

ANNUAL REPORT

Student Media

June 2011

Submitted by Bradley Wilson, coordinator of student media advising

SUMMARY

Our student staff members continue to be recognized at the national, regional and local level for the quality of the products they produce. The *Agromeck* yearbook and *Windhover* literary and arts magazines were both recognized by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association with Crown awards and by the Associated Collegiate Press with a Pacemaker award. *The Independent Weekly* recognized WKNC as the best college radio station in the Triangle and WKNC was one of mtvU's finalists in a national contest. Just as critical, the students produced 155 issues of the daily newspaper, a 376-page yearbook, 21 issues of the weekly newspaper, a literary and arts magazine, kept a 25,000-watt radio station on the air 24/7/365 and produced numerous videos as well as website updates, blogs, Tweets and Facebook status updates.

We successfully produced *The Brick* as it made the transition over the past year from First Year College. Despite the financial drain, it was a positive addition to the *Agromeck* staff's summer duties and with monies donated by University Advancement and advertising sales should at least break even in 2011.

Our staff members continue to contribute to the profession through dozens of presentations at state, regional and national conventions as well as the publication of information regarding best practices for the management of Student Media operations and various other aspects of the mass media. Two new staff members, Tyler Dukes and Brian King, joined the team and immediately began adding to the value of the experience for the students.

Despite continued growth of the program in terms of participating students, we saw a drop in the monies available for student programming due to massive increases in administrative service fees and the costs of benefits. And advertising income for the daily newspaper showed about a 6-percent decline compared to the previous year. We saw no expansion of our physical plant despite documented needs.

Annual Report for 2010-2011

I. Programs

Wolf TV — Our newest medium, *Wolf TV*, took some small steps toward long-term success this year. While not innovative compared to other media outlets, providing a stable video outlet that provided content on its own website (ncsu.edu/wolftv) as well as for other student media outlets was an educational innovation in our operation. Led by Caleb Van Voorhis, student station manager, the staff of *Wolf TV* consistently produced video stories, some journalistic and some entertaining. By the end of the year, the staff was working to codify some of their job descriptions and policies to have a foundation on which future leaders could build.

Agromeck — We continue to receive national praise for our annual publication. The 2010 edition, edited by Michele Chandler and Bryant Robbins, won a Gold Crown from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. The North Carolina College Media Association named it Best in Show at its annual conference and it is a finalist for a Pacemaker from the Associated Collegiate Press. The 2009 edition, edited by John Cooper Elias, won a Pacemaker this academic year and a Gold Crown in the previous year. The *Agromeck* staff works with other yearbook staffs to improve the quality of college yearbooks nationwide. For example, 2010-2011 editor Susannah Brinkley assisted adviser Bradley Wilson in teaching a class at the statewide North Carolina College Media Association on saving the college yearbook.

Subjectively, everyone who picked up a copy of the 2011 book had positive comments. Brinkley worked diligently to build upon the strong foundation of quality yearbooks produced in the last few years and set a high standard that led to constant improvement in reporting, photojournalism, design and coverage. Objectively, the *Agromeck* measures success in several ways, including deadline progress, coverage and distribution. The staff failed to meet all of their deadlines, technically. They missed most deadlines by about two weeks, although the final deadline was submitted on time and the book was delivered right on schedule. The staff even requested additional pages, taking the book from the anticipated 344 pages to 376 pages. Despite the increase in page count, the staff's coverage as measured by the number of people pictured or quoted in the book dropped precipitously. There were 2,613 names in the 2011 book, and at 376 pages, that averages to 6.95 people per page. The 2010 and 2009 editions had an average of 7.57 and 7.34 people per page, respectively.

We printed 1,000 copies of the book using a dedicated \$0.50 in student fee money and distributed for free to graduating seniors. The initial Brickyard distribution on April 19 and subsequent events resulted in about half the books being given out. The other half was distributed at the Scholars Dinner, GLBT Lavender Graduation on May 12, two engineering departmental graduations on May 13 and the large graduation May 14.

- *Deadlines* — The staff failed to meet all of their deadlines, technically. They missed most deadlines by about two weeks. However, the final deadline was submitted on time and the book delivered right on schedule.
 - Aug. 11, 100 pages, 100 pages received in plant Aug. 24
 - Sept. 15, 36 pages, 30 pages received in plant Oct. 1
 - Oct. 13, 36 pages, 40 pages received in plant Oct. 21
 - Nov. 17, 48 pages, 54 pages received in plant Nov. 29
 - Dec. 15, 24 pages, 30 pages received in plant Dec. 22
 - Feb. 2, 52 pages, 45 pages received in plant Feb. 8
 - Feb. 23, 24 pages, 36 pages received in plant March 4
 - March 23, 32 pages, 41 pages received in plant March 23
 - Original plan was for 344 pages. Final was at 376 pages.
- *Coverage* — Despite an increase in page count, the staff's inclusion of people dropped precipitously this year.
 - 2004: 1,491, 384 pages including directory
 - 2005: 3,307, 416 pages including directory
 - 2006: 2,907, 400 pages including directory
 - 2007: 1,379. 272 pages (5.07/page)

- 2008: 1,487, 232 pages (6.40/page)
 - 2009: 2,408, 328 pages (7.34/page)
 - 2010: 2,604, 344 pages (7.57/page)
 - 2011: 2,613, 376 pages (6.95/page)
- *Distribution* — We printed 1,000 copies of the book. We gave away about a dozen copies to senior staff and campus officials. We exchanged about six with other yearbook staffs around the country. However, by the deadline for distributing books on the last day of classes we had about half of the books left in the office. Those books were distributed at the Scholars Dinner, GLBT Lavender Graduation May 12, two engineering departmental graduations on May 13 and the large graduation on May 14.

Technician — After the challenges left by last year's student leadership, the *Technician* staff led by Editor Amanda Wilkins successfully produced all 155 issues of the paper scheduled. The paper was named Best in Show for technicianonline.com and for large-school newspapers from the North Carolina College Media Association. Staff members won seven individual awards from NCCMA as well.

We had eight recipients of the \$1,000 *Technician* grant: Joanna Banegas, Joshua Chappell, Tyler Everett, Jeniece Jamison, Alanna Howard, Jessica Neville, Brooke Shafranek, and Brooke Wallig. This grant has proven successful as a recruitment tool for students with fewer than 36 hours of coursework but has proven less successful at retaining students for four years.

We printed 11,000 copies per day at a cost of about \$2,040 per issue including payroll in a budget of \$316,200.

In most measurable ways, the *Technician* improved this year over last. The staff met deadline 88 percent of the time, the highest non-summer percentage since 2005 and significantly higher than the goal of 80 percent. Of the nine times the staff missed deadline in the spring, news was the last page in 56 percent of the time. In the fall, of the 35 times the staff missed deadline (51 percent of the time), sports was the last page in 34 percent of the time. The staff published more corrections (1.31/issue) and published them online and in print. The staff increased the number of stories per page from an average of 1.31 last fall to 1.34 with an overall average since 2006 of 1.37. This is an area targeted for improvement. With a goal of at least three sources per story, this staff had 2.99, also an area for improvement. Each story had an average of 1.65 students used as sources, meaning students were the majority of the sources in the paper. The most significant area noted for improvement was the inclusion of more ads. This spring, an average of 19.1 percent of the paper was ads with a goal of 29 percent. This meant that news/features had to fill the gap and had 45.2 percent of the paper and a goal of 37 percent. This means we spend more on content while we are bringing in less money. Just in photography alone, the staff spent \$4,600 more than budgeted to fill the space left vacant by ads.

Windhover — Edited by Mollie Mohr, we printed and distributed on time 2,500 copies of the magazine at a cost of \$9.85/book including all budget items. Printing was about \$19,000 of the \$25,000 budget.

NCCMA named the 2010 edition Best in Show. The 2010 edition received an ACP Pacemaker and was also Best of Show at the Louisville national convention. The 2010 also received a Silver Crown from CSPA.

Nubian Message — Edited by Mario Terry, we printed and distributed 20 issues of the paper largely on time. We printed 750 copies of each issue and, of those, about 550 were actually distributed each week at a cost of about \$600/issue or \$0.79/copy.

WKNC — With Tommy Anderson as general manager, WKNC has continued to increase its focus on student impact, both in terms of staff members and listeners. Interest in joining the staff has increased exponentially, leading to more than 100 applicants in the fall and spring semesters. Additionally, a fall 2010 listener survey showed an increase in the number of NCSU students who constitute the station's audience. In the spring of 2007 and fall of 2008 it was estimated about 25 percent of the station's listeners were current NCSU students. Based on the survey, we estimate that WKNC's audience is now around 40 percent current NCSU students.

WKNC continues to reduce its reliance on student fees. By the middle of May, WKNC raised more than \$43,000 of the \$48,000 in non-fee revenue budgeted. Of this, income from WolfPack Sports was about \$14,000, income from TirNaNog Local Beer, Local Band was about \$15,000 and income from benefit concerts such as the Double Barrel Benefit was about \$7,000. Student fee revenues accounted for more than \$10,000 of the station's \$60,000 budget. A loss of any of the non-fee sources would be devastating to the station's 25,000-watt operation.

Finally, the Student Media Board voted to change the general manager's term to coincide with all the other senior leaders instead of changing over on April 1.

WKNC was a top-10 finalist in the mtvU Woodie Awards. The Independent Weekly named WKNC 88.1fm the Best College Radio Station and Michael Jones was a finalist for the Best Radio DJ. In addition, Mike Alston and Kelly Reid were named the Best Radio DJs by the College Broadcasters. Other CBI awards included: Best Regularly Scheduled Program, Mike Alston and Kelly Reid, "First Friday" segment of "Eye on the Triangle"; Finalist for Best Regularly Scheduled Program for "Musicology: Americana" by Matt Gossett and Caitlin Cauley; and Best Student Media Website, wknc.org.

II. Initiatives

The Brick — In 2009, the staff in First Year College approached Student Media staff members about taking over *The Brick*, a publication about NCSU traditions that started as a class project. It was very successful, but due to staff cuts and budget constraints, FYC couldn't continue the project. Student Media viewed this as a positive strategic partnership. Student Media published what is officially the second edition of the publication in the summer of 2010 with Bryant Robbins serving as editor. As a former *Agromeck* editor, he knew the systems and worked closely with Nathan Hardin, *Technician* summer news editor, to research, write, edit and produce the book. Those two Student Media staff members partnered with students on the Student Government Traditions Committee to determine the content and the publication was very well received.

Financially, it was a drain. It cost \$7,021 to print or \$1.40/copy. In the spring, our business staff sold about \$8,000 worth of advertising for the 2011 edition and obtained \$12,000 in funding for two years of printing from University Advancement thanks to the work of Chandler Thompson, the incoming student body president.

SG students distributed them at various "101" classes around campus in the fall semester and this became a good strategic partnership with Student Government, New Student Orientation and various other campus departments.

Recruitment—

- 389 individual students expressed interest in at least one medium during the recruitment period (down slightly from 399 in 2009).
- Reached 226 freshmen during New Student Orientation.
- Reached 28 new transfer students during transfer orientation.
- Reached 55 new graduate students during graduate orientation.
- Reached 80 students of indeterminate class status at Cates Crawl and the Student Media open house.
- Overall, 905 unique contacts were made with 389 students (up from 772 contacts in 2009).
- Although students continue to express interest in multiple media, they generally only join one staff. Photographers may take assignments from multiple media, but usually only maintain staff status for one medium.
- Average media selected per person = 2.32 (up from 1.93 in 2009, 1.85 in 2008, 1.76 in 2007 and 1.32 in 2006)
- 75 individuals attended the Student Media open house, up from 62 in 2009 but still down from 81 individuals in 2008.
- 45 of the 75 individuals who attended the open house expressed interest at a prior recruitment effort (60 percent of open house attendees, up from 52 percent in 2009).
- 22 of the 75 individuals who attended the open house joined a medium's staff (29 percent of open house attendees).
- The number of students contacted by an editor/manager by the Monday following each week's efforts increased from 53 percent in 2009 to 76 percent in 2010. It had been 72 percent in 2007 and 2008.
- All interested students were contacted eventually this year, while only 82 percent were contacted in 2009.
- 11 individuals from Cates Crawl also attended the Student Media Open House (18 percent of all those reached at Cates Crawl, down from 21 percent in 2009).
- 13 of the 26 individuals enrolled in the WKNC training class expressed interest at one of our recruitment efforts, with four attending the open house.
- 45 of the individuals who expressed an interest in Student Media joined the staff (12 percent, the same as in 2009, but down from 14 percent in 2008 and 16 percent in 2007 and 2006)
- 40 of those individuals who expressed an interest were retained (10 percent of total recruited, up from 8 percent in 2009, down from 14 percent in 2007 and 2006 and even with the 10 percent in 2008.)

Recruitment conclusions

- Having a student from the business office compile the initial orientation reports and send a welcome e-mail remains incredibly valuable and time-saving for the professional staff. The initial email also allows invalid e-mail addresses to be corrected before being sent to the student editors.
- According to New Student Orientation, 4,435 students came through the 17 freshman orientation sessions. We made contact with 226, which represents five percent of the incoming class.
- Student Media opted out of recruitment efforts at new student convocation, the Back to School Jam and the Brickyard organization fair, as well as a new event called Welcome Back, Pack! This had no apparent impact on post-orientation recruitment, as our number of contacts was up from 2009. We will continue to center later efforts on Cates Crawl and the Student Media Open House.

Academic Progress — We analyzed the grades and status of the current students on payroll and working as volunteers. As we continue to watch the potential impact of University Regulation 11.55.6 and our internal academic progress policies, here is how Student Media came out for the fall of 2010:

- In the fall, we had 255 students in our records, including volunteers. The October 2010 report included 232 students, representing a gain of 23 students throughout the semester. In the spring, we had 318 staff and volunteers. Of those, 43 are spring 2011 graduates, and 275 are students eligible for rehire. Graduates are excluded from any further statistics.
- There were 182 students (71 percent) with greater than a 3.00 cumulative GPA, fulfilling one of the requirements for membership in the Society for Collegiate Journalists. This is an increase from 67 percent in fall 2009, 61 percent in fall 2008 and 62 percent in fall 2007. In the spring, there were 188 students (68 percent of 275) with greater than a 3.00 cumulative GPA, fulfilling one of the requirements for membership in the Society for Collegiate Journalists
- In the fall, there were 95 students (37 percent) with a greater than a 3.50 GPA for the semester. This represents a steady increase of two to three percent each year since fall 2007. In the spring, 91 (33 percent) had a cumulative GPA of 3.50 or higher.
- There were 24 students (9 percent) with a 4.00 cumulative GPA for the fall semester and 16 (6 percent) with a cumulative GPA of 4.00. In the spring, 15 students (5 percent) had a cumulative GPA of 4.00.
- There were three students with below a 2.00 cumulative GPA in the fall and four in the spring. This is much lower than the seven students in the falls of 2008 and 2007. All three in the fall were first semester freshman. In accordance with our policy, as amended in January 2010, "Such freshmen may, if they desire, be placed on probation for one semester and shall develop a plan in conjunction with their media adviser."
- Of the student leaders who are specifically targeted by the campus-wide policy, four had below a 2.50 for the semester, five had below a 2.50 cumulative and three had a 4.00 for the semester and two maintain a 4.00 cumulative. We had no student leaders in the spring semester below a 2.50.
- *Agromeck* had the highest average cumulative (3.47) and semester (3.34) GPAs. The yearbook staff also had both highest GPAs in fall 2010, spring 2010 and fall 2009.

- The average cumulative GPA of student leaders was a record low 3.12 in fall 2009. This fall, the average cumulative GPA is 3.28. In the spring, the average cumulative GPA of student leaders was 3.38.
- Despite countless requests by both Bradley Wilson and Martha Collins, several *Nubian Message* staff worked on the paper but did not have employee or volunteer paperwork.

III. Diversity

Our Time Out for Diversity study of the *Technician* continued this year. The findings were similar to past years with little progress made in areas identified last year.

IV. Staff

Tyler Dukes joined our staff last summer as the Student Media production assistant, working largely in the *Technician* newsroom from 2-11 p.m. He coordinates continuing education training for all media, provides valuable educational opportunities and helps sustain a culture of constant improvement. Bringing in working professionals also helps Student Media form partnerships with local media outlets.

In addition, Brian King joined us as a systems administrator. His willingness not only to deal with the mundane, but critical, technical issues but to help with the vision and direction of Student Media has helped him to be an immediate asset to our organization. He also serves as adviser to the student webmasters and works closely with the student and consulting engineers at WKNC. He estimates that about 60 percent of his time is spent working with WKNC.

Assistant Coordinator and WKNC adviser Jamie Lynn Gilbert celebrated her fifth-year anniversary with Student Media. She continues to serve as secretary for College Broadcasters, Inc., and was invited to teach about Internet rate cards at College Media Advisers Summer Adviser's Workshop. Gilbert and student program director Kieran Moreira held a session on developing a public affairs program at the fall National College Media Convention.

Martha Collins continued to advise the Society for Collegiate Journalists. Officers of that student group included May Chung, president; Meredith Faggart, vice president; Kathryn Glaser, secretary; Kieran Moreira, fall historian; and Alanna Howard, spring historian. The group had 14 new members this year and 10 other active members. NCSU students and media received 16 awards from SCJ this year.

Coordinator Bradley Wilson, for the fourth year, chaired the North Carolina College Media Association and that organization's conference at Appalachian State University. For the 11th year, he edited the national quarterly magazine of the Journalism Education Association. Student photographer Brent Kitchens authored an article for this magazine, yet another example of how Student Media operations enhance the scholarship of our students. Bradley presented an academic paper at the Western Political Science Association conference in San Antonio on local media agenda setting.

V. Recommendations and concerns for the future

Budget — Our five-year budget plans shows that we will have depleted our excess cash reserve in 2013-2014. This wasn't projected to happen in earlier projections until at least 2014-2015. However, massive increases in the administrative services fees, from \$1,192 in 2008-2009 to \$32,481 for 2011-2012 and increased in full-time staff benefit costs, from \$59,597 in 2008-2009 to \$85,192 in 2011-2012 (with one additional full-time employee), will more rapidly deplete our excess. Through our budget process this year, we planned for a fee increase of \$1 in 2013-2014, another \$2.50 in 2014-2015 and yet another \$1.15 in 2015-2016 just to maintain publications as they are now with no growth.

Expectations — Last year, the College Media Advisers national survey identified two major areas of concern: budget and rising expectations on students. As indicated above, clearly budget is a concern at NCSU as well. However, since we have been good stewards of our money, we have not had to make some of the short-term, rash decisions other college media outlets have had to make. The expectations of students, however, are another matter. Back in 1999, when the *Technician* went daily, students had to produce 155 issues of the paper and that was tough enough. Now they have to produce those same 155 issues, plus maintain a website that must be updated more than just daily even when classes aren't in session. Now they have to maintain the Twitter account and Facebook accounts as well. It's a drain on the student staff not only of the *Technician* but the *Agromeck*, WKNC, *Windhover*, *Nubian Message* and Wolf TV as well. We need to spend some time doing some strategic planning for what the Student Media operation at NCSU will look like in five or 10 years before the budget situation necessitates change.

Administrative reorganization — With a budget crisis at the state level and administrative changes at the campus level, administrative reorganization continues to cause stress, frustration and a feeling of lack of control within the Student Media. The Student Media operation was not at all involved in the Strategic Planning initiatives of the University and the University's Strategic Plan has now been approved by the University. After an IT audit, there continues to be a move to take our systems administrator, paid for with Student Media student fee monies, and move him to be in a pool of Student Affairs IT staff members despite the concerns we voiced. Our request for additional space in Witherspoon to make a home for Wolf TV and desperately needed expansion space for WKNC was denied in part. Discussions continue about our space needs and it appears we will receive some additional space to meet our needs. And while millions of dollars are being spent on Talley Student Center renovations and \$10 million on Health Center renovations, Witherspoon continues to have maintenance problems ranging from continued problems with the heating/cooling and elevator to broken water fountains. Mandates, often at the last-minute after our students have developed their budgets, regarding increased administrative service fee assessments with little or no explanation as to where the monies are going put stress on the financial side of our operation. As part of the provost's plans, entire chains within the Division of Student Affairs are being reorganized. Our full-time and student staff do not feel a part of these discussions or the decisions that will influence the future viability of the organization. This lack of empowerment and lack of influence on the future continues to lead to frustration regarding everything from the physical plant to job security. While we all recognized the positive nature of change, we also recognize that people need to have a voice in their future success.