

THE FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION OF COLLEGE MEDIA ADVISERS, INC. • SUMMER/FALL 2007 • VOL. 45 NO. 1-2

# DARK DAYS LESSONS LEARNED



How do you prepare for something like the tragedy at Virginia Tech?

The truth is, you don't.



The shock waves from the fatal onslaught at Virginia Tech on April 16 still reverberate throughout our society in many forums and on many issues. Few of us can probably really understand the depths of the sorrow that campus community has shared unless, God forbid, a similar tragedy has happened on our own.

The Virginia Tech tragedy has probably had the greatest collective impact on this generation of college students since Sept. 11, 2001, when most of our student journalists were just starting their freshman years of high school. For many of them, the events of April 16 present the dilemma that faces many who still possess the idealism of their youth and the ambition to succeed as professionals: how can you prosper in a tragedy without sacrificing your ideals? And if you cannot function as a journalist in the most trying of times, what does that say of your professional prospects?

Many of our nation's student journalists, and not just those at Virginia Tech, faced those questions and acquitted themselves commendably, using their intellects, their skills and the tools at their disposal to find their voices and to engage readers, in many cases, far better than their professional counterparts. One of our colleagues told me afterward that throughout that sad day, she turned to the Collegiate Times website for the most unfiltered and timely news coverage, information that served the central interests of the newspaper's immediate readership and was devoid of the agendas of the national news media.

Inside our pages this month, we display some of the extraordinary journalism produced by the staff of the Collegiate Times and other student journalists around the country, and we offer some observations by advisers and some of those students themselves on how that tragic day changed their lives.

It's often easy in hindsight for journalists, when they reflect on a major issue of an era, to pinpoint its genesis, to more or less nail down when the story broke, to connect all the dots that may
have previously seemed unrelated. But on most days in most newsrooms, the portent of the news
in its embryonic stages is not always so clear in the relatively hurly-burly from which it emerges.
Too often we fail to recognize the stories as history in the making, much less treat them that way.
And when we do, it only complicates the grind even more, one reason why newspaper accounts are
often tagged as the "first drafts of history" and the reporting as "writing history on the fly." Kelley
Callaway, the student media coordinator at Georgia Southern University and the managing editor
of CMR, recognized this the hard way when she rolled up her sleeves to help compile the centennial history of Georgia Southern. But there's good news. In the process Kelley gained considerable
insight into how student journalists and advisers can capture events of the day in a manner that
makes the lives of historians a lot easier, and she shares her thoughts and advice along those historical lines elsewhere on these pages.

Those of us who did not know Indiana University adviser David Adams are, judging by the regard in which he was held by those who did, probably the worse for it. Adams, who died at his home in Indianapolis in June, was one of the most acclaimed advocates of student journalism and freedom of the collegiate press in the nation. Chosen by his peers as president of both CMA and the Student Press Law Center, Adam's accomplishments were many, but all of the long list of awards and titles only signify the extraordinary stamp he left on college journalism, most particularly at IU, whose student publications annually rank among the nation's best. Elsewhere in the magazine, we pay a small tribute to Dave and share again some of his advice on what it is that advisers do.

Mark Twain or somebody said it was differences of opinion that led to horse racing. Consensus is less easily reached in a newsroom, where friction can compromise the overall effort to get the best job done, and it can get further complicated when convergence comes into play. Former CMR editor Pat Parish of Louisiana State University reported last year in a case study of some initial efforts toward convergence that much of its success at the college newsroom level depends on the degree to which the students embrace it in the first place. President-elect Vince Filak of Ball State University and Andrea Miller of LSU decided to find out more about why and how student journalists react to cooperating with their former (hopefully) competitors, and you can read the results of their research inside.



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# 4. Dark Days & Lessons Learned

No one is prepared for tragic events like what occurred at the Virginia Tech campus last April, but the success of the Collegiate Times provides other schools with valuable tips to prepare for the unimaginable.



Kelly Furnas & Kelly Wolff



# 10. Black Day in Blue Ridge

Not only did the student newspaper at Virginia Tech provide relevant coverage of the Virginia Tech shootings, but dozens of staffs from other college media responded as well. Some sent contingents to Blacksburg, while others delved into the local ramifications of the events in Virginia.

# 16. Remembering Dave

Longtime student media adviser Dave Adams died unexpectedly last June leaving a legacy of commitment to student media, journalism and service.



# 18. No One Else is Writing this Down

At times the only record of the life and times of students at an institution comes from the student media. Students are not only covering current events but providing a chronicle of their schools that will be scrutinized by scholars in the years to come.

Kelley Callaway

# 21. College Media and Convergence

# **Refereed Article**

Two journalism professors research why convergence does or does not work in various college media environments. Through an online survey of college media advisers, the researchers explore media bias among college journalists.

Vincent F. Filak, Ph.D.

Andrea Miller, Ph.D.

Student journalists at Virginia Tech cope with a deadly rampage and aftermath on campus

By Kelly Furnas and Kelly Wolff



ollegiate Times staff members and advisers were interviewed dozens of times about the newspaper's coverage of the April 16 shootings at Virginia Tech. One of the universal questions we were asked: "How do you prepare for something like this?"

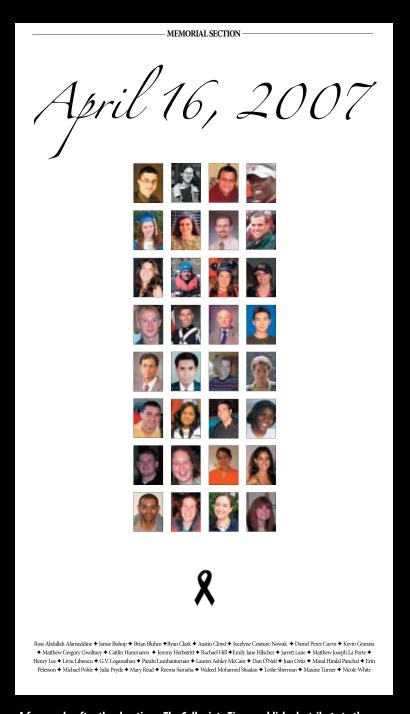
The truth is, you don't.

You can surely mitigate emergencies with disaster manuals, phone trees or even drills. Unfortunately, many procedures become out of date the moment they are created, and being too rigid in your response could leave you blind to new ideas. Plus, in reality, emergencies never go they way they are planned.

When we sat down to develop our list of lessons learned from watching students cover a tragedy, it ended up not being so much about procedures that should have been in place as it was about the information we should have had. That being said, another key factor in responding to an emergency is simply knowing what you believe. While there may be time to debate the finer points of an ethical decision, any organization without a clear mission and purpose is going to struggle making on-the-spot judgments.

The following tips include roadblocks we faced in trying to provide coverage as well as mindsets that helped get us through the week.

- **1.** It's all about the readers. It sounds like a simple notion, but when big news breaks, sometimes journalists worry more about headlines and deadlines than readers. It's important that the focus of the staff's efforts remains on the community in all aspects of production, from newsgathering and online updates to photography and page design.
- **2.** Talk to third parties on which you rely. The Collegiate Times was six hours late sending files to the printer, yet newspapers were still in the racks before 9 a.m. The union where student media is housed was locked down for several hours, yet university personnel allowed news staff members inside



A few weeks after the shootings, The Collegiate Times published a tribute to the fallen members of the Virginia Tech family (May 1, 2007).

Remember
everyone
deals with
tragedies
differently.
Our staff
heads
announced
early on that
only people
who wanted
to work
should do so.

to do their jobs. Communication, both before and during the crisis, ensured that everyone was on the same page about how operations could continue.

- **3.** Find out now what happens to your website when traffic spikes. This can be valuable not only in an emergency, but also for when you get linked by a high-traffic site such as Slashdot or Fark. What is your emergency bandwidth plan? Can you turn off non-vital services (we didn't know how to get to CT e-mail the moment we made the switch to collegemedia.com)? Can you leave your HTML files on your main server and move all other content somewhere else? What is your ISP willing to do to help you? And no matter what, your single server can do only so much; your ISP has only so much bandwidth. Spreading out the servers to computers in different network locations helps a lot. We were using collegiatetimes.com, collegemedia. com, hosting.vt.edu and College Publisher.
- **4.** Avoid pizza. While feeding student staff members is important, multi-day crises will result in an overload on cheese and tomato sauce. We bought students pizza the first day, and both the Times-Picayune and a former editor of the Ball State Daily News bought pizza the second day. Later in the week we tried other staples barbecue, sub sandwiches and tacos.
- **5.** Chaos is fine, as long as it doesn't get published. Working amid pandemonium keeps the adrenaline flowing, but the readers lose confidence if it doesn't seem as if the staff is in control of the situation. Dropped stories, botched facts and copy editing mistakes may seem like a natural result of a hectic situation, but maintaining a copy chain and redundancies in internal communication can limit those failures from being distributed to the community.
- **6.** Have contact information for all your students and ensure they have yours. Keep the information in redundant places. Addresses and phone numbers aren't enough. Midway through the crisis, I picked up my office phone and couldn't dial out because all circuits were busy. I tried my cell phone, but there was too

much congestion. Virginia Tech's e-mail server was lagging by about an hour. The answer? Instant messaging. All your students have it, and so should you. Our news reporters were able to send quick updates to our web staff via IM, and several reporters used it to ask me questions.

- **7.** Allow staff members to shine, regardless of their position. Probably the unanimous MVP in the Collegiate Times' coverage was a sports reporter who, prior to April 16, had written about five stories. Yet during the week, the top editors gave him a lot of latitude, and he came back with about a dozen pieces, almost all enterprise and investigative.
- **8.** Quickly extinguish any talk about awards. Acknowledge praise from your peers because that encouragement goes a long way to keeping the staff motivated. However, when a staff member decided to send out a link to an Editor & Publisher column that had suggested the Collegiate Times deserved a Pulitzer, the self-indulgence suddenly felt tacky. At that point we reminded the staff of our primary mission to serve the readers.
- **9.** Have press passes for key personnel, and be prepared to make more. We think one of the factors that led to our photo editor's detainment by police (and having his equipment confiscated but later returned) was the fact that he didn't have media identification. Student leaders usually create press passes in August, but this year it had slipped through the cracks.
- **10.** Remember everyone deals with tragedies differently. Our staff heads announced early on that only people who wanted to work should do so. While we encouraged everyone to seek counseling, we never pushed the issue.
- **11.** Have policies in place for dealing with outside media. Perhaps our biggest failing during the crisis was our inability to handle the barrage of requests from outside media. We had national news outlets seeking stringers. We had more than 100 requests for interviews. We had dozens of other publications seeking per-



# **COLLEGIATETIMES**

www.collegiatetimes.com

April 20, 2007

# What's next?

# Students given several options for semester's end

SATURDAY

# Hokie Hope: all day, worldwide

- ◆ Hokie Hangout: 1 p.m. 7 p.m., Old Dominion Ballroom
- ◆ Relay for Life: 6 p.m., Johnson-Miller Track

#### SUNDAY

- ◆ Hokie Hangout: 1 p.m. − 7 p.m., Old Dominion Ballroom Hokie Hangout: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m., Old Dominion Ballroom ♦ Hokies United picnic: 5 p.m., Drillfield

# — SPECIAL EDITION —

# **COLLEGIATETIMES**

# Week of strength follows day of horror on campus



More than the contraction of the

# Students, community show humanity after tragedy

FINISH NOW



# Gov. Kaine organizes independent review panel



COMPLETING

THE SEMESTER

The final constraints of the second contract results to born they respected to the shorting. Kizzel that properties Verginia End-strained Carden the desire stuped energy Exter and Thomby They has been acting as a very very good predict and the major and the second to the second to the second to the second of the second to the second to the second of the second to the second to the second of the second to the second the second the second the second the second the second to the second the second

ADD ASSIGNMENTS COMPLETE COLIRSE WITHDRAW

The Collegiate Times followed developemnts in the days and weeks after the tragic events of April 16. Whether or not they considered it at the time, the student journalists and photographers were recording the first draft of history.



# DARK DAYS LESSONS LEARNED

mission to reprint photos or stories. We had other news organizations seeking space and computers. Every phone in the newsroom was ringing (not once with a news tip, and always with someone wanting something), so the staff ended up forwarding all the phones to the editor's office. Yet every time she would hang up the phone, it would literally begin ringing again.

At 11 p.m. on the day of the shootings, she decided to leave the phone off the hook. Being part of the story while trying to report the story is never a good combination, but during the crisis it also impeded the work. Television producers trying to interview our editor inside the newsroom would tell other students who were working to be quiet. At one point, an adviser was talking with a student when the camera operator came over and told them to move, since they were in his shot.

The lessons?

Consider who can have access to the newsroom – whether for coverage or to work. You may decide that working with professional publications may foster good relationships later down the road, or that other student media operations deserve a helping hand if they are in an unfamiliar environment. Regardless, set ground rules for all your guests – and your own staff members – that ensure your publication takes priority.

**12.** Consider how you will handle photography that is in great demand. We were overwhelmed with more than 100 calls from different media and agencies. If you are an AP member, the terms of your contract may dictate that photos go on the wire. Will you put restrictions on them, such as no magazine and broadcast use? Will you reserve the magazine and broadcast rights for possible sales?

Will you distribute freely over AP to maximize exposure of your students' work? We ended up dealing with an outside vendor to license our photography except for some early photos we sent out on the AP wire. It was probably the only way to handle the number of reprint requests we were getting, but we also lost a lot of flexibility in accommodating other college newspapers or trade publications.

Be ready to specify in an agency photo contract the length of time the rights belong to the agency to sell and what uses, such as fellow college papers, are allowed.

- **13.** Consider alternatives when the story impedes distribution. The day after the shootings, some roads leading to newspaper racks were closed. In some cases, street teams distributing papers might help. In other cases, online may be the only choice.
- **14.** Be prepared if your offices are inaccessible. Prepare staff at orientation with designated alternate meeting places. Make arrangements with your printer, other newsrooms, or even labs with computers to share space. Have an off-site copy of a cloned computer so you could transform alternate computers into newsroom computers. Know how to access your servers from alternate sites. Have an off-site backup of your server that is updated regularly.
- **15.** Don't lower your expectations. It's easy for a tragic situation to make excuses for poor writing, lackluster designs or sloppy copy editing. But students will maintain a higher sense of pride if, weeks after the event, they can point to what they did instead of what they could have done.

(Scott Chandler, design and production adviser of Educational Media Company at Virginia Tech, contributed to this report.)

Kelly Furnas became editorial adviser of Educational Media Company at Virginia Tech in 2005 after working for newspapers in Las Vegas and Tallahassee, Fla.



Kelly Wolff has been the general manager of Educational Media Company at Virginia Tech since 1999 and serves as the vice president of College Media Advisers as well as the treasurer of Southern University Newspapers



# How do you prepare for something like this?

# The truth is, you don't.





# VT journalists respond to the acts of a madman

# Monday, April 16, 2007

- 9 a.m. Collegiate Times staff member calls editor Amie Steele to report rumors of shootings at a residence hall. Steele dispatches reporters and photographers to the scene and notifies the web staff.
- 9:26 a.m. University sends a mass e-mail to all students about the residence hall shootings.
- 9:30 a.m. Steele hears about shootings at another building across campus and dispatches reporters and photographers there.
- 9:47 a.m. The Collegiate Times publishes its first post about the residence hall shootings ("Shots were fired on campus in West Ambler Johnson Hall in the early morning hours. The Collegiate Times is currently investigating the story. More information will be posted as it is made available.)
- 9:50 a.m. University sends a second e-mail reporting that a gunman is loose on campus. The student union that houses the Collegiate Times newsroom is locked down.
- 10:15 a.m. Collegiate Times online director Chris Ritter arrives at the newspaper's off-campus business office and begins leading online operations there.
- 10:16 a.m. University cancels classes.
- 10:30 a.m. The Collegiate Times photo editor Shaozhuo Cui, taking pictures of the events unfolding outside the classroom building, is ordered to leave the scene. As he begins to do so, police officers tell him to get on his knees. He complies, and officers then cuff his hands behind his back and, according to Cui, they say over the radio that "We've got a suspect matching the profile."
- 11:01 a.m. Trying to process 168 connections per second, the Collegiate Times Web server fails.

- 11:30 a.m. Traffic from collegiatetimes.com is redirected to collegemedia.com, the Web site of the newspaper's parent company.
- 11:36 a.m. The Collegiate Times begins posting updates online again.
- Noon University holds its first press conference, announcing 21 killed and 28 injured. Two Collegiate Times reporters spend the rest of the day and much of the rest of the week at the media staging area at Virginia Tech's alumni center.
- 12:30 p.m. Cui is released from police custody, but without his cameras, camera bag, driver's license or student ID. Officers tell him they would contact him about his possessions. They are returned approximately three days later.
- 1:45 p.m. The Collegiate Times Web staff arrives in the newsroom.
- 4:40 p.m. University officials confirm that 33, including a gunman, have been killed.
- 5:38 p.m. The Collegiate Times Web site uploads a redesigned format specifically for the shooting coverage.

# Tuesday, April 17, 2007

- 1:09 a.m. The newspaper sends the first of 16 pages to prepress.
  - 6 a.m. The Collegiate Times puts the newspaper to bed.
  - 9 a.m. The newspapers are delivered.

Chronolgy prepared by Kelly Furnas

6





Technician - North Carolina State University





IN THEIR WORDS

America's collegiate press responds to a Black Day in the Blue Ridge

DARK DAYS
LESSONS
LEARNED

did something we've almost never done since I've been at North Carolina State - we used a wire photo. My question was why we would not hesitate to send someone up there to cover a football game but didn't send someone up there to cover something that will change many aspects of our campus life. We did have some discussion about why universities from California were sending reporters/photographers and we didn't. Part of the reality is that it came at a bad time, finals, for us. That's part of the reality of working for a student media outlet where academics take priority.

The staff felt that, although Virginia Tech is our sister school and is only two and one-half hours away, that their story was here in Raleigh. We have a lot of families with ties to Virginia Tech, so they set out to document that. Our photographers did search for reaction photos on campus, but none of the vigils were until the next day and the only other thing was people watching television.

So, after some debate about which photo to use, the students chose to run a wire photo. I was very pleased with the initiative they took to find local angles on the stories, particularly on campus safety. The alternative copy brought to light the comparisons between the two schools. If we had it to do all over again, I'd probably push a little harder to send



Est Lausin, Mch. State News 1963 No. 2007 No. 20

Deadliest shooting in U.S. history at Virginia Tech leaves at least 33 dead, including gunman; motive not yet known

# **Timeline**

# **Students** outraged over lack of warning

By Sue Lindsey



CAMPUS SAFETY



# Mich. native: 'This is just proof that it can happen anywhere'

By Laura Misjak

# no concrete plan in place at MSU if shooting were to occur

**Emergency procedures exist,** 

WANT TO CONNECT?

# AYS PAST DEADLII FOR NEW WEBMAI ANNOLINGEMENT GAPSA FLECTS 400 miles apart, students commemorate tragedy INCOMPLETE

Thousands of students gather on Drill Field, lighting candles in honor of the 32 murdered

For admissions, local crime not a concern

Showdown at Franklin Field 🧠

By JASON SCHWARTZ can college campus, Virginia
Polytechnic Institute students

The Daily Pennsylvanian

One day later, a 'somber' campus marred by tragedy deals with emotional aftermath

still no doubt that things are different.

"Pee the first time ever here."

Sereaming into the phone, she different with the phone wi

'The darkness actually scared me'

INFIDITE (CITALES IN THORN OF Mr. CA. THATACHAS DE PARAL RELIANDA SERVICIAN DE LA CASAURA (V. 2).

BLACKERURG, Va.

Throughout bloece and cheers, single sky a viley gain to be vide a raage of easy. The case of the case of

Parents, experts say academics outweigh worries about safety

MOURNING ed in Monday's shooting.

and with speeches and See VA TECH VIGIL, page 4 CONTINUES gina reus accur the tragedy as several hools experience bomb reats. PAGE 7 TO SERVE AND PROTECT

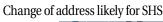
: 12,773.04 ▲ 52.58 :DAQ: 2,516.95 ▼ 1.38 :500: 1,471.48 ▲ 3.0 CHARLIF POWELL Q&A

ID of Va. Tech

students, teachers, even people who

At two separate candlelight vigils, Penn students commemorate Monday's massacra By ASHWIN SHANDILYA
Staff Writer
sushwings wherion superus adu
"It was intended

One year gone



# Medical facility may move to 36th and Market streets in 2008

By PAUL RICHARDS Staff Writer

# The State News - Michigan State University

a reporter and photographer up there. We could find the NCSU angle up there too without overlooking it at home.

We have added a budget line item of more than \$500 specifically marked for the coverage of news events, (and) I do think we'll be quicker to jump on covering a big story with such implications for our campus as a result of our discussions after this.

> **Bradley Wilson** Coordinator of Student Media North Carolina State University

ecause several of our students at the Rocky Mountain Collegian are native Coloradans, they have vivid memories of Columbine and a

special sensitivity to the tragedy, which became a driving force in their coverage. They decided to create a four-page wraparound of our regular April 17 edition, with photographs and fairly extensive coverage of the tragedy.

All of them worked tirelessly to make the wrap come together, and they hold that week in a special place in their hearts.

Jenny Fischer Creative Services Manager Colorado State University Student Media

he Daily Pennsylvanian was one of a handful of college newspapers to send staff members (two reporters and a photographer) to

lege student on our campus was talking about, and after the initial shock of the news, our editors wanted to try to tell our readers what life was like from college students' perspective rather than that of the network news channels. The combination of articles and features from the scene at Virginia Tech, our local campus stories about student reaction and campus police preparedness, and "Penn

profs ask, 'What if it happened in my

class?" gave our readers staff-generated

local and national perspective.

Blacksburg on April 17, the day after the

shootings. This was a story every col-

Eric Jacobs General Manager The Daily Pennsylvanian.

# The Daily Pennsylvanian - University of Pennsylvania



The UB Post - University of Baltimore

The Breeze - James Madison University

hen people ask me about my experience covering the tragedy at Virginia Tech, I usually give a one-word response: intense.

After watching the second press conference from The Daily Tar Heel office on April 16, where university officials admitted that they believed more than 20 people were dead, I started mobilizing for Blacksburg. I gathered two other reporters, a photographer, stacks of empty notebooks, and ran to my car, then drove the 200 miles to Blacksburg, Va., at about 80 mph.

Tearing down the road certainly felt

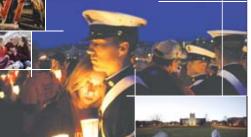
good, despite the fact that the four of us didn't even have a change of clothes between us, much less all our drivers licenses, money, and other essentials. But it was not until we were in Blacksburg, confronted with a mourning maroon-and-orange student body and a landscape of satellite trucks, that we confronted the enormity of our task.

During the next three days, sustained by massive amounts of caffeine and the accomplishment of writing good stories for the readers back home, I made friends with the student staff of The Collegiate Times. They were understaffed, overworked, and filing great stories. Their professional conduct did not falter as they dealt with the national media crush. Their coverage did not become sentimental, even as they identified friends and professors on a credible list of the dead. Their generosity to me extended from the office to their personal lives, providing information, photographs, a computer for work and a futon for sleep.

JMU responds to shooting, page 3

I was in Blacksburg six days of the next 10. The experience taught me how to work well in a crisis, but it taught me more about the "Hokie Spirit." Among





Hitting close to home

forefront issues

of safety

Stop Day: All-around good time

raised per capita

IN THEIR WORDS

# America's collegiate press responds to a Black Day in the Blue Ridge



Small Talk - Methodist University

The Doane Owl - Doane College

the university-sanctioned memorials to the 32 victims lay tributes to the gunman and senior English major Sueng-Hui Cho. While it was not a consensus, several members of the college community saw Cho as a part of the tragedy.

"He was still a person, too," said junior Matthew Quinn, "He was still a Hokie."

> Erin France State and National Editor The Daily Tar Heel

owell Raines, the former executive editor of the New York Times, was known for "flooding the zone," unleashing major manpower,



The UB Post - University of Baltimore

**DARK DAYS** LESSONS **LEARNED** 

# America's collegiate press responds to a Black Day in the Blue Ridge

to cover the biggest of stories. In keeping with the sports metaphor, this is a story about losing the ball out of bounds late in the game ... and then executing a full-court press to try to make up for it.

The Orion comes out each Wednesday, and The Virginia Tech killings, of course, happened on Monday, April 16. The Orion's April 18 edition had nothing on its front page about murders of historic proportions that occurred on a college campus. The only "story" was of fewer than 100 words on A-2.

While it's possible to explain such an oversight, it's impossible to excuse it. Readers don't care about a newspaper's problems; they just want the coverage they're entitled to.

By the end of that week, The Orion had dispatched three student journalists—reporters Karen McIntyre and Ashley Gebb and photographer David Flannery—more than 2,500 miles to cover the reopening of the VT campus. They spent five grueling days there and sent back stories and photos that were impressive in terms of both their quality and quantity. McIntyre later would write that The Orion "put more time, sweat and stress into covering this tragedy than any other college newspaper in our state, and probably the country—Virginia Tech's Collegiate Times excluded."

The students' blogging in particular was illuminating and insightful, and it confirmed, in my mind, the priceless educational value of this venture. McIntrye, in her final Blacksburg blog, dated April 24, had this to say:

"The tragedy happened on April 16. But it's not over. It's a story, it's a lot of stories, and there's still much more that needs to be said about it.

"Our coverage is late, but not because we didn't care.... The Orion does care. No story can fully explain what it's like on the Virginia Tech campus. No words can describe the unity in this little community of Blacksburg. No story can do this justice, but I just hope that after reading this week's issue, people can for-

give us for last week's mistake. I hope just this once, people will think, better late than never."

> Dave Waddell Adviser, The Orion California State University-Chico

rion reporter Karen McIntyre was among the three-member team of journalists from Cal-State Chico who, like many of their counterparts at college newspapers across the country, journeyed cross-country to Blacksburg, report first-hand what they found. McIntyre wrote in the newspaper's blog that she felt compelled to help the Orion atone with its readers for failing to initially recognize the impact of that April 16 at Virginia Tech. Here's what she told readers in an April 24 blog entitled "Better late than never"

"BLACKSBURG, Va. — The largest shooting spree in modern U.S. history happened April 16, on a college campus at that, and we didn't have more than three inches in our paper about it. And the little bit we had wasn't even on the front page. The Orion messed up. And I am part of The Orion. We all made a mistake.

"The Virginia Tech massacre was not on the front page of The Orion last week. But it will be this week. And it won't be an AP story pulled from the wire. It will be real, and it will be of way more quality than it would have been last week or if we had tried to do it any other way than coming out here and walking in the shoes of a Hokie...The Orion does care. No story can fully explain what it's like to be on the Virginia Tech campus. No words can describe the unity in this little community of Blacksburg. No story can do this justice, but I just hope that after reading this week's issue, people can forgive us for last week's mistake. I hope just this once, people will think, better late than never.

Orion assistant news editor Ashley Gebb expressed to readers back home her awe at singular responses from fellow college students. In her April 24 blog entry about the unity among college students, entitled "It's all the same," she told about one of those first-hand experiences:

"The nation has come together and united - and the colleges even more so. While on the Drillfield days ago, out of nowhere came a marching band of students from Alabama playing "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah." When talking to someone later, I found out that they DID come out of nowhere. They got in a van and drove from Alabama to come show Virginia Tech their support. It was mindblowing."

Orion photographer David Flannery he wound up learning much from the professional press that descended on the Virginia Tech campus, most of it its unprofessional pursuit of the story at all costs. Here's what he wrote on April 23 in "A lesson in ethics:"

"I have never enrolled in a journalism ethics class. After today, however, I feel like I could teach one.

"I am at Virginia Tech to cover the aftermath of the events of April 16th, and I'm appalled at what I have seen. I simply cannot believe the way broadcast media has treated the students, teachers and staff here.. The mainstream U.S. media has invaded this small college town of Blacksburg, and pushed an already fragile people to a breaking point. Today the Student Government released a statement to the press asking them to leave.... I keep listening in on students being interviewed, and it felt like these people who had just experienced a tragedy become a commodity, something to be bought and sold.

"As a photographer, I ended up choosing to leave my long lens at the office because I wanted to force myself to talk to these people. I cared about the story, and I wanted to make sure the VT students knew that I did. [But] I kept seeing old men (pros) with video cameras shoving themselves through people to get right up in the faces of crying people.... I could understand capturing the pain and suffering of VT for the first couple of days, but a week later, I think doing that is completely insensitive and unnecessary. The story has since moved on, it has become a story of moving on, and it's time for the nation to let Blacksburg mourn in peace.





The Orion - California State University-Chico

The University Times - University of North Carolina Charlotte

"I also kept hearing the same questions from the reporters. 'How many doors down from the killer did you live?' 'How has the shootings/massacre/killings affected your life?' The worst though, was that each of these questions eventually led up to a conclusion question about blame. The reporters wanted to hear students express judgment for who is to blame, be it the school, the police, society, the killer, it didn't really matter. It just needed to be something tangible that broadcast could hold onto. Every student that I talked to expressed their disdain for the obvious presence of the media.

"I have always thought that I didn't need to take classes in photojournalism to understand it, and I feel the same today. Seeing things like this helps me to understand the type of photographer, the type of journalist, and the type of person I want to be. Sometimes you have to get the story, and sometimes you have to

stand back and wait.

'[The] mainstream media seemed to either ignore common courtesy or flat out not possess it that bothered me the most. They didn't care how people felt, they just wanted a story, and they forced it out of this little Virginia college town...[I]t was pretty obvious that these people had already made up their minds before they got here, and they searched out people to prove it.... I have to give them a failing grade for the VT coverage. They got the story out, but at what cost to the people affected? The students at VT have their own opinions. Today I saw a group of students with cameras stopping reporters and journalists, directly confronting them in a documentary style about whether or not it was appropriate that the media is still here. . . . [T]he most I overheard from those being interviewed were the words "responsibility," "obligation" and "necessity," the same righteously noble garbage that everyone interviewed was saying. It was a straight up cop out on their part.

"I learned a lot about journalism this week. I learned even more about myself. I learned more through real experience than any book or classroom could ever teach me. I know where to draw the line, and I know how people deserve to be treated."

Dave Waddell Adviser, The Orion California State University-Chico





David L. Adams, 59, director of student media at Indiana University since 1989 and an adjunct professor at Indiana University's School of Journalism, died unexpectedly at his home in Bloomington on June 2.

A devoted mentor to hundreds of students, Adams was publisher and adviser to the Indiana Daily Student, the Arbutus yearbook, and the idsnews.com Web site at Indiana University. The Society of Professional Journalists named the Indiana Daily Student its winner for Overall Excellence for College Daily Newspapers in 1998, 2004, and 2005, and in March 2007 the College Media Advisers selected the Arbutus as Best Large Yearbook. Adams was inducted into the College Media Advisers Hall of Fame in 1997.

A passionate advocate for student journalists and their First Amendment rights, Adams was named Journalism Educator of the Year in 2004 by the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. A board member of the Student Press Law Center for nearly 20 years, he was president from 2003 until 2006. He was past national president of the College Media Advisers and the Society for Collegiate Journalists. From 1992 until his death he was adviser to the campus chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Born in Iola, Kansas, on Oct. 30, 1947, Adams received his bachelor's degree in 1969 in English and journalism at Washburn University, Topeka, Kan., which named him a Distinguished Alumni Fellow in 2001. He received a master's degree in journalism from the University of Kansas in 1972 and a Ph.D. from Kansas State University in 1984. In 1975 he joined the faculty of Fort Hays State University in Kansas.

In 1981 he joined the faculty at Kansas State University, where he also served as executive director of the Journalism Education Association. After his move to Indiana in 1989, he quickly became a thoroughgoing Hoosier, but he never forgot his Kansas roots. He named his pugs Dorothy and Toto, and one room in his home was devoted to Oz memorabilia.

In 2002 Adams was a visiting professor of communication at Hawaii Pacific University in Honolulu. In 2001 he was a Fulbright Senior Specialist at Zambia Institute for Mass Communications Education Trust in Lusaka, Zambia, and in 1997-98 he held a Fulbright Lecturing Fellowship at the China School of Journalism in Beijing.

A member of the Bloomington Rotary Club since 1989, he was a member of its scholarship committee. A former director of IU Credit Union, he was an active member of Unity of Bloomington. A longtime board member of Bloomington PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), he was treasurer and a member of the scholarship committee. The Indiana chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association has named its newly established scholarship the David L. Adams Memorial Scholarship.

"Adams is survived by his partner, Chunming "Jimmy" Chou, of Bloomington, with whom he was joined in civil union in Vermont in 2001; his son, John D. Adams, of Overland Park, Kan.; his brother Charles Adams, of Haysville, Kan.; his stepmother, Betty Adams, of Los Lunas, N.M.; and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to the David L. Adams Scholarship/School of Journalism, IU Foundation, P.O. Box 500, Bloomington, IN 47402.



David L. Adams



# Adams left an indelible mark on student journalism

The legacy that CMA Hall of Famer David Adams left to student journalists at Indiana University and to student journalism in general is enormous. By the standards by which most advisers are held in regard, Dave had either done it or won it in his long career.

At IU, the Indiana Daily Student and the Arbutus yearbook, among the many other student publications, are consistently judged among the best in the country, and Adams, who died at his Bloomington home in June, has played a major role in their success.

Beyond the IU campus, Adams served at various times as national president of both CMA and the Society of Professional

Journalists, for which he was also a national board member for nearly 20 years, and he was named the scholastic journalism educator of the year by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

If Adams' accomplishments and the accolades bestowed on him are taken by most advisers as coins of their realm, what the best advisers do on a daily basis to advance student journalism can be an elusive concept outside the newsrooms. In an oft-quoted article he authored for the CMR, Adams related what he envisioned as the role of the adviser, and his answer to the outsider's perennial question about what exactly it is that advisers do bears repeating.

# "What do you do as a media adviser, anyway?"

# 1. Establish a learning atmosphere that emphasizes student leadership

- Always allow the students to make content decisions, even the big ones.
- Remember that experience is indeed the best teacher.
- Remember you are an administrator in student media, even more than you are a teacher or coach. Make sure the student editor or manager is perceived as the leader, not you.

# 2. Train

- Work with students to increase their competence not only in skills specific to their area (such as writing, photography, scripting, on-air speaking) but also interpersonal skills (tolerance for their peers in a working situation, leadership, team- and morale-building, management).
- Develop ways to ensure students learn how to meet deadlines, including how to cope when the unexpected happens.
- Work with students in content-production areas to expose them to concerns and processes on the business side (advertising, billing, bookkeeping).

# 3. Coach

- Recruit, train, inspire and befriend a staff of students whom you set free to do their best work and bring forth their highest levels of creativity and fair play.
- Do periodic critiques, stressing both positive areas and areas needing improvement. Critiques can be written or oral, or both.

## 4. Help

- Help the staff to establish policies at the beginning. These should include job descriptions, governance structure, editorial policies or code of ethics, and operating policies.
- Help the staff in its recruiting efforts.
   Facilitate contacts around campus in areas that could yield potential staff members.

# 5. Protect and defend

Safeguard the students' opportunity
to produce their media without undue
restraint or pressure from outside groups.
Remind students that they have one of
the most important jobs of any: practicing the First Amendment in responsible
ways and helping others in the campus
community to understand why this set of
constitutional guarantees is essential in
our democratic society.

# 6. Educate outside groups

Take every opportunity to educate administrators, other students, alumni and the public in the legal and pedagogical underpinnings of CMA's code of ethics, which emphasizes the benefits of "learning by doing" and decries all external control. You may often have to remind these groups that you are not the school censor and do not want to be.

# 7. Provide resources

- Oversee the finances to ensure stability and businesslike practices, so moneys will be available when needed.
- Either learn to be a computer expert or arrange for outside technical support.

- Provide opportunities for you and the students to be exposed to the larger media world. Attend conventions and workshops; participate in professional organizations; bring media speakers to your students.
- Keep current in new technologies and media trends.

## 8. Provide career encouragement

 Encourage good students to go into media careers. Know what jobs are out there.

# 9. Motivate

 As adviser, you will be a key motivator, offering encouragement, support and counsel to the staff members. Because your job often allows for close relationships with key staff members, you have a golden opportunity to help build each students confidence and self-esteem.

# 10. Respect and foster diversity

 As adviser, you will be a key resource in helping the staff bring diversity to written and visual coverage in campus media. You will help the staff to develop an acceptance of others views and uniqueness as humans. Diversity in staffing, in coverage and in opinions and issues covered ensures a relevant campus medium, and the adviser is the continuity in the organization that fosters such diversity in staffing and coverage from one staff to the next. Student journalists are chronicling campus events in a way that no one else could . . . or would.

# HISTORY IN THE MAKING

BY KELLEY CALLAWAY

As the awful events of April 16, 2007, unfolded in the shooting rampage at Virginia Tech, student media across the country immediately sprang to action, questioning security on their own campuses, telling the stories of those affected, informing their communities of memorials to honor those who died. But they were doing more than that, even if they didn't realize it. They were chronicling the story of their institutions, and they were writing the first draft of their university's reaction to historic events.

Many journalists either don't consider the historical impact of their jobs, or they just aren't aware of the implications their words could have down the road. As advisors, we have to make students aware that what they cover now will not only have an immediate impact on their schools, but will also tell the story of the institution long after the students themselves have graduated. The bottom line is that student journalists have a much more important job than many of them realize.

I had worked in student media for more than ten years before I truly understood the impact a paper has on the history of the community it serves. I could grasp the day-to-day importance, but not until I worked on our institution's centennial book did I see the historical value of student news media.

As Georgia Southern University approached its centennial year, our marketing department commissioned the writing of a comprehensive history of the school's first 100 years. I was hired as a proofreader on the project, and as I started delving into the chapters I started realizing the impact the student publications I worked with had on the historical process. When the author of the book wanted to inject student opinions or student reaction, his source was almost always the student newspaper or yearbook. The only sources quoted more in the final product were the two local newspapers, and that's only because they were around to cover the founding and early years of the university.

Student editors don't always realize the power they wield in the here and now, so it is more difficult for them to grasp their historical importance. As Spiderman has taught us, with great power comes great responsibility: student journalists need to realize the long-range impact of their work, and advisors need to guide them, as I put it, to "think forward historically."

# WHO ELSE WOULD BE WRITING THIS STUFF DOWN?

Student media are the primary recorders of history on their campuses. Editors, managers and writers cannot assume someone else is chronicling events, and no-one else probably is. The Georgia Southern community is probably typical of many of our universities in that very few individuals are chronicling the happenings of the day, except for the student media staffs. The Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society at Georgia Southern has been naming the university's Professor of the Year since 1971, but when the centennial history book wanted a list of all the past recipients, the society didn't have it. No one in the organizations had ever stopped to keep a list. So how did the historian unearth who had won the award for the past 30-plus years? He found it on the pages of the student newspaper.

It would be easy to think that local papers, with their full-time reporters, do a better job of capturing the historical impact of an institution. But this just is not the case. They might get the facts, but student publications can get the feelings. Not only are student reporters better at understanding the moods on their campuses, student sources are likely to be more candid talking to fellow students than talking to professional reporters.

Perhaps more importantly, students choose the content of their own publications, so it is a better gauge of what is important to students. If on-campus housing is full, the professional media may congratulate the school on filling every bed and discuss the story as another sign of the university's success. The student media, however, will probably tell the story of new students living in residence hall lobbies, and may continue coverage with a discussion on the need for more student housing. The same story means different things to different audiences.

Students also will cover the trends, fashions and hotspots that are popular on campus. When historians look back and try to capture a generation, these are the things they are looking for. Students know what students like. Student publications, because of who is doing the reporting, are the best place to get this information.

- 1. Make sure student media represent the diversity of an institution's opinions and interests and not just that of the editors. This means that the staff needs to be diverse, and we aren't just talking about color and creed. Make sure that the entertainment section hires CD reviewers who appreciate all types of music (not everyone likes hard rock); ensure that liberals and conservatives alike contribute to the editorial pages. This diversity is good for the publication now and in the future; it is also good for students. Encourage student reporters to find out about groups on campus, including organizations that are not officially recognized by the school, and popular groups on Facebook.com.
- 2. Student journalists should pay attention to political movements, and always attend and cover student government and faculty senate meetings. If they have the time and resources, consider attending and covering meetings of other prominent campus groups. Most of the time, before a policy becomes a policy, groups on campus are discussing the plausibility of initiating the change. While sometimes the meetings might seem boring, the notes from those meetings may become invaluable when a policy is approved. Knowing what faculty are discussing is vital to the life of a journalist. Faculty, especially tenured faculty, can be very opinionated.
- 3. Make sure journalists stand up for the students in situations when they may be tempted to back down. Sometimes administrators pressure reporters to back off stories that reflect unfavorably or place the university in a bad light. But for the real truth to be told now and to be recorded for the future, students need to press for those stories. More importantly, and harder to recognize, sometimes student reporters back off a story or subject because of pressure from other students. Last spring country artist Kenny Chesney announced a surprise concert for Georgia Southern students with tickets going for \$10. A local bar was supposed to begin selling tickets on a certain day at a certain time, but that morning reports started coming in that the bar claimed tickets weren't on sale yet, and students were turned away only to find out that tickets went on sale 20 minutes later. In pursuing the story surrounding the confusion, our reporters started uncovering some shady practices, and even some of our own staff asked that the paper stop investigating because they were afraid the show would be canceled. It was because through conversations with our reporters, Chesney discovered that his "Keg in the Closet" tour had been booked at a bar that didn't even have an alcohol license. Chesney and his people felt they had been lied to by the bar owners. Students at Georgia Southern, who had been first happy with the paper for announcing the concert, turned against its staff when they started uncovering the lies told by the bar owners. But the journalists pursued the unpopular story and the truth behind Chesney's appearance is on the record for all time.

- 4. Impress on reporters the need to cover and to follow up on new developments. Just because student editors think everybody knows about something, doesn't mean everyone does. Especially in our new multi-media world, alumni access student media websites and keep up with their alma maters through the student publications and sites. When Georgia Southern announced plans for a Starbucks in the student union, our reporters covered it for the better part of a year. But the new staff never covered the actual opening the following year because they assumed, by then, every one knew the shop was open. Historians will have a hard time uncovering when the shop opened and what its immediate impact was.
- 5. Learn the art of the follow-up story. We all know how important it is to follow up on a story: it helps readers in the here and now, and is the best way to inform a community and remain objective. But it is invaluable to the history of an institution. There is nothing worse for a historian to read a story about, say, a bombing conspiracy on campus, but then never know what happened to the suspects. In 1999, five Georgia Southern students were accused of plotting to set off an explosive device on the far end of campus to create a distraction so they could rob the financial office. The student paper followed the story from day one until four of them were sentenced for the conspiracy. That sentencing happened almost a full year after the story broke, but the new staff understood the importance of following through with coverage. If the accused students had been cleared, but no one had ever reported it, then only the accusation would be on the record. Journalists have to tell the whole story every time.
- 6. All photos should have a caption. Try to get the names of the people in the photo. You never know who will become famous or part of a story later on. And just because everyone today knows what the university president looks like it doesn't mean someone will in fifty years. If the photo doesn't run, put the information in the metadata.
- 7. Think of the "What If?" It sounds morbid, but you never know when you might be taking the final picture of someone or an event that something. Even if the university hosts the same event every year, take fresh photos of it, just in case it ends up being the last time the university hosts the event. Take pictures of the star football player anyway, because you never can tell. Last spring, our photographers spent an extremely hot Saturday afternoon taking pictures of the spring football scrimmage game. The paper was done publishing for the year, so it was hard to understand taking pictures of a practice game. But three months later, Georgia Southern's star player, Teddy Craft, was killed in a motorcycle accident. The pictures from the scrimmage were the last pictures of Craft playing football.

# How to think forward historically



# **Preserving** the past

- 1. When changing the format of a publication. consider what historical value might be lost. This is especially true now in the age of the declining yearbook. Remember that individual, labeled pictures of students, faculty and staff will be lost. How does switching the format change the historical value of the publication?
- 2. Consider binding all editions at the end of the year. Most libraries already have connections to binderies, but there are binding companies that can provide the same service. Having everything in one place makes it easy to browse (easier than most online archives), and is also a really nice gift for former editors. It also gives historians a place to start.
- 3. Keep an archive room, with at least two year's access electronic version of each edition.

- 4. Get a filing system for photos. Everyone has a different way of doing this, but remember to focus on dates, events and places. Put subjects and other information in metadata. Create a system and stick to it. And save everything.
- 5. Remember to finish the year with a Year in Review section. This is the number one easiest place for reporters, editors and historians to start finding information they need. Consider going month by month and highlighting the most important stories on campus that month. Remember to include captions with pictures with full information for future generations. 🗢

Kelley Callaway is the interim **Coordinator of Student Media at** Georgia Southern University, where as a student she was editor in chief of the George-Anne newspaper she now advises. She previously advised student media at Methodist College.

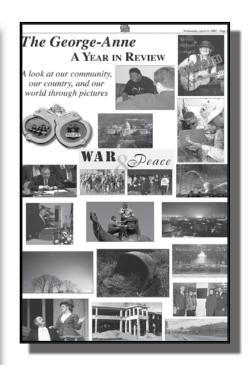


She is managing editor for College Media Review.



worth of publications. This gives our students physical copies to grab and remind themselves of what has been covered during the previous years. It also allows for easy access for people in the university community to get their hands on any issues they found particularly important. Also consider keeping electronic records of everything. At Georgia Southern we post a PDF of each edition on line, and this also allows us to have an easy to





YEAR IN REVIEW sections are a great way to capture the spirit of the past year and provide a historical roadmap for the future. However, your students need to understand that a year in review section is more than a picture page (above), and a really good section needs to provide copy and context to the visual elements (left).

survey of 150 participants in student newsrooms across the country found that student journalists have demonstrated signs of intergroup bias, favoring their own medium and career choice. Participants who have experience in converged newsrooms, however, are more positive in their ratings of convergence than their traditional-media peers. They also reported valuing the convergence experiences and trusting journalists from other media. Implications for student media are discussed.

# Refereed Article

# College Media and Convergence: Student journalists' attitudes and perceptions about convergent media operations

Vincent F. Filak, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Ball State University

Andrea Miller, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Louisiana State University

Convergence remains an important issue at the collegiate and professional levels, with newsrooms continuing to look for ways to produce media across multiple platforms and educators looking to prepare students for this new journalistic realm.<sup>2</sup> For the most part, the issues of technology and law have been resolved.<sup>3</sup> However, the issue of cultural differences among print and broadcast journalists has remained the key sticking point in convergence efforts in professional newsrooms.<sup>4</sup> Work in this area has demonstrated that these journalists are often engaged in an intergroup bias dynamic in which they favor their own group and work while looking less favorably on the work and skill of the other group, thus sparking cultural conflicts.<sup>5</sup> This issue has also arisen at the college level.<sup>6</sup>

At many universities, student media has become a testing ground for convergence, with varying levels of success. Often, the success of these efforts is tied directly to the students' level of "buy in." To date, no study has examined the perceptions held by student media practitioners regarding convergence. Furthermore, no study has examined whether students engaged in convergent newsroom experiences are finding ways to get past medium-based biases and see the value of convergence.

This study seeks to draw from intergroup-bias research and organization-based research to examine the attitudes and perceptions student media practitioners hold in regard to convergence. It is clear we need more research on what the basic root problems are for successful convergence within student media organizations. While instructors can foist convergence upon their students through threats

and rewards, advisers who operate under ethical guidelines set forth by organizations such as College Media Advisers and the Society of Professional Journalists cannot. Thus, if advisers are to aid students in moving toward a fully converged news operation, it is important to understand what leads to the conflicts between the student media groups and how to resolve them. It is also important to assess whether exposure to converged media operations will help diminish cultural problems and improve working relationships or merely antagonize students from these groups and create a more hostile working environment.

An on-line survey has been executed using the College Media Advisers listserv and student media participants from the researchers' universities. The goal was to gauge opinions about convergence and if students felt they were getting the necessary support to converge successfully. If students feel there are barriers to convergence, it is unlikely to succeed. With this survey, we hope to get to the root of the disagreements, and offer advisers information to help overcome these obstacles. With such an approach the students will feel more "ownership" of the converged operations and want to contribute on all levels.

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

We first define convergence in the industry, the university classroom, and finally college media. We will look at differences in con-

# Refereed Article

vergence applications and the obstacles to its success unique to each venue. This is followed by the theoretical application of intergroup bias to college media attempting this "blending" of mdia.

# **DEFINING CONVERGENCE**

Convergence at the professional level is defined as the integration of print, broadcast, and online technology into single newsrooms or agencies. Newsrooms spanning the states, from Arizona to Virginia, have attempted convergence with varying levels of success. In terms of resources, convergence is a massive financial commitment. For example, when three Tampa Bay area news outlets converged, parent company Media General paid \$35 million to construct a new convergence home. Physical and management structures can be put in place to facilitate convergence, but the commitment must be made at all levels of the news organization. Resource networks must be built, policies must be implemented, and finally, perhaps the most important and difficult aspect, staffs must be reorganized and buy into the culture of the convergent newsroom.

Studies of converged newsrooms have found that culture is the main stumbling block to successful convergence: Journalists are often resistant to change, tainted by the decades-old tradition of separation of print and broadcast. 10 The conflicts between the newspaper, television, and online cultures are common and extremely difficult to overcome.11 The different outlets have competed with each other and worked in opposition so long, they have been trained to dislike and distrust one another. 12 In converged newsrooms, television's ability to get news to the public first often meant print journalists were asked to hand over their stories for dissemination via the airwaves. This did not sit well with print journalists where success is often based on who "scooped" whom. 13 Even after converged products are complete, the individual units still have to publish and broadcast their own unit's product. Journalists, once autonomous, feel like they have "two different bosses" which adds confusion and stress to the situation.14

Problems in creating an operational model of convergence for the classroom have also been a challenge. Some research has suggested that students need to have some experience in multiple platforms if they are to truly be a valuable contributor to a converged newsroom upon graduation. <sup>15</sup> Other researchers suggest that the tenets of traditional journalism, such as strong writing and reporting, will be the most valuable tools students possess, even in the face of an everincreasingly convergent world. <sup>16</sup> For the most part, academics have found the best way to prepare students for convergences is to ensure that they can "think, report, and write across print, broadcast, and online media platforms." <sup>17</sup> This approach, while logical, has proven difficult, with many universities citing financial or staffing limits as the key roadblocks to convergence. <sup>18</sup> While 60 percent of U.S. journalism schools are preparing students to work across multiple

media platforms, many admit teaching print, broadcast, and online journalism concurrently has been difficult.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, some researchers have suggested that, since many professors and advisers have come from traditional newsroom settings, they could be bringing their medium-based biases with them into the classroom.<sup>20</sup>

#### **STUDENT MEDIA & CONVERGENCE**

Student media are often the first place in which college students truly ply their trade for a broad audience. Students are also required to deal with many of the same things their professional colleagues are, such as angry sources, demanding officials and pressure from every angle. Even more, they face the potential for censorship from administrators, backlash from fellow students and theft of their products. 21 Jared Flesher, a former college journalist who moved into the professional ranks recently, perhaps summed it up best when he noted, "College journalism is community-based journalism in its purest form: we write about the people we sit next to in class and the ones we see at parties on Friday night."22 College journalism courses can provide theoretical propositions and hypothetical situations but it takes the crucible of a newsroom to make those situations real. It is the experiences in these newsrooms that some feel provides the bulk of journalism education for college journalists.<sup>23</sup> Thus, while curriculum changes that are geared toward providing students with convergence experiences are important, student media experiences are more likely to galvanize student opinion on the issue.

To date, there has been very little studied in regard to the levels of convergence within student newsrooms. In a 2002 survey of student media organizations, of the 187 who identified as having more than one publication on campus, only two indicated sharing newsgathering and dissemination between outlets. Even more, 180 said there was no sharing of information. Despite continued evidence of professional newsrooms implementing convergence at a growing rate, few college media organizations are combining traditional news outlets into a converged newsroom.<sup>24</sup>

Hammond, Petersen and Thomsen<sup>25</sup> studied an attempt to create a converged news operation at Brigham Young University. Over a five-year period, newspaper and television students were put in a single newsroom and directed to work together to create their news products. The approach resulted in an unmitigated disaster, with television students accusing newspaper students of hiding news from them in order to break it in the next day's paper and newspaper students accusing television students of failing to work with them on stories. In the end, the only thing most of the students could agree on was that they disliked each other and convergence as a whole. One of the points the authors noted in their article on this experiment was that cultural differences were unexpected, but were the main problem these students faced as print and broadcast became "us" versus "them."

More recently, BYU has pulled back from its all-out convergence approach to curriculum and media and has begun to rethink the process. However, since the study by Hammond and his colleagues, numerous colleges and universities have begun to train students in the ways of convergence with some others, such as Ball State University, the University of Mississippi and others, looking for ways to create convergent opportunities for the college media outlets on their campus.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Intergroup bias refers to the way in which members of competing groups tend to show favor toward their own group rather than members of another group.<sup>28</sup> In student media, students are not only colleagues, but peers – many are the same age, experiencing similar life lessons such as balancing school and work. They relate to and associate with each other on many levels – as college students, young adults, print or broadcast journalists. The decision to join a group (student media) and enact a certain role (print or TV journalist) is done to make the individual gain a sense of belonging: a sense perhaps stronger for young adults.<sup>29</sup>

The competitive environment of newsrooms also makes intergroup identity stronger. Journalism is a highly competitive profession where success is based on beating the competition to a story – the competition being the other news outlets. This highly charged environment promulgates intergroup bias. The more competitive the activity, the more likely intergroup bias will persist and members will show in-group favoritism.<sup>30</sup> These in-group biases can lead to stereotyping and distrust that quash any opportunity to work together toward a common goal.

Physical distance between newsworkers is another obstacle in successful convergence. In an attempt to mitigate that problem, newsrooms have been built for the sole purpose of housing convergence. These close quarters have led to new attitudes toward the "other." As a result of working in close proximity, a study of four professional converged newsrooms found newsworkers admitting the experience has led to respect for people in other parts of the news organization and a valuing of pooling the media outlets' resources.<sup>31</sup>

Group members will favor fellow group members during allocation of resources.<sup>32</sup> Thus the perceptions of where the loyalties of the student media leadership lie may become a factor in efforts to converge. Is the student media director a former print or broadcast journalist? Perceived favoritism in terms of resources can affect perceptions of importance and pecking order within student media as well as work performance. Those units that see themselves as the "lesser" may have less inclination to help create the overall converged product.

Perception is also important in the adoption of new journalism

practices. Groups must perceive an advantage to participating in convergent activities, for example, a better job after graduation. A 2005 study found that the majority of newspaper and TV executives surveyed believe convergence skills are important for new hires.<sup>33</sup> For those already in the field, a study of four converged news organizations found that journalists perceived the experience in a converged newsroom as a career booster.<sup>34</sup> An acceptance of convergence may be the result of a perception of advantage. Therefore it is necessary for journalism educators and student media to find ways to incorporate convergence into their own environments<sup>35</sup> stressing this perceived advantage.

In sum, college media is just now traveling down the path of convergence. By identifying cultural and institutional obstacles advisers can help avoid clashes that lead to stereotypes, unit-specific autonomy, and lesser journalism – thus better preparing students for a multi-media world. Given the theoretical basis of intergroup bias and previous work conducted on convergence, we propose the following hypotheses and research questions:

**Hypothesis 1:** Newspaper and television students will rate their medium and career choice significantly higher than their rating of the medium and career choice of the outgroup.

**Hypothesis 2:** Participants who identified themselves as newspaper or television students would be more likely to believe that the administration supports the other medium more.

**Hypothesis 3:** Participants exposed to convergence would be more positive and less cynical about convergence.

**Research Question 1:** Will exposure to convergence create a significant difference among newspaper and television students in regard to how they rated their own medium and career choice as well as the medium and career choice of the outgroup?

**Research Question 2:** What do students who have participated in converged newsrooms think about their experiences?

#### **METHOD**

Participants were solicited through student media advisers who were members of the College Media Advisers group. Participants<sup>36</sup> were emailed a link to an online survey along with an email explaining what the survey would entail. They were then asked to rate a series of statements on 1-7 Likert scales (1= strongly disagree, 4 = neutral, 7 = strongly agree) that would allow us to ascertain their

# Refereed Article

attitudes regarding several aspects of media and convergence. We received a total of 150 usable responses.<sup>37</sup>

were labeled convergence approval and convergence cynicism, respectively.

## **MEDIUM-BASED BIAS INDICES**

Participants were asked to rate several statements that measure their attitudes toward print and broadcast news, both as valuable media and as career choices. Previous research in this area<sup>38</sup> has identified four variables that measure intergroup bias among journalists and journalism students: print superiority as a medium, broadcast superiority as a medium, print superiority as a career, and broadcast superiority as a career. These variables have been validated and refined in several subsequent studies<sup>39</sup> and thus a finalized version of the items was used here.

Print Medium Superiority (PMS, e.g. "I believe most of what I read in the news section of the newspaper" alpha = .81) and Broadcast Medium Superiority (BMS, e.g. "I believe most of what I see on the television news" alpha = .82) each consisted of five items and spoke to the value and importance of each medium. The Print Career Superiority variable (PCS, e.g. "Newspaper writing is the most rewarding field in journalism" alpha = .85) and the Broadcast Career Superiority variable (BCS, e.g. "I like the idea of working in the field of television news" alpha = .78) each contained six items. The items spoke to the importance of working in the ingroup field or the problems associated with working in the outgroup field.

As an additional measure of intergroup bias, we asked students to rate to what degree they felt the administration at their school provided support for their medium and their outgroup's medium. Four items yielded two variables, each with two items: administrative newspaper favoritism ("The newspaper gets more resources than other student media outlets," alpha = .80) and administrative television favoritism ("The television station gets more resources from the administration than other student media outlets," alpha = .83)

# ATTITUDES TOWARD CONVERGENCE

In order to assess what the participants felt about convergence, they were asked to rate a series of statements that reviewed positive and negative aspects of shifting to a converged newsroom.  $^{40}$  The items were factor analyzed, and, after removing all cross-loading items, two factors emerged. The first factor contained 7 items (e.g. "Convergence helps audiences learn about an issue in a comprehensive way" alpha = .89) that dealt with the positive aspects of convergence. The second factor contained 5 items (e.g. "Convergence means more work for individual journalists" alpha = .60) and discussed the drawbacks and negative aspects of convergence. They

## **CONVERGED NEWSROOMS**

Finally, we asked students who stated that they participated in converged news operations to respond to a series of statements that measured to what degree they felt connected with their convergence partners and the quality of work provided by those workers.<sup>41</sup>

In addition, we asked the participants to tell us what medium they worked for (with an option for multiple media) and whether they worked in a converged newsroom as well as several demographic variables, including age, gender, year in school and years spent in student media.

#### **RESULTS**

To test group-based differences, we had asked participants to identify which medium they worked for. Participants<sup>42</sup> were then coded into one of three categories: newspaper, television or other. The other category included radio stations, magazines and year-books.

Hypothesis 1 stated that newspaper and television students will rate their medium and career choice significantly higher than their rating of the medium and career choice of the outgroup. A series of one-way ANOVAs were performed with a Scheffe's post-hoc test to isolate the specific differences among the three groups. All three ANOVAs were significant (PMS F= 11.18, p < .001; BMS F= 13.58, p < .001; PCS F= 38.35, p < .001; BCS F= 36.68, p < .001). Results showed print and television students were more positive in rating their own medium and career choice than they were in rating the medium and career choice of their outgroup. Furthermore, they were also more favorable in their ratings of their ingroup medium and career choice than were the participants who had fallen into the other category. Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that participants who identified themselves as newspaper or television students would be more likely to believe that the administration supports the other medium more. Two oneway ANOVAs were conducted with Scheffe's post hoc tests to examine differences among the groups. Both ANOVAs were significant (Administrative television favoritism F = 7.01, p < .01; Administrative newspaper favoritism F = 7.41, p < .01). With the administrative newspaper favoritism variable, television students were significantly more positive in their ratings, indicating that they believed the newspaper was being favored. With the administrative televi-

sion favoritism variable, newspaper students gave the higher rating, stating that the television station was being favored. Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Research Question 1 asked if exposure to convergence would create a significant difference among newspaper and television students in regard to how they rated their own medium and career choice as well as the medium and career choice of the outgroup. We examined both the item in which participants were asked to identify the medium they worked for as well as the item that asked if they were working or had worked in a converged news environment. Using these items, we recoded the group membership to create six groups: newspaper with convergence experience, newspaper without convergence experience, television with convergence experience, television without convergence experience, other with convergence experience and other without convergence experience. In the four ANOVAs, all were again significant, (PMS F = 4.82, p < .001; BMS F= 5.65, p < .001; PCS F= 15.40, p < .001; BCS F= 15.69, p < .001) but the differences were primarily between the newspaper and television participants without convergence. However, in the Print Career Superiority variable, the newspaper participants without convergence were significantly higher than all other participants except the others who had convergence experience. In the Broadcast Career Superiority variable, the newspaper students both with and without convergence experience were more negative in their ratings than broadcasters without convergence experience. In none of the four analyses did convergence experience lead to significant differences within a medium or career choice. For example, print students with convergence experience were not significantly different in their ratings of any of the four variables than were print students without convergence experience.

Hypothesis 3 stated that participants exposed to convergence would be more positive and less cynical about convergence. Two one-way ANOVAs were conducted.<sup>43</sup> The convergence approval variable yielded significant differences (F = 7.16, p < .01) with those exposed to convergence being significantly more positive in their ratings. No significant differences existed, however, between the groups with the convergence cynicism variable (F = 2.55 p > .1). Therefore the first part of Hypothesis 3 was supported because exposure made the participants more positive; however, the latter part of H3 was not supported because the participants with no exposure were not more cynical.

Research Question 2 attempted to assess what students who have participated in converged newsrooms think about their experiences. Of the 150 responses we received, 43 students from 12 universities stated that they worked in a converged environment. Although this small grouping makes for an invalid statistical analysis, we thought it would be valuable to examine these responses. Thus, we have presented them here from a merely descriptive perspective.

The items were measured on 1-7 Likert scales, but given the size of the sample, we thought it would be more valuable if we condensed the scales to account for three basic ideas: some level of agreement, neutrality and some level of disagreement. We then assessed two basic areas in which we asked them about their convergence experience: the quality of their convergence experience and the issues of cooperation and trust among the media outlets in their newsroom.

Convergence quality: The participants appeared to have some issues with the quality of the work they had been provided by their partner. Only 16.2 percent of the participants agreed to some degree that they used material provided by their partners without major revision while 46.5 percent of the participants disagreed with that statement to some extent. When asked to respond to the statement, "The stories our partner gives us meet or exceed our standards," the agreement rose to 23.4 percent with the disagreement sitting at 32.6 percent. In addition, 27.9 percent of the participants agreed to some degree that their news partner provided them with quality story ideas while only 18.6 percent disagreed to some degree with that statement. When asked to rate the level of quality they saw in the finished stories from their convergence partner, the numbers rose for agreement (30.3 percent) and fell for disagreement (11.6 percent). As a whole, however, the participants were overwhelmingly neutral about their convergence arrangement and the level of quality work it had created.

Cooperation and trust: In examining the issue of trust, the participants indicated fewer medium-based biases and more cooperative attitudes. Only 17.1 percent of the participants agreed to some degree that they were suspicious when people from other media wanted to work with them, as compared to 48.8 percent who disagreed with that statement to some degree. A similar statement, "I don't trust 'them'" also had 17.1 percent of the participants agreeing, while 58.5 percent disagreed.

In regard to the equity of the convergence arrangement, 14.6 percent of the participants agreed to some degree that convergence meant their group would be left to do all the work. In contrast, 46.3 percent disagreed to some degree with that statement. In reacting to the statement "We don't get anything out of this partnership," 12.2 percent of the participants agreed to some degree while 51.2 percent disagree.

In rating their overall experience, participants were overwhelmingly positive. In rating the statement, "Working with our partner makes our news product better," 58.5 percent agreed to some extent with only 4.9 percent disagreeing. Additionally, 61 percent of the participants agreed that their experience in working with individuals in other media has been positive with only 4.9 percent again showing any level of disagreement.

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## **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

This study suggests that students who identify themselves along traditional medium-based lines are likely to demonstrate intergroup behavior. Newspaper students were more likely to believe that newspapers were the best source of information and that a career in the newspaper business was more valuable than a career in television news. Television students thought just the opposite, which mimicked earlier findings from professional newsrooms. In addition, both groups were likely to believe that their group was slighted by the administration and that the other group was better supported and liked.

Students who were exposed to convergence were more positive in their ratings of the benefits of convergence, although no differences were found between the groups when assessing the drawbacks of convergence. These findings have some value, in that it is clear that students are capable of finding value in this approach to journalism but have not been blinded to some of its negative ramifications. Since contact alone has not been shown to be a panacea for decreasing bias and distrust among groups, 44 we thought the deeper look into how students who were participating in converged newsrooms felt about the process would give us a better sense of things.

Overall, students in the converged newsrooms were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences, reporting that they felt they had gotten something of value out of the partnership. They also reported lower levels of distrust in their answers regarding partnerships with outgroup members. Although they reported general neutrality regarding the quality of work provided to them by members of other media, the findings in this section demonstrated that those participants who worked with other journalists in a cross-platform

setting were likely to be positive about the experience. Given the problems that some student newsrooms<sup>45</sup> and many professional newsrooms<sup>46</sup> have reported regarding bias and cultural issues, these findings suggest that some newsrooms are finding ways around these traditional stumbling blocks.

Another perceived stumbling block is that the students believe the administration does not support or like their medium. It is almost like sibling rivalry. But this finding about administration shows that at least one of the causes may be from the top down, at least in perception. Therefore, again the importance of the administration and the advisors showing unity is of utmost importance.

The advisor in a student media environment can be a large part of this positive or negative experience. While this study asked about administrative support of other outlets, it did not ask specifically about the advisor's support of other outlets. Studies in professional newsrooms would support the notion that advisers probably also display some level of outlet bias. If advisers speak or act unfavorable toward other student media outlets, the students may model this behavior. This is a question that needs to be asked in the future concerning convergence and educational environments. Do journalism professors and advisers who exhibit intergroup bias themselves influence their students? This possibility is one advisers must be cognizant of as they perform their duties and interact with all student media.

Journalism students say they believe they would work better in a non-competitive newsroom environment than a competitive one.<sup>47</sup> Again, the adviser is a large part of the success of a positive newsroom culture – creating situations where the students can all work as a team. If within the newsroom, internal rivalry and competition is no longer emphasized, students can focus on outdoing another media organization – the external "other." This "team-style" report-

- 1 The first author would like to thank the Lilly Endowment Inc. for its support of this research through a Lilly V early-career faculty support grant.
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ing is beginning to replace the traditional beat model of staff management.  $^{48}\,$ 

The importance of experiential learning at the college level cannot be understated, especially in regard to the field of journalism. While classrooms, homework and tests can accurately measure how well students will do in some fields, journalism requires that students go beyond their texts and classes if they are to become successful. Student media are perhaps the best ways to give students those learning opportunities, as the production of a real news product, while on deadline and with fellow students of limited experience gives students a very realistic look at what they will find in the field.

Given all of this, we felt that it was valuable to see to what degree these learning experiences were meshing with convergence, which is one of the rapidly expanding areas of mass communication. While newsroom experiences can give journalists skill-based knowledge, they can also provide students with social norms that might inhibit or enhance their openness to this new approach to journalism. Our work here provides an opening gambit in the discussion of student media and convergence in that regard.

This study has some clear limitations. Given the general paucity of research on each topic, let alone the complete lack of research that connects the two, this study is meant to be little more than a first cut at the issue of convergence and how it affects student journalists. The sample of those involved in converged newsrooms is based on convenience and is too small to conduct rigorous statistical analyses. Furthermore, the scales from which most of the convergence items have been drawn<sup>49</sup> are not strictly rooted in a theoretical paradigm and have not been extensively validated. Future work should set out to establish a series of variables based on these and other similar

items that will measure the level of convergence in which an outlet has engaged, the issues of trust and cooperation that surround a converged media outlet and the overall value that participants feel results from converged media operations. While the rudiments of those variables exist, more work must be done.

In addition, studies need to examine the issue of convergence and editorial control. In some organizations, the student media are housed in and run by the university, thus making it more of a laboratory experience whereas other schools have completely independent media outlets. To what degree administrative control or administrative direction influences the creation of converged newsrooms would be interesting. In some cases, it could be argued that the fear of taking editorial control away from the students might be a mitigating factor in creating a convergent newsroom.

Future work should also look to do more in-depth analysis of what makes some of these newsrooms successful in their ability to diminish bias. Again, we believe the advisors can be a large part of this by promoting team work and a positive attitude toward other outlets. While some students in this study still reported having feelings of ingroup superiority, the data strongly suggested that they still felt convergence was worthwhile and that trust among media partners was becoming less of an issue for them. If advisors can foster and cultivate this trust and cooperation in students, it is possible much of the ingroup bias could be overcome. If future work can tap into exactly what makes these students react to convergence in this fashion and if advisors are a factor, not only will that work be able to provide a roadmap for future student media convergence efforts, but also a blueprint for professional newsrooms that seek to find ways to make convergence work.

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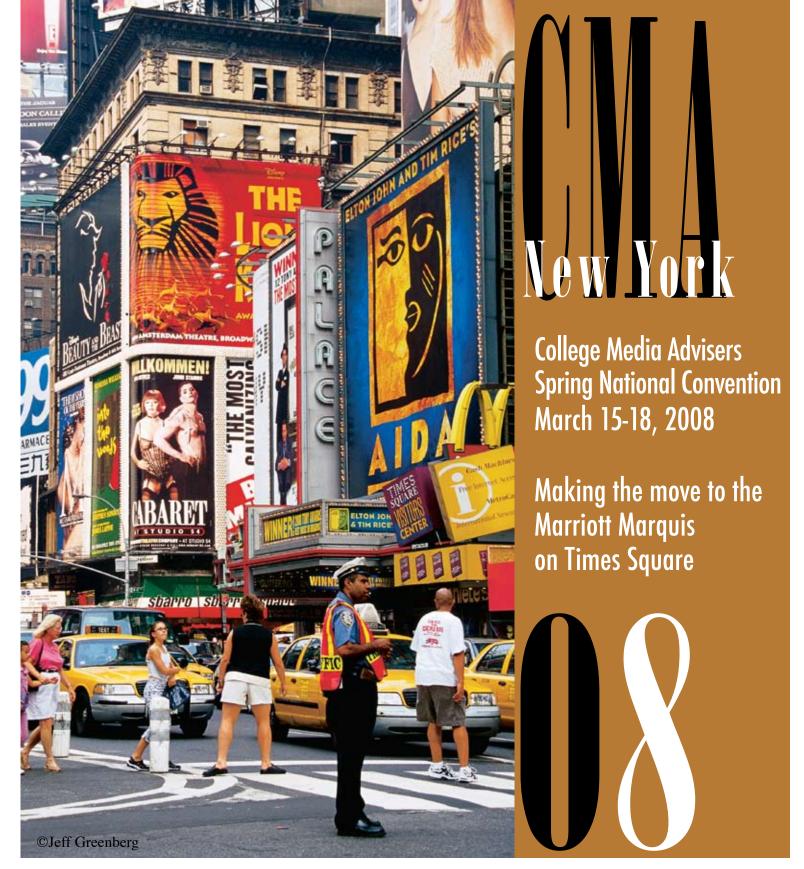
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