charlotte won the bid to design and install the new set.

Studio Displays designer Bridgett Norris created the design that was ultimately chosen. The set was designed for two seated anchors with an option to have two additional anchors who could stand next to the seated anchors. An interview area for a reporter and guest was also in the new plan. As the backdrop for the new set, two lighted panels display scenes of Winthrop's campus. The panels can be removed so the pictures can be updated when needed. Lighting has been adjusted to accommodate the new set.

The studio will soon welcome its first news crew, but a few things still need to be completed before the new studio is totally complete. Two flat panel TV screens need to be installed on the set and several large pieces of the old set, as well as the old lights, need to be removed and sent to surplus.

Broadcast students have used the new set for two practice Close Up news shows and are very excited to start using it full time. Because of the COVID-19 school closing, however, the set may not be used until the fall 2020 semester.



# Geek Culture and The Rise of New Careers

Katie Oliver Smith

"Stranger Things," the "Game of Thrones" finale, Baby Yoda, and the film *Avengers: Endgame* have flooded the media and become part of day-to-day conversations. Pop culture has led to the normalization of geek culture. Societal and technological changes over the past two decades have led to the growth of a geek culture, which has opened up new career opportunities in the marketing and communication industries.

Popular aspects of geek culture are binge culture and superheroes. Binge culture started with the success of Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, HBO, and Disney+, spurring television companies to develop their own streaming services. Shows like "Stranger Things" and "Game of Thrones" blew up beyond expectations creating massive communities of fans and followers. One can find related or themed merchandise of these shows in everyday stores.

Superhero stories have also contributed to the rise of geek culture. Marvel jumped to the top of the movie industry as DC Entertainment followed on its heels. Superhero movies and streaming series' create vast communities of fans, from casual watchers to superfans who support the brands.

Companies, adapting quickly to the explosion of fan culture, have created new positions in the marketing and communication fields. Companies want to build consistent brands and monitor the representation of shows and characters on social media. Many positions for young professionals include

managing official social media accounts of shows or characters that often have, thousands, sometimes millions of followers.

Another new position is pop culture journalists, a term referring to people who keep up-to-date on popular television shows and movies in order to inform the public. The past decade has produced many small news companies that revolve entirely around pop culture or geek-related content. The events industry has seen a large growth in pop culture conventions. Young professionals can get involved in the marketing and communication of these events as brand monitors or event coordinators. As geek culture continues to grow, so do the opportunities for recent graduates of Winthrop's Department of Mass Communication programs.

## Geek Culture

Companies to Research for Job Opportunities

### Rooster Teeth-

A production company that produces podcasts, live-action shorts and series, and animated shows, including two of the most famous online series "Red vs. Blue" and "RWBY."

### Nerdist-

A news and media company that produces content, podcasts, and articles about any and all current geek-related media.

### Achievement Hunter-

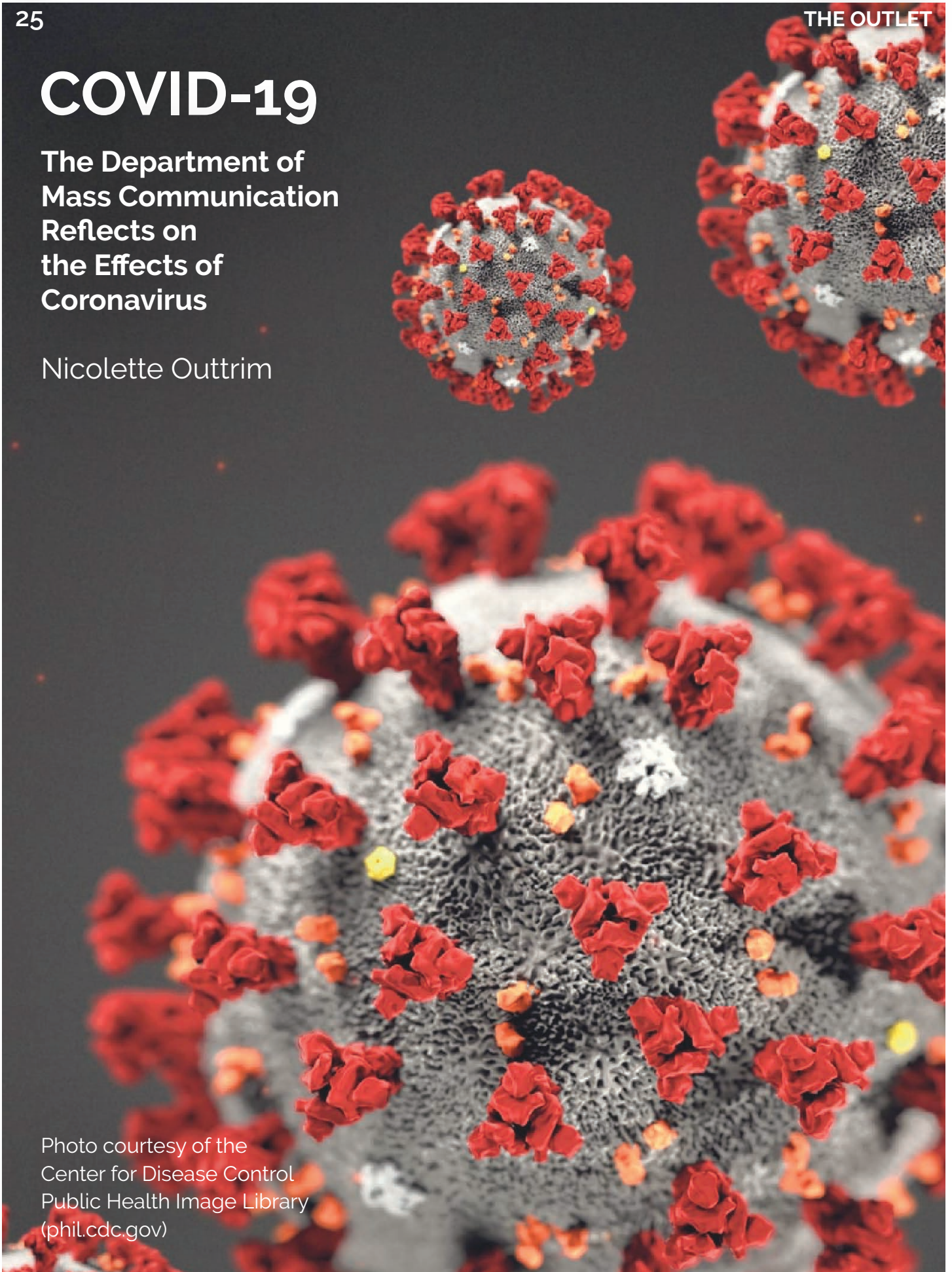
A live-action comedy and gaming group known for entertaining on-camera personalities and video game content.

# COVID-19

The Department of  
Mass Communication  
Reflects on  
the Effects of  
Coronavirus

Nicolette Outtrim

Photo courtesy of the  
Center for Disease Control  
Public Health Image Library  
([phil.cdc.gov](http://phil.cdc.gov))





Coronavirus, COVID-19, became a familiar term to college students just before Spring Break 2020. The virus is an airborne, respiratory illness with flu-like symptoms. Reported illnesses ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death.

On March 11, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared the coronavirus a pandemic, a global virus outbreak. Several species of animals are suspected to have been the cause of the virus. Originally detected in China, the coronavirus rapidly spread throughout Europe and reached the United States as serious public health risk.

The virus has impacted the MCOM department in several ways. Professors had to adapt all their classes to an online platform, all department activities were cancelled and interns scrambled to finish internships or work remotely to ensure internship credit.

IMC intern student and marketing assistant at Rock Hill Parks and Recreation and Tourism, Savannah Moore, says her internship was cut short due to the virus. "I was hoping to gain more experience and create additional content for my portfolio. I understand that these are necessary precautions and I agree with the school's decision; however, it may be harder to find a job with limited internship experience," Moore said.

The Coronavirus has severely impacted the mass communication department faculty and students. Professors and staff are not able to enter the building without notifying the police. Class, tests, advising, and meetings are all held remotely online and students are struggling to access the advanced software they need to complete class projects.

MCOM students, faculty and staff are facing these new challenges together. The department's slogan, "learning through experience" could not be truer than it is today.

**"By and large, the students have been fantastic about changing expectations and allowing for the alternate delivery of classes. I've had to have a lot more faith in my students to pay attention to emails and go through material on their own."**

**-Bill Schulte**

**"I'm trying to stay flexible and understanding. I've been emailing, creating videos and posting updates on Blackboard often and making myself available for video chats or phone calls when needed."**

**-Joseph Kasko**

**"I tried to streamline assignments and be as understanding as possible of student needs in these difficult times. What was most uncomfortable for me was the lack of personal, face-to-face interaction with students."**

**-Guy Reel, Department Chair**

# Winthrop University Converts to Online as Coronavirus Takes a Toll

## COVID-19 Shuts Down Universities Nationwide

Madeline Milne

On March 19, 2020, South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster announced all schools in the state must move to remote learning via online classes until further notice. Following this announcement, Winthrop University issued an official email to all students, faculty, and staff, stating beginning March 23, and for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester, all classes will be held online. Winthrop announced all remaining cultural events, campus-held activities, and graduation ceremonies were cancelled or postponed until further notice. Students and faculty are to monitor their email and Winthrop's website for more updates.

The MCOM department at Winthrop is just one of the departments that is struggling to adapt its curriculum for the rest of the school year, due to the amount of group work, hands-on activities, and broadcast assignments found in the semester teaching plans.

"Going online with such short notice created several challenges, including how to grade display board and bulletin board projects that could not be turned in, how to ensure real time group interaction for team projects and how to encourage students to do better with their assignments via an email message," said Bonnye Stuart, instructor of Public Relations Writing and Production. A significant amount of projects and assignments within the MCOM department curriculum are done within groups or teams, which has caused a lot of speculation on how these classes will need to change, going forward. "I am still not certain how assignments and exams will be adapted online—especially the team work," said Integrated Marketing Communication Professor Padmini Patwardhan.

Winthrop University sent a separate email on March 20 explaining that the university will be offering ways to accommodate as many concerns as possible, including allowing students to to S/U courses, waiving remaining cultural event credits for seniors graduating in May or August of 2020, providing take-out meals for students who are unable to leave campus and setting up online options for academic advising beginning March 25.

### *Tips to survive online classes:*

- Create a workable study space that is not your bed or somewhere *too comfortable*
- Set aside specific times for getting school work done
- Limit the amount of distractions around you while you are doing your school work
- Read instructions and assignments guidelines more than once
- Create a planner for assignment deadlines and test dates
- Reach out to professors if you have questions or concerns



# Annual Mass Communication Recognition Dinner Cancelled Due to Coronavirus

## Students Recognized for Achievements Virtually

Ashley Jordan

The Department of Mass Communication holds its annual student recognition dinner in April to celebrate the achievements of students in the department, highlight student publications and recognize professionals and internship supervisors who have made notable contributions to the department over the year. The annual event is planned by the Public Relations Principles class, MCOM 370. Students are broken up into teams that take on specific responsibilities and plan the event. Teams include: food and food logistics, decoration, publicity, program design and management, video and photography, and seating and arrangements. Two student project managers oversee the event.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, this year's dinner was canceled. However, the department is looking forward to announcing this year's awardees using online communication.

Planning this annual celebration is the major assignment for Public Relations Principles class, so Dr. Patwardhan, instructor of the spring MCOM 370 class, got busy making an alternate plan for students to receive credit.

Canceling the dinner was a very difficult decision; however, Dr. Patwardhan believes this was a good teaching and learning moment for students to understand that crises often require alternate plans.

Although the dinner is not going forward this year, the department is determined to honor online its students, graduating seniors and the extraordinary people who contribute to the success of its department.

*See the student award winners and recognitions on the next pages.*

**"I focused on keeping things simple but engaging and meaningful. In the Public Relations Principles class I substituted a case study using the coronavirus crisis for the canceled recognition dinner assignment."**

-Padmini Patwardhan

# 2019-2020 Department of Mass Communication **Student Award Winners**

## **Leadership Award**

Jointly awarded to Imani D. Belton and Genevieve I. Young

Imani's achievements and actions as CSL president made her a natural choice for the Leadership Award. "She is a hard worker, very cooperative when working with her on class assignments, super intern at Beyond Marketing agency— glowing evaluation! Not afraid to step up and get the job done," one of her professors said.

Genevieve is a leader in so many ways throughout her career, including work for the Society of Professional Journalists. One of her teachers observed, "She's a great 'doer' — reaches for the stars — and she is not afraid to take risks to reach the next level. Great student [and is] not letting the current crisis dampen her spirits or affect her class work."

## **Kappa Tau Alpha Honor Society**

KTA is the leading honor society for mass communication departments.

## ***2019-2020 Inductees***

Ashley Holbert, La J'ai Reed and Olivia Esselman

## ***Kappa Tau Alpha Top Scholar***

Ashley Holbert

According to the department chair, Dr. Reel, this award is based on grade-point average. Ashley's high GPA in this demanding department is a testament to her hard work and intelligence. Ashley will receive a plaque from KTA commemorating this honor, along with an honor cord and medallion, and her name will also be inscribed on one of the permanent plaques in Johnson Hall.

One of her professors said of her, "What a delight — Loves learning! Has great curiosity and has contributed so much to the MCOM 302 International Communication class — always ready to share her knowledge — always going above and beyond."



**Continued/** Student Award Winners

## **Outstanding Senior in Journalism**

Matthew R. Thrift

Matthew has been recognized as an outstanding senior due to his involvement and strong news judgment. One of his professors lauded his commitment to journalism and investigative skills and said of him, "He has fearlessly chased stories and asked difficult questions. He's even taken himself off assignments to avoid conflicts of interest. He respectfully challenges instructors and peers in class to be their best and never makes excuses."

## **Outstanding Senior in Digital Information Design** (Digital Media Track)

Isabelle "Izzy" Schmidt

Her professors said that she showed tremendous commitment, creativity and initiative. They commented on her strong photography and video production skills, exceptional multimedia work, and the work she has done for the Palmetto Report. Not only does she shine in the classroom, but one professor said, "Her work off campus with professional organizations is prolific."

## **Marilyn Sarow Outstanding Senior in Integrated Marketing Communication**

Jointly awarded to Laura E. Munson and Noelie Kanor

Laura is known for her hard work, leadership, creativity and teamwork. One of her professors said of her, "She has a great can-do spirit! Very helpful with other students. Great collaborator. Awesome internship at the Greenville Theatre — they loved her and said she had great skills."

Noelie has excelled among a strong group of IMC graduating seniors. Not only did her professor describe her as highly creative, motivated and thoughtful, but as "an asset to her team as an ideas person who goes beyond the brief to create fresh and original concepts for communication campaigns." The department continues to be impressed with the accomplishments of the French students and looks forward to Noelie's continued success back in France.

## **Dr. Larry Timbs | Landmark Diversity Scholarship**

Tatianna Davis

The award includes a \$1,000 scholarship and an internship at a Landmark community newspaper during the summer. One of her professors said, "Her application letter showed a passion for journalism and the need for diversity in the newsroom. She made a positive impression within the judges with her focus on community journalism and comments tying newsroom diversity to innovation."

**Continued/** Student Award Winners

## Outstanding Junior

Jointly awarded to Anna E. Sharpe and Emma C. Teel

Anna is an excellent student, writer and leader who has strong news judgment. She has produced many outstanding pieces for The Johnsonian and the Palmetto Report. One of Anna's professors said of her, "She is truly one of the best student journalists not only in the mass communication department, but also in the state."

Emma is a responsible and motivated student with well developed skills in different aspects of IMC. One of her professors said of her, "Her leadership on the social media practicum team was exceptional. If there is one thing I can say about her is that she is able and willing to rise to every challenge I have thrown her way this semester. She is truly a pleasure to have in class."

## Special Recognition

Special Recognition Awards were given for the first time this year to was students in the Department of Mass Communication who excel in leadership, academics and service. These students are applauded for their outstanding accomplishments. Congratulations to all recipients!

Monejah Black, Kennedi Harris, Allison Thomas, Matthew Shealy, Alyssa Washington, Rebekah Davis, Mariah Jurow, Greta Conboy, Victoria Howard, Jack Stanton, Yashuri Del Rosario Rodriguez, Raili Burton, Jack Weis, Savannah Moore, Savannah Scott, La J'ai Reed

# Professional Award Winners

## Friend of the Department Award

Gene Policinski, Freedom Forum and Newseum

This year's winner of the much-sought-after "Friend of the Department Award" recognizes someone with significant and generous contribution to the development of students in the Department of Mass Communication. "The relationship with Gene has been rich and rewarding," said Dr. Reel. The award is recognition of his efforts to educate students on the First Amendment and the importance of press freedom during his time at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., and as First Amendment Senior Fellow/President and Chief Operating Officer at the Freedom Forum Institute. Freedom Forum works to raise awareness of First Amendment freedoms through education, advocacy and action. "We look forward to continuing our partnership with him in the future," Reel said.

**Continued/** Other Award Winners

## Internship Supervisor of the Year Award

Laurabree Monday, CN2 News

Laurabree is an EMMY award winning journalist who joined the CN2 News team as the News Director and Anchor in July of 2008. "She is a great mentor who really helps our students to be their best. Students come back from internships at CN2 transformed into professionals. She always makes the internship a rich and rewarding learning experience for mass communication students. We hope this relationship continues for many years to come," said Bonnye Stuart, mass communication internship supervisor. The department is thankful to have her as a mentor to mass communication students.

## NABJ Chapter of the Year Award

Winthrop University Chapter

The Winthrop University Association of Black Journalists chapter was nationally recognized for student chapter of the year at the NABJ national conference in August 2019.

# College of Arts & Sciences Student Scholar Award

Tea Franco

"It's such an honor to win the Inez Bell Caskey Award this year for my senior capstone/honors thesis project where I examined the way race played into the reactions to the crack crisis compared to the opioid epidemic. I'm very thankful for my time at Winthrop and the opportunity I had to work on a project that I felt was really important," Franco said.

For more information about these awards and Recongnitions please visit [winthrop.edu/masscomm](http://winthrop.edu/masscomm)



## Follow the Department of Mass Communication on social media

Twitter @wumasscomm

Facebook @masscommwinthrop

Instagram @mcomeagles



### Apply for Department Scholarships

#### *IMC Summer Internship Scholarship*

This scholarship is awarded to an IMC student who enrolls in a 1-credit internship during the summer term. The scholarship is based on the needs of the student.

Requirements for applying for the Integrated Marketing Internship Scholarship:

- Submission of the Internship Application
- Submission of a current resume
- Submission of an essay addressing the following:
  - What the student hopes to gain from the internship experience
  - What type of business/organization the student wants to work in and why
  - The student's financial need

The application essay will be evaluated based on how well the student tells his/her story.

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#### *Dr. Larry Timbs | Landmark Diversity Scholarship*

A merit-based scholarship. Applicants who received other scholarships are still eligible to apply.

Requirements for the applicants:

- Have a 2.5 G.P.A. or higher
  - Be a sophomore or junior
  - Agree to intern with a Landmark community newspaper
  - Write a 500-word essay describing the contribution and impact of diversity in the newsroom. Provide examples of how the student has excelled in the Department of Mass Communication or at Winthrop University. Show leadership with student publications. Describe achievements or honors. Describe a desire to pursue a career in journalism
- 

#### *Stewart Haas Memorial Restricted Scholarship*

A scholarship established in memory of former faculty member, Stewart Haas, to provide renewable scholarships for students majoring in mass communication. The funds allow for students to receive \$1000 each year. The scholarship may be renewed for a rising junior or senior who maintains a 3.0 GPA.

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#### *Jefferson Pilot Communications Scholarship*

A merit-based scholarship established by Jefferson Pilot Broadcasting Company forwarded to a student majoring in mass communication.

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#### *South Carolina Broadcasters Awards*

A scholarship that encourages students to remain in the state of South Carolina and work for an in-state broadcaster.

Requirements for applicants:

- Be a broadcast major
- Freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior status

The SCBA looks for students who have a strong desire to work in broadcasting, was involved in broadcasting during high school and/or college and plan to work in broadcasting in South Carolina.

# What is The Outlet?

The Outlet is an intra-departmental biannual newsletter published by the Department of Mass Communication. Its purpose is to provide useful information to students, alumni, and faculty in the form of news stories, photos, and features. The newsletter and its content is written, edited and designed by students majoring in mass communication (MCOM), integrated marketing communication (IMC) and digital information design (DIFD). The collaboration is a multipart semester-long class assignment for students enrolled in MCOM 471 Public Relations Writing and Production. The publishing and production of The Outlet is advised by Mrs. Bonnye Stuart.

## Contributors

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Izzy Schmidt, '20

*Digital Information Design major with concentration in digital mass media from St. Simons Island, Ga.*

Katie Oliver Smith, '20

*Integrated Marketing Communication major from Lexington, S.C.*

Genevieve Young, '20

*Integrated Marketing Communication major from Long Beach, Miss.*



# Turn Yourself In!

We're a family,  
we want to hear from you.

The Department of Mass Communication wants  
you to share recent news, awards and  
significant events in your career.

*Visit [www.winthrop.edu/masscomm](http://www.winthrop.edu/masscomm)  
then follow the "Turn Yourself In!" link.*

