Welcome to the Fall/Winter edition of the CMS Newsletter! We trust that you will find many items of interest to read, ranging from program updates to discussions of some of our many events, to features about a few of our many fascinating and distinguished alums. With so much going on and so many interesting people affiliated with our program, there’s never a dearth of things for us to write about!

In particular, we’d like to draw your attention to two things. First, we’ve introduced a new feature in our newsletter, an in-depth profile of one of our classes. In addition to hearing the voices of our students, we think there’s no better way to understand CMS than to be “inside” one of our classes. John Ciampa’s article will take you into Gail Bambrick’s dynamic classroom as you’ll learn something about what happens in her “Public Relations and Marketing: Unraveling the Spin” course. Second, we’ve spent time this fall updating and upgrading our website, particularly with an eye toward using it to showcase our student work and events better, and toward improving our pages for prospective students, since we know that this is the primary way for 17-year-olds to learn about and evaluate potential college choices. We invite you to peruse our website: http://ase.tufts.edu/cms. We love to hear from you – please keep us informed about where you are and what you’re doing!

Inside this Issue

CMS News — pages 2-3

Events — pages 4-5

Alumni News and Profiles — pages 6-10

CMS Internships — pages 11-13

Student News — pages 14-15

Send us your news!

Changed jobs? Gone back to school? Moved? We want to hear from you. Email us at cms@tufts.edu.

Do you know someone who might be interested in receiving this newsletter? Feel free to pass it along.

And please remember to visit our website!
**CMS News**

**Academic update**

This year we have our largest senior class ever – close to 90 students at this writing! As usual, the majority of students have opted to work on CMS Senior Projects of their own design, and as usual, there is incredible variety and creativity exhibited in the range and breadth of what students have elected to do. Here is a very small sample of what some of our students will be working on during the spring semester:

**Hillary Sieber (A12)** went on what she called a “transformational” Hillel-sponsored trip to Rwanda. While there, she spoke with many young Rwandans who were suffering effects from the genocide their parents and grandparents had experienced, and yet about which they knew remarkably little. Moved and troubled by this, Hillary decided to work on a documentary film that chronicles the legacy of genocide and ponders the question of how best to teach its legacies to subsequent generations.

**Tucker Delaney-Winn (A12)** thinks we should all brush up on our Shakespeare. In particular, he is concerned that young people today increasingly find Shakespeare irrelevant. To rectify this, he has written “Hamlet: The Hip-Hopera,” which has already been performed at Tufts by 3Ps. For his CMS Senior Project, Tucker will be writing a teacher’s guide that goes along with the show and explains how media literacy training can be used, in this case utilizing hip hop and popular culture to teach Shakespeare.

**Andrea Levine (A12)** is a computer science major who wants to encourage more young girls to pursue computer science and engineering. She’ll be developing a website designed to attract more middle-school-aged girls to these fields.

**Alex Stein (A12)** is taking a look at the world of niche marketing. His CMS Senior Project will be an exploration of how advertisers are – or are not – trying to appeal to young gay men, and how their efforts reflect more generally on the ways in which niche advertising is a moving target.

**Kristen Barone (A12)** is exploring the world of e-books and their impact on the children’s publishing industry. Not content simply to study this complex issue that has huge effects on the economics of publishing and, quite possibly, on the ways in which children will be reading, Kristen is also going to be writing her own e-book so that she can better understand both the problems and the promise of this newish technology.

**William Carpenter (A12)** is a political science major and a political junkie who is already the veteran of several political campaigns. Will is writing a thesis in which he will analyze and compare the content of several political news talk shows on both MSNBC and Fox throughout this primary season.

This is but a small sampling of the many fascinating topics our students have taken on. Stay tuned for our Spring edition, in which we’ll feature students talking about their recently completed projects!

**Producing Films for Social Change**

We tried an experiment this year in our “Producing Films for Social Change” class. This year, for the first time, instead of having students pitch their own topics, we pitched topics to them. CMS Director Julie Dobrow solicited topics from colleagues, and proposed 25 topics to students, from which they selected four. And because we are trying to launch a new program of Environmental Communication along with the Environmental Studies Program, the pitched topics were all about environmental issues. The result: four outstanding films on important environmental subjects.

**Sprawl: The Story of our Vanishing Natural Spaces** highlighted the tensions between wetlands preservation and development. The student film team traveled to New Hampshire, where they followed award winning author/illustrator and Tufts alum David Carroll (A65) into the marshes to track spotted turtles and listen to his eloquent pleas about the importance of environmental preservation.

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Ever wonder that happens when you put a piece of paper into that blue recycling container? **Reduce, Reuse** followed the paper trail, as student producers examined the environmental ethics and economics of paper recycling.

**Highway to Health** tracked the “Tufts Pollutionmobile,” a retrofitted RV staffed by Tufts Engineering grad students that travels around measuring ultrafine particulate levels. A joint undertaking of the School of Engineering and the School of Medicine, the CAFEH project (Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health) has found that highways tend to be located disproportionately near low-income communities, which then tend to have disproportionately higher levels of certain health problems.

A tip from Dr. Mark Pokras at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine led our students to produce **Fatal Flight**, the story of bald eagles that are dying from lead poisoning. The majestic birds ingest lead in the bloodstream of deer and other animals shot by hunters using lead bullets. Tufts vets are among those doing research into this vexing problem, and our students caught it on film in very compelling ways.

All four films, along with a photo slideshow of the event, can be seen on the CMS website by clicking [here](#).

**P.T. Barnum Awards**

Last June, the P.T. Barnum Awards for Excellence in Entertainment were awarded to television writers Robert Sternin (A77) and Prudence Fraser Sternin (J77), actor Hank Azaria (A88), and television executive David Rone (A84). A special posthumous P.T. Barnum Award was given to film producer/director Gary Winick (A83). Television writers and funny men extraordinaire Jeff Greenstein (A84) and Jeff Strauss (A84) hosted the event, held at the Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles.

This June, P.T. Barnum will move back to Lincoln Center in New York City, where the awardees will include television news producer Marian Porges (J82), choreographer Betsy Gregory (J73), actor Jonathan Hadary (A72), and writer Gregory Maguire (G90). This year’s emcee will be cabaret performer and singer Charles Camele (A80).
9/11, Ten Years Later: A Reporter Looks Back

*September 9*

Boston Globe Correspondent Peter DeMarco spoke to students about what it was like to cover the 9/11 disaster as a New York Daily News reporter. Working the early-morning shift, DeMarco had a first-hand view of the events of 9/11. By nightfall, he’d found survivors who’d escaped from the 80th floor, witnessed - and ran from - a 40-story building that collapsed before his eyes, and stood in the moonlighted doorway of an empty firehouse, boots and jackets hastily strewn across the floor by men who would never return to pick them up. Four days later he fulfilled his assignment, reaching Ground Zero and spending 19 hours there, chronicling the incredible efforts of rescue workers to find survivors.

**Film Screening: *Girlfriend***

*October 4*

Shot on location in and around Wayland, Massachusetts, *Girlfriend* tells the story of a young man with Down Syndrome who romantically pursues a small town single mom. The film was awarded the Grand Jury Prize at the White Sands Film Festival, with Director Justin Lerner picking up the award for Best Director. The film also won the Gotham Independent Film Festival audience award. Lerner was on hand after the screening to speak with students and audience members, along with the film’s lead, Evan Sneider, providing insights into the film’s genesis and production.

**CMS Internship Panel***

*October 11*

Our annual event featured a panel of eight CMS students who participated in high-profile internships. Panelists spoke about their experiences and offered invaluable advice to their peers.

**Film Screening: *We Are Egypt***

*October 26*

A film by Lillie Paquette (Fo8), *We are Egypt* told the story of the struggle for democracy in Egypt that led to the nation’s historic uprising in January and February of 2011. Filmed on the ground in Egypt over the preceding 14 months, and chronicled through the eyes of Egypt’s youth activists, labor movements, and political opposition figures, it stood as a powerful account of the struggle against extraordinary odds to remove an uncompromising US-backed authoritarian regime determined to stay in power.

**Jobs in the Media***

*November 16*

Once again a big success, this annual event featured a panel of alums providing insight and tips about the media job market, along with interviewing and resume strategies, advice on what skills students should be mastering, and what it takes to land that first position after graduation. Moderated by CMS Director Julie Dobrow, the panel consisted of five speakers representing a variety of media fields (print and web journalism, broadcasting, advertising/public relations/marketing, film).

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Panelists included the following:

**Peter Chianca (A90)** — Editor-in-Chief, GateHouse Media New England (North Division)
**Brad Puffer (A95)** — Director of Communications, Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Former Reporter/Anchor, New England Cable News
**Blair Lerner Ramsey (A04)** — Account Director, Media Contacts (Digital Advertising, Media Planning/Buying)
**Don Schechter (A01, G03)** — Owner, Charles River Media Group
**Valerie Wencis (A04)** — Assistant Director of Communications, Harvard Medical School

*Below: Some snapshots of our “Jobs in the Media” event.*
Alumni News

Naif Al Mutawa (A94), creator of the comic book series THE 99, recently debuted the first animated film adaptation of the series at the New York Film Festival.

Loretta Allen (A10) is an office administrator at CRG Partners in Boston.

Brianna Beehler (A11) is living in Palembang, Indonesia on a Fulbright grant working as an English teaching assistant.

Jessica Bidgood (A10) is working for the Boston bureau of The New York Times. (See page 13 for feature.)

Heather Blonsky (A11) is living in Mumbai, India and working for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, teaching Sunday school and planning youth programming.

Aaron Cantu (A11) is working as a teacher in Houston, Texas as a member of the Teach for America class of 2011.

Alyce Currier (A11) is working at Wistia, a video hosting website based in Somerville, Massachusetts.

Roiy Gavrielov (A11) is a strategist at Naked Communications in New York City.

Mitchell Geller (A11) is working at 360i, a digital marketing agency in New York City, as an associate community manager.

Sarah Bluestone Glassman (J98) is a school social worker in Bethpage, New York.

Rebecca Goldberg (A11) is working as a logger for Bunim/Murray Productions in Los Angeles, the reality production company that makes The Real World and Keeping Up With the Kardashians.

Sarah Korones (A11) is interning at Psychology Today magazine in New York City.

Lauren Lanster (A10) is a second year graduate student at the Entertainment Technology Center at Carnegie Mellon University.

Rachel Lefsky (A11) is working at O’Neill and Associates in Boston.

Hui Lim (A11) interned at both Demos and International Music Network, working in the legal and music promotion fields, and is now living in Los Angeles.

Elcin Marasli (A11) is attending graduate school at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for Visual and Critical Studies.

Ariana McLean (A11) is working for Americorps VISTA in a production assistant training program, working with low-income and unemployed residents of New York City.

Andy Mead (A10) is working as a project manager with Novus Select, a multimedia production agency based out of Portland, Maine.

(Continued on next page)
Alumni News

Sarah Nash (A11) is working as a production assistant at Rock Wall Winery in Alameda, California.

Jane Ottensmeyer (A11) is an associate community manager at Communispace, a Boston marketing firm.

Erica Petersen (A11) is an account coordinator at Akamai Technologies, an Internet/tech company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts as part of its advertising division, working on online/display advertising for client accounts.

Simone Press (A08) is a production coordinator for ABC News in New York City.

Georgia Ranes (A11) is working at International Creative Management (ICM) in Los Angeles as an assistant in the television department.

Amanda Roberts (A11) is working at Suffolk Construction, a construction management company in Boston.

Amy Rosenbaum (A10) is working in the children’s publishing group at Simon & Schuster in New York City as an editorial assistant.

Julie Schindall (A07) is a communications consultant living in Berlin.

Catherine Scott (A11) is a law student at Northeastern University, specializing in intellectual property and media law.

Sarah Sorcher (A08) of the National Journal recently completed her first video project about the hunt for Osama Bin Ladin.

Amy Spitalnick (A08) is the Director of Communications for New York State Senator Daniel Squadron.

Amanda Warren (A11) is a business development associate and assistant to the CEO at E+Co., a clean energy investment firm in New York.

Jeremy White (A09) is working in New York City as a U.S. reporter for the International Business Times.

Caleb Zimmerman (A11) is an assistant content manager at the Miami office of the advertising agency Crispin Porter and Bogusky (CP&B).

Send us your news!

Changed jobs? Gone back to school? Moved? We want to hear from you.

Email us at cms@tufts.edu.
Profile of David Polk (A05)

By Elliott Davis (A13)

Not everyone is able to turn childhood ambitions into a future career. David Polk (A05), whose love of radio began at a very young age, has done just that.

Polk is a producer and program host at the 60-year-old WFMT-FM, a mostly classical radio station in Chicago that also mixes in arts news and discussion. One of the main reasons that Polk loves his job at WFMT is the freedom he gets to pick his own projects and the chances he gets to travel around the world. He is proud to have co-hosted and produced the coverage of the Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, Poland, as well as the series on the Salzburg Music Festival in Austria. But Polk’s main project for WFMT is to work with young musicians in the Chicago area and feature them weekly on the radio.

“Open up a newspaper, go to the sports section, and there will be a profile of the star quarterback of the football team or the star track runner,” he says. “This is great, but you will never open up a newspaper and find a profile of the concertmaster of the orchestra or the student who just performed in the orchestra. We felt it was our job to feature them and give them a spotlight.”

While studying at Tufts, where he majored in International Relations and graduated in 2005, Polk did an internship at WBUR’s Car Talk program in Harvard Square. Car Talk was Polk’s first real experience in radio. At Car Talk, a comedy show that masquerades as a program that offers vehicular advice to callers, Polk’s job was to screen the phone calls and “hundreds and hundreds” of voicemails received by the show every week. “I knew just about anything that could go wrong with anyone’s car, but I wouldn’t know how to fix them,” Polk jokes.

Polk says that the part of the internship he got the most out of was when he got to sit in on the production of the show and “just see how radio is made.” He also credits the success of his internship to CMS through its internship credit program. He says that CMS was “really great” about facilitating the credit he needed for the internship, and he also found the course’s required weekly reports to be very useful. “It was really nice to have someone in Susan (CMS Associate Director Susan Eisenhauer) to talk to about my internship every week,” Polk says. “Usually, an internship is someone’s first time in a real office, so to have someone to talk to about it was very helpful and educational in and of itself.”

Polk credits Tufts and its liberal arts education to his success in the media industry. He notes, “The thing about Tufts is that we don’t have a Communications major, but we see so many graduates go into media successfully, and I think this is because of a liberal arts education.”

“When you go into media, you are essentially communicating something. Anyone can learn how to operate a software program or a camera or, in my case, a microphone and recorder, but you still need something to communicate about. You need to learn how to obtain information about a subject. To write and to think and to research are very important things you get out of a liberal arts education.”

Polk stresses the importance of internships, the alumni network, and the use of social media in offering advice to Tufts students seeking careers in media. But most importantly, according to Polk, “you need to learn how to tell a story.”
Profile of Judy Bass (J73)

By Jill Slutzker (F12)

If you ever enjoyed a Spider-Man comic book or watched the hit $2.5 billion grossing movie series, then you have benefited from the work of CMS Executive Board member and Tufts alumna Judy Bass (J73). Bass, a prominent media and entertainment lawyer, has more than 25 years of experience representing the creative community, including representing the Spider-Man character at Marvel Enterprises. Bass has worked in the legal departments of CBS Enterprises, Marvel Enterprises, and Time Inc., where she served as the chief attorney negotiating Time Inc.’s sponsorship agreement of three Olympic Games. She now runs her own media and entertainment law firm in New York City.

A double major in psychology and philosophy at Tufts, Bass is a proponent of an interdisciplinary education for future journalists and media executives. “Without knowledge of how the world works, you can’t be a good journalist. You need a strong foundation in areas like political science, history, economics, and literature,” she says.

During her studies at NYU Law School, where she served as Managing Editor of the Journal of International Law and Politics, Bass delved into studying First Amendment law and developed a passion for the intersection of law and media. She interned for a firm representing clients like Newsweek and the National Enquirer. “The editor of the National Enquirer would call me and read the stories in his Scottish accent,” she recounts. “He would ask if there was any potential libel in the story, and I would give him feedback. It was very terrifying!”

As a specialist in licensing and intellectual property law, Bass represents her clients through the creative process, helping writers, producers, directors, and new talent to navigate the legal aspects of the creative process and get their products produced. “I often am there every step of the way,” says Bass. “People come to me with an idea for a TV show, and I assist them through the process of production and distribution.” Helping people to get their products successfully funded and distributed is, in Bass’s words, “the best part of my job and the most challenging part at the same time.”

Bass’s clients have included, among others, magazine and book publishers, reality TV show producers, independent film directors, and even one client who is currently featured on the Cooking Channel.

“It is a fascinating time to be involved with intellectual property,” says Bass, commenting on the proliferation of YouTube, MySpace, and other technological and social media outlets. “There are so many more opportunities for distribution as well as all kinds of challenges as to how to protect intellectual property.” While Bass welcomes the rise in e-book sales and the opportunity to introduce her clients’ products into new and nontraditional media markets, she notes that the abundance of works being distributed in these new markets makes it harder for quality products and artists to get noticed. “Things are still shaking out as to how we as consumers will know quality places for music and other work that fall outside of traditional places.”

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A strong advocate for ethical media practice, Bass supported the creation and development of the CMS featured course “Media Law and Ethics,” taught by professor and freelance reporter Phil Primack (A70). The course, which is offered through the Ex College, focuses on the political, philosophical, and historical roots of the First Amendment and addresses key ethical issues in the field surrounding libel laws, conflicts of interest, the public’s right to know versus an individual’s right to privacy, the ethical use of new technology, and the use of anonymous sources, among other topics.

“Democracy depends upon an informed citizenry, which in turns depends upon a free press, which James Madison called ‘one of the great bulwarks of liberty,’” says Primack. “This course seeks to provide students with an overview of the intent, role, and constantly evolving state of the First Amendment and related law in the development of the American press. It also looks at how the press has – or has not – used its legal rights.”

The course examines media law and ethics from both a contemporary and a historical perspective. In a fast-paced media age, Primack says, there is a tendency to disregard history given the constant flow of new headlines and stories, but today’s media controversies have pertinent parallels to those of the past. “The current controversy over WikiLeaks, for example, has echoes in the Pentagon Papers case of 40 years ago,” says Primack. “The classroom provides a safe haven to step back and consider such legal, historical, and ethical context.”

With an eye to history, Primack also makes a point to reflect the most current trends and topics in the course. “I have never taught the same syllabus two years in a row -- the law, technology, and other factors keep changing media law and ethics.”

Echoing Primack’s enthusiasm for this type of course, Bass cites her philosophy background at Tufts as well as her work experience in the legal department of Time Inc. as her personal motivation to support the course. At Time Inc. for 13 years, Bass advised the editorial and publishing staffs of the Magazine Group on a range of issues, including libel, copyrights, anonymous sources, and conflicts of interest. As the head lawyer for *Sports Illustrated*, published under Time Inc., Bass supervised the publication of controversial sports stories on point-shaving, steroid usage, and other scandals Bass likens to the Penn State Joe Paterno scandal that broke in November.

“We had to decide what to publish, and often ethical issues would come into play. I felt there was a lack of training among journalists on these issues; you need to know ethical implications to be a good journalist.” Bass says. As a supporter of the “Media Law and Ethics” course, Bass hopes CMS students get the opportunity to explore these difficult ethical issues from an academic perspective before encountering them in the field.

From her own studies at Tufts to representing Spider-Man and negotiating Olympic sponsorships, Bass says she has always valued her Tufts education and connections. She has worked with fellow Jumbos throughout her career, including clients. “We always have a wonderful connection when we find out we both went to Tufts!” she says.

**Did you know that any donation you make to Tufts can be designated for CMS?**

We need your help to continue offering a high quality and up-to-date program for our students. Donations to help us continue to offer high profile events like the annual Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism, and support for student projects would be most appreciated.

Simply visit the Tufts Fund webpage to direct a contribution to CMS.
Internships

Internships leading to jobs

The pressure is indeed on for college students to do internships (sometimes more than one) as a way to network with media professionals, improve their resumes, and fine tune some all-important skills such as news writing, editing, filmmaking, web design, and social media.

As it turns out, Tufts is way out front among schools when it comes to experiential learning as a complement to academic course work.

Last summer and fall, nearly 50 Tufts students received credit for internships done in television, film, radio, print and web journalism, PR, marketing, advertising, the recording industry, multimedia, and social media. Summer internships took place primarily in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles (with one in London!), at sites such as Rodale Publishing, Participant Media, the Jim Henson Co., the New York Observer, Nickelodeon, Verve Music Group, Clear Channel, Forbes, and Universal Pictures. Back in Boston this fall, our students interned at WGBH/PBS Boston, GateHouse Media, Arnold Worldwide, Hill Holiday Advertising, Boston Magazine, NESN, and Walden Media among others. At this writing, 21 students have signed up for spring internships, and the list is growing daily!

Winternships

Our popular January Winternship program became more popular than ever this year! We read almost 300 applications for 27 slots. Applicants included students from all class years, all majors, and were from not only the school of Arts and Sciences, but also from the School of Engineering and the Museum School.

Alumni in many media industries in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles once again embraced the program and offered our students many exciting opportunities for an intensive, one-week internship experience between semesters. The many sites included Digitas, WBUR, and Arnold Worldwide in Boston; Seftel Productions, Trickle Up, All You, Cooking Light Magazine, and HarperCollins Publishers in New York; ICM, Schachter Entertainment, Bona Fide Productions, and Berman/Singer PR in Los Angeles. And one lucky student trailed Christopher Brown (A90) the art director for Mad Men, as they filmed the upcoming season! A complete list of winternship 2012 sites can be found by clicking here.

The program also caught the eye of local media in another way. The Boston Globe ran a feature story on our program.

Our internship and January winternship programs rely heavily on Tufts alumni working in media fields. We would love to hear from you if you have an opportunity to share with our students. Please email us at cms@tufts.edu.

This January, Allie Schmider (A13) winterned with Albert Berger (A79) at Bona Fide Productions in Los Angeles (left), while Alex Stein (A12) and Emily Friedman (A12) made the most of their winter break at Young & Rubicam in New York City.
From Tufts to the New York Times: Jessica Bidgood (A10)

This coming summer, CMS will once again offer a paid internship at WBUR/NPR Boston through its David Burke Media and Public Service Internship Program. This will be the fourth Burke internship, a highly competitive position named in honor of Tufts alumnus David Burke (A57), former president of CBS News and former vice president of News at ABC.

The most recent Burke intern was Jessica Bidgood, who graduated in 2010 and had a fantastic and rewarding summer of reporting and writing at WBUR. Her internship led to a full-time news position at WBUR, a stint at WGBH news radio, and now, less than two years later, to a reporting job in the Boston Bureau of the New York Times. We asked Jess to tell you about her rise through the ranks, all of which began with her CMS Burke internship.

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A few weeks ago, I found myself at Filene’s Basement in the Back Bay, on its very last day of business. The department store chain is a Boston institution, and I watched as people picked over the last racks of merchandise, now reduced to 80 or 90 percent of its original value, or even bought clothing racks and signs, taking pieces of the store home with them. Some didn’t really care about the end of the store – there is a Marshall’s across the street, after all – but others weren’t sure where else, in this economy, they could find decent-looking work clothes at an affordable price.

It was an interesting and lively day – and a historic one, for Boston business history – and I was lucky enough to get to be there for my job at the New York Times’ Boston bureau, which I joined in September, where I write about and research New England for the paper.

Halfway through college, I had no idea that I would begin building a journalism career here in Boston. But I have found it to be a robust city for journalism opportunities, and one I wish I had taken advantage of even sooner.

When I was a junior at Tufts, having been part of the Tufts Daily and the IGL’s Exposure program, I got a grant from the Communications and Media Studies program to do an eight-week summer internship with WBUR’s newscast unit. I had never done radio or worked in a professional newsroom before, and quickly fell madly in love with it all. I was getting to know the Greater Boston Area in a very different, deeper way than I had from the Tufts campus, and had the opportunity to observe and learn from excellent reporters and producers.

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WBUR asked me to come back to continue my internship that fall, and then they offered me the chance to begin freelancing as a production assistant for Morning Edition. For me, and for many other young journalists, freelance production opportunities are a great way to get professional newsroom experience early in one’s career, and there are plenty of them in the Boston area.

WBUR was a great place to be because of its multi-platform focus – I could learn radio production and also offer my multi-media skills to the Web team. This led me to work on their Web desk for six months, in a full-time, freelance capacity.

I was still looking for a full-time, permanent, role, and my Web experience with wbur.org gave me just the right skill set to apply for a job building WGBH’s online news presence, which I applied for and got in September 2010. This gave me a chance to work on building an online news presence from the ground up, in a brand new news radio environment.

When the Times’ position opened up, the local experience I had built, and the people I had learned from while doing it, helped to qualify me for the role.

Throughout all of this, I have been told many times that going into journalism is something of a kamikaze mission – that there are no jobs left, even for the most talented young people, and the ones that exist now will be gone soon. But the industry needs young people who are willing to work across different platforms and explore possibilities of the Web and social media while learning more traditional hallmarks of the craft.

And this city is full of opportunities to do that, with papers like the Globe, the alt-weeklies, and the Wicked Local network, as well as ample radio and television – I recommend that students with an interest in journalism give it a try, right here, in Boston. The CMS program is an excellent place to start.

CMS on the Web

Please take a moment to visit our multimedia website, which features photo galleries, useful links, and audio and video files of many events, including our newly-designed pages for prospective students.

CMS Staff Assistant John Ciampa is the site’s webmaster; send him your news and updates at john.ciampa@tufts.edu.

Are you our Facebook friend?

We’ve consolidated our Facebook information since the last issue, so if you haven’t been there in a while, or have yet to join up with us, please take a moment to check us out by clicking here!

The CMS Facebook group is the place to go if you want to connect with alumni, discuss internships and classes with other students, and make sure you don’t miss exciting events.
Student News

Real world marketing
An inside look at one class delivering on the promise of experiential learning

By John Ciampa

A wilted head of lettuce resting limply on the edge of a classroom podium isn’t your typical academic prop. Then again, Gail Bambrick’s fall 2011 CMS class, “Public Relations and Marketing: Unraveling the Spin,” is no ordinary Tufts course.

In addition to featuring unconventional objects on display, the class demands that students create and then implement genuine marketing proposals, in a process that moves from bare bones conception to full-blown reality. The result is a hands-on workshop that draws on a solid understanding of media, marketing theory and history, and public consumption.

In her class pitch, Bambrick, who is a senior marketing communications writer at Tufts, states the course mixes “a little psychology, a pinch of sociology, a smidge of anthropology, some cognitive analysis, and a bit of marketing strategy” into a complex stew that analyzes how “carefully manipulated events and media can mold our thinking.” Bambrick describes the class as a vehicle for thrusting students into today’s media environment. “Rather than telling them about it, I try to show them,” she says, with the prime mover being the students’ group presentations, given at the end of the semester.

Bambrick says students select their own groups, or “creative teams” as she calls them, based on similar interests and goals. Once formed, each team splinters from the class and immerses itself into a final project aimed at solving a public relations/marketing challenge through the creation of mixed media campaigns and strategic plans. The students really get into it, as does Bambrick, who teaches the class with a palpable, infectious energy.

In preparation for such lofty goals, Bambrick grounds the class with intensive readings. Texts such as Edward Bernays’ Propaganda, Noam Chomsky’s Media Control, Daniel Boorstin’s influential book The Image, and PR! A Social History of Spin by Stuart Ewan form a broad contextual and historical foundation for Bambrick’s students to build from. By the time they are done reading John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton’s Toxic Sludge is Good for You at the semester’s midpoint, they emerge, sludge intact, with a solid understanding of the dirty underbelly of media manipulation. Guest speakers and industry insiders drop by from time to time, too, fleshing out the printed material with real-world insights and inside information. Though this media boot camp helps prepare them, Bambrick says many of her students are already off to a good start. “Students these days have a much better understanding of media. They’re exposed to so much, and have been since they were young, so they’ve developed a healthy skepticism about everything they consume,” she says.

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As Bambrick has taught the course, she’s noticed a technical evolution that’s been undeniable. All of her five guest speakers for this past semester, for instance, were “digital marketers,” she says. Other trends come and go, too. Bambrick says that as younger media consumers have become increasingly savvy, traditional advertising strategies are no longer effective. Instead, today’s crop of consumers are likely to be moved by humor, wit, and quirkiness.

Consisting mostly of seniors, the class’ makeup is both bright and career-oriented, according to Bambrick, with about half of the 45 or so students being CMS minors, with political science, international relations, English, and psychology majors sprinkled throughout. “They really want to use these projects to find jobs,” Bambrick notes.

Kicking off “presentation night” was a group of a half-dozen students representing the “Lettuce Movement,” a curious venture about — you guessed it — increasing public awareness for lettuce. But what sounded trivial at first turned out to be a multi-faceted exercise about taking a common, simple, oft-ignored product and raising its profile through various forms of media. The “lettuce group” utilized videos, a Facebook page and a Twitter feed, promo clips, ads in the Tufts Daily, flyers and buttons, and even a country song to espouse the wide-ranging benefits of lettuce.

Why? Perhaps because lettuce is something we take for granted. It’s an underdog, as one student put it. But now, thanks to the movement, it’s no longer under the radar.