

MILLER MINUTE

The Newsletter of the A.Q. Miller School of Media and Communication

COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP RECOGNIZED WITH DOZEN AWARDS



K-State's Collegian Media Group publishes the Collegian newspaper, Royal Purple yearbook, and Manhappenin' magazine, all of which garnered accolades at the 2023 National Collegiate Media Convention, organized by The Associated Collegiate Press (ACP) and College Media Association (CMA) in Atlanta this fall.

CMG brought home 13 individual awards for student work produced during the 2022-2023 academic year.

In the Design category, the Collegian's Page Design Chief Zoe Schumacher won First Place for Best Nameplate, and editor-in-chief Carter Schaffer won an Honorable Mention for Best Interactive Graphic. Maggie James won an Honorable Mention for Best Advertising Rate Card. Toby Hammes won an Honorable Mention for Best Sports Game Story. Collegian photojournalist Avery Johnson was awarded an Honorable Mention for Best General News Photo.

"These are nice honors for the staff," CMG Director David Levy said. "They competed against hundreds of entries from around the country and have something to show for their efforts when applying for their first jobs out of college. Employers always want evidence of your work outside of class. The Collegian Media Group provides those opportunities for students across all academic disciplines."

Manhappenin' magazine won two First Place awards. Caroline Reynolds took the nation's top spot for Best Editorial Illustration, and Joscelyne Espinoza won Best Magazine Feature Page Spread. The Royal Purple won three Honorable mentions, including Best Yearbook Page Spread, Best Yearbook Cover, and Best Sports Page Spread. For a full list of awards, visit <https://www.k-state.edu/media-communication/about/news/CMG-ACP-CMA-Awards-2023.html>.

CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Heather Woods, for being named 2023 Outstanding Mentor in Master's Education by the National Communication Association!

Dr. Woods, now A.Q. Miller School's interim director, was recognized for her years of work with graduate students in her previous role as associate director for graduate programs and research. Dr. Woods mentored graduate students, coached them through career and academic transitions, developed orientation and onboarding processes that support student success, secured funding for graduate student professional development opportunities such as conference travel, and developed workshops around maintaining work-life balance, prioritizing mental wellness, writing as a community practice, presenting and publishing public-facing scholarship, and developing a professional digital persona.



Dr. Heather Woods

JOURNAL ARTICLE ON STUDENTS' NEWS HABITS MARKS ONE OF THE FIRST COLLABORATIONS ENABLED BY SCHOOL MERGER

Dr. Sam C. Mwangi, director of the Huck Boyd Center for Community Media, and **Dr. Colene Lind**, director of K-State's Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy, had a research paper accepted for publication in the *Teaching Journalism & Mass Communication Journal*, a peer-reviewed electronic journal focused on teaching. The journal is published by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Their paper is entitled "An Exploration of the News Consumption Habits of College Students: Implications for Journalism Education."

"This is the first research project inspired by the merger between the former A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Department of Communication Studies to form the current A.Q. Miller School of Media and Communication," Dr. Mwangi said. The study's findings have practical implications for how journalism schools train the next generation of storytellers.



Dr. Colene Lind and Dr. Sam Mwangi at the KMAN studios, where they were invited to talk about their work.

A.Q. MILLER SCHOOL FACULTY LEAD COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTED BY USDA AND NBAF GRANT

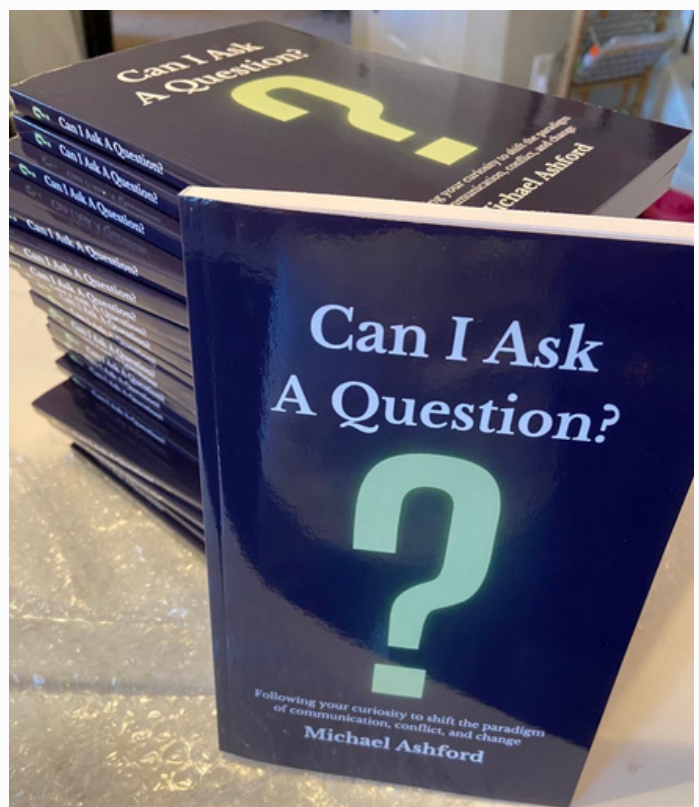
In what could mark the beginning of a multiyear collaboration, **Drs. Raluca Cozma** and **Sean Eddington** serve as co-Principal Investigators in a series of projects funded by a \$158,000 grant from the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF), the nation's only large animal BSL-4 facility, which is housed in Manhattan, KS.

Together with graduate research assistants **Margery Punnett** (master's student in English) and **David Barnhart** (doctoral student in Leadership Communication), the team aims to publish several studies made possible by access granted by NBAF to its communication department, practices, and experiences. One study will interview community opinion leaders and focus on best practices using case studies from NBAF and other high-containment laboratories on the value of building relationships and trust within surrounding communities. Another study will examine strategies for managing mis- and disinformation surrounding high-containment laboratories in transient communities. "We hope our work shines a light on the meaningful and important ways that NBAF engages productively within the communities of Manhattan and advances the School's (and the larger university's) mission of community-engaged communication scholarship that makes a positive and practical contribution to society," Dr. Eddington said.

MASTER'S STUDENT MICHAEL ASHFORD EXAMINES APPROACHES TO CONFLICT COMMUNICATION IN NEW BOOK

Can people change? This question is one **Michael Ashford**, master's student in mass communication, spent years researching and exploring, especially as it relates to people's ability to communicate well with each other when conflict is present. When Michael started his podcast, *The Follow-Up Question*, in Summer 2020, he set out to interview people from different walks of life to uncover stories of real people who navigated hostility or disagreements to successfully co-create new solutions to big problems. "In interview after interview, some common themes emerged regarding the psychology of conflict communication, and as such, my book began to take shape," Michael recalls. The book is titled "Can I Ask a Question" and was published this fall. "My hope is that anyone who wants to become a more nuanced thinker, communicator, and conversationalist will read the book and gain value from it," Michael says.

The book is available at <https://michaelashford.com/caniaskaquestion>, and it will soon be available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.



STUDENTS IN DR. NANCY MUTURI'S STRATEGIC HEALTH COMMUNICATION COURSE GET THEIR WORK PUBLISHED

Dr. Nancy Muturi led and co-authored a study with several graduate students in her MC 750 - Strategic Health Communication course that was accepted for publication in *The Indian Journal of Public Health* this fall.

Titled "[Examining Weight Stigmatization toward Obese Individuals among Nutrition and Dietetic Students using the Attribution Theory](#)," the study used survey to measure the extent of weight bias among dietetics and nutrition students at Kansas State University and investigate its determinants. The analysis revealed that a third of the sample had a negative attitude toward people with obesity, and more than 60 percent of the participants were not satisfied with their body image, which the authors argue is the result of media portrayals of thinness. Even more concerning was that none of the participants had eating competence, on a standard scale that captured eating attitudes, food acceptance, food regulation, and contextual skills. Considering the nutrition and dietetics students' future role in clinical and community settings, the authors urge that weight bias be addressed properly in a systematic manner and propose a health communication campaign plan directed to students. Dr. Muturi is scheduled to teach MC 750 again during summer 2024.



Dr. Nancy Muturi

DR. HUYEN NGUYEN PUBLISHES RESEARCH ON DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION PLANS FOR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS



Dr. Huyen Nguyen's study examining digital subscription plans of 127 U.S. paid community weeklies was published in the latest issue of [Grassroots Editor](#).

While offering valuable recommendations for U.S. newspapers to make informed pricing decisions and grow digital subscription revenues, prior pricing studies and surveys focused primarily on major publications. Little is known about community newspapers' pricing strategies, and Dr. Nguyen addressed this knowledge gap in a study titled "Pricing U.S. community weekly newspapers: An analysis of digital subscription plans." Dr. Nguyen assessed the current optimal price set by weekly newspapers in an effort to help both the papers and their readers make informed pricing and subscribing decisions for the highest potential economic benefits.

The analysis revealed that the majority of weekly newspapers moved away from a unit-pricing approach, but many papers made the mistake of not properly informing potential customers about their pricing menus, causing confusion and concerns about the undisclosed prices. Some even displayed conflicting pricing plan or failed to provide means for readers to subscribe to their services altogether.

Dr. Nguyen points to several strategies for community newspapers to more effectively capture revenue from their digital content, from from simply checking the registration and subscription process to ensure no errors, no failed paywalls, and no conflicting offers, to considering more complicated pricing decisions such as redesigning price structures and introducing price promotions.



Dr. Huyen Nguyen

Dr. Huyen Nguyen has also been invited by the Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) to provide two training sessions on data processing at the annual [NICAR conference](#) in Baltimore, Maryland, March 7-9, 2024. The National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR) is a collaboration between IRE and the Missouri School of Journalism.

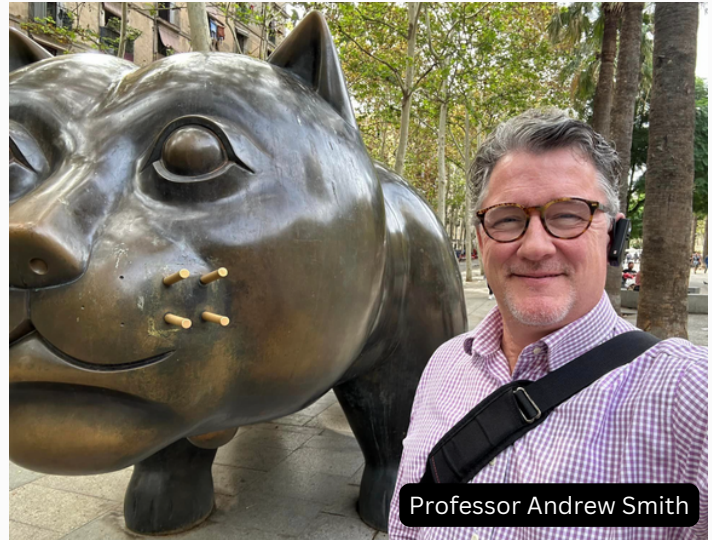


PROFESSOR ANDREW SMITH ATTENDS BARCELONA WORKSHOP ON STUDY-ABROAD EDUCATION APPROACHES

Professor Andrew Smith was selected from nationwide applicants to attend the “Los Cinco Sentidos” (The Five Senses) exclusive workshop in Barcelona, Spain, this fall. The workshop, run by program provider Barcelona SAE (Study Abroad Experience), brought together select study-abroad faculty members from around the United States to spend five days learning about the city as well as discussing the future of education-abroad faculty-led programs.

The focus was on how to use all five senses when discovering new cultures, using Barcelona as a classroom. The attendees talked about how to model these principles and ways to engage students in not only studying abroad but also deciding to take the leap themselves.

Professor Smith also had a chance to check out some of the Barcelona curriculum, sitting in on an intercultural psychology class with current study-abroad students. Professor Smith is using what he learned in Barcelona to start planning for a new study-abroad opportunity for SMC students, tentatively scheduled for the spring of 2026. While in the city, he got a chance to scout out cultural opportunities and make connections with people and places students can use their five senses to discover.



Professor Andrew Smith

K-STATE DEBATE TEAM MEMBERS WIN CEDA TOP PAPER AWARD

Dr. Alex McVey, director of [K-State Debate](#), and **Trevor Turner**, fifth-year Master of Architecture student and member of the debate team, were awarded “Top Paper” by the Cross Examination Debate Association. The award was announced at the National Communication Association Conference (CEDA) in November, where McVey and Turner participated in a panel featuring a variety of new scholarship concerning debate theory and competitive tournament design. Their paper, “Presumption, Performance, and Praxis: Reclaiming Debate as a Site of Freedom,” was recognized for providing “an innovative perspective on new argument trends in intercollegiate cross-examination debate.”

The paper calls for judges and debaters to reexamine how they evaluate performances that are presented within the debate space. “The paper deals with a concept in argumentation theory called ‘presumption’ — much like the presumption of innocence in a courtroom — and offers a critique of the way that teams in debate leverage presumption arguments in debates involving performative styles of argumentation,” Dr. McVey said.



THE THIRD ANNUAL K-STATE SOCIAL MEDIA WEEK TO TAKE PLACE MARCH 4-8

In what has become a signature event for the A.Q. Miller School, K-State Social Media Week (#KStateSMW) has been slated for March 4-8, 2024, and promises to offer programming in a variety of formats, including in-person, online, and hybrid. The Content Creator Fair on March 6 will feature professional influencers and content creators sharing tips on how to become a savvy and creative content producer on social media.

All students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members are invited to attend. Students will be able to register to attend individual events in [K-State OrgCentral](#). The week-long event encourages attendants to explore the opportunities inherent in social media: to stay informed, explore new ideas, express themselves and engage with others in their communities and around the world. The event organizer, **Professor Jana Thomas**, invites all K-State units and organizations to get involved as a special guest, panel member, or workshop host. For details, visit <https://www.k-state.edu/media-communication/about/events/social-media-week.html>.



SMC REPRESENTED AT THE JEA/NSPA CONVENTION IN BOSTON

Last month, **Professor Nick Homburg** and a group of students from SMC and the College of Education traveled to Boston for the JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention. JEA (Journalism Education Association) has been part of the A.Q. Miller School and Kansas State University for decades, having moved its headquarters to Kedzie Hall in 1987. Nick Homburg has been involved with JEA since 2015, when he took the lead to improve our recruiting efforts and build a more substantial presence at the bi-annual conferences that JEA organizes.

“Our objective is to promote Kansas State University to high schools all over the nation and to recruit students to our school,” professor Homburg said. As the lead recruiter and organizer, professor Homburg planned and manned the school’s booth, while students helped with giveaways and shared information about learning and student-media opportunities offered by our four undergraduate programs with interested high schoolers. The K-State students in attendance were **Kelsey Volk**, Senior in Mass Communications; **Ainsley Trunkhill**, Junior in English Education; **Hannah Humes**, Senior in Communication Studies; **Hannah Kipp**, Junior in English and Journalism Education; **Claire Lowry**, Junior in Journalism Education; **Wittney Hammeke**, Junior in News and Sports Media; and **Rayne Rekoske**, Senior in English and Journalism Education. “At this year’s conference we had 197 students stop by our booth for more information on our school,” professor Homburg says, a number that is reminiscent of pre-COVID years.

The next JEA conference will take place in Kansas City in April, when JEA will be celebrating its 100-year anniversary. Having the centennial in “our own back yard” is important, professor Homburg says, because regional high schools that have not been able to attend previous conventions due to lack of travel funds will be able to be there and hear about what our school has to offer. Homburg expects to see numbers between 5000 to 6000 students. “This is a great recruiting opportunity, one where the A.Q. Miller School should be able to really shine,” he added.



FACULTY SENATE APPROVES NEW CERTIFICATE IN STRATEGIC HEALTH COMMUNICATION

An online interdisciplinary graduate certificate that will be administered by the A.Q. Miller School has been approved by the Faculty Senate on December 13, meaning that students will be able to enroll in the new program as early as next year.

Professor Alan Boyer and **Dr. Nancy Muturi** worked with colleagues in the Master of Public Health and the Department of Statistics to propose a 15-credit program that will build advanced knowledge and communications skills to effectively understand, communicate and report about public health issues and events. Students will be equipped with skills to analyze data, create content and effectively communicate to various audiences about public health issues; and credibly deliver public health information to the news media. As recent pandemics have demonstrated, health communication is crucial in every aspect of human life where information, education and behavior change are necessary in disease prevention and people’s health and well-being.

SMC courses MC 750 - Strategic Health Communication, MC 712 - Environmental Communications, and MC 780 - Research Methods in Mass Communication are part of the certificate.