

ANNUAL REPORT

Student Media

May 13, 2005

Submitted by Bradley Wilson, coordinator of student media advising

SUMMARY

I. Programs

Student Media is largely in the business of getting a daily and a separate weekly newspaper published, keeping a 24-hour-a-day radio station on the air, putting a bi-weekly arts magazine online and printing an annual yearbook and literary magazine. A continued emphasis (and tracking) of how well the media are meeting deadlines has drawn attention to the need to continually stress this aspect of the media. The Time Out for Diversity study this year was more in-depth and more accurate look at the content of the *Technician*.

II. Compact Plan

Of our eight-page Compact Plan, the one item that stands out is the one item that again met with failure this year – “To work with student government and student media leaders to create a true advisory board.” Our board was again ineffective this year, having failed to meet regularly or to approve the minutes of its September meeting. Any changes in the board met with apathetic responses from student leaders, Student Government officials and administrators. No one wanted to get into fights like happened last year even though all parties acknowledged that the revisions were needed. The second item that failed to meet expectations that stands out is *Agromeck* sales. However, advertising sales figures exceeded expectations for WKNC, *Technician* and *Agromeck*.

III. Diversity

The second Time Out for Diversity study was designed to make *Technician* staff aware of the diversity (of ages, majors, classifications, gender and race) of the sources used in news/feature, opinion and sports coverage. What we found is that we disproportionately cover males significantly more than females and African-Americans more than the reflection of the campus break-downs and other racial groups less than the campus average. 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. This year, the study also included bringing in guest speakers

for one hour, once a week for four weeks on African-American issues, BGLT issues, Native-American issues and women's issues.

IV. Staff

In terms of professional staff, the most significant news was the hiring of our administrative assistant Martha Collins. She is an asset to the Student Media, keeping our payroll and expenditure records in order. Krystal Pittman became a permanent employee, bringing stability and order to the business office. We continue with the process to fill another full-time position in the department, an assistant coordinator with primary responsibility for advising WKNC.

Professional staff 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.

Recognition

Media recognition this year included the *Windhover* winning its ninth Pacemaker and nomination for its 10th. The 2004 *Agromeck* received a silver crown from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and was nominated for a Pacemaker by the Associated Collegiate Press. WKNC was again named the Best College Radio Station by the Raleigh *Independent Weekly*.

V. 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.

I. Programs

1. Timeliness

The *Technician* met its deadline 61 percent of the time in the spring semester. The staff members met their midnight goal only 21 percent of the time in the spring semester. Since April 1, the staff met its deadline only 33 percent of the time and met its midnight goal only 10 percent of the time.

The *Agromeck* got off to a slow start, turning in 42 pages on Nov. 12 when 32 pages were due Oct. 29. Because the staff turned in 10 extra pages, this helped for the second deadline but also meant the plan would not guarantee a delivery date until the final pages were turned in, jeopardizing our plans to be able to advertise a delivery date all along to give people a secure feeling that the book would come out.

| <i>Deadline</i> | <i>Pages due</i> | <i>Turned in on time</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | 32 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 62 | 63 | 102% |
| 3 | 62 | 64 | 97% |
| 4 | 59 | 52 | 88% |
| 5 | 41 | (Due May 17) | |
| | 256 | | |

The Nubian Message was scheduled to come out with 23 issues this year. The staff published 21 issues. Both issues that did not come out were in March. Except for a few issues early in the school year and the missed issues in March, they were generally out within a day of the scheduled day. Several issues came out a day or two late, one because the student scheduled to pick them up and deliver didn't do it.

While it would be nice to be able to focus on learning objectives like improving coverage, the emphasis on meeting deadlines is critical.

2. Training

Without a doubt, the best training this year was done by the photography staff. Generally coordinated by Austin Dowd, the fall training began with a trip to Boone to work with the staff at Appalachian State University. Ten N.C. State photographers went on that photo adventure. In addition to having monthly critique sessions, which brought back alumni and professionals like Grant Halverson, Jason Ivester, Hide Terada and Mike Pittman, the photographers also went to Fort Lauderdale over spring break for a week-long photo adventure. As a testimony to the success of the photo adventures, Bradley Wilson and Stephanie Petrovitch, a sales representative for Taylor Publishing, co-authored an article for the national magazine *Taylor Talk* about the photo adventures.

At the end of each training session, the people attending the sessions were asked to fill out an evaluation form. The average grades for training within each media are a minor reflection of whether or not the training met the goals of the person attending.

| <i>Staff</i> | <i>Average grade</i> | <i>Number of sessions</i> |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Nubian Message | 3.968 | 21 |
| Photography | 3.619 | 10 |
| WKNC | 3.875 | 9 |
| Technician | 3.609 | 91 |

The details of all our training are assessed in a detailed assessment report prepared in the summer of 2005. Specific recommendations include keeping the fall Technician retreat but refining the specific lessons being taught, the radio station staff no longer attend the CMJ convention in New York City but attending the College Broadcasters Inc. convention in the fall with the College Media Advisers and Associated Collegiate Press. This year the business staff also made an increasing presence at SUN and CNBAM. Although the evaluations of the sessions rated only a B+, I'm convinced this is a worthwhile conference for the students and business manager, especially if she takes a leadership role in the organization, something that will be good for her professional development.

The most beneficial training this year was the training associated with the Time Out for Diversity in October. We had five speakers come in to talk about various aspects of diversity on the staff and in the media: Larry Gouridine and Laci Leggett talking about women's concerns; Brett Locklear talking about the concerns of Native-Americans; Tracey Ray talking about the concerns of African-Americans; and Jim Whitiker talking about the concerns of the GLB population on campus. This time (about one hour, one day per week for four weeks) was VERY well spent. The lessons the students cited they learned really improved the quality of the publication and relations on staff.

3. Coverage

As part of the Time Out for Diversity Study, we learned that our average number of sources in the paper was 2.7/story with an average for stories that started on page 1 of 3.4. A study of college newspapers by Professor Todd Simon at Kansas State University found the average number of sources to be 3.52 (range: 2.7 to 3.9) in college papers. We were below average. So we started tracking it. We found that in the spring semester, the average was truly 2.7 when no subjective articles (columns or editorials) were included. This is extremely low considering it takes a minimum of three sources to have the foundation for an article. Worse yet, there were nine days in the spring semester when the *Technician* published articles with no sources (reprints of press releases). The average number of student sources per article was 1.7, also very low.

The *Agromeck* improved its coverage, including group shots for the first time. The number of undergraduates having their portraits in the book was up (300%) from 119 to 354, the number of seniors having portraits in the book was down (25%) from 530 to 394. Even before the final deadline of May 17, there were nearly 3,000 people in the book, exceeding the goal of 1,400 people. As of the end of April, the *Agromeck* had sold only 682 copies, significantly short of the sales goal of 2,000 copies. Goals for next year include reaching 2,600 copies or recommending that the *Agromeck* cease publication.

The *Technician* staff also faced some ethical dilemmas that turned into learning experiences this year. The first, beginning with a story on Oct. 29, 2004, was inaccurate coverage in no fewer than two stories of a meningitis outbreak involving a UNC-Chapel Hill student. There were some inaccuracies in the *Technician* coverage that posed problems for the Health Center staff. The medical director at the Health Center met with the editors to make sure that accurate information was disseminated in the future. The staff learned that they need to verify their information from multiple sources, and shouldn't just use one source for their articles if for no other reason than to check their interpretation of the facts.

On Feb. 2, the staff published a picture of Australian Rules football by Sefton Ipock. The sports editor, Austin Johnson, and photo editor, Taylor Templeton, thought they had permission to use the photo from the team that gave them the location of the photos electronically. No permission was ever given. Ipock complained and tried to further educate the staff about copyright rules. The staff was reminded that they should never use material not taken by our staff without written permission.

Around spring elections, approximately 8,000 copies of the *Technician* disappeared from delivery boxes. In this issue was the one and only time prior to his election that the newspaper staff printed the name of "The Pirate Captain," a candidate for student body president. Although a police report was filed on the stolen papers, no student ever pursued the issue of stolen papers despite recommendations from the Student Press Law Center. One editor said, "Why should we care?" Another said "I don't want to draw attention to people stealing papers." We turned this into a lesson about why they should care and should push for charges to be pressed with the loss of income for that day since advertising money had to be returned when there were no papers distributed. The news editor never published the name of the candidate again until after the election. The candidate had said he only wanted his "stage" name used. The news editor later said this was a bad judgment call, but the damage had been done – a candidate for student body president had determined the content of the publication.

II. 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"

- For the second time, the N.C. State daily newspaper editor attended the MSCNE04 Management Seminar for College Newspaper Editors at Grady College of Journalism and Mass communication at the University of Georgia. Matt Middleton said, "By the end of the week—and two pictorial trips to the 92,000-seat Sanford Stadium later—I would probably call Athens a "town that taught me nearly a bachelor's degree worth of journalism in a week."
- The *Technician* staff retreat held at the Roanoke Island Festival Park in Manteo was even more successful than the previous year largely due to more structure and a focus.
- Seven students attended the College Media Advisers and Associated Collegiate Press national convention in Nashville. Patrick Clarke and Austin Dowd sat on a panel discussing coaching staff members.
- 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 also taught segments of the workshop.
- Again, 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.

Technology plan

The Technology Plan created two years has continued to evolve. Now updated twice a year, it included all levels of technology from the phone system, overhauled and replaced last fall with Nortel digital phones, to all equipment in WKNC to computers and digital photography equipment. Attached to the inventory is now a complete inventory of all equipment within the Student Media area. This plan has really helped us to get a grasp on the budgetary implications of technology and technology upgrades. The most significant change planed in the near future is the purchase of a new server. While we've added, in the last year, a backup system that backs up files nightly, the servers are old and not as reliable as desired. This summer, planned upgrades include the purchase of new servers and backup power devices.

As part of our technology upgrades, we also got cable television in the newsroom this past fall for the first time, allowing us to stay in touch with world events in a more timely fashion.

Accountability

Last year, we reported that "we had numerous instances where students were paid salaries for work that was never performed." This was a pervasive problem in the last few years. However, this year, when *The Nubian Message* didn't come out, the co-editors didn't pay themselves their full salary. Same with the *Agromeck*. This was a step in the right direction as was writing job descriptions for all student employees at the time they were hired.

Budget

We're still eight weeks from the fiscal year, so it's hard to make a completely accurate assessment of the fiscal status. However, April was an incredible month for the *Technician* in terms of ad sales, thanks to the housing market, so we're in very sound condition.

| <i>Media</i> | <i>Income goal</i> | <i>Actual income</i> |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Agromeck | \$11,000 | \$13,185 |
| Technician | \$333,000 | \$349,233 |
| Nubian Message | \$0 | \$559 |
| WKNC | \$30,875 | \$22,594 |

NOTE: Income figures are as of the end of April, 2005. The payroll expenses (commission) related to sales income have been subtracted from gross income figures.

On the expense side, all media met fell short of their budgeted projections largely because of unfilled positions, equipment purchases that didn't happen or publications that weren't printed.

Awards and recognition

- *Windhover*: Pacemaker award from the Associated Collegiate Press (for the ninth time), Shawna Jones, editor; inclusion in the *Best of Collegiate Design* published by the College Media advisers for (5th place) magazine cover, designed by Emmett Byrne.

- *Technician*: inclusion in the *Best of Collegiate Design* published by the College Media advisers for (4th place) house ad designed by Thushan Amarasiriwardena, (3rd place) features page by Win Bassett, (5th place) features page by Thushan Amarasiriwardena and Taylor Templeton, (5th place) editorial page by Thushan Amarasiriwardena, Taylor Templeton and Carie Windham, (2nd place) sports page by Thushan Amarasiriwardena. Also included (5th place) for Technician online by Thushan Amarasiriwardena and Doug Steigerwald.
- *2004 Agromeck*: inclusion in Taylor Publishing's *Yearbook Yearbook*, Jaime Trivette, editor. The 2004 edition also received a Silver Crown from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Josh Bassett and Austin Dowd were also recognized by CSPA for (1st place) division page design, (1st place) yearbook advertising spread, (2nd place) organizations or greeks spread, (2nd place) yearbook color spread, (3rd place) student life spread, (merit) academic spread.
- *2003 Agromeck*: edited by Lucy Tatum, inclusion in the *Best of Collegiate Design* published by the College Media advisers for (1st place) cover by Will Hall, (1st place) division page by Will Hall, (4th place) sports spread by Will Hall.
- WKNC: named Best College Radio in the area by the *Independent Weekly*
- The photography staff recognized its top photographers each month: Rebecca Arnold and Peyton Holland in August, Jeff Reeves in September, Matt Robbins in October, Nathan Bullen and Courtney Evans in November, and Matt Robbins in January. They all received recognition on the *Agromeck* Web site for their teamwork and ability to make the publications successful visually.

IV. Diversity

A Time-Out for Diversity study of the Technician

FIRST ADJECTIVES USED TO DESCRIBE NEWSROOM CULTURE

dedicated, energetic, friendly, like a home for some, family atmosphere, not diverse, stressful
 "What goes on in our newsroom: first, we learn. We have fun. And we work hard."

OTHER ADJECTIVES

giddy, tired, exuberant, hard-working, fun, exclusive, competitive, loose, tense, liberal, jovial,
 intelligent, stressful, relaxing, cocky, moderate

STAFF AS SELF-DESCRIBED

Generally white males from upper-middle-class families who are majoring in engineering or
 some science. Three-fourths of them were self-described liberals.

HIGH SCHOOL: About half of editorial board said they had journalism experience in high
 school.

AFTER COLLEGE: About two-thirds of editorial board said they intend to go into journalism in

some form after college.

COVERAGE BY RACE:

| RACE | 2004 | 04 NEWS | 2003 | UNIVERSITY | |
|------|-------|---------|------|------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% | American Indian |
| 2 | 3% | 3% | 2% | 5% | Asian |
| 3 | 18% | 14% | 19% | 10% | Black |
| 4 | 73% | 75% | 74% | 77% | Caucasian |
| 5 | 2% | 2% | 1% | 2% | Hispanic |
| 6 | 0% | 0% | | | Mixed Race |
| 7 | 2% | 2% | 2% | 5% | Other |
| 0 | (16%) | (20%) | | | Can't determine |

GENDER

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| 1 | 65% | 69% | 57% | Male |
| 2 | 32% | 31% | 43% | Female |
| 0 | 3% | | | |

IV. Staff

Presentations by Bradley Wilson, coordinator of Student Media Advising

- Student Body Treasurer’s Roundtable, Feb. 28, 2005 “Campus Publicity” According to the student organizers, Matt Waligora and Mital Patel, “(the event) could not have gone better.” “(We) were pleased with the turnout and with the constant dialog.” Each participant at the event was given a copy of the Publicity Packet which is now published online at the Student Media Web site.
- Journalism Education Association convention, Atlanta, Nov. 18-21, 2004, “Football: ‘Nuff Said,” “Preparing Your Photography Portfolio,” and “Entering Photo Contest.”
- Journalism Education Association convention, Seattle, April 8-10, 2005, “Type Basics” and “Photography for Advisers.”
- Three photo adventure sessions for North Carolina high school students, including one in Asheville, one in Raleigh and one in High Point. These one-day photo adventures serve not only to get high school teachers and students interested and educated in various aspects of digital photography, they also draw attention to the program at N.C. State hopefully attracting students here.
- Taught photography for adviser classes at Ball State University Summer Media Workshop in July.
- Taught advanced design and coordinated photography classes at the North Carolina Scholastic Media Institute workshop at UNC-Chapel Hill in June.
- Coordinated production at the Dow Jones Summer Internship Program summer workshop at The University of Texas at Austin.

- College Media Advisers/Associated Collegiate Press, Nashville, Nov. 5-9. 2003, "The Magic of 3 a.m.", "Yearbook Photography: It's All About the People" and "Making Your (Web) Presence Felt" and two-day, pre-conference workshop on Adobe Photoshop with Austin Dowd helping out. Also coordinated the on-site photo competition, "Nashville Blues."

V. Recommendations and concerns for the future

We have made remarkable strides in the past couple of years. While we're still not competitive in many areas with our peers, we are moving in that direction. Most importantly, we are moving in the direction of having the support networks in place to continue improving our educational environment. Our two biggest needs continue to be (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.

Hiring an individual to serve primarily as the adviser of WKNC the radio station will take a large burden off me and help us ensure that the entity with the greatest liability to the university has a structure in place to improve.

I also remain concerned about the equity of our staff's salaries within the student media circles nationwide. We've proven that we're way below average for operations our size. We've proven that the only operation even remotely close to our size in North Carolina pays at least 50 percent more than what we pay. We've had discussions about the structure of the department within Student Affairs. Yet none of this seems to be moving towards discussions at a level high enough to make a difference. No easy solutions to these problems, but it would be helpful to have some discussions and to open some dialog with people in a position to do something about it.