WORD PLAY

Poets are superheroes!
we have a god-like grasp
of language
and the power to transform
any emotion into alliteration.
we sit with sadness
until it spins out of silence
onto paper,
we craft confessional poems
with the spark of a metaphor
and the speed of a comet.
we are saviors
of sonnets.
Protectors of expression.

if there is no answer,
we write down the question.

Marcus Amaker, ’99
Charleston’s Poet Laureate
2019 Issue
The College of Information and Communications
Alumni Magazine

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ON THE COVER
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Photo by Alice Keeney, provided.
Two years ago, a friend at a public relations agency asked me to do something once I got settled into my new job as dean of the CIC. “Tom,” he said, “Send us your diverse talent.” That appeal has since been echoed by a slew of employers, particularly last summer when I traveled to dozens of media organizations and libraries to connect with alumni.

Cultivating diverse talent benefits everyone. A broader spectrum of students means we have better ideas when CreateAthon is developing marketing materials for area nonprofits, a wider scope of stories in our student publications and more perspectives in class discussions. And – as my friend can tell you – a workforce that’s reflective of the real world is more innovative, more creative and more successful. So, when we work to make our programs more inclusive, we’re not just opening doors for students – we’re actively improving our industries.

Unfortunately, the decline in state funding for higher education has had a detrimental impact on college affordability, and research shows that when tuition increases, campus diversity often decreases. That means, if we want to counteract the effect of tuition increases, we can’t simply add a few new programs to our offerings and call it a day. Instead, we have to view diversity as a continuous process.

So, what are we doing at the CIC? As you’ll read on page 19, we’ve appointed Dr. Shirley Staples Carter as our first associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion. She’s already hard at work collaborating with the university to set goals and develop ways for us to reach them. With Dr. Carter’s guidance, we’re creating new educational experiences, like the upcoming Digital Media Academy this summer. Our new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Research Symposium explores how diversity-related issues intersect with our faculty’s areas of expertise. And, we’re fostering partnerships with area HBCUs.

We’re also expanding our scholarship offerings for underrepresented students through opportunities such as the SJMC Media Diversity Scholarship. There’s even more in the pipeline, and we hope to have new developments to share with you each time you open a new issue of InterCom.

South Carolina is among the top 3% of four-year institutions in the country in the number of degrees awarded to African American students. That’s good, but our goal is to do even better.

As alumni, you play a critical part in this process. Have an idea for a new program? Want to discuss how you can support underrepresented students? I hope you’ll reach out to Dr. Carter to explore how you can get involved.
Doug Menuez, the photographer and filmmaker who captured 15 years of innovation following Steve Jobs and Apple, shared his experiences during a recent lecture sponsored by the SJMC and McNair Institute for Leadership in Equity and Access. Menuez is “Fearless Genius,” a book, lecture, photos and a video web series that tell the stories which unfolded from 1985 to 2000. Working on Gov. McMaster’s campaign, O’Looney said, “My biggest takeaway from these experiences was learning how to complete goal-oriented projects,” O’Looney said. “In both internships, the overall goal was to get the candidate elected and to stop at nothing to see it through.” –Shelby Johnson

THE GENIUS CAPTURING GENIUS

Shirisha Mudunuri wants to give students the skills to find their dream jobs after graduation. As the new CIC career services manager, her role is to introduce students to as many learning and job opportunities as possible. “I chose to work at the CIC because of the creative, interpersonal nature that it brings,” Mudunuri said. Specifically, she develops events that help students gain skills in interviewing, resume-writing and networking, including the annual CIC Career Fair. She received a Bachelor of Arts in sociology from the University of Richmond and a Master in Management Studies from Duke University. In college, Mudunuri took leadership positions in a variety of campus events. Specifically, she created a series of events called “Experience India,” where students of mostly Indian descent got to experience a little piece of India right on campus. She initially saw herself going down a business-related path but eventually decided to begin a Master of Education in Higher Education and Student Affairs at South Carolina. Her first position at the university was experiential education manager in the Career Center, where she increased student participation in group job shadowing programs by 833% and served as a liaison to the CIC, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sports Management and the Darla Moore School of Business. “I love the CIC,” she said. “Being able to get students on the right path is extremely rewarding.” –Michael Racanelli

THE CIC WELCOMES NEW CAREER SERVICES MANAGER

Caroline O’Looney

INTERNSING FOR CHANGE

A CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

All journalism and broadcast majors are required to participate in senior seminar. Although the time and effort required can be daunting, the rewards include experience in short and long-form stories, producing films and digital writing. “What’s a typical day in senior seminar like? Students begin their day with an editorial meeting at 8 a.m. From there, they break into teams or work individually to complete their stories by 3 p.m. “In JOUR 471 you have two weeks to do a package, which makes you work late because here you have seven hours,” says senior Jamie Gilbert-Fitzpatrick. “That really teaches you what you’ve made of. In the very first two weeks you realize your strengths, weaknesses and where you need to improve.” Students commit eight hours a day a in the newsroom. Jobs or other classes are not recommended because of senior semester’s schedule requirements. –Ciano Chandler

Claire Robinson in the SJMC.

LEADING THE WAY

Shirisha Mudunuri

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ACTIVELY ENGAGED

“Effective communication is one of the most meaningful practices and something I am incredibly passionate about,” Robinson said.

Shirisha Mudunuri

“I don’t take pictures of babies, high school seniors, brides, families or kids,” Dr. Keith Kenney said. “I take creative portraits that are between branding and art.” The visual communications professor has a unique craft that has propelled his career as a photographer and educator. Since joining the faculty in 1988, Dr. Kenney has been a driving force in photojournalism. In addition to teaching, he has traveled the world, including China, Uganda and Georgia. In 2010, he received a grant from the U.S. State Department for partnering with the Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management in Tbilisi, Georgia. He says one of his greatest career accomplishments is the creation of the Visual Communications Quarterly Journal, now in its 25th year of publication. After his retirement this spring, he plans to open a photography business in Florida. –Abby Gerwit

Claire Robinson.

Quick TAKES

The filmmaker showed sleepless nights, screaming CEOs, that is,” Menuez said, explaining why he took on the project. "Fearless Genius," a book, lecture, photos and a video web series that tell the stories which unfolded from 1985 to 2000 is “Fearless Genius,” a book, lecture, photos and a video web series that tell the stories which unfolded from 1985 to 2000. Working on Gov. McMaster’s campaign, O’Looney said, “My biggest takeaway from these experiences was learning how to complete goal-oriented projects,” O’Looney said. “In both internships, the overall goal was to get the candidate elected and to stop at nothing to see it through.” –Shelby Johnson

THE GENIUS CAPTURING GENIUS

Doug Menuez, the photographer and filmmaker who captured 15 years of innovation following Steve Jobs and Apple, shared his experiences during a recent lecture sponsored by the SJMC and McNair Institute for Entrepreneurism and Free Enterprise. The result of his efforts is “Fearless Genius,” a book, lecture, photos and a video web series that tell the stories which unfolded from 1985 to 2000 in Silicon Valley. “I set out to capture the story of innovation … whatever that is,” Menuez said, explaining why he took on the project. The filmmaker showed sleepless nights, screaming CEOs, conducted phone interviews, knocked on doors and surveyed people in Columbia. While interning for Cayce’s mayor, she worked on social media accounts, designed flyers and invitations, set up fundraisers and worked festivals for the campaign. She gained knowledge from both of her internships. "My biggest takeaway from these experiences was learning how to complete goal-oriented projects," O’Looney said. "In both internships, the overall goal was to get the candidate elected and to stop at nothing to see it through." –Shelby Johnson

LEADING THE WAY

SLIS is leading the way in accessibility research with the creation of L_LED, the Laboratory for Leadership in Equity and Diversity. The L_LED program is dedicated to ensuring that all library patrons receive the same level of access to information and library services, and it’s perfectly summarized by the tagline “Everyone, everywhere, every time.” L_LED is a passion project of Dr. Clayton Copeland, who has personal experience with the unique needs of those who are “differentely able,” a term she adopted during her time in the Panhellenic sorority and serves as an event director for the university’s Homecoming Commission. Working on Gov. McMaster’s campaign, O’Looney lives lost and people pushed to the breaking point — all in the pursuit of technology to change the world. Lecture attendees were given a look at the man behind the myth of Steve Jobs, along with the names of people largely forgotten who made Apple Inc. a worldwide brand. –Griffen Hedrick

ACTIVELY ENGAGED

Claire Robinson.

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Claire Robinson.
Quick Takes cont.

TAKING STOCK
Photography is all about showing, not telling, and the photos media agencies choose can make all the difference in a news story. Dr. Tara Mortensen, an associate professor in the J-school, says which image is chosen or how it’s framed can paint a picture that may not tell the whole story. “You can tell the truth with an image, while not telling the whole truth,” she said.

Her most recent research examines whether people find stock photos or photojournalism more trustworthy. Many organizations have begun to use stock photos over using an on-staff photojournalist to save money, and she aims to find out if that is negatively influencing the reader. Dr. Mortensen says stock photos tend to be generic and designed to apply to many different specific article topics, images that have been used too often or look posed may evoke a sense of inauthenticity. Photojournalists, on the other hand, take photos for a particular article or provide images for the author to write about, indirectly playing an important role in building trust with the reader.

–Sophie Bello

WHEN IN ROME
Dr. Carol Pardun and Van Kornegay, two SJMC faculty members, will venture to Italy this May, taking 24 students along with them. The three-week Maymester class, Travel Writing and Photography, will begin on campus and end in Rome. Dr. Pardun can’t wait to experience the sights and food. “I love Italy, so I’m excited about introducing it to my students,” she said. “I’m probably most excited about eating in Italy because nothing beats the food there!”

In addition to eating their way through the country, the class will visit tourist attractions such as the Colosseum, St. Peter’s Basilica and the Pantheon. Dr. Pardun hopes to teach the course in May 2020, but “it is not officially in the books yet.”

–Alexis Sweet

ALUMNI STRONG
Karson Terry feels as though she has come home. A 2016 graduate of the university, she joined the CIC in February as alumni and donor relations manager. Terry plans programs and events to help the college build stronger relationships with its alumni and donors. This includes coordinating the college’s student-alumni mentoring program, managing the college’s stewardship initiatives for donors and planning special events for alumni and donors. As a member of the development team, she helps create opportunities for CIC alumni and donors to give back in ways that benefit students, faculty and staff.

“Ultimately, the success of our students and future alumni is the driving force behind everything that I do,” Terry said. “I can’t think of a better job than helping to prepare a brighter future for generations to come.”

–Haley Davis

STORYTELLING IN THE DIGITAL AGE
Thanks to smartphones, anyone can create professional-quality videos with the right software and skills. The CIC’s Digital Media Academy was created to teach them how. The first week-long camp, held at SJMC in May, was designed for underrepresented students of all majors, including those from local HBCUs. Students work in teams to produce digital media content with their smartphones and the university’s equipment.

“Working in this community can be enriching for them and open them up to a vast new world, a new awareness of career opportunities,” says Dr. Shirley Carter, the CIC’s associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion. “It’s a pipeline initiative to attract students who might not otherwise think of digital media brands, advertising and PR as a career aspiration.”

–Olivia Ondia

FROM COLUMBIA TO COSTA RICA
In July, a group of graduate students will venture to Costa Rica for a week with Dr. Kim Thompson, an associate professor in SLIS. The school has partnered with the University at Buffalo to offer the study abroad opportunity through UB’s International Librarianship course. Dr. Thompson explained how she and Dr. Dick Kawooya, interim director of SLIS, hope the school will be able to offer its own study abroad program in summer 2020.

“This course is a response to the effects of globalization in the library and information science field,” Dr. Thompson said. “We hope students come away with an understanding of the innovative practices in disparate communities that allows them to not only imagine themselves in these contexts, but also prepares them to serve diverse user groups within U.S. libraries, archives and other information agencies.”

While in Costa Rica, students will take tours and explore the University of Costa Rica and its library and information studies. They will visit libraries throughout Costa Rica, such as the Judicial Power Library and the National Archives Museum. Support the program by donating to the Dean’s Excellence Fund. Visit Costa Rica and AS1023 in the message line.

–Natalie Kistner

LIGHTER A “SKILL”
new name is part of an ongoing effort to broaden the pursuit of literacy. “We want to change the misconception that libraries are all about books,” says Christine Sheltek, executive director of SCCLC (pronounced skill). Previously named the South Carolina Center for Children’s Books and Literacy, the college has broadened the center’s outreach to incorporate a spectrum of literacies, including media, financial, health and even nutrition. It’s working to offer more professional development opportunities for teachers and librarians as well as experiential learning programs for students. And, SCCLC plans to launch a highly anticipated online portal that will provide greater access to resources and research. “There are a lot of things happening,” Sheltek said. “It is an exciting time to be at SCCLC.”

Clearly, while the center is home to the one of the largest selections of children’s books on campus, books are just one chapter of their story.

–Jesse Sarette

INTERACT WITH INTERCOM
Department and oversees all monitoring and compliance activities for the October 2015 flood recovery. “If you find yourself thinking that you might’ve just wasted four years of your life, don’t panic,” Lemmonds said. “You’ll eventually find your way to something even bigger than you could’ve imagined – just like I did.”

–Pinya Murphy

Share your unforgettable memory, anecdote about a favorite professor, advice to the next class or a way college changed your life. We’ll include museum and SCCLC Power Library and the National Archives Museum. Support the program by donating to the Dean’s Excellence Fund. Visit Costa Rica and AS1023 in the message line.

–Natalie Kistner

LITERACY IS A “SKILL”
was an instructed journalism alumna. For three years, Lemmonds studied journalism at South Carolina, determined to land a position with ESPN once she completed her degree. During her senior year, she learned the reality of many sports broadcasting jobs: An interview with ESPN was hard to come by without years of “in-the-trenches” jobs. Although discouraged, she began to shift her focus toward networking.

“I refused to believe that my life path included any other road aside from the one that led to ESPN,” said Lauren Lemmonds, a 2016 broadcast journalism alumna. “Since I had no job prospects at the time, I took advantage of every opportunity I had to make professional relationships with people,” she said. Her hard work paid off. She now works as a program compliance specialist for the City of Columbia Community Development

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CIC COURSE EXPLORES BLOCKCHAIN

Since its introduction to the world in 2008, blockchain technology has made its way into virtually every industry. To prepare students for work with blockchain, the CIC is offering a new introductory course on its use this summer.

Led by the research work of Dr. Jonathan Fletcher and taught by Dr. Dirk Brown, both of the university’s McNair Institute for Entrepreneurism and Free Enterprise, SLIS 480: Special Topics in Blockchain in Information Management will familiarize students with major platforms and educate them on applications. “There are tons of applications of blockchain technology,” Dr. Fletcher said. “The structure of the course will be to explain what it is and how students can use it in the world.”

–Neil Boris

REAL WORLD COLLABORATION

With three ADDY Awards (2008), Adweek’s Readers’ Choice Award for Hottest Lifestyle Magazine (2017) and the Society of Publication Designers’ Brand of the Year award (2018), Garden & Gun has established itself as a powerhouse of a publication. The magazine covers southern topics from leisure to hunting and more. Readers can even find more eccentric stories such as touring the ultimate woodworking shop at Richland Library.

This semester, the company is working with the SJMC to allow students in Associate Professor Cecile Holmes’ magazine writing class and Adjunct Instructor Jason Porter’s motion design class to create articles and videos for the magazine. Students in the motion design class will create explainer videos that visually communicate the ideas and stories that students in Holmes’ class have written. “Working with Garden & Gun provides students with the experience of creating professional-level work that has the opportunity to be published by an actual brand,” Porter said. “This is an experience I wish I could have had when I was an undergraduate.” He hopes this type of professional partnership is something that can continue with future upper-level classes.

–Adam Cline

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Have any idea what creative placemaking is? Through the collaborative efforts of community stakeholders, public spaces can be transformed to foster growth, community, sustainability, art and culture – the same values that resonate with libraries. According to the American Library Association’s Center for the Future of Libraries, which works to identify emerging trends in libraries and their communities that focus on art and culture just as much as they would with transportation or education.

–Chloe Neal

A Fellowship to Remember

If you had asked Heather Braum several years ago what she would be doing during the summer of 2018, it likely wouldn’t have entailed a fellowship in Washington, D.C. After working in the Northeast Kansas Library System for nine years, Heather received a recommendation from a friend to apply for a Google Policy Fellowship at the American Library Association’s Washington office. She was eventually chosen.

After living in two small rural Kansas towns and working in Lawrence, moving to D.C. was a big step but one that Braum was willing to take. Lucky enough to find a residence on Capitol Hill and work in the heart of the city, she was thrown right into the mix. “A perk of the location was being able to take in all of the cultural and historical opportunities and even getting to work in the Library of Congress reading room,” she said.

Even though the fellowship lasted for only three months, she received a behind-the-scenes view of the technology and telecom policy world. She attended Capitol Hill briefings, hearings and meetings held by both Congress and the Federal Communications Commission. She interviewed and observed the ALA Washington office staff at work. She and other fellows completed a research project on libraries, democracy and civic engagement.

Braum’s favorite part of the fellowship was getting an inside look into ALA’s policy and advocacy work, including net neutrality, copyrighting and broadband access and, growing up as a small-town farm girl, living, working and commuting by train in a large city was an experience.

Currently, Braum is a second-year Ph.D. student in library and information science at the university. She focuses on public libraries, policy and Twitter information usage at the state legislative level. Eventually, she’d like to work in a library or education advocacy-related role with a state-level or national organization. “Working on increasing library funding and overall public support for organizations that support lifelong learning for the general public from early childhood and on is what I see myself doing down the road,” Braum said.

Go for the fellowships and internships that are related to your career path, even if they’re big dream ones like this fellowship was.

–Heather Braum

–Chloe Neal
JIM HOAGLAND

Jim Hoagland gives out of a tremendous sense of respect to those in South Carolina who have supported him. “I hope it’s a way to pay tribute to, to respect and to honor those who have contributed to my career,” Hoagland said. “Whether it be the editors of The Rock Hill Evening Herald, The State or The Record – an afternoon newspaper in Columbia in those days.”

Jim Hoagland was born in Rock Hill, South Carolina. “I discovered the Rock Hill Public Library, and I realized that books, newspapers and magazines were a passport to another world,” Hoagland said.

Hoagland feels that this continued desire for learning is what led him to journalism. He graduated from the university in 1961 with a bachelor’s in journalism. Hoagland is a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner, receiving this prestigious honor first in 1971 for his work on a 10-part series about South Africa and again in 1991 for his columns concerning events leading up to the Gulf War and turmoil in the Soviet Union. Hoagland retired from The Washington Post in 2006 but still continues to write columns from time to time.

ALEXANDER B. “BOB” NOE JR.

Bob Noe’s gifts to the School of Library and Information Science come from a strong desire to support future librarians, a field he feels will always flourish in spite of the digital age. “I give because I think there’s still a huge place in the world for good librarians, whether it be special librarians, like I used to be, or school or academic librarians,” Noe said. “People think they can just go to the internet for everything now, but who’s going to tell them if what they read on the internet is true?”

Noe was born in Newport News, Virginia. After earning a bachelor’s degree from East Carolina University, he went on to earn a Master of Education, ’76, and a Master of Librarianship, ’77, from South Carolina.

Bob Noe

ALEXANDER B. “BOB” NOE JR.

Bob Noe’s gifts to the School of Library and Information Science come from a strong desire to support future librarians, a field he feels will always flourish in spite of the digital age. “I give because I think there’s still a huge place in the world for good librarians, whether it be special librarians, like I used to be, or school or academic librarians,” Noe said. “People think they can just go to the internet for everything now, but who’s going to tell them if what they read on the internet is true?”

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SHAYLA MERRITT

Shayla Merritt’s decision to establish a scholarship for South Carolina undergraduates comes from a deep-rooted love of family and a desire to honor a lesson she was taught by three of the toughest women she knows – her mother, Louisa Frazier-Merritt, grandmother, Mary Frazier and aunt, Louise Ferguson. The lesson? “Pay it forward.”

Merritt established the Frazier-Merritt Family Scholarship Fund, which she hopes will be an endowed scholarship by this time next year. The scholarship is typically awarded to women of color who are passionate about both communications and STEM fields.

I remember I was leaving Atlanta to go back to a job in New York, and my Aunt Louise said to me ‘Shayla, whatever you do, pay it forward,’” said Merritt, her voice heavy with nostalgia. “That was the moment I knew I wanted to establish a scholarship.”

Originally a native of Buffalo, New York, Merritt can’t remember a time growing up when her family wasn’t performing acts of kindness for strangers. She once witnessed her mother pay a speeding ticket for a stranger who was short of funds, and Merritt reflects that this was just the sort of thing her mother did. She graduated from Syracuse University with a Bachelor of Science in public affairs and a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics and education. She then received a Master of Mass Communication degree from South Carolina. She now works as the associate marketing and communications manager for Stevens and Wilkinson, an architecture, engineering and interior design firm with offices in Columbia.

Every donor has a story that inspires them to give back. To discover ways to support the CIC, visit bit.ly/cic-giving.

Or contact Elaine Arnold Sr. Director of Development: earnold@sc.edu
When Associate Professor Karen Mallia came to the University of South Carolina in 2005, a derogatory comment made by Neil French, creative head of a giant advertising group, was spreading like wildfire through social media. “Women don’t make it to the top because they don’t deserve to,” French said, a statement that sparked Mallia’s now nationally recognized research into gender, creative work and leadership in the creative industries, research that recently culminated with the publication of her textbook “Leadership in the Creative Industries: Principles and Practice.”

Mallia found that half of account planning departments were women and two-thirds of media positions were women, so why was the creative department lacking? One of the biggest issues Mallia noted was that women were coming out of portfolio schools and colleges in the same proportion as men, if not a greater number, and were getting into the industry but weren’t getting the recognition. Outdated attitudes about women still influence hiring practices.

“The old boys’ club still exists, and it continues because of certain things like methods of hiring,” she said. “One of the things I mentioned in my textbook is that people claim to be interested in diversity. They claim to want to hire women, but there’s an adage that says ‘Men are hired for their potential, but women are hired for what they’ve already done,’ so they’re not often given the chance.”

According to Mallia, in the creative industry, people tend to hire more subjectively. “People tend to want to hire people like themselves. This is a natural human tendency, but it is at odds with diversity,” she said.

Why opt for a textbook instead of another academic journal article? “I wanted this sort of hybrid type of book where it has the authenticity and the research and the citations, and is evidence-based,” Mallia said. “But I wanted it to read like a trade book, so that somebody can pick it up and it will be approachable.”

Diversity and the Creative Industry

Story by Olivia Ondus, Senior, Advertising

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–Karen Mallia

Mallia accepting the top prize at Creativibe on behalf of CreateAthon@USC. Photos provided by Karen Mallia.

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Mallia accepting the top prize at Creativibe on behalf of CreateAthon@USC. Photos provided by Karen Mallia.
Today, data analytics and communications go hand in hand. Journalists must translate spreadsheets into insights. Advertising agencies must measure the effectiveness of campaigns. Public relations practitioners must develop strategies based on data collection and research. Like other communications programs, each of the SJMC’s majors prepares students for careers that are becoming increasingly data-centric. But what makes the SJMC different is its pairing with the School of Library and Information Science. These two sister schools work together to provide students with a stronger foundation in analyzing, interpreting and communicating information.

One way J-school students can benefit from SLIS is through minoring in informatics. According to Dr. Elise Lewis, an instructor in SLIS, the informatics minor (formerly known as information science) teaches students how to collect, understand and implement data within an organization.

Ashley Pullen, a 2015 public relations alumna, is an account executive at SFW Agency in Greensboro, North Carolina. She communicates information to clients through a variety of social media platforms. Her job has taught her to find reliable data and how to select the most accurate information for the projects she is given. “Data drives part of the ‘why’ behind what we do in an agency world,” Pullen said. “You have to be able to justify the work that you are doing, and data is a great way to accomplish that.” Even though she has gained an information scientist skill set from her job, Pullen says J-school students who minor in informatics will have a leg up when entering the workforce.

Josh German, a junior mass communications major and informatics minor, believes his outlook on journalism has improved due to the information science classes he has taken. “The power of data is just beginning to be recognized around the world and the benefits of using it correctly can land someone a job with some of the biggest and best corporations in the world,” German said. “Just over the past year, I have learned more about how to obtain, distribute and store information than in all my years of schooling combined. I enjoy being able to use the things I learn in SLIS to make daily information consumption a little easier.”

“I enjoy being able to use the things I learn in SLIS to make my daily information consumption a little easier.”

- Josh German

This web-shaped infographic depicts the benefits an informatics minor can have on all six majors at SJMC.

Infographic by Abby Gerwit.
Drag Queen Story Hour

Event sparks debate on whether libraries should host controversial programs.

Story by Shelby Johnson, Sophomore, Visual Communications

When a group called Mom’s Liberal Happy Hour SC hosted a children’s story hour with drag queens at a Simpsonville library last February, a debate erupted on just what it means to be a public space. Drag Queen Story Hour is a national organization that began as drag queens reading stories to children in libraries but now also offers literary and creative programming for children of all ages. The organization argues these events promote kindness and tolerance.

The Greenville News. Critics also argued that libraries shouldn’t be allowed to host controversial events because the cost of increased security is a burden for local law enforcement agencies.

Dr. Eric Robinson, a media law professor and First Amendment expert in the SJMC, says public facilities can’t discriminate against users based on their message. “The people who oppose having these events have the right to say they oppose, and the people who support these events have the right to say they support,” Dr. Robinson said. “All of these have the right to express their opinion and the government should be involved in protecting that.”

Debate about the story hour led to concerns about security. The Greenville County Sheriff’s Office provided deputies all day that Sunday in preparation for protestors and news reporters.

Five Forks Library offers space for the general public to use. Events in this space are not sponsored or promoted by the Greenville Library System and prospective users must submit an application.

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Dr. David Lankes, director of SLIS, first became aware of this event when he saw a Facebook post about it. “Honestly, I think it’s a really great opportunity for the community and all libraries to get to know the whole community and not just people they see all the time,” he said. “It comes down to the fact that libraries serve the community, but they also help shape it.”

“It comes down to the fact that libraries serve the community, but they also help shape it.”

–Dr. David Lankes

“Dr. Carter believes in the importance of diversity and inclusion at a large institution like South Carolina. “I want our initiatives to be models for other universities to follow,” she said. IC

“I want our initiatives to be models for other universities to follow.”

–Dr. Shirley Staples Carter

Dr. Shirley Staples Carter has spent years opening doors for underrepresented students, so it was no surprise when she was appointed to her new role, associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion for the College of Information and Communications. As founding director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, she is knowledgeable about the college and those who inhabit it.

Her previous diversity work with two of the largest journalism education associations is one of several reasons why she feels well-equipped for such a position. “I see my job as essentially working with the CIC administration, the faculty, staff and students in creating an inclusive learning and working environment,” Dr. Carter said.

Dr. Carter is the first to hold the position at the CIC. She represents both the SJMC and SLIS on the university’s Council of Academic Diversity Officers. She works closely with Dr. John Dozier, the university’s chief diversity officer and senior associate provost for inclusion, to develop and implement strategies for the university. Each ADO is responsible for applying three Focus Carolina initiatives within their college: composition, achievement, and engagement and inclusion.

Dr. Carter plans to promote these initiatives through events such as the CIC’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Research Symposium as well as through the Digital Media Academy, graduate school open house and MLK Day Breakfast of Champions. The purpose of these events and others like them is to attract underrepresented students and faculty and build awareness around diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the college.

Dr. Carter believes in the importance of diversity and inclusion at a large institution like South Carolina. “I want our initiatives to be models for other universities to follow,” she said. IC

Ensuring a safe and satisfying environment for students, faculty and staff.

Story and photo by Haley Davis, Senior, Public Relations

“Diverse Voices” is one of Dr. Carter’s favorite books.

“Diverse Voices” is one of Dr. Carter’s favorite books.
What struck me most about Marcus Amaker was how he seemed as eager to meet with me as I was with him. He was just as excited to ask me questions about myself and my career goals as I was to hear about his. Amaker, Charleston’s first poet laureate and a 1999 J-school alumnus, laughed and cracked jokes throughout our interview at a coffee shop, where he ordered a stack of pancakes and a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice.

The poet laureate position was created in 2016, a year after the massacre at Mother Emanuel church. The city was hurting and needed to heal. Amaker led a benefit show for the families of the victims with a jazz band and poetry, and future Charleston mayor John Tecklenburg was in the audience. After his election, he called Amaker and shared that he wanted to create a poet laureate position as part of the healing process and to put a stronger focus on art and culture in the city. Amaker was his choice for the job.

Today, the poet laureate writes poems for and about the city of Charleston, and he works in schools to encourage kids to become interested in writing. While it is now part of his job, Amaker has volunteered in schools for years, working with children as well as mentoring high school students. “I’m a huge Star Wars fan,” he said with a laugh. “So there’s that part where Yoda tells Luke, ‘pass on what you have learned,’ and that’s what I feel like I’m doing, and it feels really good.”

When he was a child, poetry felt dead to him, like something that belonged in a classroom, but he always “wanted poetry to be alive.” Now, he wants to show that it truly is and wants to give children confidence to pursue writing and the arts. Despite the stigma surrounding artistic careers, he is able to prove that writing as a career can be both fun and profitable. He started out by writing songs when he was 10, constantly creating in his red notebook. In high school he stopped singing, but he never stopped writing. Amaker said his poems “still feel like songs” to him.

His career as a writer began when he majored in journalism at the University of South Carolina. “I love hearing people’s stories and finding out how similar we all are, instead of focusing on our differences,” he said as he described how the J-school taught him the skills needed to be able to tell people’s stories. As a journalist, he worked at The Post and Courier and created Charleston Scene, the paper’s successful entertainment section, in which he served as editor and graphic designer.

He is currently the lead graphic designer for the music journal No Depression. Additionally, Amaker does videography, website design and has over 30 electronic music albums, most recently collaborating with Grammy-nominated producer Quentin E. Baxter for a poetry and jazz album. The album is part of the empath project, which includes a book of Amaker’s poetry. Find the project and more at marcusamaker.com.

“I love hearing people’s stories and finding out how similar we all are instead of focusing on our differences.”

–Marcus Amaker
Josh Dawsey has risen to prominence as The Washington Post’s White House reporter, but he’s not the only SJMC alumnus at the paper. Sports reporters Kent Babb and Isabelle Khurshudyan have also carved out a niche for themselves there, and they credit Senior Instructor Doug Fisher for helping them get there.

A CAREER FROM COPY EDITING CLASS

It’s not very often that a single class ends up changing a student’s entire life, but for Kent Babb, ’04, that’s exactly what happened. “All throughout undergrad I did not want to be a journalist,” said Babb, a sports feature writer for The Washington Post. “But Doug Fisher’s copy editing class seemed fitting at the time. However, life – and Doug Fisher – had other plans.

“I was looking at law schools when I enrolled in the copy editing class, and at the time, it was one of the hardest courses in the entire school,” Babb said. He became engrossed in the AP Stylebook. When Fisher took notice of Babb’s interest, he recommended that he take the Dow Jones copy editing test. Although Babb had no idea what it entailed, he agreed. He scored so well that the summer after his junior year, he earned a sports writing internship in St. Louis. It was his first time on his own and the farthest he’d ever been from home, but it wasn’t the first time he’d dabbled in journalism.

“At 17, I started becoming a freelance writer,” he said. “I liked it and it always came easy to me, but I wanted to become an attorney. Thank God I didn’t go to law school.”

After graduation, he joined The State newspaper as a sports reporter, covering high school football and, of course, South Carolina games. After several years, he joined The Kansas City Star to cover the Chiefs, then the Post in 2012.

“If Doug hadn’t recommended that I take the test, I probably wouldn’t be sitting here right now,” Babb said. “It’s a worldview for me to say that people are better served to do what makes them happy. I would encourage anybody to find out what they truly love, whether it’s journalism, math, science or anything, and just do it.”

SPORTS IN A CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS

Isabelle Khurshudyan, ’14, was just 12 when she moved from the hustle and bustle of New York City to small-town Walhalla, South Carolina. “New York was too big of a city for me but Walhalla was almost too small, so in some ways, Columbia and D.C. are a balance of both worlds,” she said.

Khurshudyan, a sports reporter for the Post, began to immerse herself in journalism as soon as she got to college. She wrote and edited for The Daily Gamecock and began writing for The State her junior year. “I was always pretty stubborn that I wanted to be a writer,” she said. “I wanted to work at a newspaper during a time when so many people were moving toward social media and television.”

At The Gamecock and The State, Khurshudyan had the opportunity to cover several notable South Carolina games during the 2012 football season, including the 2013 Capital One Bowl, the infamous LSU game in Baton Rouge and the game against Tennessee that ended Marcus Lattimore’s career. She, too, credits her success as a writer to Doug Fisher’s copy editing class. “I hate to admit it,” Khurshudyan said, laughing, “but Doug Fisher told us that his class would help us and that we would come back, and that’s exactly what I’m doing right now.”

Focused on becoming a sports writer, she interned for ESPN.com the summer after her junior year. After graduation, she interned at the Post. Subsequently, Khurshudyan earned a permanent position in D.C. covering high school sports. She then moved to college sports, mainly focusing on the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech athletics. After nine months of writing for the Post, she began covering hockey, more specifically, the Washington Capitals, winners of the 2018 Stanley Cup. “As a journalist, you obviously want people to read your work,” she said. “And when it’s a stage like that, you’ve captured the attention of the sports world and it’s a huge career opportunity.”

Khurshudyan credits her alma mater with helping her achieve her dream of becoming a sports writer. “The J-school always emphasized the pursuit of truth and encouraged its students to find the deeper meaning and push the boundaries,” she said.

“There’s something special about being in a place where so many exciting things happen.”

-Isabelle Khurshudyan

Isabelle Khurshudyan. Photo provided by The Washington Post.
When Sarah Massengale isn’t singing opera or writing articles about performances statewide, the junior public relations major is busy pursuing her second college degree. She sees her new career path not as an abandonment of music, but as a complementary option.

At 14, she began singing gospel music in a very small Baptist church. She wasn’t exposed to anything resembling classical music until a teacher heard her sing and then introduced her to Carolyn Poole, a professional pianist who Massengale now describes as a mentor.

“After hearing me she invited me to sing in her choir, then explained to me about the idea of voice lessons,” Massengale said. “She connected me with a voice teacher in St. Matthews, South Carolina, and I have been studying classically ever since.”

Once upon a time, music was Massengale’s lifelong plan. That changed after she graduated from Converse College with a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance.

“I was going to take off to New York and do music,” she said. “But it’s crazy with competition and requires a certain level of cutthroat personality that I don’t have. I’m ambitious, but I cannot be cutthroat – it hurts me.”

With music being such a competitive field, Massengale knows that it will not be easy for her to achieve that dream on pure talent and skills. It’s going to require much more from her. “You know, when you’re blind, you can’t wait tables to cover expenses when you’re taking auditions,” she said. “Those kinds of jobs are not accessible to you that let you do things on your own schedule.”

Massengale, born blind, but she does not allow her visual impairment to define her. She believes many people erroneously view people with disabilities as incompetent or unable to care for themselves.

“They’re a person with a disability the standard by which everyone’s success should be judged,” she said. “I’m just another person, too. We happen to be blind.”

Stephanie Martin, SJMC adjunct instructor, reminisces on what the experience was like teaching Massengale in her PR writing class.

“It was stressful at first figuring out how to approach things, but as far as working with her, she’s a wonderful personality, very challenging and a great writer,” Martin said. “I hope the university continues to look for ways to help students with disabilities.”

Martin said that even though Massengale is a patient student, her fellow classmates must be patient with her as well. “When she asks a lot of questions, it’s not to make things more difficult for you, but to get a better understanding about what they’re doing, and simply asking more to learn more,” she said.

Her classmates are learning more, too. Having her in class is helping them learn to better describe visuals in full detail. “I’ve never had a class with anyone with a disability like that,” classmate Natalie Kistner said. “But I think there are definitely times when we do stuff that doesn’t accommodate her and she points it out, which takes strength.”

As Massengale approaches her senior year, she’s confident that she knows herself better than she did during her early years of college. “I can’t sit here and tell you, ‘Oh, I want to work for this company in 10 years,’” she said. “But I know is that, ultimately I would love to do something in which I can put PR and music together. You know, maybe work as the PR person for the Metropolitan Opera.”

Read the online version of this story at bit.ly/cic-intercom-sarah for Sarah’s perspective on her profile and how writers should approach stories about people with disabilities.
Two weeks into his job with the University of South Carolina Athletics department, Justin Stoll crafted some of the most iconic words in Gamecock football history, words that now boom across more than 80,000 fans at the beginning of each home game: “It’s Saturday in South Carolina,” the voice echoes from within the scoreboard. “Welcome to Williams-Brice.”

“That might be one of the great moments of my career,” Stoll said. “People know that word for word, and I wrote those words. It’s more than enough noodles stuck for NFL Films during the 2008-2009 football season: I was the guy who got the shot that said, ‘We’re going to Disney World’ with Tom Brady and Julian Edelman,” Stoll said casually. “Every single day you set out to learn something new or try something new – it was very experimental,” Stoll said. “Throw the spaghetti on the wall and see what noodles stick.”

More than enough noodles stuck for NFL Films, which offered Stoll a position during his senior year at OU. Stoll still holds the official title of ground cinematographer, spending the game collecting shots from the sidelines. It can be dangerous at times. “He tried to jump over me – I’m a large man,” Stoll said as he told the story of his oh-so-unfortunate meeting with New York Giants’ safety, Antrel Rolle. But the hard times made way for the limelight as Stoll found himself on the sidelines of Super Bowl LII and LIII. “I was the guy who got the shot that said, ‘Welcome to Williams-Brice’ or on coursework for his degree. Why an MLS?

“Information science spoke to me – it was exactly what I wanted,” Stoll said. “Everyone thinks about it in terms of libraries, but it’s so much more than that.”

Having a nationally ranked school in his backyard covering topics such as naming conventions, metadata tags and database management hit all the right buttons for someone who spent so much time inside a control room.

“Through my time in post-production, I developed a sincere love of workflow and metadata,” Stoll said. “If you don’t know where the asset is, you don’t have the asset. It is going to be a large need in the very near future, and I am hoping that I am seeing this picture ahead of the curve.”

Though he still spends many Sundays in the fall on the sideline at Bank of America Stadium, most of Stoll’s time is spent working year-round in his office at Williams-Brice or on coursework to expand their digital and analogue archives thanks to his other role – Master of Library and Information Science student.

Initially, he set out as a theater major at Ohio University, but that changed when he was bitten by the production bug. “We did a high school football coverage show covering them like SportsCenter,” Stoll said. “It kind of encapsulated everything that I am doing in my career now.” From shooting and editing film to building graphics or even reading the entire 600-page technical director’s manual, it was all a part of the process for the aspiring director.

“Every single day you set out to learn something new or try something new – it was very experimental,” Stoll said. “Throw the spaghetti on the wall and see what noodles stick.”

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Photos by Lewis Zeigler.

Story by Natalie Kissner, Senior, Advertising

Each fall, students and mentors spend 24 straight hours coming up with advertising and marketing campaigns for nonprofits that need help. The students involved in CreateAthon@USC are enrolled in Professor Karen Mallia’s Creative Leadership course that works with mentors who volunteer for the event to get the ball rolling on a creative strategy for each brand.

Woody Hinkle, ‘70, owns a small advertising agency that specializes in hotels and resorts. Three times during the past five years, he has returned to South Carolina to mentor CreateAthon students. Hinkle says that the students are doing the work and he is there as a professional guide to help get them on the right track.

“It’s a joy to watch it all come together and see how excited the team is when we start to see the work develop,” Hinkle said.

Daniel Delgado, ‘17, couldn’t wait to return to Carolina to be on the other side of the CreateAthon@USC teams. He has a bachelor’s in advertising and participated in the event as a student in 2016. “It was great way to help out and be a part of an event that did a lot for me as a student,” he said. Now employed as an advertising manager, Delgado helped primarily with the social media planning.

Jared Owenby, ‘14, is excited to give back a little of what was given to him during his time as a Gamecock. A journalism graduate, he has participated in the program for three years and is eager to return and to lend his voice to push the project forward.

Last year, he and his team were assigned a human trafficking awareness company and took a humanistic approach by focusing on the worth of a life, which Owenby says is priceless. “It always reenergizes me and reminds why I went the route I did,” he said. “Working with students helps me grow by reminding me to listen and to trust others’ intuition and vision.” As a copywriter in New Orleans, the journalism alumnus has participated in the program for three years. “It’s so infectious,” said Lisa Fischer, ‘84, who has participated twice. “To see a project come to life and watch the students mature as professionals is priceless. “It always reenergizes me and reminds why I went the route I did,” he said. “Working with students helps me grow by reminding me to listen and to trust others’ intuition and vision.” As a copywriter in New Orleans, the journalism alumnus has participated in the program for three years. “It’s so infectious,” said Lisa Fischer, ‘84, who has participated twice. “To see a project come to life and watch the students mature as professionals is invaluable experience, from trying to collaborate to presenting in a professional setting,” she said.

Deepfakes and Media Forensics

Story by Neil Boris, Senior, Advertising

A s technological advances make it easier for almost anyone to create deepfakes, Christine Glancey and her colleagues on The Wall Street Journal’s Media Forensics Committee are working to ensure the paper knows how to spot them. Deepfakes are realistic videos, images or audio files created by artificial intelligence known as generative adversarial networks that feature public figures saying or doing things that never truly occurred. GANs use algorithms and machine learning techniques to learn a figure’s facial expressions and positions.

Deepfakes were initially used in 2017 to create fake celebrity pornographic material. Since then, they’ve evolved to include political content. Because research on GANs is publicly available, anyone with technical knowledge and a powerful graphics card can create them.

“I first became aware of deepfakes in December 2017 after reading an article on them from a journalistic research page on Twitter,” Glancey said. “I was immediately frightened by the implications of their usage.” Determined to combat them, Glancey, a deputy standards editor for the Journal’s Standards and Ethics Team, teamed up with Francesco Marconi, a member of the Journal’s Media Science Lab, along with New York University graduate student Till Daldrup, to form the paper’s Media Forensics Committee. “Marconi and Daldrup conducted research of academics working in the deepfake field and created a presentation for the Journal’s staff to show the implications, different forms and how deepfakes work,” Glancey said. The committee has since created a media

“I first became aware of deepfakes in December 2017 after reading an article on them from a journalistic research page on Twitter, and I was immediately frightened by the implications of their usage.”

–Christine Glancey

“SWAT team, consisting of members from the Journal’s videos, photos and desktop platform teams as well as its spot news desk and media science lab departments. This team convenes monthly to identify the validity of content by assessing metadata and skeptical content – frame by frame – that is sent in to the Journal. Glancey visited the SJMC in April to explain the deepfake phenomenon and how the Journal is proactively working to identify and combat them. Glancey showed the presentation created by the Media Forensics Committee to SJMC students and faculty.

“Teaching media literacy and spreading awareness of deepfakes to young journalists is important to help them detect fake media of all kinds,” Glancey said. “This knowledge will then assist them in their creation of transparently real journalism.”

Story by Natalie Kissner, Senior, Advertising

Jennifer Hammond, Samantha Hayes, London Masters, Townsend Cruz, Kathleen Studermire, Allen Maasdam, Nina Trin, Deanna Roberts, Meredith Price, Gordon Humphreys, and Cindy take a photo opportunity at the 2018 CreateAthon@USC. Photos by Lewis Zeigler.

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Christine Glancey poses after giving her deepfake informational seminar. Photo by Sophie Bello.
Looking Through The Lens

H e’s covered every U.S. president from Ronald Reagan to Donald Trump. It’s a fast-paced job. As chief photographer for Getty Images, Win McNamee, ‘85, must be nimble, especially in his use of technology for photojournalism in an instant news era.

“We all start as beginners in whatever field we choose, but what I think separates people in terms of success is hard work and being open to learning from anyone you happen to cross paths with,” McNamee said.

The Arlington, Virginia, native attended the University of South Carolina as a photojournalism student, where he was involved in several publications including The Columbia Record, The State and The Daily Gamecock. These early experiences in print media ignited his passion for his craft. McNamee says several South Carolina alumni inspired his professional journey including Jeff Amberg, Ginger Pinson, Joe Farmer, Donna Bise and Bobby Hurt.

“College is more than just taking classes. It teaches you the tenacity of sticking to something and not giving up.”

–Win McNamee

College is more than just taking classes. It teaches you the tenacity of sticking to something and not giving up. –Win McNamee

“Still photography is all about the moment in time,” McNamee said.

McNamee spent 14 years with Reuters as a news photographer and a member of the Air Force One press pool. In addition to presidents, he photographs members of Congress and political events in Washington, D.C., and beyond. Some of his most memorable opportunities include covering the 70-year anniversary of the invasion of Normandy, following a migration story out of the Middle East and his time in the press pool. During his sophomore year, McNamee felt disheartened after being told that still photography would soon be replaced by videography as technology progressed. It hasn’t happened yet. He believes this is because shooting for video and shooting for still images are two different mediums with alternate executions and ways of thinking.

“Still photography is all about being able to capture a specific moment in time,” McNamee said.

“It still has the same power today as when I first started shooting.”

Win McNamee, chief photographer for Getty Images. Photos taken by Win McNamee, chief photographer for Getty Images. Shown: protesters at Brett Kavanaugh’s confirmation hearing; Dr. Christine Blasey Ford before the Senate confirmation committee; Donald Trump at his first State of the Union address. McNamee’s Getty Images profile online. Provided by Win McNamee.
Emily Stone has a trick for getting people to read her entire email – put the best gossip at the bottom. Her internship at the South Carolina Bar started with reading the last bit of an email from the South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

“I read the entire email and that’s where I saw the internship posted,” she said. Stone greatly credits the email that the J-school sends out for highlighting this opportunity for her. “Always read to the bottom,” she said with a bit of finger wagging.

The Walterboro, South Carolina native applied to the University of South Carolina. She started college as a print journalism major at the J-school, but moved into public relations and minored in political science. After graduating in 2018, Stone found herself in a position many recent graduates dream of: she had to apply. Having all the contacts and relationships already built allowed Stone to make a smooth transition into the role.

In her current position as content strategist, she creates a bi-weekly e-blast and manages the organization’s website, social media and magazine – all skills she learned through writing courses at the J-school.

“My time at the University allowed me to form connections with people across the nation,” Stone said. “Attending the University of South Carolina creates a bond that’s like no other. My time there helped me establish friendships for life.”

“Read to the bottom,” she said. Her old boss from the internship was leaving the Bar and told Emily she had to apply. Having all the contacts and relationships already built allowed Stone to make a smooth transition into the role.

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Emily Stone wanted a career where these two worlds intersected. Her next step was to work at Baker, Ravenel and Bender law firm for two years after taking the LSAT. Stone realized she did not want to attend law school. “It’s a lot of work, good work, but it will always be there,” she said. She keeps law school on the back burner and recommends that to students who may not want to go into law right away but don’t want to give up on it completely.

After graduating in 2018, Stone found herself in a position many recent graduates experience – back home and without a job. She spent a month regrouping and considering her next move when opportunity came knocking. Her old boss from the internship was leaving the Bar and told Emily she had to apply. Having all the contacts and relationships already built allowed Stone to make a smooth transition into the role.

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“The Walterboro, South Carolina native said she only applied to the University of South Carolina. Set to be a Gamecock, Stone began as a print journalism major at the J-school, then moved into public relations and minored in political science.

With a love for law and politics, Stone wanted a career where these two worlds
Crimson Hexagon, an artificial intelligence-powered software with a library of more than 1 trillion social media posts, to gain a sophisticated analysis of public sentiment toward the Democratic presidential primary candidates in South Carolina. Crimson Hexagon automates the collection and analysis of social media data, using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Reddit and Tumbrl. The software is used by major companies such as Anheuser-Busch, InBev, Adidas, General Mills and Paramount Pictures. Insights lab users can study not only the volume of conversation on a particular topic, but whether reactions are positive or negative and even whether or not they convey a specific emotion. “South Carolina Insights is an exciting project,” said Randy Covington, the CIC’s director of special projects. “We look forward to playing an important role in helping people better understand the candidates and issues in the pivotal South Carolina presidential primaries.”

The lab will also explore topics like South Carolina tourism and how visitors engage with state accounts while they are here as well as how South Carolinians feel about legislative issues such as teacher salaries, the sale of SCANA to Dominion Energy and more. In addition to studying specific issues of importance to the Palmetto State, the lab will also serve as a tool for teaching students, faculty and community members how to gather and interpret social media data, skills that will make future graduates more marketable to potential employers. “The insights lab is making us a better school,” Covington said. “Our future journalists and strategic communicators need to understand social media and the lab will give them access to the state of the art analytical tools.”

“I like to say that social media listening is like putting your fingertip to the pulse of what is happening in the digital world.” —Kaitlyn Park

Obituaries
Helen Fellers, MLIS, 1975, died Dec. 15, 2018. Fellers worked at the CIC’s South Carolina Center for Children’s Books and Literacy (now South Carolina Center for Community Literacy) from 2001-2016. Here, she managed the collection, led story times for neighborhood preschools and taught a children’s literature class. She also served as a literacy advisor, starting in the college’s “Reading Rosters Recommend!” video series. In 2013, Fellers was honored with an annual Literacy Leaders Award from SLIS. She also received Richland Library’s 2016 Lucy Hampton Boundick Award, which recognizes local figures who have advanced the interest in books or libraries.

Louis Sussman, a longtime supporter of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, died Feb. 11, 2019. Sussman served as student body president at the University of South Carolina before graduating in 1943. The Gaffney native then spent three years playing professional football before embarking on a lengthy career in newspapers, serving as publisher of his family’s newspaper, The Gaffney Ledger; from 1969-1999. In 1999, the school named him a Diamond Circle Honoree for outstanding contributions to print journalism.

1970s
Hank Gilman, BA, 1975, has been named editorial director at Newsweek magazine. Gilman previously worked as deputy editor of Fortune magazine.

Rick Stewart, MA, 1975, was promoted the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, one of the most prestigious awards bestowed by the governor of North Carolina. Stewart is an assistant professor of communications in the School of Visual, Performing and Communications Arts at Brevon College in Wilson, North Carolina, and retired publisher and editor of four newspapers formerly under the umbrella of the Johnstonian News Group.

1980s
Mike Boykin, BA, 1980, has been named one of Charlotte Business Journal’s Most Admired CEOs of 2019. Boykin is CEO of Bopseke Sports & Entertainment, a marketing agency in Charlotte.

Walter Clayson, MLIS, 1985, retired in February. Clayson served six years with the state of Georgia and 24 years with Live Oak Public Libraries in Savannah, Georgia. Clayson and his wife are celebrating his retirement by traveling the world in their sailboat.


1990s
Adrienne Fairwell, BA, 1999, has joined SCETV in Columbia as vice president of marketing, communications and development.

Melanie Huggins, MLIS, 1995, was awarded the 2018 Stephen G. Morrison Visionary Award by One Columbia for Arts and History. Huggins is the executive director of Rideland Library.

Kathleen (Bell) Johnson, BA, 1998, was named to The Independent’s 2019 Class of Rising Stars of Philanthropy for her volunteerism and fundraising work with local nonprofits. The Independent is a philanthropic publication in Kansas City, Missouri.

Lorne Kennard, MLIS, 1999, is a university archivist and manager of technical services at the Brown Library at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois.

Padgett S. Moringo, APR, BA, 1990, has established Padgett Communications, a consulting firm specializing in communications strategy, public relations, event planning and social media for nonprofits, small businesses and professional services.

Dr. Amanda (Colson) Sturgill, BA, 1990, recently worked with Dr. August Grant at the SJMC and two colleagues at BYU-Hawaii to edit a major two-book set, “Religion Online: How Digital Technology is Changing the Way We Worship and Pray.” This year, she is also on the board of directors for the AEJMC, the major organization for mass communication programs at colleges and universities. She and her husband, David (computer science, ’89), are proud Gamecock parents to a daughter and a son, both in the Carolina Band. Sturgill is an associate professor of communications at Elon University in Elon, North Carolina.
Josh Dawsey, BA, 2012, was named to the Forbes “30 under 30: Meet the Millennials Changing the Face of the Media” list. In April, he spoke at the University of Arkansas School of Journalism and Strategic Media’s Roy Reed Lecture. That month, he was also honored with a White House Correspondents’ Association Merrimann Smith Award for print. Dawsey is a White House reporter for The Washington Post.

2000s

Kara Apley, BA, 2001, won a Meadows Regional EMMY Award in the Interactive category, which recognizes storytelling on multiple digital platforms. Apley is a journalist and digital producer at WSMV in Nashville, Tennessee.

Alison (Steinheude) Bell, BA, 2008, started her own business as a family photographer in order to travel the world with the U.S. Marine Corps. She currently lives in Okinawa, Japan.

Summer M. Bender, BA, 2007, has been named to The State’s 20 under 40 class for 2019. Bender is a theater teacher at Spring Hill High School in Chapin and is president of the Theatre Towne Board.

Hilary Dyer Brannon, BA, 2008, MMC, 2012, has been named to The State’s 20 under 40 class for 2019. Brannon is a communication and events director at the University of South Carolina.

Drew Brooks, BA, 2007, has joined National Guard Association of the United States in Washington, D.C., as a senior writer/editor. Brooks previously worked as a reporter with the Fayetteville (North Carolina) Observer.

Mary Kathryn Brown, MLIS, 2000, renewed her National Board certification in library media this year. She has a new job as Librarian at Woodward Academy North, a private school in Johns Creek, Georgia.

Jamie Dowtin, MMC, 2009, has returned to Prisma Health Midlands Foundation as events director for Prisma Health Children’s Hospital – Midlands. In her new role, Dowtin will manage the children’s hospital’s board and direct signature fundraising events, KEMPALOOZA and Festival of Trees.


Jason Holif, MMC, 2009, is vice president of business applications and insight at Experience Kiniments in Florida.

Kim Jamieson, BA, 2006, MMC, 2008, has joined Columbus Metropolitan Airport as director of marketing and service development. Jamieson was also named to The State’s 20 under 40 class for 2019.

Merrell “MJ” Johnson, BA, 2009, has been named to The State’s 20 under 40 class for 2019. Johnson is the development and marketing officer for Mental Illness Recovery Center in Columbia.

Michael Lamberth, MLIS, 2006, has been appointed city librarian of the San Francisco Public Library by San Francisco Mayor London N. Breed. Lamberth is the first Asian American to lead the SFPL.

Jason Rapp, BA, 2002, has been named program director for South Carolina Cultural Districts. Rapp is communications director for the South Carolina Arts Commission.

Carolyn (Callahan) Round, BA, 2008, has been named a 2019 Young Leader in Louisville, Kentucky. She is the only member of Louisiana’s media industry to earn the distinction. She has also taken over as weekend evening anchor and managing editor at the city’s CBS affiliate. She and her husband welcomed a baby girl in 2017.

Drew Weiss, MLIS, 2004, gave a TED Talk about eliminating late fines in order to fulfill the mission of public libraries. The video received more than 850,000 views. Weiss is a youth services manager at La Crosse Public Library in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Brian Walker, BA, 2009, has been promoted to president at Swinom, an Indiana-based digital agency that helps higher education institutions engage with potential students. In his new role, Walker leads digital strategy, development and innovation.

Beatie (Pacon) Wallace, MLIS, 2001, has been appointed to the 2020 John Newberry Award committee to select the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children published in 2019.

Nandini Bhalla, Ph.D., 2019, has been appointed as a professor in the fall.

Thomas Broughton, MLIS, 2014, has been appointed the Vermont State Librarian by Gov. Phil Scott. Broughton is the first African American to hold the post.

Marti Brown, MLIS, 2011, Certificate, 2012, was awarded a Spauldford Fair Grant in November to develop a library program she developed. In December, she received her National Board Certification in Library Media. Brown is a library media specialist at Westwood High School in Bythewood.

Lindsey Church, BA, 2013, married Andrew Ellis in January. The two met in their Harvard Law School section, and their wedding announcement was featured in the New York Times.


Connor Fassnacht, BA, 2017, has joined Independence Blue Cross in Philadelphia as the associate channel manager for consumer marketing and member engagement.

Britney Jade Geary, MLIS, 2015, was one of only 50 people allowed to participate in the American Library Association’s 2019 Emerging Leaders program.

Kathryn Hodges, MLIS, 2017, was one of only 50 people selected to participate in the American Library Associations 2019 Emerging Leaders program.

Margaret Hoyton, BA, 2013, has launched a full-service marketing company called Twelve31 Media in Myrtle Beach.

Rachel Kachek, MLIS, 2018, has joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency working in research and data science support.

Thomas Malach, MLIS, 2010, will give the closing keynote at the Queer Library Association Conference in late May. Malach is a teen services librarian at Richland Library and co-hosts “The Secret Sroud,” a podcast about comics and libraries.

Avery Wilks, BA, 2015, was named The State Media Company’s 2017-2018 Hampton Gonzales award recipient. Wilks is one of 12 recipients of McClatchy’s 2019’s President’s Awards for Journalism Excellence for his investigation of corrupt leadership in a South Carolina electric co-op. His 2018 South Carolina Press Association awards include a second place Judson Chapman award, first place in Government Beat Reporting, first place in Business Beat Reporting and first place in Individual Use of Social Media. Wilks is a State House and politics reporter for The State in Columbia.

A’ja Wilson, BA, 2018, was keynote speaker at the Women’s Rights and Empowerment Network’s third annual summit in April. Wilson is 2018 WNBA Rookie of the Year.

2010s

Thomas Bell, BA, 2013, has joined Horry County Government as a public information officer. He works primarily with the Horry County Emergency Management Department focusing on media relations, social media and public education.

Nandini Bhalla, Ph.D., 2019, will join Washington and Lee University in Virginia, as a tenure-track assistant professor in the fall.

Jason Broughton, MLIS, 2014, has been appointed the Vermont State Librarian by Gov. Phil Scott. Broughton is the first African American to hold the post.

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Courtney McAllister, MLIS, 2017, joined Yale University’s Lillian Goldman Law Library as the electronic resources librarian in October. She is also associate editor of “The Serial Librarian.”

Ashley Pullen, BA, 2015, has joined SWF agency in Greer, South Carolina, as an account executive.


Ron Stafford, MLIS, 2017, has been hired as head librarian at Northeastern Technical College in Cheraw, South Carolina, following five months as interim head librarian. In his new role, he will establish an analog archive and digital archive for born-digital material. While working with the director of the online college, he will create a digital budget system.

Rachel Stein, BA, 2018, has joined Majority Whip James E. Clyburn’s staff as district press secretary. Stein will manage and coordinate media activities for the congressman in South Carolina.

Eric Taylor, BA, 2017, has been promoted to digital marketing specialist at Spectra, a full-service marketing agency in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Taylor previously worked as a client relations and content manager.


Thomas Waters, MLIS, 2017, has joined Bemus University in Gannett, Georgia, as a technical services librarian.

Sara Wilde, BA, 2015, is a reporter and weekend anchor for WVLT Channel 8 in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Avery Wilks, BA, 2015, was named The State Media Company’s 2017-2018 Hampton Gonzales award recipient. Wilks is one of 12 recipients of McClatchy’s 2019’s President’s Awards for Journalism Excellence for his investigation of corrupt leadership in a South Carolina electric co-op. His 2018 South Carolina Press Association awards include a second place Judson Chapman award, first place in Government Beat Reporting, first place in Business Beat Reporting and first place in Individual Use of Social Media. Wilks is a State House and politics reporter for The State in Columbia.

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Eloise C. Eggleston, Senior Director of Development, at earnold@sc.edu or 803-777-6898.
Last year, Senior Instructor Lisa Sisk received a devastating diagnosis – primary progressive aphasia, a neurodegenerative disorder that affects her ability to communicate. For someone who has made her mark on thousands of public relations practitioners over the past 20 years, including eight years as InterCom editor, giving up teaching was out of the question. And for her family at the CIC, the feeling was mutual. Since then, Sisk and the SJMC have adapted to keep her doing what she does best – teaching.

Read the full story online: uof.sc/LisaSisk