As part of its continued mission to expose students to successful alumni and other experts in the field, the School of Communication hosted guest speakers with a variety of accomplishments during the Fall 2013 semester.

ECU communication graduate Ashley Boarman ('08) spoke at a School of Communication Guest Lecture Series, “Evolution of Marketing PR in Social Media Environment.”

Boarman is a PR senior account executive for the Baltimore-based MGH Inc., the largest full-service integrated marketing firm in the mid-Atlantic. The firm offers advertising, public relations, media planning/buying, creative design and production, interactive (design, development and marketing), mobile, market research, direct response, relationship marketing and social media marketing.

Boarman is responsible for providing PR services to numerous clients, a job she says she finds “incredibly rewarding.”

During the presentation, she focused on the skills required to work in PR, as well as discussed how she landed her current position, and touched on how her job is far from the glamorized PR profession shown on television.

“I do a little bit of everything,” said Boarman, who explained she writes media advisories, meets with clients, pitches stories to reporters and so much more.

Boarman also stressed that PR practitioners are sometimes misconceived as “spin...
The right to freedom of opinion and expression may be a human right, but it is not certain for journalists in areas of conflict.

On Dec. 13, 2012, NBC foreign news correspondent Richard Engel and his four crew members were kidnapped in Syria. They were gagged, terrorized psychologically, and bound.

“When you’re blindfolded and then they fire the gun up in the air, it can be a very traumatic experience,” said Engel during a “Today Show” interview.

They were held captive for five days before being rescued by Ahrar al-Sham, a rebel faction in the Syrian Civil War.

There are many similar stories like Engel’s. Others have ended tragically for journalists, leading to a call for action concerning the safety and protection of both civilians and journalists.

In response, a debate titled “Protection of civilians in armed conflict: protection of journalists,” was held on July 17, 2013 by the United Nations Security Council and attended by expert journalists.

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Alumnus plays role in important debate

Spearheading the session was East Carolina University alumnus Michael Aho. After graduating with a degree from the School of Communication in 2002, Aho went on to work for the U.S. government; he is currently serving at the US Mission to the U.N.

The purpose of the debate was to address council member concerns, along with those of four expert international journalists on the issues. The experts who attended were Richard Engel, Kathleen Carroll, Mustafa Haji Abdinur and Ghaith Abdul-Ahad.

Engel is a NBC correspondent. Carroll is Executive Editor and Senior Vice-President of the Associated Press. Abdinur is a self-taught Somali journalist and Agence France-Presse’s Somalia correspondent. Abdul-Ahad is an Iraqi reporter and photojournalist.

During the discussion, Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson noted that more than 600 journalists have been killed in the past decade while doing their journalistic duties. Eliasson also stated that...
School of Communication welcomes Pulitzer Prize winner and N.C. native

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Gene Roberts was the keynote speaker at the School of Communication’s annual High School Media Workshop as well as the School’s visiting scholar this October.

An eastern North Carolina native, Roberts has served the New York Times as national and foreign correspondent, national editor and managing editor. He was executive editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer from 1972 to 1990, supervising a staff that won 17 Pulitzer Prizes. He won a Pulitzer Prize for history with co-author Hank Klibanoff for a book on the press in the Civil Rights era, titled “The Race Beat.”

Roberts shared his experience as a reporter and editor, and also spoke about the press and the civil rights movement.

The High School Media Workshop is an annual event hosted by the School of Communication and the North Carolina Scholastic Media Association. Over a dozen high schools in eastern North Carolina send their students to this one-day event on ECU’s campus. Roberts told the high school students that gathering as much information as possible and making the reader “see” the story is paramount.

Journalism debate cont.

41 journalists alone have been killed in Syria since 2012, and 108 in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2006.

Today, many perpetrators who kill journalists have a sense of impunity when it comes to their crimes. If they are never punished, their freedom enables them to kill again.

“When a journalist is killed, the news dies too,” said Somalia correspondent Abdinur.

SOC reaction

School of Communication Director Dr. Linda Kean said she was very impressed by the role an SOC alumnus played in organizing the debate, which was the first debate on journalism at the Security Council since 2006.

“I’m very proud of Mr. Aho on a variety of levels,” related Kean. “He has been very successful in his career. He is a great representative of the School of Communication at East Carolina University.”

Kean believes the open debate was imperative not only for the protection of journalists, but to point out what defines journalism as there are those who consider themselves entrepreneurial journalists but hold no media credentials to cover news.

“If we value open dialogue and communication and freedom of the press, how do we protect those people who are providing us with the information?” Kean asked.

The debate can be viewed at:


Save the Date!

ECU School of Communication’s
CommCrew Spring Reception
Greenville Museum of Art
April 5, 2014
doctors” who distort the truth.

“The thing about PR (is) if you do it right and do it well, it is based on the truth, even when that means dealing with an unfortunate news item for your client,” Boarman said. “We want to be honest with people. That’s how the public trusts us and we build our credibility.”

Current students and others who attended the lecture, which was open to the public, were encouraged to be well informed, organized and great at networking.

“If you want to be successful in public relations, you have to be on top of the news,” she related. “One reason I feel like I’m successful in my job is because I also know what is going on in the industry.” She said she constantly thinks about her clients and the way news stories are covered.

Video of Boarman’s full speech is available at: myweb.ecu.edu/cfac/kang/boarman.htm

Brandon Sneed—the author of “The Edge of the Legend,” which chronicles what he calls “the most incredible basketball championship season of all time”—also paid a visit to the School of Communication.

Sneed’s book focuses on Anthony “Ant” Atkinson, Barton College’s hometown hero whose incredible narrative culminated in a sensational, symbolic comeback in the 2007 national championship game against the undefeated defending national champion, when Atkinson scored 10 points in the final 39 seconds to give Barton its first and only national title.

Sneed also writes for national magazines and is working on a novel, a biography, and a memoir that Hollywood producers are considering optioning for a movie. In addition, he blogs at brandonsneed.com about life as a writer and human being.

“I’m passionate about finding good stories and telling them well,” Sneed said.

The author was a guest speaker in Dr. Cindy Elmore’s Feature Writing class.

“He described the many ways he has found unique story angles geared toward the audiences of particular magazines,” Elmore said, adding that Sneed related that he has spent hours crafting a single email to an editor to pitch a story idea, knowing that the email had to be perfect.

Sneed also presented at the SOC’s High School Media Workshop about what it takes to tell a good story, storytelling across various media formats, and how the internet has enabled people to do remarkable things with narrative journalism.

He received an M.A. in English from ECU in 2012.

SOC currently accepting applications for MA program

A background in health communication lets graduates of the School of Communication’s master’s degree program pursue a variety of opportunities within the healthcare industry, academia and the not-for-profit sector.

The SOC is currently accepting applications for the fall 2014 term.

Through this 30-hour program with a thesis or non-thesis option, award-winning faculty who have been recognized for teaching and research give students a solid foundation in communication theory and practice.

Courses include: interpersonal, organizational, intercultural, pedagogy, social influence, media and advocacy.

Many courses have a health focus, such as physician-patient communication, health campaigns, and communication within health organizations.

The application deadline for Fall 2014 is June 1.

For more information, visit www.ecu.edu/comm and click on the MA Program link.
A cademic Advisor Dinecia Gates organized a special showing of “Miss Representation,” a documentary by Jennifer Siebel Newsom that appeared at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and then aired on the Oprah Winfrey Network.

More than 250 students attended the viewing in the Hendrix Theater during the spring 2013 semester. “The film shows images of women in media and that reflects how we view women in leadership,” said Gates.

According to the film, the media’s current message to the American culture is that female power and worth come solely from physical aspects and not ability to lead. The documentary’s goal is to challenge the media’s portrayal of females. It includes stories from teenage girls and interviews from well-known women, including Condoleezza Rice, Katie Couric, Nancy Pelosi and Rachel Maddow.

Gates gained funding for this event through the Co-Curricular Collaborations fund. According to the Student Affairs website, the Co-Curricular Collaboration fund was established so learning outside of the classroom would be more engaging for students.

“Funds are based on academic curriculum,” said Krista Wilhelm, Assistant Director for Educational Programming. “It’s meant for faculty to extend classroom learning.” Gates is currently planning two more special events related to communication. One will be a sports panel during the Fall of 2014 directed towards communication majors.

“The panel will consist of big names in the sports industry and will address how to get jobs, showcase work done, and make connections,” said Gates.

The other event will be a panel focusing on the concentrations available for communication students. It is in the works for the Spring 2014 semester.

“I love working with students but I really enjoy showing students what they can do with their major.”

### Overall satisfaction with instruction in your major

| Satisfied to Very Satisfied | 92 percent |
| Neutral | 6 percent |
| Dissatisfied to very dissatisfied | 2 percent |

Total: 95 responses

Source: *East Carolina University Graduating Senior Survey Academic Year 2012-13 Graduates, School of Communication Report*
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