ENGAGED LEARNING TAKES FLIGHT

Celebrating 10 years of excellence in the Interactive Media master's program

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19
Letter from the Dean

DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

I am excited to present the School of Communications annual report for the 2018-19 academic year. This first annual report during my time as dean showcases many of the events and achievements that demonstrate we are living our mission to prepare students to be exemplary communicators in an increasingly diverse, interactive and global age.

Thanks to the outstanding work of my faculty and staff colleagues and the strong support of President Connie Ledoux Book, Provost Steven House and founding Communications Dean Paul Parsons, the School of Communications continues to excel while growing.

We continue to focus on providing dynamic undergraduate and graduate programs where students learn to appreciate the roles, responsibilities and social impact of media around the world. We value freedom of expression and the importance of serving the public good.

We are committed to helping students become better writers, speakers, creators and thinkers. We want them to learn and innovatively harness the technologies that are transforming the way we communicate. We promote the primacy of accuracy, integrity, professional standards and ethical principles.

We prepare students for careers and lives of purpose through excellent classes, outstanding student media, professional internships, entrepreneurial experiences and other forms of engaged learning. We recognize that communication is central to our lives and our world, and we are committed to upholding the responsibility that comes with that.

Thank you for your support. We will work hard to continue earning it.

Sincerely,

ROCHELLE L. FORD, PH.D., APR
DEAN

School of Communications earns top honor in PRWeek Awards competition

Powered by the teachers, scholars and mentors pictured above, the School of Communications was named Education Program of the Year by PRWeek. The honor, part of the annual PRWeek Awards, which are considered one of the communications industry’s highest accolades, was announced at a ceremony March 21 in New York City.

In their assessment of Elon, the PRWeek judges commended the school’s “hybrid faculty members,” who possess both terminal degrees and significant professional experience. The judges echoed the sentiments of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, saying the school adapts “nimbly to the demands of a digital, multimedia world of communication.”

Judges also noted that students have completed internships at “heavy-hitter PR agencies and organizations,” highlighted the accomplishments of the award-winning student-run agency Live Oak Communications, and championed the school’s “close industry connections” that lead to professionals frequently visiting campus and speaking with students.

Additionally, Anissa Cooper ’19 was named honorable mention – or runner-up – for PRWeek’s Outstanding Student of the Year award during the ceremony. The strategic communications major was one of five finalists for the national award. Cooper attended the ceremony with Dean Rochelle Ford, Associate Dean Kenn Gaither and Associate Professor John Doorley.

Anissa Cooper ’19

On the cover:
Lecturer Brandon Booker leads a drone training session with Interactive Media students Cuquis Robledo and Ellington Hayes in the Historic Neighborhood. The Media program celebrated its 10th anniversary during the 2018-19 school year.
To further strengthen student-centered learning, the School of Communications has adopted and implemented a new departmental structure. Beginning in fall 2019, the school will have six undergraduate programs, each with a faculty leader. The programs and their respective leaders are:

- **Cinema and Television Arts** – Vic Costello
- **Communication Design** – Randy Piland
- **Journalism** – Anthony Hatcher
- **Media Analytics** – Brian Walsh
- **Sport Management** – Tony Weaver
- **Strategic Communications** – Bill Anderson Jr.

Additionally, Associate Professor Julie Lellis has assumed the role of communications core and minor director, overseeing the school’s opening and closing core courses, communications electives, and the communications minor. Professor Naemenah Clark has been named the school’s assessment coordinator, ensuring academic quality in accordance with program accreditation guidelines.

According to Communications Dean Rochelle Ford, the restructuring was necessary to maintain the strong engaged learning and close mentoring relationships that make an Elon education unrivaled. The curriculum will remain unchanged this fall, as faculty begin a curriculum review to create more enhancements based on industry needs.

Costello expects the restructuring should be a welcome change for both instructors and students. “With more than 1,000 student majors and 60 faculty, the previous communications department had reached critical mass, where administratively, it could no longer be effectively managed as a single academic unit with one department chair,” Costello said. “The new administrative structure strengthens our ability to strategically plan for the future while specifically addressing the needs of our faculty and students within their professional discipline or chosen major.”

On the surface, Lellis doesn’t expect that students will notice much of a change when they return in the fall. “As a School of Communications, we are nimble, and will strive to maintain the benefits of a holistic and interdisciplinary program where we embrace the academic and professional intersections that unite us all across majors,” she said.

The new structure’s real benefit to students will be the increased access to department and program leaders, whose expertise aligns closely with their professional career interests and pursuits. The creation of smaller academic units provides new opportunities for group meetings of faculty and students by major (or interest group) along with more regular communication about events, activities, and opportunities.

**Mitch Pittman ’09 accompanies iMedia students to Cuba**

Before a decade-long career in television news, where he collected more than a few awards, and the recent launch of his own production company, Elon alumnus Mitch Pittman ’09 was an underpaid glazier cleaning the basics of photojournalism from Senior Lecturer Randy Piland.

Ten years later, Pittman joined Piland in January to assist and mentor seven Interactive Media students conducting their Interactive Project for the Public Good work in Matanzas, Cuba. In a region known for its poets and culture, the group turned their cameras on artist Jesus Alberto Mederos, who hosts art therapy sessions for youths with behavioral issues, children with cancer or other chronic illnesses, and seniors with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. The student group’s objective was to bring global attention to Mederos’ charitable efforts and the larger Matanzas community.

“Mederos has painted murals all over the city, and he’s a local celebrity there. Now he is using his clout to help others.”

Elon alumnus Mitch Pittman ’09 (left) accompanied iMedia students during their fly-in project in Cuba, where he struck up a conversation with a local resident.

**Interactive Media celebrates decade of excellence**

With the presentation of Simone Young’s diploma on May 22 in Whitley Auditorium, the M.A. in Interactive Media program put the finishing touches on its first decade of preparing multimedia professionals to succeed in a digital age.

This spring, Young was one of 28 iMedia graduates, a group educated to think strategically across platforms, create data-driven media content, and explore new avenues in interactive and digital media delivery. These students discovered new technical skills and career paths in UX/UI design, VR, gaming and digital storytelling.

In total, 318 students have graduated from the 10-month program since its inception.

Over the past decade, iMedia has helped address a void in the higher education landscape, explained David Copeland, Elon’s A.J. Fitcher Professor and director of the graduate program.

“We have discovered over the last decade that this program filled a niche that wasn’t available at other universities,” he said. “We’ve created a program that prepares students to fill a multitude of jobs, not just in communications, but across all types of professional fields.”

According to Copeland, one of iMedia’s greatest strengths is its condensed schedule. The August-to-May degree program allows the faculty and curriculum to remain nimble and adjust to always evolving industries.

“We have created a program that has been right for the times—and a little bit ahead of what others were doing,” Copeland said. “And because we are a 10-month program, we have been able to change and adapt every year, to look at where industries are going and what is needed. This ensures we are sending our students into the professional world ready to succeed.”
THE IMAGINING THE INTERNET CENTER CELEBRATES A MILESTONE

In fall 2019, the Imagining the Internet Center will complete its 20th year of work illuminating the evolution of digital communications networks at the dawn of the 21st century. On April 7, 2020, Wikipedia founder and Internet Hall of Fame member Jimmy Wales will speak at Elon and be awarded the third Areté Medallion, presented by the center to highly distinguished humanist innovators, change agents and thought leaders for their contributions impacting the global future.

HERE’S A LOOK BACK AT THE PAST YEAR FOR THE CENTER:

Expanding leadership team

The center’s leadership team grew this spring with Assistant Professor Kathleen Stansberry’s appointment as director of research projects and partnerships and Assistant Professor Alex Luchsinger taking on the role of director of documentary multimedia projects and partnerships. Professor Janis Anderson continues to serve as the center’s executive director.

“Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humans”

A 22-page report by Anderson, Luchsinger and Advisory Board member Lee Raine of Pew Research Center featured the opinions of nearly 1,000 experts on the future of humanity in the age of AI. It was released Dec. 13. Raine unveiled the report and shared highlights from it live on stage at the People-Centered Internet conference in San Jose, California, which was livestreamed to a global audience. The report gained global media attention via several major outlets, including The Verge. Research in the report was selected by the Pew Research Center as one of its “18 striking findings from 2018.”

Team documents Global IGF-France

A 10-person documentary journalism team from the Imagining the Internet Center interviewed more than 150 Internet experts from 55 nation-states at the U.A.-facilitated Global Internet Governance Forum at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in November. The team’s work resulted in 600 video clips on the center’s website and YouTube channel.

“The Future of Trust”

Anderson and Raine each made a 3-minute opening keynote presentation Feb. 20 on “The Future of Trust” for 100 top industry, government and university researchers who are part of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences’ Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable. The event was held at the historic Washington, D.C., National Academies building. Anderson kicked off the program, and she and Raine provided the opening scene-setter for the daylong conference on “Authenticity, Integrity and Security in a Digital World.”

News coverage of IGF-USA

Cain Donovan, director of School of Communications student engagement and alumni affairs, and Anderson co-led the recruitment and preparation of 20 Elon students who conducted complete multimedia documentary coverage of all events of the 2019 Internet Governance Forum-USA at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. In July, Donovan and Bryan Baker, director of technology, communications and multimedia projects, led the team’s near-real-time coverage. The photos, videos and print-news accounts were promoted by IGF-USA’s site and are part of its official report to the United Nations’ Global IGF Secretariat.
Communications Fellows on a tour of TNT studios

AUGUST

Emmanuel Morgan ’19 participated in the 2018 Carnegie Knight Fellows program, a 10-week multimedia reporting project that examined intolerance, racism and hate crimes in America. As a News21 Fellow, Morgan traveled extensively with stops in New York City and San Francisco. The cohort’s coverage, titled “Hate in America,” subse-
quentely won the Student Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence in Digital Reporting and the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award.

“Digital Queer Storytime,” a short documentary film made by Emma Kopkowski ’20 and Tyler Litwin ’20, was screened at the 2018 North Carolina Gay + Lesbian Film Festival in Durham.

Stephanie Hays ’18 and Alex Toma ’20 combined to earn four awards, including two first-place finishes, in the 2018 Michigan State University Design Cunsel for College Students. Hays works as the lead designer at the Sacramento Business Journal.

Associate Professor Vanessa Bravo received the 3rd Top Faculty Paper Award from the Political Communication Interest Group at the 2018 AEJMC conference in Washington, D.C. With her co-authors, Bravo analyzed how U.S. President Donald Trump and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto communicate during the first 100 days of Trump’s term regarding the community of Mexican immi-
grants living in the United States.

While participating in the U.S.-UK Fulbright Commission exchange program, Mercy Ette, senior lecturer at the University of Huddersfield, taught in the School of Communications and conducted research during the fall semester.

SEPTEMBER

Lecturer Kelly Furnas was named a National Scholarly Press Association Pioneer Award recipient, acknowledging his passion for and contributions to scholastic journalism.

More than 100 people were willing to make a deal during the First Amendment Free Food Festival in September, signing away their First Amendment rights for a free lunch. The lunch-hour program aimed to help students understand the implications of freedom of speech, press, religion, petition and assembly. Pictured above: Alexandra Roat ’20 tries to interview Dean Ford while Kenneth Brown ’19 blocks the news reporter.

Professor Harlen Makemson’s research paper, “From Gibson Girl to Gibson Goddess: The World War I Illustrations of Charles Dana Gibson in Life Magazine,” received honors at the American Journalism Historians Association convention in Salt Lake City.

From Oct. 12 through Nov. 27, Regal theaters across the country screened “Movie Life,” a 35-second commercial made by an Elon team that was one of five finalists in the 2018 Coca-Cola and Regal Films program.

Accompanied by Dean Ford, a group of six students traveled to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to attend a “Women in Media” forum presented by WTVD’s Minority Advisory Committee.

A team that included strategic communications major Alejandro Ramos ’19 captured first place in the Elon Champion Analytics Challenge, addressing sales opportunities with HanerBrands executives.

Nearly 40 students completed the Sport Management Department’s 400-hour intern-
ship requirement during summer 2018, gaining real-world experience with organi-
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ment offered a glimpse into how its students spent their summer months at the 2018 Sport Management Internship Forum.

In conjunction with Elon Athletics, Elon Sports Vision (previously named Maroon ’Sports) and its students streamed the Sept. 30 home football game against New Hampshire, the first athletic event remotely broadcast from Schar Center’s new control room.

Dean Ford presided over her first School of Communications Advisory Board meeting on Sept. 28, welcoming 17 board members and guests to campus.

OCTOBER

The school led an on-campus celebration of national News Engagement Day on Oct. 2, with initiatives that encouraged students and community members to read, watch, like, tweet and share the news. This included stu-
dents Nina Fleck ’20 and Mavel Anderuk ’22 serving as town criers, shouting headlines at College Coffee.

“Young Filmmakers of Ethiopia,” a one-hour documentary produced by Associate Professor Vic Costello, was awarded Best of Show in the Broadcast Education Association’s Faculty Documentary Competition.

During their Atlanta media tour, 29 Communications Fellows provided an up-close look at the television and content development industries.

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DECEMBER
Dean Ford was one of six "Inspiring leaders of communications" inducted into the PRWeek Hall of Fame at a Dec. 3 ceremony at the Grand Hyatt New York. Ford used her 1.5 minute speech to champion the importance of diversity and inclusion, share her experiences during her own personal and professional development, and thank the mentors, coaches and sponsors she's had along the way.

JANUARY
During Assistant Professor David Bockino’s Through the Lens of ESPN class, 18 students enjoyed a comprehensive media tour in January, visiting ESPN, Fox Sports, SNY, MLB.com and the New York Yankees, as well as sports outlets and athletic venues in Buenos Aires.

As part of their Winter Term "fly-in" experience, Interactive Media students divided into four groups to visit Colombia, Cuba, Dominica and Ecuador, collecting content to visit Colombia, Cuba, Dominica and Ecuador.

February
Twenty-two students in the Communications Internship Showcase & FEBRUARY professionals and gaining insights week trip in January to Florida, twenty-two students in the respective nonprofit organizations, stateside, the students built public good. Upon their return and Ecuador, collecting content to visit Colombia, Cuba, Dominica.

The Pendulum, the newspaper of the Elon News Network, Phi Chi Club yearbook, and Colonnades Literary and Art Journal all won Best of Show awards on Feb. 23 from the North Carolina College Media Association.

In partnership with the PR Council, the School of Communications hosted its PR Agency Careers Diversity and Inclusion Panel Discussion on Feb. 25. The wisdom session and ensuing networking reception featured strategic communications and human resources executives from W20 Group, Ketchum, Weber Shandwick, Taylor Global, FleishmanHillard, Finsbury and EP+Co.

North Carolina Open Government Coalition welcomes new director
Brooks Fuller was named the director of the North Carolina Open Government Coalition (NCOGC) and Sunshine Center as well as an assistant professor in Elon’s School of Communications this spring.

As the NCOGC director, Fuller works with the coalition’s board to organize the state’s annual Sunshine Day, a program the coalition sponsors to bring together journalists, media companies, attorneys and the public for an open government-related educational program. The school has had six LAGRANT Scholars over the last three years – including a two-time winner.

watching the original – and often award-winning – content produced by Elon students and faculty got a lot easier around spring break. The school launched its own channel available on Roku devices, with categories highlighting student works, student media and organizations, and testimonials. The school is set to expand to other streaming platforms.

During the 2019 Elon Innovation Challenge, 115 students representing a variety of majors addressed how to reduce, repurpose and/or manage the amount of packaging waste on Elon’s campus.

Driven by the application of design thinking, teams created products, services and campaigns to address the problem. The winning team featured media analytics major Anna Cosentino ‘19 and Max Pivonka ‘19, who won $1,000 for Best Innovation. The duo designed a “Google” delivery packaging, recycle and reuse center for Elon’s student mail room.

APRIL
A passionate pitch about a defiant love story scored Riley Bradford ‘21 and Sophia Ortiz ‘21, cinema and television arts majors, first place in the 2019 RiverRun International Film Festival’s Documentary Pitch Fest, a student competition judged by industry experts.

Katie Halter, coordinating producer of Elon Sports Vision, returned to her native Minnesota to help produce three of the CBS Sports Network’s basketball-centric shows during the Final Four.

Artanne Payne ‘20 and Maggie Cornejo ‘21 were among the 39 undergraduate students nationwide to receive highly selective scholar- ships provided by The LAGRANT Foundation, a nonprofit organization that promotes diversity in the fields of advertising, graphic design, marketing and public relations.

Professor Janessa Anderson was presented with the Danes-Daniely Award for Excellence in Teaching at the annual Faculty/Staff Awards Luncheon on May 15.

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Four communications majors were named national winners in three categories of the Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Awards competition. Alex Hager ’19 and Emmanuel Morgan ’19 (General News Reporting), Jessica Rapfogel ’19 (Sports Photography) and Anton Delgado ’20 (Breaking News Photography) were recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists.

Associate Professor Vanessa Bravo was selected as one of nine participants in the 2019-20 Institute for Diverse Leadership program of AEJMC and ASJMC, two preeminent associations in the field of mass communication.

Kass was recognized for his public service announcement promoting the United Nations AIDS outreach program that aired internationally during the 2018 World Cup telecasts. The professor teamed with Elon colleagues Mitch Hendon ’17, assistant director of multimedia projects, and Clay Stevenson, senior lecturer in music, as well as Interactive Media graduate Troy Caldwell ’18, to develop three PSAs as part of a UNAIDS campaign.

A contingent of faculty, staff and alumni attended the 2019 Broadcast Education Association (BEA) annual convention and Festival of Media Arts. The April event was highlighted by Assistant Professor Doug Kass earning the top prize in the festival’s Faculty Film & Video Competition – Commercial or PSA Category. The professor earned the top prize for his video “Waiting in the Middlefield,” a documentary by Assistant Professor Sana Haq aired in late May on UNC-TV, a public television network serving North Carolina.

Four communications leadership team members participated in a media and immersion tour in New York City in June. Members of the School of Communications leadership team participated in a media and immersion tour in New York City in June.

Promotions and tenure
In March, the Elon University Board of Trustees announced the promotion of Naemah Clark and Anthony Hatcher to professor. Additionally, the board granted tenure to Associate Professor Bill Anderson Jr.

New full-time faculty & staff
Associate Professor Nicole Triche’s documentary “All Skate, Everybody Skate” played at the North Carolina Museum of History as part of the Longleaf Film Festival.

JUNE
Members of the School of Communications leadership team, including the school’s new department chairs and program directors, participated in a June 10-11 media and immersion tour in New York City. In addition to hosting an alumni reception at Weber Shandwick, the group visited with executives at BET, Starz, Bloomberg, Estée Lauder, The New York Times and CAA.

School awards
Faculty and staff members were honored during the School of Communications annual awards program on April 14.

Top 10 Under 10 recipients
In April, several School of Communications graduates were recognized with 2019 Top 10 Under 10 Alumni Awards, spotlighting the young alumni’s professional success and influence in their communities. The recipients included Emily Farret ’09, director of global communications for Nike; Josh Norris ’11, NFL writer and podcaster for NBC Sports and Rotoworld; Jasmine Gregary ’12, associate attorney for Payne & Associates, PLC; and Zora Stephenson ’15, anchor and reporter for Fox31, KDVR-TV, Denver.

Distinguished Alumni
Angie Lovelace Walton ’10 and Tony Weaver Jr. ’16 were among five Elon graduates recognized with 2018 Distinguished Alumni Awards during Elon’s Homecoming festivities.

Outstanding Alumnus Award
Tom Mullen ’00, vice president of marketing and creative services at Warner Records, was presented with the Outstanding Alumnus Award at a Nov. 2 luncheon, recognizing his post-graduation pursuits centered around his passion for music. Mullen oversees the marketing for the catalog of Atlantic Records’ currently signed artists, including popular musicians such as Ed Sheeran, Bruno Mars, Deaf & Cude and Missy Elliott. Recently, he added the label’s podcasts endeavor to his list of responsibilities.

Top 10 Under 10 Alumni Awards
Five Elon graduates were honored with the 2019 Top 10 Under 10 Alumni Awards, spotlighting the young alumni’s professional success and influence in their communities. The recipients included Emily Farret ’09, director of global communications for Nike; Josh Norris ’11, NFL writer and podcaster for NBC Sports and Rotoworld; Jasmine Gregary ’12, associate attorney for Payne & Associates, PLC; and Zora Stephenson ’15, anchor and reporter for Fox31, KDVR-TV, Denver.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS ANNUAL REPORT | 2018-19
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multimedia production associate
Technology, Thomas & Scale
Akins Atkins
assistant media specialist, TV
Jenna Barson
professional assistant coordinator
entry post-graduate sales program, Newseum
Maria Barroto
publicly visible, News confess Publishing
Gabrielle Beamon
social media, Fincher
Hannah Bomson
staffing coordinator, Bronx NV Staffing Group
Margaret Boisvert
business development representative, Outright Media
Alexandra Britt
United States business associate, Raleigh
Paige Carlin
media analyst, Radio Free
Caroline Curby
advisory specialist, Raleigh
Anissa Cooper
director of player development, Denver Nuggets
Michael Clemente
CEO, NovelHealth TV New York
Andrew Cosentino ‘19, a media analytics major 
will begin her professional career in San Francisco
on May 1.

When Dwight C. Schar Hall was completed, Ben Hannam recalled the school’s leadership asking what equipment the communications design majors needed. The associate professor of communication design requested an infinity table to photograph student work with equipment borrowed from the Gear Room. The goal was to produce more impressive portfolio pieces. But there was a hitch.

“The plan worked, but students had to lug 100 pounds of lighting equipment downstairs from McEwen to Schar, so I’m not very happy,” Hannam said. “Students were using the infinity table because it was time-consuming and cumbersome.”

Hannam put forward this proposal to the school’s technology committee to purchase and install ceiling-mounted lighting equipment in a photography lab in Schar Hall. The results have been eye-opening — see the photo of junior Madison Burress’ work redesigning Mild’s Famous Sweet Tea packaging. Similarly, Rebecca Rabine ‘19 used the new setup to capture striking images of her package redesign of Chaos golf balls.

“For communication design students, approximately 85 percent of graduates get job offers based on the quality of their portfolio,” Hannam said. “It’s encouraging to see the School of Communications, Dean Ford and our school’s technology committee work together to put a key piece of equipment in place for our students.”

Above: The new lighting, multiple angled shots and some Photoshop magic allowed communication design major Rebecca Rabine ‘19 to create a strong portfolio piece, despite having just one copy of her redesigned package.

Right: Madison Burress ’20 redesigned the packaging for Milo’s Famous Sweet Tea. Konner said the goal of the project was to “increase the perception of value for the product through the use of design.”

PORTFOLIO PIECES POP UNDER NEW CEILING-MOUNTED LIGHTING SYSTEM

STUDENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Center about their post-graduation 
employment, get 

Where’s the Class of 2019?

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In its 12th year, the Elon in Los Angeles program welcomed 42 students this summer with a visit to the picturesque OUE Skyspace observation deck. The 2019 cohort completed internships with marquee organizations across Southern California, including National Geographic, Young Hollywood and Film 44. “Elon in Los Angeles is the genuine article of experiential learning,” said J McMerty ’00, the program’s director. “Fifty percent of students that participate in the program will come back to start their careers in LA, joining the almost 500 alumni creating a supportive environment in a tough industry.”