

ANNUAL REPORT

Student Media

June 15, 2004

Submitted by Bradley Wilson, coordinator of student media advising

SUMMARY

Programs

Student Media is largely in the business of getting a daily newspaper published, a weekly newspaper published, a 24-hour-a-day radio station on the air, a bi-weekly arts magazine online and an annual yearbook and literary magazine published. Sometimes other things fall to the wayside. But four items stand out with programming this year: the upgrade of WKNC to 25,000 watts, completing a \$50,000 project that began in 1995, and the FCC license renewal of the station, good for another seven years; the on-time submission of a much-improved *Agromeck* yearbook; an abbreviated Time Out for Diversity study of the content of the *Technician*; and several cooperative efforts with other campus agencies and departments, especially the panel discussion on photojournalistic ethics in conjunction with the Pulitzer Prize exhibit.

Compact Plan

Of our eight-page Compact Plan, the one item that stands out is the one item that met with failure this year – “To work with student government and student media leaders to create a true advisory board.” Despite having a detailed written plan that had the support of all the student media leaders and many people around campus, we did a very poor job of playing the political game and met with little visible and vocal support from administrators or student leaders. Although the campus-wide referendum failed, we have agreed to continue the fight for a strong advisory board. After the spring elections, the board never met despite repeated attempts, once again proving that the current structure is not only not an asset to the Student Media, but a drain of time and resources.

Diversity

The Time Out for Diversity study was a first attempt to make *Technician* staff members aware of the diversity, meaning diversity of ages, majors, classifications, gender and race, of the sources used in news/feature, opinion and sports coverage. What we found, in an unscientific manner, is that we disproportionately cover males more than females and African-Americans more than the reflection of the campus break-downs and other racial groups less than the campus average. However, this study left a lot to be desired in terms of making policy decisions. We also

examined the staff and its lack of diversity. We know that to accurately cover the happenings on campus, we need a diverse staff and will be striving to recruit a more diverse group of writers, photographers and designers through upcoming years. And we will include those diversity efforts for all media, not just the *Technician*.

Staff

In terms of professional staff, the most significant news was the resignation of our administrative assistant Mini Jolly. She was an asset to the Student Media, keeping our finances straight for several years and literally holding Student Media together for more than seven months back in 2002 when there was no coordinator. Finalizing a process that began in October of 2003, we hired Krystal Pittman to be the business office manager. We continue on our goal, a goal that has been stated for many years now, to fill the four full-time positions and to hire another EPA assistant position to serve as the adviser to the electronic media, WKNC specifically.

Media recognition this year included several awards for the *Windhover*, especially the ninth Pacemaker, *Agromeck*, *Technician* and WKNC, named the Best College Radio Station by the Raleigh *Independent Weekly*.

In addition, professional staff members and students attended and presented workshops all around the nation, increasing the visibility and stature of the student media here at N.C. State. We also made considerable outreach to high schools in an effort to attract some of the best high-school journalists to help build our program.

Recommendations and concerns for the future

Our two biggest needs are (1) additional professional staff to advise the students on sound business and journalistic practices; and (2) developing a system of accountability for the student staff members. In addition, student leaders, in addition to getting their publications out on time on a scheduled basis within budget, have to learn to play within the student political system on this campus until we get separated from student government, a clear conflict of interest.

Programs

1. *The upgrade of WKNC to 25,000 watts*

This project began in 1996 and cost more than \$50,000, but it's now complete, giving the station access to almost all of Central North Carolina, more than one million listeners. In addition, WKNC is once again broadcasting on the World Wide Web, giving the station access to anyone with Internet access.

2. *A Time-Out for Diversity study of the Technician*

While not completely scientific, this study showed that the daily newspaper is more than adequately covering the racial diversity on campus. However, stories tend to feature males more than females even more than would be expected on this campus with a majority of males. Seeking diversity of ages, majors, classifications and all other possible break-downs and covering activities of all students continues to be a focus of the newspaper.

3. *The on-time submission of the Agromeck*

Last year, for the first time in many years, the *Agromeck* came out on time. However, in the 2002-2003 school year, the staff produced three yearbooks. This year, we continued the focus on meeting deadlines but put an additional emphasis on quality in our endeavor to make the yearbook a self-funded entity. In cooperation with Taylor Publishing and Campus Ad Co., we allowed the students to focus on generation of quality stories, page designs and photos without having to worry about selling the books, marketing the books or selling ads. Still, we sold about 1,200 yearbooks with a campaign targeted at parents, not students and \$21,850 in advertising. And the students produced the finest book N.C. State has ever seen. Next year, we continue an emphasis on meeting deadlines and quality but add the dimension of expanded coverage. We know the more people we get in the book the more people will buy the book. Then in the following year we keep the focus on deadlines, quality and coverage and establish a tradition of excellence and a self-funded book with a sales goal of 4,000 copies.

4. *A cooperative education effort in conjunction with the Pulitzer Prize exhibit*

Together with the university library system, we co-sponsored a panel discussion on photojournalism ethics, featuring Hal Buell, a 40-year veteran of the Associated Press and author of *Moments: The Pulitzer Prize Photographs*, Pat Davidson, assistant professor at UNC-Chapel Hill, Robert Miller of the Raleigh *News & Observer*, Jay Jennings

of WRAL and Mark Dolejs of the *Durham Herald-Sun*. Buell also spent a day working with the student staff photographers and critiqued portfolios. This was one of the many campus-wide team efforts of Student Media this year in an effort to build relationships with any of a number of campus departments and agencies.

Compact Plan

While the failure of the movement to reform the board was a low-point of the year in terms of Compact Plan initiatives, there were several other points that merit attention from a historical perspective.

Contacts with professionals

"To make contacts with media professionals in the community to speak to our students, teach workshops, and provide hands-on training." This was related to the initiative "To become actively involved in media organizations such as the College Media Advisers, the Associated Collegiate Press and the Society for Collegiate Journalists as well as professional organizations such as the North Carolina Press Association"

- One of the most successful workshops was the one-on-one time the student photographers spent with Hal Buell, now retired from the Associated Press.
- For the first time, N.C. State daily newspaper editors attended the MSCNE04 Management Seminar for College Newspaper Editors at Grady College of Journalism and Mass communication at the University of Georgia. Thushan and Carie came back with tons of useful information and handouts, material they used throughout the year at staff retreats, daily staff meetings and just for the quality improvement of the paper.
- The *Technician* staff retreat held at the Roanoke Island Festival Park in Manteo was extremely successful. The staff spent almost three days learning about journalism skills, particularly copy editing, and doing some team-building exercises. Assisted by free-lance writer Scott Lajoie from Washington, D.C. and photographer Matt Stamey of the *Wichita Eagle*, the staff also had a lot of one-on-one instruction time on feature writing and photo editing in particular.
- Five students (Matt Middleton, Carie Windham, Ben McNeely, Diane Cordova, Jamie Proctor, Austin Dowd, Michelle DeCamp) attended the College Broadcasters, College Media Advisers and Associated Collegiate Press national convention in Dallas. Students said this was one of the best educational experiences they had all year. At this convention, Austin Dowd, *Agromeck* photo editor, assisted Bradley Wilson in teaching a two-day, pre-conference workshop on Adobe Photoshop.

- Cat Warren, an associate professor in the English Department, coordinated a successful one-day workshop for six members of the *Nubian Message* staff in the spring including coverage of ethics and ways to improve writing and design. Bob Kochersberger and Bradley Wilson also taught segments of the workshop.
- One of the least successful was the trip six WKNC staff members made to New York City for the CMJ Music Marathon. This convention, according to a considerable amount of traffic on the College Broadcasters e-mail distribution list, is nothing more than a “big party.” Students failed to return with summaries of the sessions and when they did have summaries, they showed little educational gain, especially when all student attended the same session instead of attending a variety of “sessions.” They did, undoubtedly, make some good career contacts and contacts with musicians which will prove to benefit the station in the long run.
- Three designers, Patrick , Josh Bassett and Win Bassett attended Tim Harrower’s newspaper design workshop in Durham. In discussions with the designers after the workshop, the three picked up on some significant trends in design as well as learned some ways to refine their own designs.

Technology plan

Two related initiatives related to technology included, “To develop a three- to five-year technology plan” and “To fix major problems with current technology.” Thanks to Joel Ebel, our systems administrator, the Technology Plan was completed during the first semester and continually updated during the year. While there was no funding for the technology, this was remedied for the 2005 fiscal year, allowing technology purchases to be made on a plan and not just a rash judgment. In addition, the server closet was updated and cleaned out with a backup system in place – something that had not been in place at all prior to this year. This system will need continual updating. All computers were reformatted and inventoried during the year. At the start of the year, a significant number of computers had illegal software on them. By the end of the, 98 percent of the computer disk space was free of illegal software, leaving only some fonts and other material to be removed during the summer.

Accountability

There was one additional low-point that merits attention in the future. “Students should be held accountable for meeting deadlines and keeping a pre-established production schedule.” and the related initiative, “To educate students about the importance of time management and meeting deadlines.” We had numerous instances where students were paid salaries for work that was never performed. For example, despite a budget that called for all staff members to be paid for work performed, at the end of the fall semester, three yearbook editors who were paid several hundred dollars each month in the fall but never produced one story or spread were fired

or resigned. Still, the yearbook did finalize on time (Wednesday, May 20) with an anticipated delivery of late August. The staff only missed one major deadline. The *Nubian Message* staff was paid for several months despite producing no issues. In fact, that staff only produced 15 of the 27 (55 percent) issues on the production schedule. Even the *Windhover* was not completed on schedule and was over budget. After school was out about two-thirds of this year's issues were left unassembled and not distributed. The solution to fixing this problem is two-fold: education and monitoring. The professional staff will be working with student leaders to educate them on generally accepted accounting practices as well as work-place ethics, a process that we began this year by having a regular meeting with the newly hired editors/general manager. Additional monitoring can only take place with additional staff and administrative procedures designed to prevent misuse or abuse, intentional or unintentional.

Budget

The Student Media overall ended the year almost exactly on target. Income, thanks to aggressive efforts by the *Technician* advertising sales staff, exceeded expectations. *Agromeck* income did not meet expectations (92% advertising) and neither did *Nubian Message* (0% advertising) and neither did WKNC (79%). *Technician* exceeded expectations by 45%, grossing more than \$400,000 in advertising, up considerably from past years, but still not meeting our potential of nearly \$1 million. On the expense side, nearly all media met their budgeted projections. *Technician* exceeded their budget largely due to papers that were larger than eight pages due to increased advertising. Almost all media had supply budgets that were larger than projected either reflecting items not charged to the anticipated line items or due to unanticipated expenses. After the fiscal year is over, we will all be spending some time analyzing the FY2004 budget to improve the process for the FY2006 budget since the FY2005 budget was submitted well before the end of the fiscal year.

Awards and recognition

- *Windhover*: Pacemaker award from the Associated Collegiate Press (for the ninth time), Sarah Timberlake, editor; inclusion in the *Best of Collegiate Design* published by the College Media advisers for magazine cover, magazine content spread for designs by Geoff Halber
- *Technician*: inclusion in the *Best of Collegiate Design* published by the College Media advisers for informational graphic design by Thushan Amarasiriwardena, nameplate design by Matt Pelland
- *Agromeck*: inclusion in Taylor Publishing's *Yearbook Yearbook*, Lucy Tatum, editor; recipient of a Gallery Award from Davor Photography

- WKNC: named Best College Radio in the area by the *Independent Weekly*; featured in a new local publication, the *Raleigh Hatchet*
- Rob Bradley was named the Student Media Photographer of the month twice. Pete Ellis was the photographer of the month once. Both received recognition on the *Agromeck* Web site for their teamwork and ability to make the publications successful visually.

Public presentations

Presentations by Bradley Wilson, coordinator of Student Media Advising

- Taylor Publishing, end-of-the-year recognition luncheon, April 23, presented luncheon address on the future of scholastic journalism
- Journalism Education Association convention, San Diego, Calif., April 1-4, 2004, sessions on lighting, photography portfolios and evaluating photos in addition to coordinating Web site coverage and on-site photo competitions; N.C. State student Josh Bassett assisted with updates of national Website and served as Webmaster.
- Southern Interscholastic Press Association, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C., March 5-7, 2004, multiple sessions on Adobe InDesign, digital photography and other aspects of photography. N.C. State student Austin Dowd and Josh Bassett assisted with presentations and teaching classes.
- Journalism Education Association convention, Washington, D.C., Nov. 20-23, 2003, "How to Get the Figure You Want," "Photo Editing Basics" and "Photography for Advisers."
- College Media Advisers/Associated Collegiate Press, Dallas, Texas, Nov. 5-9. 2003, "Cross Over: (When) Is Race an Issue," "Photography for Non-Photographers," "Lighting: Quantity, Quality and Direction," and two-day, pre-conference workshop on Adobe Photoshop with Austin Dowd helping out.

Cooperation

The Student Media also saw some considerable cooperation with on-campus groups, in an attempt to foster positive working relationships with other colleges and departments. For example, last summer, five photographers worked with Housing to photograph a national leadership convention, NACURH, on campus. This year, WKNC worked with Housing to provide entertainment at events such as a late April bash for Housing at which one of the WKNC DJs, Noah, provided music. WKNC also hosted the first official event with the Union Activities Board on the new patio outside Witherspoon on Harris Field May 7. Although the event was not well attended (due to lack of food?), it was another good way to get the Student Media to cooperate with campus divisions. Even the Pulitzer Prize panel discussion was an example of extensive cooperation with another university department, the University Libraries. And right at the end of

the year, the Student Media worked with the Center for Student Leadership to provide a photographer for the LeaderShape workshop and to participate in a campus-wide leadership awards ceremony, bringing campus recognition to the leaders within student media.