

SIUE Mass Communications Week Amplifies Voices of Media Professionals

by Megan Weiser
April 1 2019 2:23 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Department of Mass Communications once again invited a plethora of industry professionals to share

their insight for its annual Mass Comm Week festivities March 25-29. This year's theme was "Amplifying Many Voices."

Mass Comm Week kicked off Monday, March 25 with the "First Amendment Free Food Festival," sponsored by The Alestle, and the St. Louis Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) and College Media Advisors. Guests could temporarily "sign away their right to freedom of speech" in exchange for free pizza and soda. While the participants ate their free food, they were told exactly what they could and could not say, read and so on. By nullifying this right, the event brought awareness to the principle that allows American citizens the freedom to articulate their opinions and ideas without the fear of retaliation or legal sanction.

The four-day conference also featured presentations from industry professionals who outlined aspects of digital reporting, sports broadcasting, journalism ethics, video production and photography:

Dana Rieck - news editor for Missouri Lawyers Media

Trisha Ziff - filmmaker, curator of contemporary photographer, Gueggenheim Fellowship recipient, and director of "The Man Who Saw Too Much"

Beth Hundsdorfer - investigative reporter for St. Louis Public Radio

Bill Parmentier - founder of Oldstorm Studios and freelance producer, production designer, actor and voice artist

Lorenzo D. Savage - widower of Charmaine Savage, founder of I am East St. Louis Magazine

Holly Edgell - race, identity and culture editor for St. Louis Public Radio

Additionally, a panel of mass communications alumni, including Nick Barth, David Bracey, Monica Buschor, Caitlin Lally, and Amanda Juenger, returned to campus to share what they wish they had known before they graduated. The alumni gave the students advice about their futures, tips for pursuing jobs and applying for internships, as well as shared how they have navigated through the transformative period in their lives after college.

SIUE Athletics' Joe Pott, broadcaster and media relations specialist, shared his personal journey into the world of sports media. Pott has broadcast more than 1,000 basketball, baseball, soccer, softball and volleyball games as the voice of the SIUE Cougars.

Before joining the University, he served in a multifaceted communications position for the Gateway Grizzlies professional baseball team. His responsibilities included broadcasting games, writing and voicing radio promos, managing web content and producing feature news stories.

“I was always fascinated by the medium of radio,” Pott said. “I loved sports, and I knew I wanted to have a career in sports. During my freshman year, I was a business student, and I took a job open to all majors at my college’s radio station, FlyerRadio. The station began broadcasting play-by-play for a minor league hockey team, and I realized I should be up in a booth, broadcasting games.

“By the end of that year, I changed my discipline to radio television arts. I did everything I could to be around sports, be on air, talk about sports, and even worked for my college newspaper. I also helped start and broadcast on our campus’s television station.”

The Department of Mass Communications also invited one of its own graduate students to share their expertise. Elizabeth Donald, teaching assistant, freelance journalist, and president of the St. Louis SPJ, shared a captivating lecture on the importance of ethics in journalism. With more than 20 years of reporting experience, Donald has received multiple awards for her journalism and fiction writing. She also served on the SPJ’s national ethics commission to rewrite the group’s Code of Ethics in 2014.

“I believe ethics are the single most important topic students are going to study as future journalists, and it should be integrated into everything they do,” Donald said. “We have this enormous trust placed in us as servants of the public.”

Donald outlined the SPJ’s Code of Ethics’ four principles that serve as the foundation of ethical journalism.

“There are not always absolutes in dealing with ethics. Situations often fall within those shades of gray as you evolve as a journalist and as the world changes,” she said. “In our industry, we tend to treat ethics as a matter that is solely for academic study and debate. However, we have to take those ethical subjects that are discussed and apply them every day in our career.”

The presentations concluded Thursday, March 28 with a keynote address by Trisha Ziff, followed by a screening of her film, “The Man Who Saw Too Much.”

Central to SIUE’s exceptional and comprehensive education, the College of Arts and Sciences offers degree programs in the natural sciences, humanities, arts, social sciences, and communications. The College touches the lives of all SIUE students helping them explore diverse ideas and experiences, while learning to think and live as fulfilled, productive members of the global community. Study abroad, service-learning,

internships, and other experiential learning opportunities better prepare SIUE students not only to succeed in our region's workplaces, but also to become valuable leaders who make important contributions to our communities.