UPDATE

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A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Reasons to Celebrate
the director’s word

Every once in a while a program and individuals within a program experience a sea of change which profoundly affects its future in both exciting but uncertain ways.

That time is here for the Miller School as some of our most valuable and productive faculty members are moving on, and we struggle to hire new people. I stress hire because we cannot replace the ones who are leaving including Professors Fred Brock, Hyun Seung Jin, Linda Puntney and Stacy Neumann.

Update Magazine is changing, too. After 34 years, as a primarily print publication, Update will have its biggest presence online. You’ll see and hear the rest of my message at jmcupdate.wordpress.com. But that’s not all. In addition to the five stories you find in the print version, you’ll find more than 30 others, blogs from the magazine staff, slideshows and video. The site is interactive and you can tell us and all of our alumni what you’re doing and where you are.

Enjoy this print version of Update but for the rest of the story join us as we change online.

Angela Powers

Hurtin’ for Haiti

Within 48 hours after the Haiti earthquake, Kate Conradt, (public relations, 1986), traveled there with Save the Children to aid children and families. Conradt served as an on-the-ground correspondent to global media,

Oh, Joye

Joye Gordon, associate professor, traveled to India to prepare for K-State’s South Asian Studies program.

Back from the Emmys

Herbie Teope, creator and co-host of the Time Warner Cable and Metro Sports program “Fantasy Huddle,” received an Emmy award in October. Teope plans to return to the Miller School this summer to complete his degree in print journalism.

For the first time Update will feature stories only available online. Read about the undergraduate job placement and check out Miller School internships. Dean Spooner discusses the challenges the College of Arts and Sciences faces and Fred Brock says goodbye after six years at K-State. A class works on an advertising campaign for Tallgrass Brewery while students’ work is showcased at Hot Career Night in Kansas City. An Honors reception is held to award scholarships for 2010-2011, K-State wins 53 awards at the Kansas Association of Broadcasting competition and a team of six students is awarded $230,000 as a part of the Knight News Challenge. Salina Journal publisher, Tom Bell, discusses the future of newspapers. And finally we travel to Wichita to hear from an alumna, Amy DeVait, who received inspiration from her Miller School mentors. Check them all out online at jmcupdate.wordpress.com.

Anywhere you see this icon, click over to our website for expanded coverage of the story.
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jmcupdate.wordpress.com
Angela Powers was invited by the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait to speak about the future of journalism and mass communications as a part of the embassy's Cultural/Journalism Exchange Program to promote peace and understanding in the region.

“For us to be prepared for and have an understanding of conflict situations, it’s important for us to enlighten ourselves,” Powers said. “This visit provided enlightenment and understanding of Kuwait which I promised to share when I returned. It was an honor to be invited by the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait to speak about the future of journalism as a part of the U.S. State Department’s Cultural/Journalism Exchange Program.

“It was also interesting to observe how an alumna of our master’s program, Ali Dashti, who is a Kuwait citizen, is putting into good practice at the Gulf University of Science and Technology the principles he learned here in Kansas.”
Kuwait, a small Western Asian country between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, is changing its culture and government policies to give its citizens more freedom of speech and press. Kuwait is pouring money into journalism and mass communications education and facilities. While this Middle Eastern country is surrounded by conflict, the people of Kuwait are grateful to the U.S. for liberating it from Iraq and causing the downfall of Saddam Hussein.

Powers visited Kuwait City, the political and economic capital of Kuwait. With the world’s fifth largest oil reserves, petroleum accounts for nearly 95 percent of export revenues and 80 percent of government income, making Kuwait the 11th richest country in the world per capita.

Powers’ first lecture was held at Kuwait University, a lavish and conservative institution. Her lecture addressed the changes in news media and public relations.

“Most of the students at Kuwait University in media are majoring in public relations,” Powers said. “As the professor informed me, it is a more acceptable field than journalism for more conservative families.” Despite increasing conservatism in Kuwait, media has expanded considerably. Kuwait has 17 daily newspapers, 14 written in Arabic and three written in English, which range in political and ideological leanings.

“The press is generally self-censoring here,” Powers said. “Lebanon and Kuwait are the freest media in the Middle East. A law was passed in 2006 that allowed them to expand the newspaper market and allow private satellite companies more freedom, but the government is trying to pull back on that freedom.”

Many of these newspapers started after the communication law changed in 2006.

“Ten years ago we only had five newspapers in Kuwait,” said Saif Alazemi, sophomore in mass communications and Kuwaiti exchange student. “They were so monitored that a lot of Kuwaiti journalists thought all newspapers were the same.”

If these new newspapers are not profitable, owners are so committed to getting out alternative viewpoints they continue to fund them at a loss, Powers said. However, Alazemi has found some downsides to both the method of the freedom of press and personally owned newspapers.

“Media now is more free, especially when it comes to violations of the government and members of the royal family, but the problem with the laws in Kuwait is that it doesn’t give people total freedom of speech because you can get sued for saying your opinion and even go to jail,” Alazemi said. “Also, newspapers express the thoughts of the owner and its ideas, so they don’t really deal professionally with the news, which is very depressing.”

During Powers’ trip to Kuwait her group was invited to a Diwaniya, a gathering at the home of a prominent person, and in this case the host was the former Minister of Culture.

“Diwaniya is traditionally for men only, so this one of mixed gender was rare,” Powers said. “The purpose is to have media and high-ranking people gather to talk about social issues. So I was invited to say a few words about my visit and about stereotypes in the media.”

The next day Powers was invited to the headquarters of Al Rai, a new commercial TV station.

“It was the most impressive TV facility I have ever seen with numerous state-of-the-art studios and equipment,” Powers said. “Once again, the TV station has yet to make a profit, but the owners are committed to sustaining productions.”

While TV stations in Kuwait self-censor discussions criticizing the Emir, a military title similar to general or commander, and religion, they do not censor violence. TV news will regularly show people dead in the streets.

Powers’ two final university visits were made to both the most progressive university and the most conservative all-girl university in Kuwait.

Gulf University of Science and Technology is a modern university with a Department of Mass Communications which offers more than 50 courses ranging from history of media to digital animation. Powers describes the facility as “gorgeous and modern” and the students similar to U.S. students and representing a variety of countries.

The American Academy Institute for Science and Technology, located in a rural area of Kuwait, is a conservative, all-female community college. The purpose of Powers’ visit to the university was to address the topic of women in traditionally male careers.

“The girls wearing the conservative Muslim cloak and head coverings were interested in leadership and freedom,” Powers said. “They want to make a difference. Women were able to vote and run for office for the first time in June 2006, however they were also afraid of liberalization and concerned about the negative consequences.”

On March 10, Powers made her final stop at the U.S. Embassy’s Independence Day celebration.

“The trip was invaluable because they were so open and hospitable and willing to share ideas and opinions,” Powers said. “They want strong affiliations with our country. It’s up to us to help cultivate those relationships in a region that is vital to our standard of living and our country.”

As one further reminder of a shrinking world, sitting in a coffee shop at the Kuwait International Airport, Powers saw a woman with a large KU bag covered in Jayhawks. The Lawrence woman said she and her husband had lived in Kuwait and worked for Chevron for the past five years. While the connections between this Middle Eastern country and the U.S. may seem few and far between to some citizens, small reminders such as this prove it’s a small world after all.

This visit provided enlightenment and understanding of Kuwait which I promised to share when I returned. — Angela Powers
About 30 journalism and public relations students, professors and professionals gathered in a room and role-played through a scenario in which K-State's campus is thrust into a state of emergency — a potentially volatile situation.

These two groups, journalists and PR officials, work closely, but often adversely in the professional world, creating a tense relationship — one that was evident during the exercise.

"If there are any journalists in the room who are feeling frustrated by the statement he just made, it is because that's what PR people do," said Kimetris Baltrip, a Journalism professor, about a PR spokesman's statement during the scenario. "PR people are very good at frustrating journalists."

This tension between the two groups became a theme during the event, a tabletop exercise, which was the capstone event at K-State's Readiness Communication Conference in March. During the exercise participants were given information about an emergency scenario and discussed how they would respond as a journalist or PR official.

Deborah Potter, president and executive director of NewsLab, a nonprofit journalism resource in Washington D.C., and the keynote speaker at the conference, participated in the event.

"Everyone is usually very polite at these exercises, but there is a lot of tension," Potter said, who has participated in many other similar exercises across the country.

In the scenario K-State's campus is rocked by a deadly explosion. The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences decided to permanently close the Purple Masque Theatre to create space for a new student center in East Stadium. Students and faculty, outraged at the closing of the historic theatre, protested, wrote angry letters to the Collegian and sent death threats to the dean.

One morning, a bomb threat note is found in Anderson Hall.

"We will not be moved. Maybe this will move you — there is a bomb in Eisenhower Hall," the note read.

The building was swept, and no bomb was found.

Later that day, another note was found saying there was a bomb in Kedzie Hall. A backpack was left just outside the Collegian newsroom, and when a Collegian reporter took it into the newsroom to open it, a bomb exploded, killing three students and injuring dozens more.

Participants were split into four groups. Two played the role of journalists and two played the role of PR officials. Participants were assigned to groups, leaving many of the journalists, like Baltrip, playing the role of PR officials and vice versa.

Each time a new piece of information about the scenario was given to the participants the groups convened and decided how to respond. Usually the PR groups would start by making an official statement and the journalists would follow with questions.

To complicate the issues, the groups had to decide what to do with leaked footage of the explosion, the names of victims and other information that could not be officially verified.

"There is primarily tension in terms of when information is provided, not what information," said Potter who was in one of the journalist groups. "I think both of those groups want the facts to get out. They want the truth to come out, but a lot of..."
K-State students discuss a mock-disaster scenario in the Alumni Center during a tabletop exercise that was part of K-State's Readiness Communication Conference. Participants debated how to react if they were a journalist or a university public relations official.

Angela Powers, Miller School director, participated in the exercise in one of the PR groups. Her group debated when to have the university president address the media after the bomb threat was discovered. The journalists in the group, she said, wanted to have him speak immediately, while the PR people wanted to keep him away from the press.

"Basically the public relations people wanted the president to deal with the positive aspects of what's happening at the university and they wanted the public relations people to deal with the negative reactions," she said. "So there was some really interesting debate."

Joel Pruett, senior in journalism and secondary education, was the spokesman for one of the PR groups. It was a learning experience for Pruett, who is a reporter for the Collegian but had never worked in PR. "It gives you a better perspective on their side of things," he said about the exercise, "because they do things a lot differently than we do."

Media experts talked about producing accurate messages during disasters as part of the Readiness Communication Conference hosted by the Miller School in March. The experts also shared the lessons they learned with the audience.

Accuracy on a Deadline

A recessed economy and the changes faced by the media affect journalists' ability to report accurate information, said Monica Schneider, anchor and reporter from CLTV, Chicago.

Job cuts are translated into fewer people doing more, resulting in less time for fact checking. On top of that, journalists are required to feed the Web to satisfy needs of the public for immediacy of information. During times of crisis, accuracy checks rely solely on personal integrity.

"It is getting tougher and tougher to be accurate," Schneider said. "When it comes to disaster, the least of our problems is accuracy."

Schneider talked about the day-to-day challenges she and her fellow workmates face in trying to fill different shoes. The economic model for media is shattered; jobs will probably not be restored.

"During disaster times, checking for accuracy depends on personal ethics standards. However, Schneider admits it is still an honor to be responsible for delivering information to the public."

"It is a privilege to be in people's living rooms, it is a privilege to be in their cars," she said. "It is a privilege to be filtered into people's lives."

Securing Sources in a Crisis

The importance of forming personal relationships with sources is vital in a time of crisis, said Dewey Terrill, news director for the 1420 KJCK radio station in Junction City, Kan.

"Newsmakers have the most accurate information in a time of crisis," he said. "We try putting them on air."

Terrill received recognition for the coverage of the tornado in June 2008, which passed through areas of northeastern Kansas and wiped out three fourths of Chapman, Kan.

Terrill was able to pass a barricade set by the police as an undercover detective, thanks to the friendship he had made with a head sheriff, he said. This allowed him to report from the scene, becoming a major source of information for people without electricity.

"All they needed was a battery powered radio," he said. "We were reporting where food and water was being prepared for people who lost their homes."

Terrill also stressed the importance of working ahead of time when a disaster is expected, developing contacts with the emergency management system, police, and sheriff departments.

"The most important thing is to stay alert and be prepared," he said.

Information to Protect the Innocent

The campus newspaper staff at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., learned important lessons after the April 16, 2008, campus shootings, said Kelly Furnas, editorial adviser to the Collegiate Times.

"People can be armed with information," said Furnas. "Controlling the message can be a disaster for the rest of the community."

Furnas was referring to the time gap between the first shootings at 7:15 a.m. and the time when the press was informed and university officials gave their first official report between 9 and 9:30 a.m.

"So many people didn't know for two hours," he said.

That day, a photo editor was arrested while taking pictures of the crime scene because he had no press pass and his appearance resembled descriptions of the shooter. Furnas highlighted the importance of press passes to identify members of the media.

Furnas also talked about keeping the readers in mind when producing content during a time of crisis, including headline writing and picture choice.
From Linotype to Twitter and from FM radio to the World Wide Web, journalism education at K-State has lived through it all.

In 1910, Kansas State Agricultural College established a department of industrial journalism — one of the first of its kind in the country. Printing merged with industrial journalism in 1915, and in 1950, the program was renamed the Department of Technical Journalism.

In 1971, mass communications was added to the name to account for new media and a broader curriculum. In 1988, the school was renamed as the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications to honor a Kansas newspaperman with deep ties to the school.

In September — 100 years after its founding — the Miller School is planning a party.

(Left to right) Members of the Collegian set type by hand in the 1960s. K-State offered courses in printing beginning in 1874. A student pauses to read the Collegian in the spring of 1978. The first edition of the paper was published in 1896, then named The Student Herald. Steve Wolgast develops a photo during the 1987-88 school year. Wolgast is now an instructor and faculty adviser to the Collegian.
Gloria Freeland ('75), associate professor in mass communications and centennial coordinator, said the theme for this fall’s celebration is “Preserving the past, preparing for the future.”

“The idea for our centennial is that we’re going to find out about our history,” Freeland said. “I think it’s a good opportunity for students to know where we came from and to know our legacy, but then we’re also trying to prepare students for the future.”

Freeland, along with students, other faculty and staff members and alumni, began working on the centennial last summer. Freeland is also working with the Alumni Association, the KSU Foundation and also working with the Alumni Association, the KSU Foundation and University Archives.

The festivities are scheduled to kick off Sept. 2 with a Huck Boyd Lecture in Community Media, given by Gail Pennybacker (‘81), from WJLA-TV in Washington, D.C. Other events planned over the three-day celebration include activities in Aggieville Thursday night, a banquet and program Friday evening and a tailgate at Saturday’s K-State vs. UCLA football game.

Alumni will also have the opportunity to connect with current students in the classroom and through various workshops.

“To see our current students and our former students all together in a setting where there’s going to be so much networking going on,” said Angela Powers, director of the Miller School, “I’m excited about that.” Students are also helping prepare for the centennial. Freeland said members of the public relations techniques class are handling the social media aspects of the celebration, and faculty members Ginger Loggins and Stacy Neumann are guiding students in creating a DVD to be shown and distributed at the banquet.

Anna Lewis, senior in public relations and electronic journalism and the executive producer of the DVD has worked with Freeland on the official centennial logo, save-the-date information cards, a website and other promotional materials.

Part of the centennial effort will include a fundraising campaign called Tools for Tomorrow. According to Powers, money raised by the effort will go toward providing up-to-date equipment for students and classrooms.

“Our goal is to raise $100,000 for 100 years, so we can have an account to rely on for technology in our classrooms,” Powers said. “We want to engage as many alumni as we possibly can to secure a good, solid future for our school and for our students.”

Powers said money can be raised in a variety of ways. In addition to general donations, a silent auction, scheduled for the Sept. 3 banquet, will feature K-State memorabilia, autographed photos, books and other items.

Lewis, whose grandfather and two uncles are Miller School graduates, said working on the centennial has been an eye-opening experience. She said she now understands why many generations of families, like her own, return to the school.

“The people who are involved with the school, now or in the past, have only good things to say about it,” Lewis said. “They don’t credit the facilities or the top-of-the-line equipment, they credit the people they work with every day. The faculty is very dedicated to being a significant part of each student’s college career.”

Todd Simon, professor and former director of the Miller School from 1997 to 2004, echoed Lewis’ sentiments. He said the size of the school allows for close relationships between teachers and students.

“My favorite thing about this place is that it remains — despite changes in technology — a place where there’s a lot of interaction,” Simon said. “Students and faculty get to know each other on a first-name basis.”

And while Simon admits he has no idea what the future holds, he said he is confident the Miller School will remain committed to its core principles.

“When other [journalism programs] have more money and might be considered more prestigious, we’ve been very consistent in our mission for 100 years,” Simon said. “We remain really committed to our story-telling roots. I don't really see that changing.”

With the media constantly evolving, however, curriculum changes are inevitable. But, as Powers pointed out, the Miller School has been successful in weathering changes in the past.

“It says a lot about the fact that we value journalism and First Amendment issues that we’ve survived for a century. That’s not an easy thing to do,” Powers said. “There are many programs that have come and gone and been swallowed up by larger programs.”

Lewis said the centennial celebration in September is the perfect opportunity for those in the Miller School to remember their roots, while laying the foundation for the next century.

“With faculty, alumni and students working together, the history and tradition of the Miller School will be preserved,” Lewis said. “And they can look ahead to prepare for another 100 years.”

### Schedule of events

| Sept. 2–4 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| **Morning** | Huck Boyd Lecture in Community Media |
| **Afternoon** | Connect with current students — class presentations and mentoring |
| **Evening** | Various activities, including relaxing in Aggieville |

| Sept. 2–4 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| **Morning** | JMC Advisory Council meeting or tours of campus and Manhattan |
| **Afternoon** | Connect with current and prospective students |
| **Evening** | Celebration banquet, auction and program |

| Sept. 2–4 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| **Visit your old stomping grounds (Residence hall, Greek house tours)** |
| **Tailgate party** |
| **K-State vs. UCLA (Bill Snyder Family Stadium)** |

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**Posing with the Kansas House resolution, congratulating the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications on its centennial:** Rep. Tom Hawk, Democrat from the 67th District; Steven Smethers, associate professor; Rep. Mike Burgess, Republican from the 51st District and 1998 graduate of the Miller School; Gloria Freeland, assistant professor; and Rep. Sydney Carlin, Democrat from the 66th District. The Kansas Senate passed a similar resolution, sponsored by Sen. Roger Reitz, Manhattan.
Changing

Charles Pearce

When deciding on a candidate to fill the position of associate director for undergraduate studies, Angela Powers, Miller School director, asked herself one question: “Who would be best for the students?”

The answer was Charles Pearce, and Powers did not hesitate to hire him.

“He is the perfect person to have as the associate director of undergraduate education,” Powers said. “He really understands what students need.”

Pearce originally held the associate director position from 2001-2005 and is now in his second stint. The position became available when Steve Smethers, Pearce’s predecessor, took over as associate director of graduate studies, leaving the undergraduate position open.

“We’re thrilled to have him back in this position,” Powers said. “It was a very easy transition. It was just a great opportunity to be able to have Dr. Pearce back.”

Bonnie Bressers, associate professor and print journalism sequence head, has worked with Pearce since 1997. She said one of Pearce’s greatest strengths is his dedication to students.

“He sincerely cares about the welfare of our undergrads,” Bressers said. “There are a lot of undergraduates here who all have their needs, and he really does have a concern for the undergraduates and for this program.”

Among Pearce’s goals in his new position runs a common theme: helping students. His position gives him influence in different facets of the school, and in each of those areas he strives to meet students’ needs to the best of his ability, he said.

One of those areas is instruction. Whether providing professors ways to improve their instruction methods, supervising assessments of faculty members or just acting as a cheerleader for instruction, Pearce said he wants to do all he can to see students receive the best instruction possible.

“I would like to continue the tradition we have in the Miller School of having first-rate instruction,” Pearce said. “I think instruction is a very important aspect of what we do. It should be that we don’t even need to say that, it should be obvious that it is an extremely important part of what we’re doing.

“But getting tenure these days — being an excellent instructor is not enough. You’ve got to have the research and the service, but I think teaching is an honorable profession and we don’t give it enough credit. First and foremost, we’re here to instruct.”

Pearce also plans to focus on technology. To prepare students for the ever-changing world of mass communications, he said, it is essential to give them a taste of the technology they will encounter in the real world.

“Technology has been part of my job since I came here in 1986,” Pearce said. “Part of the job is trying to use our budget as efficiently as we can while serving students the best we can.”

While keeping the school’s technology up to date will be a challenge, Powers said Pearce is qualified to deal with it.

“The greatest challenge that he faces is to ensure that we have adequate and up-to-date technology that we’re able to offer in our courses, and to be able to schedule courses in classrooms where we do have enough technology,” Powers said. “But I think the fact that he knows so much about scheduling and technology is just going to make it that much better for the school and for the students. He just has a natural interest for new technology, and on his own he keeps up with the newest software and hardware in our field.”

A third priority for Pearce is the undergraduate students themselves, and this reason is a big part of why Pearce accepted the position. He recounted a story of helping an undergraduate student who was having a scheduling issue. The student was enrolled in 20 credit hours and was going to be forced into taking an extra credit hour because of a problem with transfer credits. Pearce was able to work with the student and other administrators to help the student fix the problem.

He is the perfect person to have as the associate director of undergraduate education. He really understands what students need.

— Angela Powers

“There is a sense of pride and accomplishment when you’re helping people,” Pearce said. “Those are the little triumphs that nobody ever hears about.”

Ultimately, Pearce’s goals come back to educating students.

“Keeping the lights on and everything, that’s all important,” he said, “but I think in this school we give recognition to good teachers, and we have turned out some terrific students. To me, that’s doing our job.”

Photo by Erin Poppe.
Steve Smothers, associate director for undergraduate studies for several years, moved to the associate director of graduate studies position to focus on building the School’s graduate program.

The position was not new to Smothers as he had filled a similar role at Oklahoma State University for four years.

Powers said she is excited about the change. Smothers is stepping in after Hyun Seung Jin, former associate director decided to step down to focus on his research and teaching.

“I knew that Dr. Smothers would be the best person for our graduate program,” Powers said. “He has good ideas about graduate studies, and he also engages students very well, and we are at a critical point in our graduate program.”

Powers said graduate student enrollment has dropped over the years to the 17 students currently enrolled. Smothers is excited for the change of responsibility and is eager to work on implementing a narrowly focused graduate program to attract prospective students.

“I think there are some immediate things we need to do and I think there are some long-range things that we need to do,” Smothers said. “We need to change our marketing, and we don’t want to lose our research and theory tradition.”

S
mthers said in the past graduate schools would offer general core classes, and it was not necessary to have a clear definition. As the Miller School looks forward, he understands this is something that can no longer apply to the graduate school.

“Today we’re seeing people who are primarily looking to change their careers,” Smothers said. “They’re wanting to develop a set of research and theoretical background that is going to help change their careers or give them the breadth of knowledge they are seeking.”

The graduate school is looking to build on its strength as a research institution while finding a niche in the Midwest marketplace of higher education, Smothers said. One possible specialty reflects the interests of faculty members.

“The field is going more into health and risk and crisis communication fields, so that’s the area we are re-marketing,” said Nancy Muturi, assistant professor. She cited the incoming National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility as an example of the niche K-State can fill.

People are concerned about their health and all the things that can happen with that particular agency coming here,” Muturi said. “We can bring in risk and health communication. We have the resources here.”

S
mthers said the graduate school is fortunate to already have research being conducted in strategic communications with a focus on risk, health and crisis. While the universities of Kansas and Oklahoma have graduate degree tracks in strategic communication, their focus is different.

“In all the research we’ve done here, we’ve not been able to see that very many programs are leaning in these areas,” Smothers said. “We have the potential to create a nice niche marketing focus for ourselves.”

Repackaging and marketing the graduate school offers fewer hurdles because there will not be a curriculum change, Smothers said. His intent is to add courses in strategic communication, not to redesign the graduation plan.

Journalism professors like Muturi, Joye Gordon and Marcus Ashlock would instruct the courses since they are already conducting research in strategic communication. Muturi said K-State has already seen a wave of graduate students coming to the university with an interest in health communications.

“Most of them have gone on to do Ph.Ds in that same area and I think that’s one of the areas we want to develop,” Muturi said. “We are not giving them enough training in health and risk communication.”

As Smothers settles into his new position and iron out the future of the graduate program, everyone involved is eager for the school’s future. Smothers said he knows the Miller School has a top-notch staff and looks forward to starting the recruiting process. He is proud to play a role in students looking to advance their education.

“Someone thinking about grad school has to remember the graduate degree will open up doors for them they never imagined,” Smothers said. “Many of our students go on to get Ph.Ds, and many are inspired to teach.”

Photo by Tommy Theis.
In 1980, Jeffery B. Morris tossed his graduation cap — becoming an alumnus of K-State. He earned his degree in journalism and mass communications from the Miller School, and made memories which have stuck with him ever since.

“I can remember I did a long interview with a professor and set my tape recorder on my electric typewriter. I went back to type up my interview and I had nothing — just buzzing,” Morris said. “So, I called him to confirm details and he said that he had given me that information already. I was so embarrassed.”

Morris began his career with the Dodge City Daily Globe as a reporter and news editor and became K-State’s first vice president for communications and marketing in February of this year.
As an undergraduate, Morris was a member of the Delta Upsilon fraternity, served as vice president of community relations, participated in homecoming events and played on the intramural teams. During the summer of 1979, Morris’ claim to fame was when his team won the all-university championship in coed softball — he was the rover outfielder.

Morris met his wife that season, since her roommate was dating one of his fraternity brothers and asked her to play. (In order to have a team, there had to be a certain amount of men and women.) She was not interested in playing softball with a bunch of fraternity boys. However, she showed up, they met and became friends for awhile before they started dating.

“Now every time I go by the recreational fields I think about the first time I met my wife,” he said.

Morris and his wife, Cynthia, are getting used to Manhattan’s growth. With new restaurants and retail stores, the town has much more sophistication than it used to. However, Morris said the one thing that has not changed is how friendly people are.

“Manhattan, Kansas, is the friendliest place I’ve ever been in my life,” he said. “You just fit in, immediately.”

While reacquainting with K-State, Morris knew exactly where he was headed, making his visit to Kedzie Hall during his first few days of being on campus.

He was brought back to his college days when he realized the only things that had changed were the computers which replaced typewriters and the writing on the ceiling in the Collegian newsroom. Besides that, Kedzie still has the newsroom feeling and has not lost its fun culture, Morris said.

While reminiscing about the lessons learned as an undergraduate, Morris mentioned a few of his most influential instructors. Bill Brown was the adviser to the Collegian at that time. He taught skills Morris still uses today.

“Just this morning I was working on a slideshow and someone put ‘Over 130 million,’ and Bill said, ‘It’s never ‘over.’ It’s ‘more than.’’” So I went back and put ‘More than 130 million.’ I try to go back and edit all my ‘that’s.’ I remember all those lessons. He helped me learn a love for language.”

David Hacker was a visiting professor from New York and taught Morris something he has carried with him his entire life. He enjoyed humorous writing but Hacker told him he needed to be clever and not cute. He was also taught that journalism is nothing more than stories. Everyone has a story and it’s a journalist’s job to find it. Morris said Hacker changed the way he wrote and made him interested in people.

Robert Applegate, magazine and feature writing instructor at the time, helped Morris move from being just a news writer to writing more in-depth and bigger stories.

Morris still applies the lessons he learned 30 years ago.

“The traditions at K-State have not changed much. Aggieville has always been a Wildcat custom, attracting students to its nightlife and young environment. On a typical Friday night, Morris and his friends would go to Kites or Darkhorse in Aggieville until close at midnight. It was a disco era, so there was plenty of dancing and "silly clothes," he said.

“By filling the new position of vice president for communications and marketing, Morris will supervise media relations and photo services, university publications, the Educational Communications Center, printing services and new units in marketing research and Web design. He will also work closely with licensing, continuing education, College of Agriculture communications, the K-State Alumni Association, KSU Foundation and the K-State-Salina public relations office.

Morris and President Kirk Schulz have become frequent text and Twitter buddies. When they do not have the time to meet, a quick text message or tweet does the job.

"Jeff is a dynamic, credible leader with experience building brands for both private sector companies and the University of Central Missouri."

Kirk Schulz

The Jeff Morris File:

Birthday: August 14
Siblings: 1 older sister, 2 younger brothers
Favorite food: Anything grilled (steaks, hamburgers)
Favorite store: K-State Superstore
Favorite Manhattan restaurants: So Long Saloon and CoCo Bolos
Vacation spot: Puerto Rico
Vehicle: Toyota Corolla
Interests: Politics, history and outdoor sports
Our alumni span the globe. The Update staff caught up with several of them to see what they have been up to since graduating from the Miller School.

For more alumni updates, or to enter your information visit Update’s website: jmcupdate.wordpress.com.

‘30s

Elizabeth Phelan (journalism ’39), Lenexa, Kan., attended K-State for her junior and senior years and still has friends from her class.

While attending K-State, she was a staff member of the Royal Purple. After graduation, Phelan worked for Farmland Co-op before moving into the travel business she eventually retired from.

Alice M. Roper (industrial journalism ’47), Manhattan, Kan., took a year off of school while her husband was in the war, during which she was a teacher in Washington County. After returning to K-State, Roper worked as a reporter for the Collegian and on the picture pages of the Royal Purple. Roper was a member of the campus YWCA and played for two years in the orchestra.

“Enrollment was so small, you knew everybody by face if not by name,” she said.

Beverly B. Pribble Pinkerton (speech and radio ’48), Lincoln, Neb., was a sorority and radio club member during her time at K-State. She is a Gold Key member from her work on the Royal Purple.

“It’s not easy to go to a game in my white and purple against a sea of red,” she said. “But I’m glad to say I’m a Wildcat.”

‘40s

Janice Shaffer (technical journalism ’58), El Dorado, Kan., is a desktop publisher for Partners and Education Foundation and does secretarial work for her church.

Shaffer and her husband are K-State fans and are season football ticket holders. They are especially excited about this year’s basketball team.

Winnie Sayre (human ecology and mass communications ’54), worked for the Salina Journal prior to getting married and following her husband through graduate school. Eventually, she received her teaching credential through U.S. Berklely in California and taught for 26 years.

She and her husband raised four children, and are now retired. Sayre does volunteer work and she and her husband enjoy traveling.

‘50s

Janet (Gordon) Leigh (journalism and mass communications ’77), Kalispell, Mont., is semi-retired and owns Swancrest Inc., an excavation business.

During retirement she has taken up quilting and volunteers for the food bank. She is also an avid hiker.

Kent Freeland (journalism ’65), Bonita, Calif., has been retired for 10 years. Freeland has two children and three grandchildren who live in Atlanta. He spends his days fishing, playing golf and traveling.

While at K-State he was the Collegian news editor and vice president of the student senate.

Virginia Dawson (Morgan) (human ecology and mass communications ’62), Peoria, Ariz, has been retired since 2001 and boasts, “It’s the best career you can find.”

During retirement she has taken up quilting and volunteers for the food bank. She is also an avid hiker.

Dawson has four grandchildren who live in the Phoenix area with her three daughters. While at K-State, Dawson wrote for the Royal Purple, Collegian and was a part of the Glee Club.

“IT was great, I got a background in home economics, but I also got the training in journalism,” she said. “At the time there were only four schools that offered that curriculum in the country.”

‘60s

Five years ago she hiked the grand canyon. The trip was seven miles down and nine miles back up. “It was the hardest thing I’ve ever done, but it’s something I’m very proud of.” She said she hikes like that require training because of their intensity.

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‘70s

Janet (Gordon) Leigh (journalism and mass communications ’77), Kalispell, Mont., is semi-retired and owns Swancrest Inc., an excavation business.

She enjoys spending her time rug hooking and participating in her community choir, The Valley Voices.

John Fraser (technical journalism ’71), McPherson, Kan., works as a consultant for Seamour Industries, Limited. While he was at K-State, Fraser wrote for the Collegian and served as sports editor for one semester.

He and his wife live in McPherson, and they have two daughters, one who graduated from K-State-Salina in December 2009.
When Sam Felsenfeld broke his neck at the age of 16 in a swimming pool accident, he said he was amazed he regained the use of his legs. “I’d always been grateful that my legs were spared, because there’s a reason for that,” said Felsenfeld, a 1998 K-State graduate. “I should’ve been paralyzed.”

Fifteen years later, on Nov. 7, 2006, on what Felsenfeld calls “a birthday for his legs,” his 4-year-old son Jack was diagnosed with autism.

Felsenfeld decided to take his new hobby of running marathons and turn it into a fundraiser for autism awareness. His efforts, a program he named Operation Jack, is Felsenfeld’s mission to run at least one marathon per week, totaling 60 in a year.

“Starting a charity isn’t what I want to do. They had the foundation built and they needed help building a skyscraper,” Felsenfeld said. “I didn’t want to build the foundation — I wanted to build the skyscraper. We were made for each other.”

For the entire story, visit our website at jmcupdate.wordpress.com.

'80s

Julie (Strouts) Habiger (journalism and mass communications '85), lives in Los Alamos, N.M., where she is the spokeswoman for the Los Alamos City Hall. At K-State, Habiger was a reporter for the Collegian and was active in Women in Communications. She said her involvement and education at K-State prepared her for her current job.

“We had a lot of practical, hands-on assignments,” Habiger said. “They were real life experiences that I can apply to what I am doing today.”

Habiger is married to Kerry Habiger, a 1985 graduate in engineering. The couple has two children: Marcus, a sophomore in the College of Engineering, and Andrew, 14.

‘90s

Jason Adair (master’s in media communications ’92), Chanhassen, Minn., is the contact manager for Bestbuy.com. He and his wife, Janice, whom he calls a “domestic engineer” have two children: Janson, 8, and Janey, 6.

While at K-State, Adair was a GTA for broadcast production. He enjoys camping, fishing, coaching his son’s little league team and during this interview “having Nerf wars with my family,” Adair said. “I think I lost.”

Lori (Armer) Dukelow (broadcast journalism ’95), Tulsa, Okla., is assistant news director at KJRH TV. Her husband is an attorney. The couple has two young children: Abington, 4, and Cole, 2.

‘00s

Melissa Dawne Cessna (print and public relations ’07), Monterey, Calif., is studying international environmental policy at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. During her time at K-State she was on the rowing team and interned at the Manhattan Mercury.

Andrew Robert Gough (public relations ’02), Wichita, Kan., works at Intrust Bank as an education coordinator for NestEgg U, the 401 K provider for Intrust Bank. He teaches people how to invest and how to save money in their plans. Gough was married Jan. 17, 2009.

“I’ve been in a financial services career for six years,” he said. “My major prepared me for speaking in public and improved my writing abilities.”