

## Read on

Newspaper no longer only source of information.

Mass Comm students learn to be 'polished gem' at conference.

# MEDIA NEWS

## Mass Communication Department's conference considered a success, despite the low attendance

By Phamalai Cummings and Patricia Commander  
ARGUS REPORTERS

Less than half of the students enrolled in the Department of Mass Communications attended this year's fifth annual conference held March 15-16, in the Anderson Conference Center. The theme of the conference was "Polish: Becoming a Media Gem." However, the low turnout suggests that most students believe they are already polished.

The conference featured lectures on dining, business and dressing for success etiquette. It also showcased the talents of various speakers, including Anthony L. Law, a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, now vice president at Wachovia Corporation. Law conducted a lecture on business etiquette. His speech began "I was expecting a bigger crowd," a common sentiment among many in the Mass Communications Department.

"I was amazed at how good the conference was but I was appalled by the attendance," Lavender Gill, an instructor and coordinator for Ram Television, said.

Gill, who has taught at three different universities, said he has "never seen a university where the faculty and staff took time to put on a conference." He added that he believes the conference did a good job of reinforcing the need for professionalism and the need for attendance and punctuality.

"Half of being successful is showing up and half of our students did not," concluded Gill.

Out of the 213 mass communications students, 69 students attended the conference. Krystal Knight, a mass communications major who attended the conference, said "I don't feel like people are taking mass communications seriously."

Although she was disappointed in her classmates, she blamed lecturers for failing to promote the event.

"I wanted to attend," Kenyetta Richmond said. "I was upset because this is the mass communications department, but there was an insufficient amount of communication."

Richmond said that she has five mass communication classes, and none of her instructors mentioned the conference until the day before the conference.

Latoya Porter offered a counter view: "Students would make the effort to find out about a step show, or a party. Why not make the same effort when it comes to events concerning their future?"

Todd Davis, a mass communications instructor, said that the attendance was lower than that of past conferences. "Students involvement is a key indicator of their educational achievements. When students are involved less, they learn less," said Davis.

"There are 168 hours in a week; students spend on average 16 hours in class.

What are they doing with the other 90% of their time?" Davis asked. "Most learning takes place outside of the class — it is up to the students to get involved in activities outside of class."

On the discussion panel at the conference were four graduates of the department — David Dawson, Kiva Elliott, Nicole Ferguson and James Hamlin. Each guest shared advice with students.

Another guest speaker and WSSU alumni, Glynis Bell, gave students some do's and don'ts for dressing for success, with a mini-fashion show.

After greetings by WSSU's new provost Dr. Pedro Martinez, Nigel Alston, a popular motivational speaker and columnist, told students that life is like a combination lock, and you have to find the right numbers to get what you want. He shared with students his belief that one's thoughts, the images he or she visualizes, and one's actions are what hold the key to a winning combination.



ABOVE: WSSU's provost, Dr. Pedro Martinez, gave the opening remarks at the annual conference. BELOW: Kiva Elliott was among graduates of the Mass Communications Department on the discussion panel.



## Most students prefer ways other than newspapers to get the news

By Gabrielle Leonard  
ARGUS REPORTER

Sophomore Danny Harris sometimes reads a newspaper when he's sitting in a barber's chair — but only if it's free. He won't spend his own money to buy a newspaper. "When newspapers first came to be, there was nothing else to compete with them," he said, "because the Internet was not around, and people seemed to like the fact that there was something tangible for them to see, instead of hear, about the news. But now, there are too many other things that notify the public of what is going on in our society and overseas as well."

Newspaper readership is down among college students. Like Harris, many prefer to get their news from TV, the Internet or New

Media. Between 1998 and 2005, weekday newspaper readers dropped from 58.6 percent to 51 percent of all adults, according to Newspaper Association of America figures. For 18- to 24-year-olds, the drop was from 43.5 percent to 38.4 percent; and for 25- to 34-year-olds, readership fell even further, from 45.9 percent to 36.8 percent. Younger nonreaders are undoubtedly unmarried, since married people read newspapers more often than singles.

Anton Taft, a senior at Winston-Salem State University, said that he reads articles that can get his attention. "I was sitting in the cafeteria and picked up the *New York Times* and started reading it because it looked interesting. The *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* are avail-

able to students on campus at no cost. Copies of the *New York Times* can be found in the Thompson Center, and there's a *Wall Street Journal* stand with free copies outside the Reynolds Center. There's also the campus monthly, *The News Argus*. But few students take advantage of these resources.

Steve Friday, a sophomore at Winston-Salem State University, said that newspapers really do not keep his attention. By the time he's picked up a newspaper, he said he's already watched the news or picked up current events on the Internet.

Friday added that he predicts newspapers will probably become a thing of the past, as they do not hold as much importance as they once did.

## Rammies, a great way to honor outstanding Mass Comm students, won't be held this year

By Steven Gaither  
ARGUS SPORTS EDITOR

For years, the Mass Communications Department at Winston-Salem State University has taken a unique approach to honoring its outstanding students. Instead of hosting an awards banquet, the department puts on "The Rammies," a knock-off of the Grammys, to honor its top students in print, television and radio. It is an event that the students, as well as the faculty and staff, look forward to every year. Students come decked out in their finest attire, and they get a chance to act like stars for the night, as they present awards to their fellow students.

There will be no Rammies in 2006. The general consensus around the department is that Rammies didn't happen this year because of a lack of dedication to the project. This year, the task of putting together the Rammies was given to two Mass Media Management classes, both taught by mass communications instructor Todd Davis.

Davis, who has been in charge of the Rammies since 2004, says that a lack of leadership and dedication where the main problems. "The students lost a sense of what the Rammies is about," said Davis.

Marcus Small, a junior in the Mass Media Management class, shared that sentiment. "People weren't willing to put in the work to get it done," said Small, who was the leader of the audio group.

Davis divided the duties of putting the show together into eight categories, each with its own group to focus on that particular element of the event. For the show as a whole, there were only two goals for the project. The goals were to solicit 20 entries and collect \$200, neither of which happened. Only 12 entries were received and about \$150 was collected, even after Davis extended the deadline to February 21. Davis said the final decision about the Rammies was left to the students who were responsible for putting the show together.

"They voted that they did not want to do it. They felt as though they did not have the time, the resources or the management to do it."

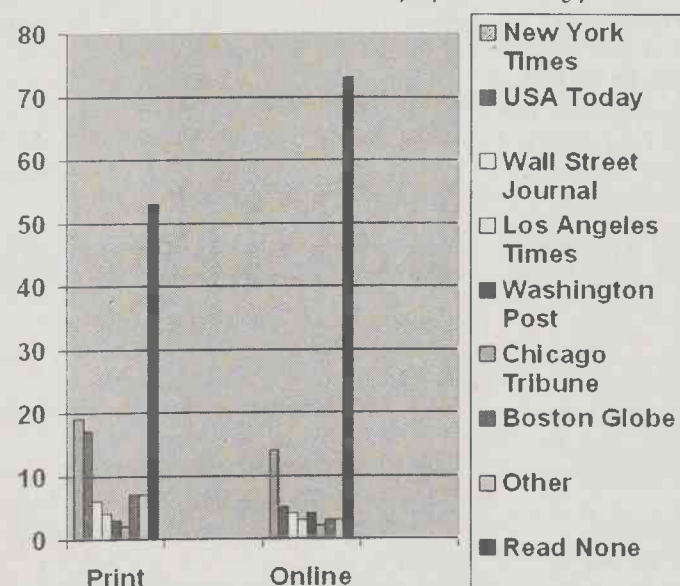
Jerome Hancock, who was the leader of the direction team, said that even though the prospects for the show were slim, he still voted to go on with the project. "As a leader, you want to see your goal come true. It's sad and kind of disappointing that it didn't happen," said Hancock.

Davis said that next year he will slim down the number of people working on the project to get a more concentrated effort. "I think that a concentrated effort will yield better results."

Davis also added that there is a lot to be learned from the failure of this year's Rammies. "Without participation and support, we cannot have an excellent awards program."

## Readership of national newspapers

Up from 45 percent last year, 47 percent of students read at least one national newspaper in a typical week:



Student Monitor publishes nationally syndicated market research studies of the college student market. For this survey 1,200 full-time undergraduates at four-year colleges and universities were interviewed.

## Ram TV19 is suffering from a lack of participation by students

By Mike Scott  
ARGUS REPORTER

Has RamTV 19 gone the way of the dodo bird? Given the programming on the channel, or rather the lack of programming, it would seem that this student-access channel is near extinction.

And that's too bad. The existence of this channel has given students an opportunity to come together to create programming, polish media skills learned in class and entertain fellow students. A dedicated few students have put in a lot of volunteer hours, hard work and creativity to make the channel a success.

But what about the majority? Are students just lackadaisical or is there something stopping students from producing shows? What has happened to the creative luster of RamTV19?

Currently, you'll see only news on the channel. All other programming has dropped tremendously. What's more, there has been only one new commercial produced since last semester. Why has the lure of programming for RamTV19 lost its appeal with students? Or, has it lost its appeal? Could it be something else? RamTV19 is a very pivotal part of the Mass Communication Department and is a great resource for students.

As a mass communications major, I am disappointed in myself and my contemporaries in the department. We have access to all these resources right here on campus, yet we have not taken advantage of them. We have faculty and staff members who sacrifice a lot for us and for the department.

There is a saying that goes something like this: You lose what you don't use. Hopefully, RamTV19 will regain its appeal, and students will step forward to produce quality programming. Otherwise, we might one day find that we've lost even before we've gained.