

Master of Science in Leadership for Creative Enterprises

Newsletter
Spring 2015



From the Director

The Power of Innovation



The Master of Science in Leadership for Creative Enterprises (MSLCE) program has been partly built on the premise that harnessing the power of innovation is essential to successfully managing a twenty-first century creative endeavor. This is why understanding the dynamics of innovation is a core theme that cuts across everything we do in the program, from the curriculum to our speaker series and treks.

On campus, our classes and speaker series guests for the winter 2015 quarter addressed various elements of innovation in the creative sector. For example, Professor Aymar Jean Christian's Television 2.0 course invited our students to rethink the business of producing audiovisual content for an industry that has seen an explosion of distribution channels. Our February speaker series guest, Sheetal Prajapati of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, reminded our audience about the challenges that digital media have brought to longstanding curatorial practices in an era in which any patron can share their views with the world. In March, Mike

Knobloch of Universal Pictures emphasized how the increasing availability of information on businesses and people has altered the dynamics of getting a job in the Internet Age.

Off campus, our hosts during spring break's trek to Los Angeles underscored the power of innovation time and again. At *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, Jill Leiderman's narration of "a day in the life" of the show gave our students a clear sense of the pivotal role that new technologies play in the work of the 200 people who make the show happen every day. At MGM, Steve Stark presented a prime example of innovation in storytelling by giving us a behind-the-scenes look at how the success of *Fargo* was extended from the movie theater to the television screen. At United Talent Agency, Michael Conway summed it all up when he said that "technology has changed everything" in his area of work in the time span he has been at the firm.

Our experiences this quarter have underscored the increasing importance of providing an education for leaders who can understand the dynamics of innovation today and use that knowledge to build and manage the successful creative enterprises of tomorrow.

Pablo J. Boczkowski
Professor, School of Communication

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Cover photos (clockwise from top): Students at *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*; Steppenwolf Theatre Artistic Director Martha Lavey participates in a speaker series; a student asks a question during a speaker series event. Photos by Justin Barbin and Kathryn E. Lawson for the School of Communication.

Faculty and Teaching

An introduction to the winter 2015 quarter faculty and their courses

BUSINESS MODELS IN CREATIVE ENTERPRISES

To teach his students about the relationship between business models and technology in creative enterprises, **Dan Gruber** talked about Pixar. The animation studio responsible for a string of huge hits like the *Toy Story* series and *The Incredibles* was acquired by Disney in 2006. When that happened, Pixar brought its creative culture to the home of Mickey Mouse. “There was an acquisition of culture by Disney,” Gruber said. This is one example of what Gruber’s course focused on — media company

‘[The students] really got into it and that inspired me to consistently be open to taking the class where they wanted to go.’

business models and strategies. The course involved a string of guest speakers that ran the creative industries gamut, including a columnist at *Forbes*, the associate artistic director of Steppenwolf Theatre Company and the founder and president of public relations firm Pitch Perfect. The class also split into groups to research and present case studies. “Students put on a three-act play to present the case of creating an investor meeting,” Gruber said. “They really got into it and that inspired me to consistently be open to taking the class where they wanted to go.”

TELEVISION 2.0

Aymar Jean Christian is trying to change the way his students think about television. “When we think of TV we think of corporate-produced products,” he said, “but that’s only a result of a very specific developing process so TV distributors can make money.” Christian designed a course to teach students how to make media products outside of the corporate system. Students came up with a proposal for integrating video into a project they could undertake in Chicago. Some ended up getting great hands-on experience. Christian is currently working on an independent television project, and he offered students the chance to help him with it. The driving question Christian

hoped to answer with his class was what it means to work outside the status quo as it relates to television. “Working outside the corporate structure has always been an option,” Christian said, “The difference has been how many people can you get to see what you produce?”

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT LAW AND ETHICS

Rick Morris calls his course the one that “seals the deal.” The students are interested in pursuing creative endeavors and this course teaches them about the contracts and the intellectual property that surround those pursuits. “The contracts are how the project actually gets done,” Morris said. “It’s how you get signed up to be a director, it’s how you get your talent, and then it’s finally how you sell your project.” His course covered important legal matters within the realm of creativity, from protection of intellectual property to project organization and execution. Students began by thinking about how to originate the property; for example, are they going to commission someone to write a script? The course ended with perhaps the most important question: how would students sell their product? “It’s very experiential, based on the life cycle of an entertainment project,” Morris said.

FINANCE IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Cory Sandrock wants to teach his students the stuff he wished he’d learned when he was an undergraduate studying theatre at Northwestern: how to raise money. Sandrock taught a course this winter that focused on knowing where to look for and how to ask for capital, as well as how to create and manage a budget for a company or production. He tried to get his students to see the similarities between business and performance. “The minute you give a monologue for an audition you are selling yourself,” Sandrock said. The class equipped students with the skills they need to understand the basics: what a spreadsheet means, for example, and how to navigate a financial conversation. “Art and business are basically after the same thing, they just speak two different languages,” Sandrock said.

Student Profiles

Our first cohort comes from a variety of backgrounds

CONTEMPORARY ART

Danielle Pierre had a feeling she'd end up in graduate school, but even she was a bit surprised that the program she chose was MSLCE. After graduating from Northwestern with a psychology and communication sciences and disorders double major, Pierre decided to take a break from pursuing science and research. She thought she would get a job at an art gallery or an ad agency for a period of time before resuming her research track. "Then this program kind of stumbled into my lap," Pierre said. She had worked at Northwestern's radio station and as a visitation officer at the Block Museum, and those experiences motivated her to apply to this master's program so she could go after a creative career more seriously. "If I was interested in pursuing what I was pursuing at the time, I could get a leg up from this program and maybe do the creative industries long term."

'The program came along and it would give me the business skills to allow me to feel comfortable and confident entering an industry I didn't feel comfortable entering before.'

Pierre always thought of herself as someone interested in the arts — she just didn't know how to get into it professionally. "It didn't feel like I had the business know-how," Pierre said, "but then the program came along and it would give me the business skills to allow me to feel comfortable and confident entering an industry I didn't feel comfortable entering before." She is uncertain about where she wants this program to ultimately take her, but she is hoping it's somewhere in the realm of music or contemporary art. She's looking forward to the internship that is built into the curriculum as an opportunity to see firsthand what that sort of career will look like. She's also hopeful that, whatever that job may be, it will allow her to combine the skills she learned as an undergraduate with the new ones she's learning now. "I think that

science is an art," she said. "The connecting thread between what I studied and what I'm studying now is just curiosity and a desire to make these things accessible to other people."

FILM

Evyenia Constantine came to the MSLCE program to learn about the business side of the film industry. "I really liked how this program is for artistic people to fine-tune and develop their business acumen for the field," she said. That means she's very excited about classes that, to others, may not sound that exciting, like Finance and Arts and Entertainment Law and Ethics. "What I'm working on now I will be able to use when I leave," she said, "I'll have a business plan to present to investors to get projects financed."

Constantine earned her BS from The New School in New York City with a concentration in Film and Media Studies and worked as an award-winning producer on a film that debuted at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. When she decided to go back to school, she looked at Northwestern specifically because it's where her mother earned a PhD in social psychology. Currently, Constantine is researching and developing two untitled projects, and says what this program offers are the skills she needs to get "investors excited to invest."

'Everything we're learning now I'm finding a way to channel.'

She's open to different jobs in the film industry once she receives her degree. "It really just depends on where the best fit is and where I can bring what I've learned here to the table," Constantine said. Until then, she will continue to learn about the business side of media production, while considering ways to apply it to her own work. "Everything we're learning now I'm finding a way to channel," she said.

Winter Speaker Series

Distinguished professionals shared their experiences and advice



Sheetal Prajapati, Assistant Director of Learning and Artists Initiatives at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) at the February 2015 event. Photo by Kathryn E. Lawson.

MARTHA LAVEY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, STEPPENWOLF THEATRE

On theatre and democracy: “I think at the heart of making theatre are precious tools for citizenship. How do we grow more nuanced, more eloquent in our understanding of human interaction? It’s no accident that theatre and democracy were born in the same place at that same moment. What we’re witnessing is human beings in conflict, negotiating conflict, and the consequences of that.”

SHEETAL PRAJAPATI ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEARNING AND ARTISTS INITIATIVES, MoMA

On technology and curation: “Technology has allowed anyone to be a curator and everyone to share their own ideas out into the world. That’s a really important shift, and I think museums for a long time prior to this were in some ways the keepers or holders of creative acts and projects. Now we have the opportunity to be a catalyst for taking that creativity out into the world and inspiring that in other people.”

MIKE KNOBLOCH PRESIDENT OF FILM MUSIC AND PUBLISHING, UNIVERSAL PICTURES

On getting a job in an Internet age: “The good and bad thing simultaneously for young people starting their careers is you now have no excuse to not know everything. If one of you interview with me for a job, the bar is now set so much higher for you to walk into the room knowing so many more things than the knucklehead like me had to know when I walked into that room twenty years ago.”

Join us on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:00pm during the academic year. Events are free and open to the public. Visit the back page for the spring quarter lineup and registration information.

Missed an event and want to hear more? Check out [our blog](#) and [YouTube channel](#) for more information and video highlights.

Industry Immersion

Students reflect on their trip to Los Angeles



Students from the program's first cohort at MGM Television. Photo by Kathryn E. Lawson.

CLAIRE TUFT

MSLCE's spring trek to Los Angeles provided our group with the opportunity to meet with well-established Northwestern alumni and friends in the entertainment industry, and for those of us contemplating a move west, a chance to test our legs in a city we may soon call "home."

Over the course of four jam-packed days, we met with entertainment professionals from all areas of the spectrum: **Josh Goldenberg**, manager at Kaplan/Perrone Entertainment; **Jackie Laine**, TV producer and Northwestern University Entertainment Alliance (NUEA) West Co-President; **Andy Bohn**, Co-Founder and Partner of The Film Arcade, an independent film distribution

company - just to name a few. Every interaction brought valuable insight into a wide array of careers in the entertainment sector.

'They offered us advice and anecdotes, reinforcing the importance of hard work, drive, and skill, but also the...caveat that there is no 'right answer' when it comes to getting your start in the industry.'

They offered us advice and anecdotes, reinforcing the importance of hard work, drive, and skill, but also the helpful (and reassuring) caveat that there is no "right answer" when it comes to getting your start in the industry - a welcome relief for the perfectionists in all of us.

These unforgettable meetings helped lay the groundwork for tangible plans post-graduation; each day, the reality of this new chapter of my life became clearer and more manageable. But the most surprising

outcome of our journey west was a palpable sense of belonging to an already-existing community, even in a city as vast as Los Angeles. All the Northwestern alumni met us with a sense of shared experience, no matter how distant their days in Evanston, nor how highly they rank professionally today. **Jill Leiderman**, Executive Producer of *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* welcomed us in with infectious enthusiasm, expressing her delight in having Northwestern students in the building. On our free time, I attended two (unrelated) events hosted by Northwestern alumni, and on both occasions I was met with warmth and camaraderie when I divulged my story - the mutual understanding and reference point that comes with the Northwestern experience provides newcomers with an instant, invaluable sense of community.

Making the move west will no doubt come with its challenges, and it will be difficult to leave the people and places in Chicago that I've grown to love and know so well - I'll even miss the frigid temperatures and the robust winter wardrobe I've curated out of necessity. But knowing that the notorious "Purple Mafia" is not only present and thriving in Los Angeles, but that it embodies so much more than just a network of contacts, is perhaps the most essential piece of encouragement I took from our trek. It means that no matter where I go or what I set out to achieve, Northwestern will be the steady ground for me to build upon.

EVYENIA CONSTANTINE

In true Midwest fashion, a late spring snowstorm bid us goodbye as the MSLCE cohort embarked on its networking trek to Los Angeles. As we left the snowy arch of the Northwestern campus in Evanston behind, we were soon greeted in Los Angeles with sunshine, palm trees, and the welcoming, smiling faces of Northwestern alumni eager to be our gracious hosts, and share with us their secrets to success in the entertainment industry. We might have left the campus but the shared feeling of purple pride was as powerful as ever.

Our trek began with a meeting with School of Communication alumnus **Michael Janak** and beloved SoC faculty member **David Downs**, who shared with us their experiences and stories of life and work in Los Angeles. During the meeting, I noticed my cohort and I were equal parts laughing out loud and taking detailed notes as we received both hilarious stories and thoughtful advice. This tone carried over to our meeting with Northwestern alumna, Producer and Co-President of NUEA West, Jackie Laine, who gave us wonderful insights about the panels, seminars and events specifically for NUEA West members in Los Angeles. Encouraging us to reach out and engage,

she told us, "Come to the events, build your network and reach out. We are all here to help each other. Northwestern alumni really like to mentor." True to her words, she then invited all of us to attend two events hosted by NUEA West, where we instantly had the opportunity to put her advice into action.

A session with **Anikka Sellz**, Director of Awards at Weissman/Markovitz Communications, provided valuable insight into how TV award campaigns are constructed and won through marketing techniques and publicity. A site visit to **United Talent Agency**, one of the top talent agencies in the world, gave us the opportunity to ask pragmatic questions about managing clients, as we were welcomed in both the mailroom and the boardroom. Andy Bohn, Co-Founder of The Film Arcade, gave us an incredible overview of the changing landscape of film distribution, in addition to further explaining the acquisition process. Josh Goldenberg, an agent at management firm Kaplan/Perrone, provided us with his origin story in the business and gave us sage advice. "Don't ask for permission," he told us, "go after what you want."

Jill Leiderman, the Executive Producer of *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* gave us a complete tour of the entire studio right before the show began and provided us with a private 'green room' experience. She even introduced us to another Northwestern alumna, Casting Assistant **Allyson Byers**, who answered our questions about the casting process. Ms. Leiderman's enthusiasm, energy and passion were palpable, and the entire building was bursting with energy and excitement.

Our trip came to a close with a site visit to MGM, where we were hosted by **Steve Stark**, President of Television Production. With my background and passion for film, I was elated to see iconic stills from my favorite MGM films as we made our way to the boardroom. Mr. Stark gave us a master class in the art of pitching as he captivated us with several new concepts for television programs currently in development. He spoke to us about the importance of storytelling and speaking with passion, all the while perfectly exemplifying both.

As the trek ended, and we traded the sunshine for slush, I thought back on the experience of being welcomed into the Northwestern family of Los Angeles. Every one of our hosts has worked very hard to achieve their success. They were incredibly passionate, giving and helpful. We met with so many alumni that I now have started to think of Los Angeles as an extension of the Evanston campus, filled with bright and talented people striving hard to achieve their dreams. As a member of the MSLCE program, and the Northwestern family, I am filled with purple pride. **#GoCats!**



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Learn More

Online sessions are held the first Tuesday and third Thursday of each month.

On-campus sessions are held the first Thursday of each month.

Sign up: <http://www.communication.northwestern.edu/programs/mslce/events>

Interested in applying? The next deadline for fall 2015 or winter 2016 admission is **May 15, 2015.**

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