



# CAPS ALUMNI AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Northern Michigan University

Summer 2010

The 2009-2010 academic year in the Communications and Performance Studies Department was certainly one replete with a number of significant changes. Clearly, the greatest upheaval took place in November with the untimely and sorrowful passing of Dr. Louise Bourgault after her all-too-brief battle against cancer. Those of you who had the chance to study or work with Louise will remember her as a tireless campaigner for the internationalization of the NMU curriculum in general and your home department's offerings in particular. Because of her efforts to bring foreign colleagues and musicians to campus, as well as encourage students to study and travel abroad, Northern became a much richer place in terms of what we have to offer those who join our family. Our friend, mentor to some, and renowned international scholar will surely be missed.

On a happier note, a number of new faces will be joining us this summer. We will see the arrival of Ansley

Valentine as our director of theatre and Shuang Xie as the new international media scholar in the broadcasting sub-area. Their profiles are in the pages that follow. Also, our Departmental secretary, Jan Hampton, will take her justly-deserved retirement from Northern after 32 years. As of this writing we do not know who will be her replacement.

In addition to all the fine accomplishments by faculty and students you will read about, we want to point out that much of the changes in CAPS cannot be easily seen unless one is here to experience day-to-day life. For instance, in the theater sub-area, folks are busy revamping curriculum to match the realities of the craft in the 21st century and to capitalize on our commitment to the "greening" program. There is also a major construction project in the Forest Roberts Theatre that will improve the handicap access for main stage production. In Broadcasting, we have received funding to replace hand-held cameras and anticipate upgrades in tech equipment donated by WNMU TV and

radio in the following months. We are also on the brink of a joint new journalism undergraduate major and a designated theater studies graduate program along with the English Department. And those in the communication studies/public relations/entertainment and sports promotion sub-area have been busy managing local communication campaigns, engaging in a range of academic service learning projects, and applying their skills in a variety of campus venues.

Despite changes in personnel, we still offer a wide range of majors and continue to move students beyond books and into the field.

Please let us know where life has taken you since graduating from NMU. It is a great day to be a Wildcat, and we would love to hear from those on the prowl performing in the world at large.

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## Department Assists in Olympic and World Cup Events

The CAPS department played an instrumental role in the planning, promotion and execution of two of the country's biggest speedskating events of 2009. The United States Olympic Education Center on campus hosted the U.S. Short Track Speedskating Olympic Team Trials Sept. 8-12 and International Skating Union World Cup Nov. 12-15 in

the Berry Events Center. CAPS students were involved with almost every aspect of the event. Students assisted with athlete interviews and coordinated entertainment and activities during breaks in the competition, helped with videography and instant replay, built a stage on site, performed an opening ceremony and assisted with the awards

presentation.

Dwight Brady and his students worked with USOEC assistant director Mike Fields to put on a show. The students manned cameras around the rink to capture the action for the big screen video display. NMU equipment and technology were used to display information on the



*Kate Annala, behind the skaters, is a PR graduate and was a USOEC intern. Skaters, from left to right are Apolo Anton Ohno and J.R. Celski*

sport during breaks, to show instant replay and to highlight previous competitions and upcoming events. Each night, footage from that day's competition was turned into a highlight reel to be shown the next day.

Broadcasting students weren't the only ones to gain experience from the events. Twelve students chose to enroll in the World Cup practicum led by NMU's Communications and Marketing Office. This practicum course introduced students to the event planning and promotional side of public relations and entertainment and sports promotion. The

students conducted research, learned about the sport, followed the event and then wrote post-event press releases.

CAPS organizations, such as Public Relations Student Society of America, were also involved in the speedskating events. While PRSSA president Kate Annala was busy as a USOEC intern assisting the announcer for the events, other members of the organization planned the entertainment. Because of the unique format of speedskating events, long breaks were ubiquitous and often waned the crowd's attention.

It was the entertainment committee's job to keep the crowd interested while the ice was being resurfaced. Chelsea Kunisch served as chairperson for the entertainment committee which brought local mascots, face painters, balloon twisters, dance-offs, bands, cheerleaders and more to the event.

Finally, CAPS students kept the USOEC media department running smoothly on a daily basis. Jackie Lange, an ESPR graduate, was the USOEC media relations coordinator. The office was also staffed by intern Han Lee (ESPR), Kate Annala (PR), Andrea Hitt (PR) and Marlie Shelton (ESPR).

## Student Profiles

### Outstanding Graduating Senior

Kate Annala was selected the 2010 CAPS Department Outstanding Graduating Senior in PR because she demonstrated a combination of academic excellence, leadership and practical application. Her presence in the CAPS Dept. is so great that she was almost selected a year early for the award until someone realized that she was only a junior.

Annala is a public relations major and communication studies minor who graduated with summa cum laude status. While juggling many activities on campus she was able to excel in her coursework and maintain a 3.93 GPA. As the president of Public Relations Student Society of America, Annala

lead fundraising efforts that helped 17 other students attend PRSSA's National Conference in San Diego in fall 2009. She also played a large role in the Jam for Love Ski and Snowboarding competition that raised \$1,800 for Teaching Family Homes, a local non-profit organization that cares for troubled children and families.

Another organization Annala was actively involved in was the Special Events Committee, a student organization that plans Homecoming and Winterfest. Annala has chaired several events during her years with the organization, which helped her build her communication skills and enhance her ability

to work with people of various backgrounds.

Another involvement Annala devoted her time to was her United States Olympic Education Center internship in the media office. Annala was responsible for much of the technical writing that the USOEC produced. Her most impressive task during the internship was working with the PA announcer during the U.S. Short Track Speedskating Olympic Trials and the International Skating Union's Word Cup that NMU hosted in the fall.

Annala is "kind of sad to leave NMU," but she is looking forward to working with a non-profit organization in the future.



*Kate Annala was voted by the CAPS Department as the outstanding graduating senior in public relations*

## Outstanding Broadcasting Student

Mark Bullion was selected as the 2010 Outstanding Broadcasting Student for his extracurricular activities and his passion for reporting. Bullion was a double major in electronic journalism and communication studies.

As a freshmen at NMU, Bullion dove right into the broadcasting field by anchoring weather for the Friday segment of Public Eye News at WNMU-TV 13 (PBS for the Upper Great Lakes region). Bullion said, "This is what set my career goal into stone. I wanted to report!"

Bullion spent four years anchoring both news and weather segments for the Public Eye News and produced as well as directed for the station for one year.

Another shining moment during

Bullion's academic career was when he co-hosted a live call-in program on TV 13 with Congressman Bart Stupak. The program allowed viewers to ask public policy questions.

Bullion also worked as a utility runner during two live, nationally televised events. He worked at the 2008 Miner's Cup football game between NMU and Michigan Tech and for the International Skating Union's World Cup. He was also a videographer for the 2009 U.S. Short Track Speedskating Olympic Trials.

Besides his involvement on campus, Bullion interned at WJBK-TV Fox 2 Detroit in the weather and news departments. While interning, Bullion gained a basic understanding of meteorology and learned more about how a major

metropolitan news room functions. After graduation in May, Bullion planned to "apply to as many TV stations across the country as possible in hopes of finding a reporter position."



Mark Bullion on Public TV 13

## Faculty Features

### New to Northern

The CAPS Department will welcome two new faculty members this summer, Ansley Valentine as the director of theatre and Dr. Shuang Xie as a communication studies assistant professor.

Professor Valentine was the Director of Theatre at Stark Campus of Kent State University. He currently serves as co-chair of Region III of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. He is also very involved with Sigma Chi Fraternity on an international level.

Valentine holds a an M.F.A. from Indiana University and a B.A. from Wabash College. He is a seasoned actor, director and

choreographer whose recent productions include *Hello, Dolly!*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and *the Sound of Music*.

Valentine says, "As a director and producer, I focus on musical theater and special events for charity fund raisers. Also, my video production company has branched into training videos, and educational experiences for young people."

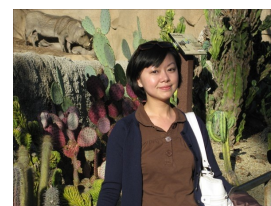
Although Valentine has a busy schedule with directing, producing, and community activities, he always makes time for his dog Jack, a wire hair terrier.

As for Shuang Xie, she holds a Ph. D. in Media and Communication from Bowling Green

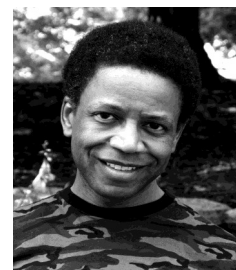
University in Ohio, a M.S. from Texas Christian University, and a M.A. from Sichuan University in China. Her research interest include international media studies, intercultural communication and new media. Xie has published several articles in the *Journal of Communication* and in the *Chinese Journal of Communication*.

Before entering her Ph.D. program at Bowling Green, Xie was editor of international news for the Economic Channel of China Central Television, the national network in Beijing, China.

She looks forward to teaching at NMU. In her spare time here, she plans to cook and travel, two leisure activities that she loves.



Shuang Xie,  
Communication  
Studies Assistant  
Professor



Ansley Valentine,  
NMU's new Director of  
Theatre

## Spotlight on Sara Potter

Instructor Sara Potter presented a paper on the Political Engagement Project at the National Communication Conference in San Diego in November. Sara said her paper “proved that students want to be engaged on their campus and in their communities and if given the opportunity, skills and knowledge students will work hard to make change.” The paper explained how civic engagement can be born in the classroom through the use of critical thinking exercises, identifying fallacies in political advertising campaigns, writing letters to newspapers and even doing group presentations on national issues. Potter was chosen to present again at this year’s convention with her paper entitled “30 Second Exercises in Speech Writing and Delivery.”

Aside from Potter’s presentations, she

teaches 16 credits a semester, runs directed studies and practicums and advises the NMU Power Sports Club.

Potter and her husband moved from their home in the suburbs of Chicago to Marquette at the beginning of the school-year in 2007, shortly after Potter finished her master’s at Illinois State University. Since then, Potter has began teaching a wide array of classes such as public address, interpersonal communication, argumentation and small group. She has also team taught entertainment and sports promotion with Karyn Rybacki.

In her spare time last year, she ran a practicum with PR major Megan Sarna and in conjunction with PRSSA they raised \$1,800 for a local nonprofit. Potter also served as the adviser for the organization that won the 2009 NMU Community Service Award. She said that her work

with the Power Sports Club has been fun and challenging. “I am so fortunate to be here at Northern doing everyday what I love,” said Potter.

Outside of her work at NMU, Potter is expecting her first child this summer. Also, in the past year, she learned to snowboard, paddled a kayak for the first time and adopted a second dog.



*Sara Potter and husband*

## Alumni Profiles

### Communication is the Key to Success



*JaneAnne Belmore on graduation day from Park University*

Less than four years after graduating from Northern, JaneAnne Belmore has secured a senior account manager position with Argus Health System, a pharmacy benefit manager in Kansas City, Mo. Belmore graduated from NMU in May 2006 with a B.A. in communication studies with full honors. She took an account management position with Argus right out of school and was quickly promoted. She is convinced that her communication degree is the key to her success in the work-force.

Belmore is responsible for maintaining a customer service relationship with one the nation’s leading plans. Within

this role, she provides day-to-day support and assistance to customers and resolves problems.

Aside from her accomplishments within Argus, Belmore recently completed her M.A. in communication and leadership at Park University in Parkville, Mo. Specifically, Belmore was focused on “determining the extent to which an ambient odor, rather than a fragrance worn by a person, affects our impression and communication towards them.” Belmore hopes to use her degree to teach undergraduate communication courses in the future.

While working and continuing

her education, Belmore also found time to join the ski patrol at the Snow Creek Ski Area near Kansas City and became a certified outdoor emergency care technician. After spending her college years in Marquette it may seem ironic that Belmore spent the winter learning how to ski and snowboard so she would be ready to patrol the slopes. “I am doing it all backwards,” she joked about learning to ski after leaving Marquette. But sometimes life is just more interesting that way for a Northern alum.

# Student Organizations

## Public Eye News

Members of Public Eye News say that the organization is still going strong. This student-run, produced and directed news reports, shown on PBS channel 13, brings together students from all departments to create a 15-minute daily report. There are at least 13 people required for each broadcast. Public Eye News provides students with life experiences they can take with them as they step into both the broadcasting and business world. Alumni of this organization are currently working in the U.P. and for companies across the U.S., including two for ESPN.

Members of Public Eye News say they devote a lot of time and effort to the program, but it is not all work. "Public Eye News is about having fun," says supervisor Robert Thomson. According to Thomson, the typically high-stress jobs of the broadcast are lightened with annual work parties and events that bring members closer together and give the organization a family feel.

Members of the Public Eye News are continually encouraging other students to join their team. Thomson says that current members hope that the organization will keep growing in size, talent and spirit. For more information visit Public Eye News at <http://wnmutv.nmu.edu>

## Superior Edge

This year 29 students were recognized as Superior Edge graduates, 14 in December and 15 in May. To receive the honor, the students completed a minimum of 400 Superior Edge hours, a minimum of 100 in each of the four edges. Another 35 students graduated with one, two, or three edges.

Since its inception in fall 2006,

Superior Edge has changed the lives of many students at Northern. Other universities have leadership programs, but NMU is the only university in the U.S. that packs community engagement, diversity awareness, leadership development and real-world experience into one, life-changing program.

To get started with Superior Edge, students attend a one-hour orientation where criteria and instructions on recording their hours devoted to community service, multicultural diversity, leadership and career related activities are explained. To complete an "edge," students document 100 hours of relevant activities and write a reflection paper articulating what they learned through the process.

A student enrichment transcript documents each edge. The student enrichment transcript gets sent out with a student's academic transcript. For more information visit [www.nmu.edu/superiorede](http://www.nmu.edu/superiorede)

## PRSSA

Northern's Public Relations Student Society of America raised \$1,800 for a local non-profit during their annual campaign. This year, PRSSA held a ski and snowboard competition called Jam for Love and a 3-on-3 basketball tournament. The group chose to raise money for Teaching Family Homes in Harvey. The money raised will be used for purchasing supplies for the newly built school on TFH's campus.

As mentioned earlier, PRSSA also worked with the Olympic Events Committee on the U.S. Short Track Speedskating Olympic Trials and the International Skating Union's Word Cup.

Also in the fall of 2009, 17 members of

PRSSA attended National Conference in San Diego, Calif. The conference covered many topics important to PR students, such as creating and managing social media networks, environmental PR, non-profit PR, and crisis management, just to name a few.

After returning from conference, PRSSA wasted no time starting their work with Prestige, PRSSA's student run public relations firm. Prestige worked with the Upper Peninsula Builder's Association to plan their annual holiday party, assisted in advertising for its printing services and created a member discount card. Prestige and PRSSA look forward to gaining a larger client base and developing skills that can be used in the professional world.

PRSSA wrapped up the school-year by helping the *Mining Journal* analyze the results for its annual Reader's Choice Award. Members of the organization were responsible for entering the survey returns into a database and analyzing the data. The organization plans to work with the *Mining Journal* in the future.



PRSSA Officers with President Wong

# Faculty & Student Achievements 2009-10

## Individual Faculty

Dwight Brady (Broadcasting) edited *Marquette Sister Cities Videos* as a civic engagement project.

James Cantrill (Department Head) continues to serve as a consultant to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), presented two conference papers, published one article in *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, and was honored with an Excellence in Scholarship Award from NMU.

Charles Ganzert (Broadcasting) published *Creating an Organizational Framework for Assessment of Student Engagement*. (Jossey-Bass), produced two musical programs for WNMU Public Radio 90, presented two conference papers, began working on *Case Studies in Rural Academic Service Learning*, and continues to serve as NMU's Academic Service Learning Coordinator.

Don and Karyn Rybacki (Public Relations) published a new edition of their guidebook, *The Rhetoric Notes*, and worked on two book manuscripts, *Publicity Techniques: Message Design for Sports & Entertainment Public Relations* and *Primary and Secondary Research Strategies for Public Relations Practitioners*.

Mark Shevy (Broadcasting) published one chapter in the *International Encyclopedia of Communication* (Blackwell), presented two conference papers, finished a manuscript for the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, and began working on a pair of research projects dealing with the perception of music as well as two additional text chapters.

Shelly Russell (Theater) worked on two new scripts: *Water* and *Lake Monsters*.

## Students

Several students accompanied Paul Truckey (Theater) to New York City for field studies and were provided opportunities to audition for roles or serve as technical assistant in various stage productions. This summer, incoming freshmen will join him in London for an international experience just before they begin their undergraduate careers.

Pete Francis (Broadcasting) traveled to the NCAA Hockey Finals in Detroit to report on and webcast NMU's team efforts.

Laura Niemela, Leanne Plath, and Chris Wasilewski attended the 2009 annual meeting of the National Communication Association in Chicago.

Whitney Oppenhuizen (Public Relations) was lead investigator on a study designed to improve the communications program for a joint Mississippi State University – Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment study concerning predator-prey relations in the Upper Peninsula.

Broadcasting students have consistently won honors each year from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters (see: [www.michmab.com/MABF/hscolawards07.html](http://www.michmab.com/MABF/hscolawards07.html); [www.michmab.com/MABF/hscolawards08.html](http://www.michmab.com/MABF/hscolawards08.html))

CAPS Faculty	Brady, Dwight - EJRN Professor	Jerome, Pat – Comm. Studies, Assoc. Professor	Rybacki, Karyn – ENSP Professor
	Cantrill, Jim- Head - Comm. Studies Professor	Niebauer, Wally – PR, Professor	Shevy, Mark – MPNT, Asst. Professor
	Ganzert, Chuck – MPNT, Professor	Panowski, James – Theatre, Professor	Truckey, Paul – Theatre, Assoc. Professor
	Hampton, Jan – Secretary	Potter, Sara – Comm. Studies Instructor	Valentine, Ansley – Director, Theatre
	Hegmegee, Kim – Tech. Director, Theatre	Russell, Shelley – Theatre, Prof.	Xie, Shuang – Comm. Studies, Asst. Professor
	Holliday, Vic – Theatre, Asst. Prof.	Rybacki, Don – PR/ESPR, Prof.	



# NMU's Roadmap to 2015 and Beyond: The CAPS Highway

In spring 2008, NMU President Leslie Wong unveiled a new strategic plan called the Road Map to 2015 and Beyond ([www.nmu.edu/roadmap2015/](http://www.nmu.edu/roadmap2015/)). This framework identifies specific priorities that your alma mater will address in the coming years, as we focus on various opportunities and challenges facing NMU. In particular, Road Map to 2015 and Beyond highlights the role that information technologies, internationalization and Northern's geographic location play in moving our institution through the first two decades of the 21st century.

The Road Map is comprised of four broad themes (i.e., nurturing innovation, promoting meaningful lives, leveraging campus attributes, and engaging our communities). The CAPS Department have identified specific initiatives they want to pursue. Some of these initiatives have already started, while others remain in the planning stages. Since you might be interested in learning more about where the CAPS department may be traveling to in the years ahead, here is a sample of some of the initiatives:

- establishing student exchange programs with communication departments at foreign universities.
- developing a talk show produced in the CAPS television studio to address global issues, cultural diversity and world concerns.
- creating a health communication program with an emphasis on rural health systems.
- instituting formal advisory boards for each CAPS specialty, thereby enlisting the expertise of both alumni and invited corporate sponsors.
- designing a media and interpersonal literacy course employing large lecture and lab sections to service the liberal studies program at NMU.
- moving the costume shop to a more suitable space.
- nurturing a touring theatre program to provide greater service to a wider range of regional stakeholders.
- working with student organizations to produce public service announcements and short news reports on issues of local, state or national significance.

If you are interested in helping with any of these or other initiatives, please get in touch. As initiatives and projects unfold, we will keep you informed of where the road is taking us.

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## FEEDBACK FROM AND FOR THE EDITOR

This second annual newsletter has made a few changes. We would like to know what you like and dislike most, and if you find the stories interesting. We hope to continue this newsletter in the future and keep our alumni and friends updated on what is happening in the CAPS community and in the field.

Besides getting your feedback on the newsletter, our managing editor, Nicole Darrow (PR graduate) wants to know where you are and what you have been doing since your time at NMU. Many successful and interesting people have graduated from CAPS, but it is impossible to keep track of everyone. Send us an e-mail with your thoughts and stories at [CAPS@nmu.edu](mailto:CAPS@nmu.edu). We are also trying to compile a more current and complete list of CAPS alumni e-mail addresses and mailing addresses, so let us know if your current email address and/or your mailing address has changed.

