

COJO instructors invited to participate in McGraw Hill Communication Symposiums

COJO lecturers Beau Bingham and Justin Stewart were invited to participate at the McGraw Hill symposium for communication professionals. Bingham attended the Fall 2023 symposium in Washington, D.C. and Stewart attended the Spring 2024 symposium in Austin, TX. Both instructors were invited upon their merit and dedication to teaching and communication studies. It was the first time either Bingham or Stewart had attended.

During their time at the symposium, Bingham and Stewart met with communication instructors from across the nation brainstorming ideas for teaching, critiquing workbooks and textbooks, and discovering avenues and ideas to help in the classroom. Additionally, McGraw Hill introduced the instructors to new tools that they were working on to gain their insight and receive advice.

“We were able to establish relationships with not only McGraw Hill and their representatives but individuals from other universities who were going through similar challenges we face,” Bingham said. “Only 17 or 18 people were with the communication group so we were able to meet up, talk about strategies in the classroom, discuss how to improve student teaching, and how to improve the student experience within the classroom.”

Stewart emphasized the support and help the symposium gave them when it comes to teaching in a university-setting.

“It was a gathering of people who share very similar jobs and were like-minded,” Stewart said. “We talked about issues including how courses have changed in the last five to ten years, how COVID has changed classes, how AI has changed classes, and other issues that directly affect teaching.”

Bingham discussed how the McGraw Hill symposium helped broaden their mindset and may allow them



Justin Stewart stands with his colleagues at the McGraw Hill Communication Symposium in Austin, TX.

to integrate new concepts and ideas within their own teaching and the teaching of current—and prospective—graduate assistants.

“One of the biggest things that stuck out to me was McGraw Hill had a textbook called a ‘Smart Book’ that specifically focused on students and it adapted toward the need and skill of each individual student,” Bingham said. “That was a technology I was apprehensive to use prior to this conference because I was unfamiliar with it, but after seeing it integrated in the classroom and asking some questions about it, it is something we are now considering using at the University of Wyoming.”

Stewart mentioned the ways in which the conference was helpful in a more individualistic way beyond the technologies one could integrate into the classroom.

“Being able to hear that other people had similar

(McGraw Hill, cont. on p. 2)



Beau Bingham stands with his colleagues at the McGraw Hill Communication Symposium in Washington, D.C.

challenges made me more empathetic to students in the few weeks since I have been back due to the discussions I had with fellow colleagues,” Stewart said. “It has made me take a step back and think about issues students may be going through beyond the walls of my classroom; it has allowed me to further develop my personal and professional growth.”

Bingham reflected on the atmosphere of the symposium and felt that it was an intellectually and personally satisfying experience for both of them.

“The environment was accommodating to everyone’s point of view—those who were new and those who had much more experience—and it felt like a very welcoming environment,” Bingham said. “They weren’t there to sell textbooks, they were there to offer help and

support. It was one of the most beneficial conferences I have been to in my career.”

Stewart reflected on how his perspective on teaching had shifted once he got back to teaching.

“Teaching can become monotonous. It can get you down every once in a while dealing with the same issues every semester,” Stewart said. “Being around other people who were in the same position as myself gave me the jumpstart I needed and has made my teaching even better after the symposium.”

Bingham and Stewart both commented on the level of respect and appreciation they received from McGraw Hill the entire time they were there.

“I really felt like [McGraw Hill] really valued our input and valued what we did,” Stewart said. “We really felt that they appreciated the work we do and sometimes conferences like that don’t always make you feel that way.”

Bingham addressed how the symposium has helped him connect more with his graduate teaching assistants.

“After coming back from the symposium, I have valued the input of the student teachers more in our weekly meetings than maybe I had before,” Bingham said. “I want to learn from them just as much as they are learning from me.”

Bingham and Stewart thought exceptionally well of the McGraw Hill symposium and COJO is delighted to have two instructors invited based on their merit and expertise.

Bristol Photojournalism presentation about Wyoming newsrooms held on February 16



Ashton Hacke, Larsh Bristol Fellow, presents photos to alumni, professors, donors, and the general public.

The heart of Wyoming’s press come from the newsrooms throughout the state. One University of Wyoming student made it his goal to document these places and investigate how Wyoming’s print media is handling the digital age.

Ashton J. Hacke, the recipient of the 2023 Larsh Bristol Photojournalism Fellowship, spent the summer photographing Wyoming newsrooms in Wyoming to understand their environment, people, and community. Hacke, a journalism major from Half Moon Bay, California, presented on his experience in Coe Library 506 this past February, followed by a viewing of his photos in the Library’s third floor gallery. The photos were available to the public through March 31.

(Bristol, cont. on p. 3)

The Larsh Bristol Photojournalism Fellowship is an annual award for UW students to support strong visual storytelling projects. It is named in honor of Larsh Bristol, a UW journalism alum who passed away in 2006.

Throughout his time at UW, Hacke interned and worked freelance at different news outlets in Wyoming. Because of his experience in these environments, many things sparked Hacke's interest to capture journalistic moments through a camera lens.

"While working in Wyoming newsrooms, I noticed a group of people who dedicated their lives, and went above and beyond for their work," Hacke said. "I thought it would be important to go into the field and tell a story about the people in the newsroom, and how print media is holding up in the state."

Before Hacke began his project, he created a plan and a set of goals.



Ashton's photos were hung in Coe Library for the general public to see. The photos hung from mid-February to the end of the semester.

"Right away, I met with the Wyoming Press Association board. They gave me advice and stories that they thought may be interesting for audiences to know," Hacke said. "I was able to take a map of Wyoming, put down all the newsrooms, and think of what I could do in the amount of time allotted, while also prioritizing stories that cannot be forgotten."

Hacke appreciated the support the Larsh Bristol Photojournalism

Fellowship gave him.

"The Larsh Bristol Fellowship is quite honestly the best opportunity that could be given to a photojournalism student, especially in an area where photojournalism is sadly not as present as other more populous places," Hacke said. "This project would not have been possible without this fellowship and the donors to the Larsh Bristol fund."

The Bristol Photojournalism Fellowship has been

hosted by the Communication and Journalism Department since 2008.

"Ashton has such a passion for photojournalism!" Department Head Cindy Price Schultz said. "He was the keynote speaker at the Wyoming Press Association conference in Casper a few weeks ago. The audience loved it so much, he was given a standing ovation."

For more information on the Larsh Bristol Photojournalism Fellowship, visit www.uwyo.edu/cojo/larsh-bristol.



COJO Alum, Kerri Smith, was featured on Guy's Grocery Games and Dinners, Drive-Ins and Dives on the Food Network. Smith is chef and co-owner of Alibi Wood Fire Pizzeria & Artisan Bakery in Laramie.

COJO professor Shane Epping will return to Peru to document women in the village of El Chino



The Association of Artisans (AoA) is the group of women that crafts items for purchase in El Chino, Peru.

In summer 2022, Shane Epping went to Peru with two undergraduate students—Vanta Coda III and Emily Smith—to help build schools in the small village of El Chino. They went as part of an organization called “Be the Change” who specializes in this form of community service. Now, Epping, the Bobby Model Photojournalism professor, will return to El Chino for personal and professional reasons.

When Epping was in Peru, he met a group of women who dedicated themselves to creating crafts that can be sold to tourists. El Chino is a very patriarchal society, so selling crafts and getting money for the village helps them leverage more power for the women.

“I thought it was very interesting that that society was very patriarchal and the men had a lot of say in what happens,” Epping said. “However, if you are making money like these women are and bringing it into the household, you would potentially have a stronger voice.”

Epping left Peru and he thought that it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. He thought he would never be able to go back and finish learning about these women and would never fully be able to tell their story.

“What were the odds that I was ever going to see these people again?” Epping said. “If I ever did come back, it would be because of ‘Be the Change’ which would not allow me to really branch out and do my own thing.”

In Fall 2023, the College of Arts and Sciences opened up submissions for a \$10,000 research grant. Epping created a detailed explanation of the women

in the village that make the crafts and why he felt it was important to go back and document them. Beyond what he thought was possible, Epping received the entire \$10,000 grant from the college.

“Without the generosity of the College of Arts and Sciences and the money from the grant, this trip would not be happening,” Epping said.

Epping wants this project to allow people of all backgrounds to know about these people and what they can do to recognize their work and learn about their lifestyles.

“I want people to know that these women who live in the middle of the Amazon Rainforest exist, I want them to know their names, and I want them to know that they live in this society where women struggle to have a voice and they have created an environment that allows them to have one,” Epping said. “Finally, I want provide a link so that people can buy their products online to support them monetarily.”

Epping highlighted that he felt this project was very important for him to tell and that he wanted to be the one to help these women share their stories.

“These women are trying to help their society and their families in a world that did not prioritize their education,” Epping said. “Who is going to do it if I don’t



The building pictured is where the group of women make their crafts. The building was specifically built for them through Be The Change.

(Epping, cont. on p. 5)



The item pictured is one example of the types of crafts people can buy from these women.

do it? I am not going to wait for someone else to potentially come along to tell the story.”

Epping believes that this story can be told in many creative and academic ways. Epping laid out how he wanted the project to work in its earliest stages of planning.

“I definitely want to make a portraiture in which I can create scenes where I can make wonderful environmental portraits of these women,” Epping said. “I would also like to include some documentary photography of them working and

what their craftsmanship looks like.”

This is another chance for Epping to use his skills to help shine a light on an issue.

“When Shane came back from Peru, he was so excited about these women artisans and what they do,” Department Chair Cindy Price Schultz said. “It will be great for Shane to use his photojournalism skills to tell this important story.”

Epping will be going to Peru in Summer 2024.

Email sepping@uwyo.edu for more information.

Sandy Hsu Presents Sabbatical Research about Taiwanese marriages to the Public

Dr. Sandy Hsu, professor in the COJO Department and director of graduate studies, spoke about her research during her semester-long sabbatical. The topic of her research asked why the Taiwanese marriage rate was dropping so drastically.

“I think there is a problem in Taiwan where people have difficulty finding a romantic partner,” Hsu said. “Many highly educated women have a hard time finding a partner in Taiwan especially after you earn your Ph.D.”

After considering this phenomena, Hsu used a qualitative interviewing technique to hone in on how she wanted to do her study.

“I conducted interviews in the summer and analysed the interview responses to develop a survey research plan over the course of my sabbatical,” Hsu said. “We used a snowball sampling technique to get the interviews and the responses helped me develop a quantitative study about the relationships.”

Hsu addressed why she felt looking into this topic was important for her and academic research.

“A major problem for the lack of marriages is a low birth rate and in order to keep the population steady, women usually need to have at least two children,” Hsu said. “Now in Taiwan, schools are starting to close because of this declining birth rate.”

Hsu emphasized that it is personal preference to have children but in Taiwan, the government gives more money to households that have more children.

Hsu highlighted her research questions which ask why



Sandy Hsu speaks about her sabbatical research during an open-to-the-public presentation with food and Taiwanese refreshments.

Taiwanese young adults are not getting married and what their attitudes are toward raising children. Additionally, Hsu clued the general audience into what she wants her quantitative study to look like.

“I want to put everything together into a single study,” Hsu said. “I think my research is important because we can look at a more comprehensive view from different perspectives.”

Hsu is still working on the project and with the help of the sabbatical, she was able to delve into her research more than before. For more information on her research, email hsus@uwyo.edu.

Gib Mathers Memorial Scholarship given to Laramie journalism student

For the first time ever, the Gib Mathers Memorial Scholarship will be awarded. The student receiving this honor is Emma Welniak, a journalism major from Laramie. Welniak has been accepted as a journalism intern in Florence, Italy, for the Spring 2025 semester.

"I realize the importance of this opportunity and to make the most of this experience, a scholarship of this magnitude is immensely beneficial," Welniak said. "After multiple meetings with my advisor and the director of the Study Abroad office, I have applied for the internship and discussed the credits required for a full semester."

Welniak understands the importance of studying abroad and has learned from others in her life who studied abroad previously.

"It has been a dream of mine to study abroad like my older sister did in Spain two years ago," Welniak said. "This is an experience I would hope to emulate through hard work, open eyes, and an open heart."

It is through Gib Mathers' legacy

that UW journalism students can experience life-changing adventures. Mathers graduated from UW with a degree in journalism and lived his life exploring the outdoors and nature through his writing and



Welniak, a fan of adventure, stands atop Snowy Range outside of Laramie, Wyoming.

storytelling.

Mathers' brother, Earl Mathers, wrote about him in a letter to the UW Foundation when the scholarship was established.

"The intent of the Gibson Lee Mathers Memorial Scholarship Fund

is to support quality journalism in Wyoming," Mathers said. "It is our fervent hope that those served by these scholarships help to extend the legacy of authenticity and integrity in journalism that were so steadfastly represented by Gib Mathers throughout his illustrious career."

It is important to the COJO Department that journalism students, especially those who call Wyoming their home, can use journalism as a way to explore the world and learn about other cultures.

"I am excited that the first person to receive the Mathers Scholarship is going on such a great adventure!" Cindy Price Schultz, COJO Department Chair said. "Emma is very interested in journalism and wants to learn more about how it is practiced in another country."

For more information about the Gib Mathers Memorial Scholarship, email Price Schultz at cprice@uwyo.edu.

Wyoming and Kazakhstan continue to have flourishing academic relationships

By Greg Ronco, UW Global Engagement Office

In the realm of academia, partnerships between universities across the globe are not merely formal agreements but vibrant collaborations fueled by personal connections and shared aspirations. This narrative finds its embodiment in the journey of Cindy

Price Schultz and Karlyga Myssayeva, whose commitment to transcontinental academic exchange has forged bonds of friendship and fostered a culture of collaboration between the University of Wyoming and Kazakhstan.

The roots of this partnership trace back to 2012 when an initial cooperation agreement was established between UW and al-Farabi Kazakhstan National

University by Professor Emeritus Mike Brown. However, it is the dedication and vision of individuals like Price Schultz and Myssayeva that have propelled this collaboration beyond bureaucratic formalities and transformed it into a dynamic platform for cross-cultural learning and scholarly engagement.

After Myssayeva presented recently to the COJO Department and the public

(Karlyga, cont. on p. 7)



Karlyga Massayeva speaks to COJO faculty and students about Kazakhstan.

about the collaboration and the vision of its future, the women discussed the faculty commitment that drives the success of this partnership.

"The main thing I want to stress is that the State Department may have helped start this, but it hasn't that been involved," Price Schultz said. "We're still doing it because it's a good relationship and it's fruitful."

Myssayeva reiterated the relationship aspect, noting that Brown and his wife are like "our second family."

"When I am inviting or working with foreign professors, I am thinking about a good relationship in the future and how they accept different cultures," she said. "For example, we respect Mike and Cindy, we respect Wyoming, we respect U.S. professors."

For both of them, mutual intellectual interests go hand-in-hand with personal support and cultural curiosity. Myssayeva noted how much students from KazNU appreciated the effort from UW faculty to make them feel at home when they visited for internships. Price Schultz explained how cultural exchange was an integral part of student experiences – from the running of small-town newspapers, to public access to the state capital, and even to enjoying a rodeo.

The two women will take their partnership back to KazNU this September, when Price Schultz flies there to collaborate with Myssayeva on researching online news in Kazakhstan. With a close relationship already established, Price Schultz said the decision was easy and now that other faculty and students have seen Myssayeva's presentation, it will be easier for others to connect through the partnership as well.

"It's been a great relationship for the last 12 years and I know it will continue to be for years to come," Price Schultz said.

COJO Faculty Kudos

- Cindy Price Schultz was granted a sabbatical for the 2024-25 school year. She will conduct research at Kazakhstan National University in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and the Media Management and Transformation Centre in Jonkoping, Sweden, during that time.

- Shane Epping won **Bronze** for his photo essay titled "Commuting: Highway of Death" at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Festival of Visual and Interactive Media (VIM Fest).

- Sandy Hsu completed her semester-long Sabbatical in Fall 2023 and is working on a project titled "Marriage and Family Expectations among Young Adults in Taiwan."

- Mitzi Stewart and Justin Stewart were awarded the Promoting Intellectual Engagement (PIE) Award that was chosen by students. It showcases excellence in teaching first-year courses.

- Shane Epping won 2024 Bowling with Professors.

- Cindy Price Schultz and Justin Stewart presented at the Ellbogen Center's Assessment Workshop. They shared their best practices for assessment and student learning.

- Sandy Hsu and graduate student Aiman Zehra received the Top Four Paper award for her thesis titled "International Students' Attitudes toward Collaborative Learning: Communication Apprehension, Language Competence, and Perceived Prejudice as Explanations" at the International Communication Association conference. The division was Instructional Communication.

- Shane Epping received an accepted publication titled "Commuting: Highway of Death" in *Visual Communication Quarterly (VCQ)*.

- Mitzi Stewart was awarded the Mortar Board Top Professor award that was chosen by a student.

- Shane Epping won Third Place at the 2nd Annual Northwest College Community Photography Contest with his work titled "Tuki-aonae Kai."

COJO Awards



**2024 Larsh Bristol
Photojournalism Fellow**

Forrest Cole



**2023-24 Inaugural
Rott Research Fellow**

Md. Saddam Hossain



**College of Arts & Sciences
Top Graduate**

Riley Frankel



**College of Arts & Sciences
Top Graduate**

Jocelyn Petersen



**College of Arts & Sciences
Top Graduate**

Karter Dunham



**College of Arts & Sciences
Top Graduate**

Carson Almand



**Judith A. Muhlberg Study
Abroad Fellow**

Ireland Earl



**Bobby Model Photojournalism
Award Recipient**

Ashton Hacke



**Gib Mathers Memorial
Scholarship Winner**

Emma Welniak



**Outstanding Graduate
Teaching Assistant Award**

Brianna Garcia



**Outstanding Thesis Award
Recipient**

Josie Campbell



**Outstanding Thesis Award
Recipient**

Aiman Zehra



**Graduate Recognition for
Excellence Award**

Nur Hanisah Binte Hassim



**Undergraduate Recognition for
Excellence Award**

Ashton Hacke