

MAY 2024

MILLER MINUTE

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



COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP SWEEPS STATE AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS

On April 26, the A.Q. Miller School celebrated student achievements from the past academic year and awarded \$233,000 in scholarships to continuing Media and Communication students.

Dr. Colene Lind led the Scholarship Committee and coordinated the scholarship application review process this year. "Thanks to the generosity of donors and student commitment to engagement and academic excellence, we awarded more than \$230,000 in scholarships to our students," Dr. Lind said. "This demonstrates a very significant commitment to making K-State education more accessible."

Alumni giving makes the Miller School's merit-based and need-based scholarship program one of the largest funders of education in K-State's College of Arts and Sciences.

Students who publish The Collegian newspaper, Royal Purple yearbook and Manhappenin' magazine won 31 awards in 19 categories at this year's Kansas Collegiate Media conference, April 21-22. This includes the Collegian Media Group's advertising and marketing team.

Among highlights, **Meredith McCalmon**, The Collegian newspaper's news desk editor, won second place for Journalist of the Year.

Maddy Daniels, Manhappenin' magazine writer, won first place for Profile Feature Story; and **Kaitlynn Faber**, The Collegian's arts and culture editor, won first place and an honorable mention for Feature Writing.

In the category of Yearbook and Magazine Page Spread, **Joscelyne Espinoza** won first place.

Maggie James, Collegian Media Group's advertising and marketing creative team member, won first place for Best Advertising Design.

Collegian Media Group students won first place in several other categories, and The Collegian won second place in the All-Kansas competition for Best Newspaper, which includes print and online. For a complete list of awards that CMG students brought home, visit <https://www.k-state.edu/today/announcement/?id=96818>.

"Our students major in so many academic disciplines," said CMG director **David Levy**. "Those who don't major in journalism know the value of the transferable skills that the Collegian Media Group offers. All students are invited to join CMG and begin building their portfolios and career paths."

MILLER SCHOOL STUDENT WINS COMPETITIVE HEARST AWARD

A.Q. Miller School senior **Madison Neal** won 7th place in the Multimedia II Innovative Journalism Competition of the 2023-2024 Hearst Journalism Awards, which are regarded as the Pulitzers of college media. This is the best placement for a K-State student in the past decade.

Madi competed with 47 entrants from 34 schools of journalism across the country. She completed her project with an interactive VR experience. "This experience is called Sustainability Lifestyle. Users of this experience will portray a hiker who is hiking through one of the U.S. National Parks," Madi explained. "During this experience, they will learn more about sustainability and living a sustainable lifestyle. Users can do this by talking to the park Ranger in the yellow shirt or by using the external links and videos. There is also a short quiz that users can take to see how much they have learned through this experience." Link to the project: <https://wvr.li/hqrvv1>. Madi used a computer in the K-State Innovation Lab to complete her work.



WILDCAT ELECTRONIC MEDIA WIN PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARDS



K-State students and faculty were recognized at the 2024 BEA Awards in Las Vegas on April 15. BEA's Festival of Media Arts competition had almost 1,900 entries from more than 300 schools across the country.

Master's student **Dawson Wagner** won first place in the country for the best long-form sports feature for his behind-the-scenes look at how a Big 12 Championship happens. The last time a student in our program won a BEA award was in 2016. **Chase Johnson** won second place for e-sports coverage.

The late **Dr. Ian Punnett** was recognized with the award of excellence for sports radio intro and PSA. He, along with **Negil McPherson**, also won Best of Competition for short form production.

Drs. **Tom Hallaq** and **Nikhil Moro** presented research papers and served as panelists in several sessions at the BEA conference, and both were recognized with top paper awards in the Interactive Media & Emerging Technologies and the Law & Policy divisions, respectively.

DRS. KATIE OLSEN AND DANI LAGREE PUBLISH RESEARCH ABOUT THE "GREAT DISCONTENT" AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS IT

Today's workplace experience has been significantly disrupted by the pandemic, new expectations for how and where employees work, and the onslaught of layoffs in 2023, leading to a phenomenon called the "Great Discontent" where employees are dissatisfied with their jobs, see limited opportunities for career growth and are actively looking for new roles.

Drs. Danielle LaGree and **Katie Olsen** conducted a survey that measured the perceptions and experiences of full-time U.S. workers across a variety of industries and workplace arrangements (hybrid, in-office, and fully-remote). Study findings point to a need for leaders to prioritize developing 'employability culture,' by investing in upskilling and reskilling their employees to be more adaptable to changing organizational demands and equipping them to contribute to the organization cross-functionally.

"This research is important because employee expectations of their leaders and the workplace have drastically shifted, especially among Gen Z who want to be supported as they continue to hone their skills and develop their career paths, and among millennials establishing themselves as organizational leaders," Dr. LaGree said. "This study is an extension of our research program that addresses organizational communication and leadership strategies aimed to support employees' career growth and paths to promotion," Dr. Olsen said. "This topic is especially pertinent in today's workplace environment where leaders must proactively build a robust talent pipeline to encourage employee retention and advancement." Titled "Combatting the 'great discontent': The impact of employability culture and leadership empowerment on career growth, loyalty and satisfaction," the study was co-authored with Alec Tefertiller and Rosalynn Vasquez (Baylor University) and was published in *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*. For the full paper, visit: <https://hdl.handle.net/2097/44133>.

WILDCAT ELECTRONIC MEDIA DOMINATE AT KAB AWARDS

Wildcat Electronic Media students who work at student-run Wildcat 91.9 and Channel 8 News brought home 40 awards from the 2024 KAB Student Awards on April 23, more than any other university in the state. “We took home 57% of ALL awards!” Channel 8 News Director and Wildcat 91.9 Interim Chief Operating Officer **Andrew Smith** said. “A great day to rub shoulders with some professionals and to take home the hardware!”

Channel 8 News won Top Newscast in the state and Wildcat 91.9's **The Morning Mix-up** won Top Public Affairs/Talk Show Program. Students **Dawson Wagner**, **Breanna Palmer**, and **Jon Grove** won first place in Best Audio Newscast for their live coverage of the Kansas City Chiefs Rally shooting. **Hannah Whetstone** and **JP Cardenas** won first place for sports feature. Other first-place winners included **Adrian Holguin**, **Jimmy Coffman**, and **Nate Lowen** for KSU Football Post-game; **Jon Grove** for top radio personality; **Adolfo Blanco** for the Dungeons and Dragons Radio Show; **Adrian Holguin** for top color commentator; and **Hailey Case** and **Lanie Henry** for top podcast. The complete list of KAB Student Awards can be found here: <https://kab.net/events/awards/2024-student-award-winners/>.

Earlier in March, Wildcat Electronic Media also brought back two awards from the **Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Awards**. K-State students were finalists in 16 categories this year. Master's student **Kolby Van Camp** won first place for Graduate Advisor of the Year, and **Jacob Hall** won best sports report for “Opera play-by-play: K-State Student Combines Two Passions.” For a complete list of finalists and winners, visit <https://www.ibsradio.org/awards>.



NINE SMC STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO KAPPA TAU ALPHA



The adviser and founding member of the K-State Louise Benjamin Chapter of Kappa Tau Alpha, **Dr. Raluca Cozma**, and KTA member **Dr. Katie Olsen**, presided over the 2024 initiation ceremony for the journalism and mass communication honor society on April 26 at the school's end-of-year celebration. Kappa Tau Alpha was founded at the University of Missouri in 1910 to form a bond of union among students of outstanding achievement in the leading schools of journalism around the country. “Only the top 10 percent of graduate students and undergraduate seniors earn invitations to become members of the K-State chapter,” Dr. Cozma said. The following students earned lifetime membership into Kappa Tau Alpha:

Janvi Aggarwal
Michael Ashford
Lauren Renee Cannon
Maria Paula Cardozo Baquero
Gwyneth Davidson
Marika Davis
Macey Franko
Julia Horn
Madeline Willson

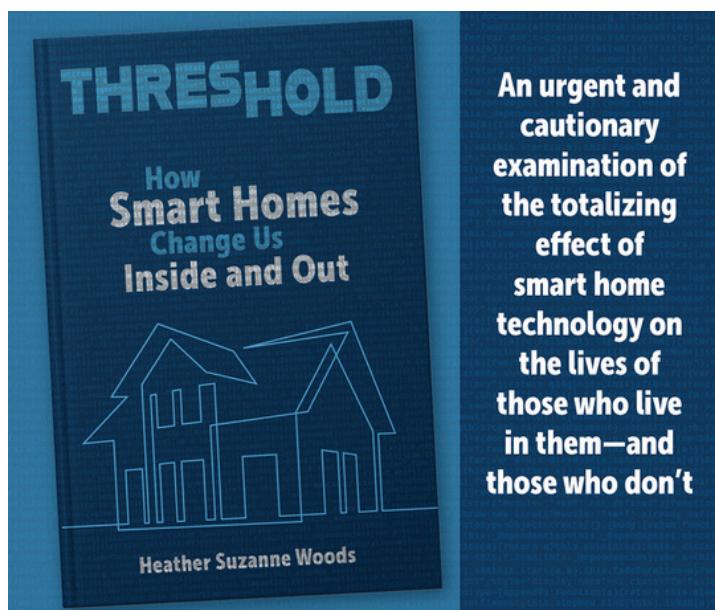
Senior **Madeline Willson** was awarded the KTA Top Scholar Award for maintaining a perfect GPA while producing several conference papers as an undergraduate student. Some of her accomplishments were featured in previous issues of Miller Minute. This summer, **Dr. Raluca Cozma** is poised to become the president of the national honor society for the next two years. She served as vice-president for the past two years.

DR. HEATHER WOODS PUBLISHES BOOK ON SMART HOMES

Dr. Heather Woods' latest book, Threshold: How Smart Homes Change Us Inside and Out, is now available for purchase in ebook, hardcover, and paperback. "Soon, it will be available in audiobook format, which I hope increases its accessibility," Dr. Woods said. The book is grounded in rhetorical theory but is written for anyone who lives in or is curious about smart homes and the impact of their quick proliferation on public or private life - be it homeowners, policymakers, technology enthusiasts, or scholars.

The book recounts how smart homes arose and predicts the trajectory of their future form. It shows how this technology may extract a cost in our attention, money, and privacy.

Dr. Woods pulls back the curtain on the technology, probes who is in control, and questions whether a home can be too smart. She reveals how smart homes incentivize ubiquitous computing as a daily practice, priming smart home occupants for permanent transactional existence largely controlled by corporate interests.



ONLINE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN STRATEGIC HEALTH COMMUNICATION LAUNCHES THIS FALL

The interdisciplinary 15-hour certificate, made possible by a collaboration between the Miller School and the Master of Public Health program in the College of Veterinary Medicine, will equip learners with skills to analyze data, design strategic plans, create content and effectively communicate to various audiences about public health issues to improve and enrich personal and community behaviors and public health practices.

Nancy Muturi and **Alan Boyer** envisioned and designed the program for working professionals in public health and hospital administration, health care, environmental communication, public relations, research, media, government and many others as well as graduate students. Learners can choose from two pathways to an advanced degree: a master's in mass communications or a master's in public health.

JMLE CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of Media Law & Ethics (ISSN 1940-9389), which is published by the A.Q. Miller School, invites theoretical and analytical manuscripts (6,000-8,000 words) that advance the understanding of media law and ethics in society, but they must focus on media law, policy or ethics. All theoretical perspectives are welcome. All manuscripts undergo blind peer review.

Past issues have published articles in disinformation, social media influencing, defamation, privacy, copyright, censorship, licensing, indecency, media access, reporters' privilege, news accuracy, bias, rule of law, and media literacy. Submissions in these and similar areas that explore legal, policy, and ethical issues facing the media are welcome. Access to JMLE is available to the public online at no charge.

Inquiries and manuscripts should be directed to the JMLE editor, **Dr. Nikhil Moro**, at nmoro@ksu.edu.

DR. COLENE LIND PRESENTS RESEARCH AND COORDINATES SERIES ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND PROCESSES

Dr. Colene Lind presented a paper at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, April 4 - 7, titled "In-District Meetings and the Language of Democratic Deference." The paper demonstrates that congressional town halls can be productive or damaging to democratic norms and citizen-leader relations, depending on how members of congress address their constituents.

This spring, the school's Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy (ICDD), led by **Dr. Colene Lind**, and the Political Science department have hosted a series of informal talks on election themes to encourage students and community members to learn from experts and each other about voting. The series, "Voting is Social," addressed topics such as transfer of power post-election and voter fraud myths and reality. The series emphasized that informed democratic participation requires both quality information from experts and an network of peers with which to have discussions. Held at local bars and restaurants, political science professors addressed topics and answered questions on polarizing topics in a relaxed setting.



DRS. TODD VOGTS AND JACOB GROSHEK TO AUTHOR BOOK ON MISINFORMATION AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION IN THE MIDWEST

Misinformation has permeated the hybrid media ecosystem and polarized American politics, which has already begun to chip away at the foundations of democracy by preventing fair and informed debate. The result thus far has led to an erosion of truth in reporting that divides, rather than unifies, the citizenry. **Dr. Todd Vogts** (Assistant Professor of Media & Department Co-Chair, Sterling College), who recently completed his doctorate in Leadership Communication at K-State, and his dissertation adviser, **Dr. Jacob Groshek**, have signed a book contract with Peter Lang for their manuscript titled "Rural and radical: How hybrid media polarizes American politics and what to do about it." The book uses survey and social media data research to examine how misinformation seeps into communities and explains why people believe and propagate it, particularly in rural America, which has become sharply divided from coastal and urban areas.

"With the 2024 election hinging on truth versus misinformation, this book highlights the vital importance of our hybrid media system and the role it plays in bringing constituents together as well as the mechanisms by which American democracy can be fractured and polarized," Dr. Groshek said. "Here we examine the myth of filter bubbles and the impact of fake news in the heartland of the United States with suggestions for how to understand and improve civil political engagement."

In a systematic but approachable synopsis, the book, to be published next year, unpacks these complex questions by exploring attitudes and beliefs prevalent in red-state heartland America. Through research focused on the rural Midwest, it becomes clear that partisan and biased media outlets fuel a growing distrust of media and political systems. By understanding how misinformation is being cultivated and its impact, the book will provide valuable insights and best practices not just for the Midwest but for the function of American democracy.



SAM MWANGI PUBLISHES JOURNAL ARTICLE ON COMMUNITY MEDIA



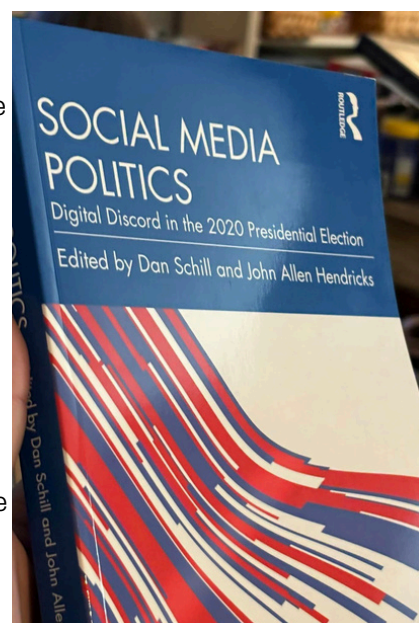
A research paper titled "Open-Source Media Project: Community Attitudes After Five-Year Organizational Evolution," authored by **Dr. Sam C. Mwangi**, together with professors emeriti **Steve Smethers** and **Bonnie Bressers**, has been accepted for publication by the Newspaper Research Journal.

The paper is a culmination of 10 years of research during which the researchers have tracked and studied a community media center in Greensburg, Kansas, documenting the role played by volunteers, its partnership with local high school journalism students and the community's response to its participatory journalism approach. In this latest installment, the researchers document the gradual evolution of the media center from its initial focus and the community's attitude to that evolution.

RALUCA COZMA PUBLISHES RESEARCH ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The 2020 presidential election campaign coincided with a once-in-a-century global pandemic during which voters relied on social media to organize and structure their lives. According to deliberative democracy theory, democracy depends on citizen political knowledge and participation as well as a healthy media system. **Dr. Raluca Cozma**, together with Dr. Alec Tefertiller (Baylor University) analyzed data from a national, cross-sectional survey conducted online after the U.S. presidential primaries in July 2020 to better understand how social media use influenced political participation and political knowledge during this time of increased social media dependence.

According to the results, increased social media use was associated with a decrease in political knowledge but an increase in political participation. In addition, the results examined the influence of social media political talk and perceived opinion leadership on knowledge and participation. "The findings show that media reportaires and people's news diets have important implications for deliberative democracy," Dr. Cozma said. The study, titled "Blame the Cobwebs or the Spiders? The Impact of Social Media Use on Political Knowledge and Political Participation," was published as a chapter in the book "Social Media Politics Digital Discord in the 2020 Presidential Election" edited by Dan Schill and John Allen Hendricks (2024).



KAB ESTABLISHES THE DR. IAN PUNNETT MEDIA EDUCATOR AWARD



The Kansas Association of Broadcasters (KAB) announced the creation of the "KAB Dr. Ian Punnett Media Educator Award," an annual recognition to honor exceptional educators in Kansas who have significantly impacted their students and fostered a passion for media careers. This prestigious award will be given each year to one outstanding educator and commemorates the distinguished contributions of the late **Dr. Ian Punnett**, a KAB Hall of Famer.

Dr. Punnett was the recipient of the inaugural award, awarded posthumously. The new award seeks to celebrate high-school or college educators who embody Punnett's spirit of excellence in media education. Recipients will be selected based on their contributions to media education, their profound impact on students, innovative teaching methods, and unwavering commitment to excellence in the field.

Each year, the recipient of the award will be announced and honored at the KAB Student Broadcast & Sports Seminar, where their outstanding achievements will be celebrated. Information on how to apply for the 2025 Dr. Ian Punnett Media Educator Award will be announced this fall.

In honoring the memory of Dr. Ian Punnett with this inaugural award, KAB pays homage to a visionary educator whose impact continues to inspire. As the award becomes a symbol of excellence in media education, it reaffirms the importance of nurturing passion and talent in the next generation of media professionals.



SMC FACULTY HEADED TO THE ICA CONFERENCE THIS SUMMER

The 2024 International Communication Association conference will take place in Gold Coast, Australia, June 21-24, and will feature several presentations by SMC faculty:

Nikhil Moro - Defamation Suits and the Chilling Effect of Propaganda

Nancy Muturi & Angela Zhang - Does Religiosity Matter? Examining Interpersonal Communication Influence on Self-Protective Behavior Against Communicable Diseases

Huyen Nguyen - On Considering Effects of Common Institutional Ownership on Media Competition and Innovation at the Regional Scale

Justin F. Willett, **Danielle LaGree**, Ben R. Warner, Brian Houston, & Margaret Duffy - Flourishing With Flexibility: Leader Communicative Support of Flexible Work Arrangements Enhances Employee Engagement and Well-Being.

Newsletter edited by Raluca Cozma

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD WINNERS!

Nancy Goulden Teaching Award
Monica Reeves

Schenck-Hamlin
Graduate Research Award
Hannah Phelps

Charles Griffin
Graduate Leadership Award
Chase Jordan



Professor Darren Epping-Fuentes, Assistant Director for Instructional Excellence, and **Dr. Sean Eddington**, Associate Director for Graduate Studies, presented the students with their awards at the school's end-of-year celebration on April 26.