

MARCH 2025

# MILLER MINUTE

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



## K-STATE STUDENTS SWEEP THE KAB COMPETITION

### CONGRATULATIONS

Three SMC assistant professors  
earned promotion  
to associate professor with tenure:

**Dr. Sean Eddington**

**Dr. Anan Wan**

**Dr. Alex McVey**

&

**Jana Thomas**

was named assistant director  
of strategic initiatives

This position aims to advance the school's mission, foster innovation and create new opportunities for students, faculty, the campus community and external stakeholders. It also includes program administration for the recently launched degree in [digital innovation in media](#).

Wildcat Electronic Media took home two thirds of all awards at the Kansas Association of Broadcasters this year.

**Wildcat 91.9** dominated the audio categories among the state colleges, totally sweeping seven categories, or half of all offered, including Best Newscast, Public Affairs/Talk Show program, Commercial/PSA, General News Story, Sportscast, Episodic Entertainment, and Podcast. Wildcat 91.9 student radio stars won an additional two first place awards in Best Feature (master's student **Dawson Wagner**) and On-Air Personality (master's student **Hailey Case**) for nine overall. WEM news director **Andrew Smith** noted that the radio station earned a total of 29 awards out of a possible 35 awards given out, or an astounding 83% of all possible places awarded.

**Channel 8 News** was awarded a total of 15 trophies, about a third of all presented. These include first place in College Newscast for "Channel 8 News" and Video Podcast. Five awards came from the special "MHK All-Day: London Calling", completed on study abroad in spring of 2024 under the guidance of Andrew Smith. [Here](#) is the complete list of winners.

**Wildcat 91.9** was also honored with the #2 position in the **BEA Festival of Arts** in the "Signature Station" award, given to the top radio station in the nation, making it the second ranked station in the country.

In the faculty audio competition, Wildcat 91.9 News Director **Andrew Smith** won the national championship in Long-Form Audio Production: Best of Competition for "A Christmas Carol." This was a production the radio station partnered locally with "The Actors Theatre" to record, which Andrew Smith then produced, edited (music, sound effects, etc.) and we aired on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Awards will be given out in Las Vegas at the BEA convention in April.

# SMC FACULTY AND MASTER'S STUDENTS HEADED TO BEA

The Broadcast Education Association's convention attracts more than 1,300 media faculty members to learn and see the latest advances in the field from the perspectives of educators and professionals. Master's students **Dawson Wagner** and **Landyn Welch** will be two of 400 students who attend the conference each year and will present their research in April in Las Vegas during the Graduate School Showcase:

**Dawson Wagner** - "Gen Z's Social Media Choices in the 2024 Election: The Impact of Platform Owners' Personalities."

**Landyn Welch** - "Get Out Your Phone and Gamble with Me: The Role Visual Senses and Experiences Play on Purchasing Behavior in Online Gambling Advertising."

**Dr. Tom Hallaq** will participate as speaker on two panels on "Defining the Documentary: The Use of AI in Documentaries" and on "The Art of Leading Student-Led Media Projects."

**Andrew Smith**, News Director for Wildcat Electronic Media, will be a panelist in a session titled "Sports Broadcasting Program Showcase." He will also be recognized for Long-Form Audio Production: Best of Competition for "A Christmas Carol."



## MASTER'S STUDENT CHASE R. JORDAN WINS TEACHING AWARD



**Chase R. Jordan**, a second-year master's student in communication studies and public speaking instructor, was awarded the GSC Award for Graduate Student Teaching excellence by the K-State Graduate Student Council. "If passion is the wave that drives teaching, I am its tsunami," Chase said. "I love communication studies and continuously work to emulate the excitement and desire I feel, reflecting that energy to my students." Chase is a strong believer in collaborative learning and dreams to use their teaching skills in a future career in academia.

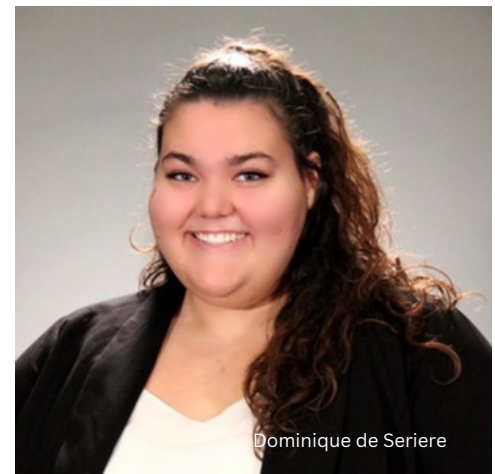
The competitive award, which often goes to doctoral students, comes with a \$500 scholarship and a perpetual plaque engraved with the winner's name that will be displayed in the school until the next award is given.

Chase has since been nominated by Kansas State University to compete for the regional teaching award hosted by the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools at the association's annual meeting in April. A winner will be selected at both the master's and doctoral levels. See more details in the Graduate School [news release](#).

# GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Dominique de Seriere and Philomena Williams

The two graduate coaching assistants for the K-State Speech Team have made big strides in the growing success of Kansas State University's nationally competitive public speaking team. Alongside Director of Forensics Craig Brown, Dominique and Philomena have directly coached five K-Staters to qualify for the American Forensic Association National Speech Tournament across six different public speaking events. But according to these coaches, it isn't just the team's success that is worth celebrating. Dominique says, "I enjoy seeing my students excited—the smiles, the energy! I love being able to contribute to our speech team's sense of community." Philomena adds, "The most enjoyable part for me is watching my students find new joy in their pieces while also helping them hone their craft as public speakers."



Dominique de Seriere



Philomena Williams

### Why did you choose K-State?

**Dominique:** "When looking at where I wanted to get my master's, I really wanted a university with a strong and well-known speech team to coach, as well as a good communication studies department."

**Philomena:** "I chose K-State because the professors here seemed eager to foster my creative and academic growth. They have not let me down in doing that thus far."

### What are your research interests?

**Dominique:** "I do feminist research in sports communication. I am currently working on my thesis that focuses on the Olympic U.S. Women's Rugby player Ilona Maher's negotiation of gender identity as it relates to her performance of femininity while competing on Dancing With The Stars."

**Philomena:** "My research interests are communication surrounding queerness and disability in the academy."

### Any hobbies or fun facts about yourself that you'd like to share?

**Dominique:** "I was a speech competitor for 10 years and actually competed against Philomena."

**Philomena:** "A fun fact about myself is that I was born in Manhattan, though this is my first time living here!"

## SMC REPRESENTED AT THE AEJMC MIDWINTER CONFERENCE



Cozma, Uzoma, and Muturi at University of Oklahoma.

Three SMC faculty members and a master's student in mass communications traveled to Norman, Oklahoma, in early March to present research at the AEJMC Midwinter Conference:

**Raluca Cozma** and **Margery Punnett** (English) - Public engagement at high-containment facilities: Best practices in communicating science and combating misinformation.

**Huyen Nguyen** - U.S. Presidential elections and abnormal returns of media stocks.

**Stanley Uzoma** - Reclaiming Africa: Social media activism on X (formerly Twitter) and the battle against stereotypes.

Angela Zhang (University of Oklahoma), **Raluca Cozma**, & **Nancy Muturi** - How the creation of an onsite communications department changed community perceptions of a high-containment facility.

# SMC STUDENT AMONG HEARST COMPETITION TOP 20 WINNERS

For the third year in a row, one of A.Q. Miller School's students was named among the top 20 in the nation in the prestigious Hearst Journalism Awards Program. Senior **Kyra Case** was listed among the top 20 winners in the 2024 Hearst Innovative Multimedia Competition for her 360VR video published in *The Collegian* about the Dusty Bookshelf bookstore in Manhattan. Titled "Saving Stories," the video was produced in Dr. Huyen Nguyen's MC 341 class with support from the Sunderland Foundation Innovation Lab, which provided Kyra with a 360-degree camera, a powerful computer for processing footage, and a comfortable workspace. The multimedia story can be accessed [here](#).



The winners were selected from 39 entries from 27 schools submitted in the second multimedia competition of the year. The multimedia judges were: Robert Scheer, Deputy Managing Editor for Visuals, Post & Courier; Lauren Frohne, Lead Video Journalist, The Seattle Times; Jim Seida, Producer, NBC News.

## SMC RESEARCH TO BE PRESENTED AT UPCOMING CONFERENCES



The 2025 **International Communication Association (ICA)** conference will be held in Denver in June and will feature the following presentations by Miller School faculty:

- **Huyen Nguyen & Anan Wan:** "Global Magazine Industry: Testing the Ownership Control Model in the Digital Age."
- Angela Zhang, **Raluca Cozma**, **Nancy Muturi**, Katie Pawlosky, Stephanie Jacques, & Jason Walker: "Effective Communication at a High-Containment Facility: How Information Consistency and Sufficiency Affect Knowledge and Community Preparedness for Potential Biological Hazards."



The **D.C. Health Communication Conference (DCHC)** will take place in Virginia in May and will feature research by a second-year master's student in mass communication and her major professor:

- **Karamatu Abdul Malik & Nancy Muturi:** "The Role of Digital Media in Motivating Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Among Teenagers in Ghana."



The **Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)** annual conference will meet April 3-6 in Chicago, and a longitudinal project that compares two years worth of social media data collected from Meltwater will be presented by an SMC professor:

- **Jacob Groshek** - "Terror on X: A Comparative Approach to Examining International Media Coverage of Terrorism on Social Media."

### FALL 2025 GRADUATE COURSE OFFERINGS:



- COMM 710** Introduction to Communication Research Methods (Raluca Cozma)
- COMM 732** Contemporary Rhetorical Theory (Alex McVey)
- COMM 800** Teaching Public Speaking (Darren Epping-Fuentes)
- COMM 845** Approaches to Public/Community Engagement (Sam Mwangi)
- COMM 916** Communication Theories & Engagement (Sean Eddington)
- MC 725** International Communication (Sunha Yeo)
- MC 765** Communication Theory (Nancy Muturi)
- MC 801** Qualitative Research Methods (Katie Olsen)
- MC 840 ZA** Social Media Data Visualization (Jacob Groshek)
- MC 850** Applied Research (Anan Wan)

# DR. ANAN WAN AWARDED COMPETITIVE AAA RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

**Dr. Anan Wan** (PI), along with Co-PI Dr. Weilu Zhang from the University of Kentucky, has been awarded the 2025 American Academy of Advertising (AAA) Research Fellowship Award. Presented at the 2025 AAA Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, on March 8, this highly competitive, double-blind-reviewed grant award recognizes innovative and impactful research in advertising. The funded project, "AI Meets Absurdity: Consumers' Responses to AI-Manipulated Absurd Advertising on Short-Video Social Media," investigates the intersection of AI-driven ad creation and absurd advertising appeals. As short-form videos dominate social media, advertisers are increasingly leveraging AI-generated absurdity, marked by surreal, exaggerated, or illogical elements, to break through the clutter. This research examines how AI manipulation and absurdity influence brand recall, ad attitudes, and purchase intent, while also considering the roles of emotional responses and perceived authenticity. By exploring these dynamics, the study contributes to both advertising theory and industry practice, offering insights into the effectiveness of AI-generated creative strategies. The findings will help advertisers leverage absurdity to enhance consumer engagement while maintaining consumer trust through transparent AI disclosures, ultimately shaping more effective AI-integrated advertising approaches.



Additionally, Dr. Wan recently organized and moderated the special topics session, "Expanding Horizons: Integrating Global Engagement in Advertising Education," at the 2025 American Academy of Advertising Annual Conference, held March 6–9 in Pittsburgh, PA. Co-organized with Dr. Sydney Chinchanchokchai (University of Akron) and Dr. Faye Yang (Grand Valley State University), this panel brought together experts in advertising and marketing education to discuss innovative approaches to internationalizing advertising curricula, including study abroad programs, virtual global exchanges, and industry collaborations. The session highlighted best practices and strategies for preparing students to navigate the global advertising landscape.

## #KSTATESMW PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

K-State Social Media Week, an A.Q. Miller School signature annual event organized by professor of practice and assistant director for strategic initiatives **Jana Thomas** in collaboration with K-State Division of Academic Success and Student Affairs will take place April 7 - 10. The fourth annual event promises a variety of sessions to benefit students and scholars across campus. To view event details and to register, visit the event website at [k-state.edu/socialmediaweek](https://k-state.edu/socialmediaweek).

### MONDAY, APRIL 7

**K-State Social Media Management Certificate Information Session** Hosted by the A.Q. Miller School of Media and Communication.  
12 - 1 p.m., online via Zoom.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 8

**From Meme to Mainstream: How Pop-Tarts Won the Internet (Case Study)** Featuring Art Director Yasmine Nur with Weber Shandwick.  
Hosted by K-State's Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and Ad Club.  
9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m., online via Zoom.

**Level Up on LinkedIn: Build Your Profile, Expand Your Network (Workshop)** Hosted by the K-State Career Center.  
3 p.m. - 4 p.m., Wildcat Chamber in the Student Union.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9

**Ag Accuracy: Addressing Misinformation in the Digital Age (Panel Discussion)**  
Hosted by K-State's Department of Communications and Agricultural Education.  
10 a.m. - 11 a.m., McVay Family Town Hall in the Leadership Studies Building and online via Zoom.

**Behind the Screens: Students Powering Campus Social Media (Panel Discussion)** Hosted by the K-State Career Center.  
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Wildcat Chamber in the Student Union.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 10

**Social Media, The Law, and First Amendment Rights (Panel Discussion)**  
Hosted by K-State Pre-Law, the Institute for Civil Discourse and Democracy (ICDD), and the Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media.  
9 a.m. - 10 a.m., online via Zoom.

**Teaching in the Digital Age: Innovations with Digital and Social Media (Discussion and Demonstration)**  
Hosted by the A.Q. Miller School of Media and Communication, the College of Education, and the Digital Media for Educators Graduate Certificate.  
12 - 1 p.m., online via Zoom.



# DR. JACOB GROSHEK INVITED AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT NFU

SMC Associate Professor and Ross Beach Chair for Emerging Media **Dr. Jacob Groshek** was invited to give a keynote presentation on “Strengthening Rural Voices in a Changing Media Landscape” for the National Farmers Union (NFU) at their convention in Oklahoma City, March 9-11. For this presentation, Dr. Groshek worked with co-author Todd Vogts (Ph.D., K-State Leadership Communication, 2023) to share findings from their upcoming book *Rural and Radical: How “Misinformation Finds Them” and Hybrid Media Polarizes American Politics* in discussing the challenges farmers and their communities face in today’s rapidly changing media environment.

Dr. Groshek also shares that the Meltwater subscription provided via K-State’s AI + Media Institute now includes coverage of Tik Tok. “Any faculty or student from A.Q. Miller is welcome to take advantage of this resource at no cost,” Dr. Groshek says. Folks are encouraged to simply reach out to him via email at [groshek@ksu.edu](mailto:groshek@ksu.edu) to receive unrestricted login credentials and access to literally hundreds of millions of posts. More information about the Tik Tok integration with Meltwater is available [here](#).



## DR. RALUCA COZMA PUBLISHES RESEARCH ON WAR JOURNALISM

**Dr. Raluca Cozma** had research conducted during her recent sabbatical leave accepted for publication in the *Electronic News* journal. Titled “Comparing Headlines during Conflict: War and Peace Journalism in the AP and QNA Coverage of the Israel-Gaza Conflict,” the study was co-authored with Dr. Claudia Kozman (Northwestern University in Qatar).

Dr. Cozma’s work on foreign news was also published in the second edition of Global Journalism: Understanding Media World Systems, edited by Dr. Daniela Dimitrova (Iowa State University). Her chapter, co-authored with Ph.D. student Teodora Trifonova (Missouri School of Journalism) is titled “Covering International Conflicts and Crises.”

Dr. Cozma has also accepted an invitation to join the editorial board of the discipline’s flagship journal, Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly.



## THE K-STATE DEBATE TEAM CELEBRATES TWO MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The K-State Debate team recently qualified two teams (**Caitlin Sand / Rachel Sum**, and **Lillian Ardis / Taryn Day**) for the National Debate Tournament to take place in Spokane, Washington, at Gonzaga University in early April. NDT debate is fast, technical, research-oriented policy debate. “This is the first time since 2016 we have had two teams represented at the NDT, and we believe it is the first time in program history we’ve qualified two teams out of D3 Districts for the NDT,” said **Dr. Alex McVey**, Director of K-State Debate.

The team also just attended the Cross Examination Debate Association National Tournament, and the teams of **Caitlin Sand / Rachel Sum** and **Cody Spurlock / Dan Robertson** both finished as double-octafinalists.

## SMC COLLOQUIUM TO RESUME IN APRIL

**Dr. Sam Mwangi** will be coordinating a new series of colloquia meant to introduce SMC graduate students and faculty to each other and to share opportunities available to our scholarly community on campus and beyond. The April 16 colloquium (2:30 p.m., Nichols Hall 126) will feature research presentations by master’s students and faculty members, and the April 30 colloquium will focus on the transition from graduate school to the workforce.

**Miller Minute editor:**  
Raluca Cozma