



# Master of Science in Leadership for Creative Enterprises

Newsletter  
Summer 2015



Northwestern University  
School of Communication

# From the Director

## A Year of Growth



It is hard to believe that our first academic year has come to a close and the students are now in their summer internships. It may be a cliché, but it does seem like just yesterday we had our orientation session for this inaugural cohort of students in the Master of Science in Leadership for Creative Enterprises program. It was not yesterday, however, but nine months ago, and much has been accomplished in that short period of time. In my opinion, two words sum up this first academic year of the program: intensity and progress.

Numbers can help us grasp the intensity of the experience for students, faculty, and staff alike. Twelve new classes; three week-long treks to major centers for the creative sector (New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco); eight distinguished visiting speakers; and dozens of other interactions with industry professionals in classes and extracurricular events. From theory to practice, these first three quarters have been marked by a constant exposure to key ideas, people, and organizations in the creative economy.

But numbers cannot properly capture the progress that I have seen in our students this year. This is because their progress is more than an accumulation of knowledge, experiences, and industry contacts. It is also a growing maturity in their professional outlook that can be best conveyed with words. Evidence of this can be found in the assessment by the producing director of the Piccolo Theatre of the work they did for this organization as part of the Nonprofit Arts Management class during the spring quarter: “I have had professional consultants who did not perform at this level.” And as Kaitlin Very, one of our students and a trained opera singer, writes in this issue of the newsletter, the learning process during these past nine months made her realize “with confidence that I am ready to pursue my dreams.” That, as program director, is music to my ears.

Pablo J. Boczkowski  
Professor, School of Communication

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*Cover photos (clockwise from top): Students at the YouTube office in San Francisco; Threadless founder and CEO Jake Nickell participates in a speaker series event; Kevin Seal, Music Analyst, and Miriam Karpilow of University Programs at Pandora speak to students in San Francisco. Photos by Kathryn E. Lawson.*

# Faculty and Teaching

An introduction to the spring 2015 quarter faculty and their courses

## NONPROFIT ARTS MANAGEMENT

**Michelle Shumate** wanted her students to get hands-on experience in the world of nonprofit arts management. So, she found them a real client to work with, a small theater in Evanston. “I want them to get on the ground, hands-on, in the trenches experience,” Shumate said. Her class spent the quarter learning about the Piccolo Theatre in Evanston as it underwent a leadership transition. The students looked through

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financial reports, analyzed its communications and marketing materials, and met with its producing director, Amanda Kulczewski, all to put together a proposal of recommendations. Shumate, an Associate Professor in Communication Studies who also directs Northwestern’s Network for Nonprofit and Social Impact, said her students were surprised when they realized they would be working with a real client. But that didn’t stop them from jumping right in. “They really grabbed this assignment with both hands,” she said. Their efforts paid off. “This was high caliber work,” Kulczewski wrote in her evaluation, “I have had professional consultants who did not perform at this level.”

## MARKETING AND PITCHING CREATIVE PROJECTS

**Laverne McKinnon** is perhaps one of the only television producers who doesn’t believe in pitching. “I believe in finding the right match.” A graduate from Northwestern’s Radio, TV, and Film program, McKinnon is a senior programming executive, independent producer, and media consultant. Her day-to-day tasks include working with writers to help them cultivate and develop their ideas, skills she taught MSLCE students this spring. Her course was designed to provide an experiential opportunity for students to learn how to be aware and mindful of all the moving parts in the production cycle. “It’s all about perspective and choice,” she said. “It’s about process, not perfection. You could fine-tune your pitch or your presentation and then walk into a room and if you’re

not fully present and experiencing what is happening in the room your pitch isn’t going to land.”

## LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

For Northwestern Assistant Professor of Instruction **Gail Berger**, good leadership comes from people who understand themselves as much as they understand their team. Berger, whose course focused on developing key leadership skills, described how important it is for a good leader to have a keen perception of team dynamics. She taught these skills to her students with a very experiential approach that included role playing and case studies. “Experience is a great teacher,” Berger said, “but experience combined with candid feedback is one of the best teachers. You don’t get that in the real world.” Berger used real-life examples to help her students navigate important negotiations, from salary talks to business projects. “Many of the skills are transferrable regardless of what the industry is,” Berger said. “Negotiation skills are particularly important — mediation isn’t about winning, it’s about understanding needs and interests.”

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CREATIVE ENTERPRISES

**Gregg Latterman** teaches his students to be as excited about digital disruption as he is. The music industry veteran founded Aware Records in 1993, an early adopter of the Internet that eventually entered into an agreement with Columbia Records to combine major label backing with grassroots artist development. The combination proved successful — it helped build the careers of musicians like John Mayer, Train, and Liz Phair. Now, the Internet plays an even larger role in the music business, and Latterman sees that as an opportunity for more creative work. “If you want to figure out how to make a living today you’re able to do so,” he said, “The playing field is much more level.” Latterman’s course, taught through the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation as NUvention Arts, explored how the advent of YouTube and Facebook means anyone can make media and share it. The trick is cutting through the clutter to get your art to a broader audience. “Being out there and engaging with your fans” is integral to that, Latterman explained. “Everyone looks for it, but there is no magic, it’s really just quality engagement.”

# Student Profiles

Our first cohort comes from a variety of backgrounds

## FINE ART

**Mona Fu** wants to modernize China's fine art market. The MSLCE student was inspired to apply to Northwestern after she worked for three years at a Beijing fine art auction company. During that time, she realized that the auction industry in China was too traditional compared to the industry in the U.S. "When I was traveling with my general manager in New York, we would visit Sotheby's and Christie's. I could compare their operation structures with ours," Fu said, "and I found their's were more advanced." That realization gave Fu the kick she needed to head to Evanston to get her master's degree. After Fu completes her summer internship at Tyler Rollins Gallery in New York City and graduates, she's unsure whether she wants to work for an auction firm, a gallery, or a museum. Whatever happens, she says she will remain within what she calls "the fine arts ecosystem." "This is the area I'm most interested in," she said. "I want to get some practical experience in America for several years and then I can bring that practical experience back to China." Fu would like to help China's fine art auction firms digitize their business. For instance, the firm where she worked was lacking in its digital presence, whereas U.S. auction firms make it easier for people to buy and sell art online. "In China, we don't have an online platform to sell artwork," Fu said, "but in America they've already done this, and I think that will be the trend in the future." Fu is excited to take the skills she learned about project management and nonprofit arts management during her coursework to whatever her next job will be. She feels especially prepared to reenter the professional world as a result of classes like Cory Sandrock's *Finance in the Creative Industries* course. "He taught us how to do the business side,"

Fu said. "I think that is really important for our future careers if we want to open our own companies."

## MUSIC

Years before **Alec Schulman** decided to pursue a career in music, he was a high school student touring Florida as a saxophone player in a ska band. Between performing live at concerts throughout the state and then going to Northwestern to major in saxophone, Schulman was on his way to being a professional musician. Then, his music professor retired, and Schulman did a 180 degree turn. He graduated with a major in political science and

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then started law school. His itch for a musical life persisted, though, and when he saw ads for the MSLCE program, his interest was piqued. "I liked how it could take my creative aspirations and make them into an entrepreneurial endeavor," Schulman said. He's excited about the doors his experience in the MSLCE program has opened for him, including an internship this summer at Warner Bros. with the creative licensing team. He'll also be working at a talent agency two days a week. "I really wanted to get back to the arts in some way, especially music," Schulman said. "The program allowed me to explore that artistic side of me, but it also forced me to get serious about what I can practically do about it."



MSLCE students presenting in class. Photo by Kathryn E. Lawson

# Spring Speaker Series

Distinguished professionals shared their experiences and advice



Marie Davidheiser, Senior Vice President, Director of Operations at Jack Morton Worldwide, fields a question at the April 2015 event. Photo by Kathryn E. Lawson.

## **MARIE DAVIDHEISER** SVP, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, JACK MORTON WORLDWIDE

**On encouraging a diverse workplace:** You need a diverse staff ... There is no formula for the people we are looking for. I am often hiring people who don't fit the mold ... When there's conflict in a productive sense ... that's when great work happens.

**On working with data in a creative field:** My belief is numbers are telling us about the past ... but a breakthrough creative idea is something that has never been done before ... and sometimes you just got to go for it, and it might fight the data, but those are the campaigns that people are pumped about.

## **JAKE NICKELL** FOUNDER AND CEO, THREADLESS

**On why to start a new business:** Do it for wanting to do it. Since Threadless started as a hobby, I didn't have a goal, the goal wasn't to make money from it, so I feel like I would have been successful at it whether it blew up or not, it was just something I wanted to do.

**On maintaining a focus on artists:** The goal wasn't to get rich or anything, and I think that's actually why I'm still doing it 15 years later, because we really run the business like a nonprofit where we are trying to make as much money as we can for artists ... but if what I was doing all day long was just trying to hawk as many t-shirts as we can, I don't think I would want to be doing that all day long anymore.

**Join us on the first Thursday of each month at 5:00pm during the academic year. Events are free and open to the public. Visit our website in September for the fall quarter calendar.**

*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 San Francisco



Students learn what the San Francisco Symphony is doing to attract a new generation of symphony subscribers on their spring trip. Photo by Kathryn E. Lawson.

## KAITLIN VERY

The San Francisco trek was truly invaluable to me. While both of the other treks were great learning experiences, what set this last one apart was the unique balance of nonprofit and for-profit organization leaders with whom we met. Our speakers represented a wide variety of sectors and roles, and they all shared an awareness of one another as well as a collective sense of excitement about their work. It gave those of us in the program a glimpse into the vibrant cultural ecosystem within the city, which is the reason that it is seen as such a cultural leader in our country. Whether we were meeting with **Michael**

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**Holtmann**, Executive Director of the small nonprofit Center for the Art of Translation; **John Hollar**, President and CEO, and **Eileen Gill**, VP of Development, of the Computer History Museum; or even **Andrea Han**, Partner Manager in Music Partnerships at YouTube, and **Erica Labovitz**, Category Business Director for Film at Indiegogo, we were given not only an informative and sophisticated introduction to their work and their organizations, but also a broader picture of the cultural network that exists within the San Francisco Bay area. It is still true that technology

companies are the dominant industry in the area, and while that may have altered it, it has not prevented the growth of culture. Meeting with nonprofit leaders Michael Holtmann and **Annie Kahane** — founder of Alive & Well Productions — was so important because it showed me that there IS a thriving space for small, nontraditional nonprofits even in such a tech-heavy ecosystem as San Francisco. Both are having great success growing their organizations and both provided me with considerable knowledge about the steps to take when founding such organizations. **Oliver Theil**, Director of Communications at the San Francisco Symphony, then expanded that knowledge by explaining to us what more established and traditional nonprofits are doing to stay relevant in today's digital landscape. Having just completed courses in both nonprofit arts management and entrepreneurship in the arts, these meetings, along with the site visit to the Computer History Museum, were the perfect reinforcement of what we had studied the last ten weeks.

“Story-telling” is a buzzword for both the nonprofit and business worlds at the moment. It is an idea we have studied in one way or another in almost every class we have taken as a part of this program, and it was also present in every meeting we had and every organization we learned about during this trek. Seeing this proved to us that our theoretical knowledge from class is also practical knowledge that we can apply to our internships and careers. I came into this program with a fair amount of experience working in the artistic side of the nonprofit sector, and the San Francisco trek gave me the validation that throughout the last nine months I have gained enough knowledge to start building up my administrative experience as well. In addition to the fantastic industry contacts provided by each trek, realizing with confidence that I am ready to pursue my dreams was the best part of our visit to San Francisco.

## ROBYN LATCHFORD

Our trek began with Michael Holtmann, who spoke of his work for the National Endowment for the Arts and his current work for the Center for the Art of Translation. We all loved his congenial manner and insightful stories about his career path and finding enjoyment in his work. I especially admired his candid comments about having a job that took him to places such as the White House, but not personally enjoying it himself. He also spoke of a friend who traveled the world in a rock band, but ultimately left the band to find a career that he truly enjoyed and which suited him. This resonated with me, as I have often felt pressured by myself and others to strive for what

I think I should want or should be doing. Hearing Michael Holtmann share similar feelings reassured me that everyone's career path is unique and it is important to pay attention to how your job makes you feel.

Our visit to the San Francisco Symphony was particularly fascinating for me, as I have a background in classical flute. It was inspiring to hear Oliver Theil speak to the prominence of social media and the role technology plays in the public relations of a symphony orchestra, especially when it comes to recruiting

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younger audiences, for which all symphony orchestras are in dire need. When I asked him how San Francisco Symphony distinguishes itself from other great orchestras in the United States and internationally, he spoke about the orchestra's involvement in the local community and how bringing the culture and values of the region into their organization makes them unique from every other symphony orchestra.

At Facebook, we heard about the critical research and attention given to each person's experience from User Experience Researcher **Lauren Scissors**. I find it amazing that Facebook hires PhDs like Lauren to gather and analyze data on people's positive and negative Facebook experiences. It was also interesting to hear that Facebook does not focus on comparing itself to competitors such as Twitter and Google+, but rather focuses on their own branding, values, and strengths to flourish as an online platform.

Meeting with **Miriam Karpilow** and **Kevin Seal** from Pandora on the last day of our trip was an incredible experience for me, especially since my undergraduate degree is in Mathematics. I would love to work for a creative enterprise that combines music and algorithms like Pandora. It was also a pleasure to hear Miriam's sage advice, which resonated strongly with Michael Holtmann's earlier words, to notice even the smallest details about yourself and your likes and dislikes in order to find a job you truly enjoy.



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## Speaker Series

We'll be bringing more great speakers to campus starting in **October**.  
Check back with us in **September** for the fall calendar!

## 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 **August 1, 2015**.

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