A Note From the Director

The 2012-2013 school year was another important milestone in our march toward being the leader in political and global communication, journalism and media studies. We began with a series of high profile events and exciting initiatives, some of which we mention below, and ended the year by awarding students over $80,000 in scholarships and awards for their exemplary work both inside and outside the classroom. The number of available scholarships and prizes for students continues to increase each year, which is something we’re very proud of. Rewarding talented students with financial support is an important goal for our school, one we hope you also support.

Our efforts to build a genuine SMPA community are gaining exciting momentum. In March, we had a terrific sold-out event at the home of CNN’s Chief Congressional Correspondent Dana Bash, BA ’93. Dana recognizes the importance of engaging and staying in touch with fellow alums and was gracious to open up her home for this very reason. There’ll be more events like this. Some of our most accomplished alumni, including Adam Conner, BA ’06 (Facebook), Rob Hendin, BA ’99 (CBS News), Reena Ninan, BA ’01 (ABC News), Mosheh Oinounou, BA ’04, MA ’06 (CBS News) and Jake Sherman, BA ’08 (POLITICO), have taken the lead and will be organizing regular networking events in the DC area. The first one took place June 19th at Public Bar in downtown DC. It was overwhelmingly successful and great fun. More than 100 alumni were in attendance, sharing stories and swapping cards!

Contact our alumni office if you’re interested in organizing an event in your area or learning more about the new DC alumni leadership group.

SMPA continues be an exceptional place to learn and to grow. You’ll see some of the year’s headlines below.

As always, you have an open invitation to stop by my office, call or email. We want to know what's going on in your world, and we welcome your participation and ideas to maintain our leadership role in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

Wishing you and your family a great summer,
Frank Sesno

2012-2013 Events

Top policy experts, journalists and politicians joined Face the Facts USA in an interactive television event on America’s debt and deficit. The role playing crisis scenario was hosted by SMPA Director Frank Sesno and carried live on C-SPAN, featuring former Senator Bob Bennett; Atlantic National Correspondent James Fallows; former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina; Gov Bill Richardson; Sen Fred Thompson and Center for American Progress President Neera Tanden, among others.

CNN’s Anderson Cooper held a town hall event on gun control in the Jack Morton Auditorium. Gun control advocates and opponents attended along with several GW students from Newtown, Connecticut.

Former CIA and NSA boss General Michael V. Hayden joined us for a Conversation Series event, commenting on cyber
attacks, national security, social media and privacy – and his favorite characters in *Homeland*.

SMPA hosted two Alumni/Student Career Networking Salons. Students had opportunities to meet alumni who have used their SMPA degrees to pursue careers in some unique as well as traditional jobs.

*From left to right: Andrew Clark (BA ’11), Nick Fabiani (BA ’11), Eric Walker (BA ’09, MPS ’10), Tim Miller (BA ’04), Director Frank Sesno, Katherine Rodriguez (prospective BA ’14), Sam Levenback (BA ’08), Madeline Twomey (BA ’11), Andrew Feldman (BA ’11) and Miles Hayward Selib (prospective BA ’14).*

SMPA launched a new mentoring program with Washington, DC’s premiere networking group for social media professionals, Social Media Club DC. The program pairs students and mentors to discuss job search strategies and career opportunities.

At a conference on the role of race in modern American politics, SMPA featured political experts, academics and journalists. Guests included political strategist Donna Brazile; Northeastern University Assistant Professor Carole Bell; Tampa Bay Times Media Critic Eric Deggans; Columbia University Professor Thomas Edsall; UPenn Fellow Seth Goldman; Obama advisor Jim Margolis; NYU Associate Professor Charlton McIlwain; University of Illinois at Chicago Associate Professor Andrew Rojecki; and GW Associate Professor John Sides.

**New Initiatives**

SMPA has launched an Executive Education program. The program will focus on informing, organizing and persuading in a digital age. It will serve as a foundation for new partnerships, reach and growth for SMPA.

SMPA’s Planet Forward launched *Feeding the Planet: Innovations in Food Production*. The initiative features a summer Fellowship for two SMPA students to travel to Africa with a professional videographer to tell stories about innovation in food production.

The Documentary Center expanded its visibility and influence with exciting partnerships, including National Geographic’s All Roads Film Festival, The West End Cinema, The DC Shorts Film Festival, and AFI Docs (formerly SILVERDOCS). The Center hosted the inaugural season of GW React to Film.

Through a summer course (pictured above), SMPA students are on the frontlines of information technology, examining the use of technologies in Kenya for mobilizing communities in collective action. Led by Professor Steven Livingston, the group began its journey this summer in Nairobi and headed through the Great Rift Valley to Lake Victoria, Tsavo and eventually Mombasa and the Indian Ocean.

**New Members of the SMPA Community**

This fall SMPA welcomes three new full-time faculty members. Cheryl Thompson joins SMPA from The Washington Post, where she is an award-winning investigative journalist covering politics, crime and corruption. She has more than 25 years of newspaper experience and was a White House correspondent...
during President Obama’s first term. Thompson will continue to do investigative projects for The Washington Post while teaching at SMPA.

Imani Cheers is a PBS NewsHour multimedia journalist who created a media literacy curriculum and directed a participatory multimedia journalism program for elementary, secondary and post-secondary students. She has 14 years of multimedia work under her belt and holds degrees from Washington University in St. Louis and Howard University.

Emily Thorson recently received her PhD in both Communication and Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. Her past research explores how voters use information to form opinions about politics, while her current research focuses on how misinformation can affect attitudes even after it has been corrected by creating “belief echoes.”

SMPA welcomed a new member to its National Council for Media and Public Affairs: Adam Conner (BA '06), an SMPA alumnus, is public policy manager at Facebook and brings considerable campaign and social media expertise to the group.

Faculty Spotlight

SMPA faculty are on the front lines of their fields, contributing to the understanding of our rapidly-changing world. Below is a sampling of their work. See more in the Faculty Update section of our SMPA blog.

In a Democracy Seminar at Harvard’s Kennedy School, Professor Dave Karpf highlighted key findings and research from his book, The MoveOn Effect: The Unexpected Transformation of American Political Advocacy. Prof Karpf won Best Book Award from the Information Technology and Politics section of the American Political Science Association (APSA).

Professor Robert Entman published Scandal and Silence: Media Responses to Presidential Misconduct, focusing on the media's response or lack thereof on political scandals. In an event at Jack Morton Auditorium, he joined NBC News National Investigative Correspondent Michael Isikoff; former Nixon staffer Egil “Bud” Krogh; and NPR National Political Correspondent and SMPA Fellow Mara Liasson in a dialogue on the media’s portrayal of political scandals.

“Let the Fire Burn,” a documentary by Professor Jason Osder, won big at the Tribeca Film Festival, taking home the award for Best Editing in a Documentary Feature, as well as a special jury mention for Best New Documentary Director. “Let the Fire Burn” explores the 1985 standoff between the extremist African American MOVE organization and Philadelphia authorities. Its DC premiere took place in mid-June at The Newseum and The Goethe Institute.

The International Communication section of the International Studies Association awarded Professor Will Youmans Best Paper at their annual conference for his research and analysis on the CIA’s recruitment efforts in Arab Detroit.

Professor Nina Seavey completed “The War at Home” for The National Park Service. The 22-minute short is a permanent exhibition at the Rosie The Riveter/WWII National Home Front Historic Park on San Francisco Bay. The film has won nine
Professor Nikki Usher wrote an informative piece for Harvard’s Nieman Journalism Lab on media organizations’ Twitter use, particularly with regard to interaction and conversation.

Doing sabbatical research in Indonesia and Malaysia on journalism and Islam, Professor Janet Steele visited Cambodia through a speaker program funded by the U.S. Embassy. She focused on the importance of journalism and independent media in a democracy.

Manheim-Sterling Undergraduate Research Award

The first annual Manheim-Sterling Undergraduate Research Prizes were awarded to senior Sarah Ferris and alumna Sara Snyder (BA ’12). Ferris is using the award to pursue to study the use of information technology by non-state actors to enable social action with Professor Steven Livingston. Snyder used the award to produce her own documentary short on LGBTQ homeless youth under the supervision of Professor Jason Osder.

SMPA has launched a campaign to raise an additional $70,000 to endow this prize so that SMPA students have an ongoing source of funding for distinguished, independent work with our remarkable faculty. If you’re interested in helping us reach this important goal, please consider a gift to Manheim-Sterling today.

Class Notes

2013

Aliya Karim (BA ’13) is working toward an MA in Media and Public Affairs at SMPA. She is also SMPA’s communications and marketing assistant and a research assistant for Professors Kim Gross and Robert Entman on their study of racial appeals by the media during the 2012 election.

Carrie Winans (BA ’13) is currently a junior account executive for a public relations firm, the10company, in New York City.

2012

Kelsi Browning (BA ’12) was hired as the assistant to the executive director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee in February.

Adam Coretz (BA ’12) has been working on a new initiative since January at the Aspen Institute to expand national service in the United States. The Franklin Project has recruited leaders from across sectors in America with the objective of restoring a sense of civic duty to country.

Miranda Green (BA ’12) worked at ABC 7/Newschannel 8 as an assistant producer after graduation and then transferred to the print journalism world. She currently works as a reporter and editorial assistant at Newsweek and The Daily Beast in Washington, DC.

Lauren Turek (BA ’12) is a researcher for Korn/Ferry International, working with the global education and nonprofit practices.

Rachel Weisel (MA ’12) has been working at APCO Worldwide as a project consultant for the past year, doing social media strategy for APCO’s digital strategy team.

2011

Seab Bartel (MA ’11) currently works as a video producer at Edelman Public Relations.

Alex Dickinson (MA ’11) was recently promoted to the role of Account Director at Beekeeper Group, a DC-based boutique public affairs firm. She recently hired a 2013 SMPA graduate and encourages job hunters to stay in touch.

Andrew Feldman (BA ’11) founded the political consulting firm, Feldman Strategies, in December. The firm has worked on winning campaigns at the local, state and federal levels in addition to work abroad. Current firm clients include Prime Minister of Aruba Mike Eman, Congressman John Delaney, Anthony Brown for Governor and more.

Zachary Hanover (BA ’11) recently won a Gold Pollie Award and three Bronze Telly Awards for work done during the 2012
election cycle. He is a media producer at CRAFT Media Digital, where he writes, shoots and edits video for political and public affairs clients.  

**Molly Lukash** (BA '11) recently finished her master's degree in International Relations at New York University's Center for Global Affairs. Since graduating from SMPA, she has also been working full-time as a social media director and key researcher for the nonprofit advocacy group, United Against Nuclear Iran.  

**Michael Moffett** (BA '11) has returned to Washington, DC to work at Gallup as its new multimedia producer. He previously worked as a video producer for a Baltimore advertising agency. If not in-studio, Michael can be found on H Street NE, enjoying everything DC summer has to offer.  

**Eric Thibault** (BA '11, MA '13) recently finished his MPA at GW and will be starting as a federal human capital consultant at Deloitte Consulting, LLC.  

2010  

**Julian Gompertz** (BA '10), moved into a new role at ESPN as a marketing coordinator in the Brand Marketing department. He previously worked for more than two years in Production at the NBA.  

**Caitlin Loehr** (BA '10) is finishing her MSc in Information and Communication Technologies for Development at the University of London, focusing in particular on how technology is being used to facilitate listener engagement in community and rural radio stations in Africa.  

**Michael Valerio** (BA '10) signed with the NBC News affiliate in Richmond, Virginia in December. He now covers Virginia politics and news from across central Virginia. He has interviewed Governor Bob McDonnell and covered Virginia's 2013 multi-billion dollar transportation overhaul.  

2009  

**Chloe Mayer** (BA '09) quit her job in web marketing at the U.S. Green Building Council and moved to San Francisco, California. Through a fateful meeting with her now-CEO, Chloe is the first employee for a social business software startup in stealth. She also serves as the GW Alum Bay Area Network co-chair. If you are in the area, she encourages you to join.  

**Angelica Spanos** (BA '09) is a reporter at WTIC, the FOX affiliate in Connecticut, having started in January. She has since covered the follow-up of the Sandy Hook tragedy, Connecticut gun control, the Boston Marathon bombings and a record-breaking snowstorm. Angelica previously worked at WBOC in Salisbury, Maryland and has an MS from Columbia Journalism School.  

**Jordan Teller** (BA '09) won his first Emmy Award for his 2012 Capitals Playoffs on Comcast SportsNet campaign, “This Is Pressure.”  

2007  

**Sarah (Kapenstein) Maiellano** (BA '07) started sales of the Homemade Gin Kit with her husband, Joe Maiellano, selling over 2,000 kits between Christmas and Father’s Day. Read more about their success story [here](#).  

2006  

**Cara McAllister** (BA '06) is the executive assistant and scheduling assistant to Governor Lincoln D. Chafee in Rhode Island, having served in this role since January 2011. She previously worked on Chafee’s campaign from 2009 through his election in November 2010.  

2004  

**Elizabeth Harrison** (BA '04) recently transitioned from National Geographic Channel to Discovery Channel as Director of Programming. She earned an MBA from American University this spring and resides in Silver Spring, Maryland.  

**Michael Henriquez** (BA '04) currently lives in Dunedin, New Zealand and works at NHNZ, Ltd. as a content producer for a soon-to-be-launched global 24-hour kids’ channel.  

2003  

**Dorothy Cascerceri** (BA '03) recently debuted her own television talk show, “Celebrity Corner,” airing on WMCN in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.  

2002
Aaron Huertas (BA '02) is doing strategic communications and press relations for the Union of Concerned Scientists, where he focuses on climate science education, defending scientists from political attacks and enhancing the role of science in American democracy.

2001

Robert Kaplan (BA '01) and Jill (Gorsky) Kaplan (ESIA '00) welcomed Miles Samuel to their family in January 2012. Rob is now Senior Manager of Sustainability for Walmart Stores, Inc., driving supply chain and product innovation to reduce greenhouse gases. Rob, Jill and Miles live in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Darley Newman (BA '01) and her husband, Chip Ward (CCAS '00), won a third Emmy Award for Outstanding Single Camera Photography for the PBS travel television series, “Equitrekking,” hosted and produced by Newman. They were nominated for two other Emmys this year. “Equitrekking” has increased international distribution and will be on in Scandinavia this fall.

2000

Janelle (Costa) Austin (BA ’00) is an attorney at Kopelman and Paige PC in Boston, Massachusetts, focusing on municipal law and civil litigation. She lives in Boston.

Tara Rosenblum (BA ’00) married her longtime boyfriend in October, and they are expecting their first child – a baby girl – later this fall. She recently won her fourth Emmy Award for Best Investigative Reporter in New York and two first place Associated Press Awards. She joined News 12 in 2004 as an anchor and reporter.

1999

Lonnie Giamedia (BA ’99) is a partner with Fisher & Phillips LLP in Los Angeles and has been chosen for inclusion in the 2013 Southern California Rising Stars list as selected by Super Lawyers. The list recognizes attorneys who are 40 or younger, excelling in their practice and building the foundations for a long and prosperous career.

1996

Gary Weisman (BA ’96) has opened his own law firm in Tampa, Florida. His practice is concentrated in the areas of insurance law and personal injury. He was recently appointed as General Counsel to the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and serves on its board of directors.

1985

Jeanne (Arpino) Chisholm (BA ’85) works as Network Project Manager for Discovery Communications.

1982

Mitchell Slater (BA ’82) recently became the on-air talent for FinLitTV, a new startup geared toward millennials’ financial literacy. His interviews will range from teens who tweet about the market to successful social media millionaires. In addition, he serves on the Westfield, New Jersey Board of Education and moderated a WETA program on financial literacy at GW in 2010.

1979

Milton Shockley (BA ’79) retired from NBC4 in Washington after 30 years in 2009. He currently lives in Murrels Inlet, South Carolina and plays golf on most days. In his spare time, Milton cleans and waxes sculptures at Brookgreen Sculpture Garden. His oldest daughter just had his first grandchild, and his youngest daughter is about to receive her Doctorate in Physics.

1978

Elliott Wiser (BA ’78) is Corporate Vice President of News and Local Programming for Bright House Networks and has been appointed to teach a graduate management class at the University of South Florida. He previously taught at the University of Richmond and at James Madison University.
Jackie Jones (BA ’76) has been named Chairman of the Department of Multimedia Journalism in the new School of Global Journalism and Communication at Morgan State University.

Barbara Strong (BA ’76) graduated from Catholic University Law School in 1984, after having spent seven years as a Washington correspondent for The Dallas Morning News. She spent eight years working as an assistant attorney general for Maryland and is currently working as an attorney for the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Married to John Jennings, Jr., she has one daughter, a son-in-law and a grandson who keeps her busy.

1974

Geoffrey Vincent (BA ’74) was elected in March to the board of directors of the Washington Internship Institute. He retired in 2008 as Head of Federal Relations for Vanderbilt University and Executive Director of its Washington, DC office. Geoffrey was at NASA from 1987 to 1998, serving as Deputy Head of Public Affairs and, for five years, as Acting Head of Public Affairs.

1973

Richard Kagan (BA ’73) is currently a sports editor for Education Update and an outreach specialist for Queens Library in New York.

1959

Russell Tomar (BA ’59, MD ’63) just released his book, Don’t Stop Dreaming; Sex, Death, Fear, Bigotry, and Greed: A Physician-Scientist’s Odyssey at the Dawn of AIDS, a medical memoir based on a journal he kept during the early years of the AIDS epidemic. His play, City Hall Juggler, inspired by political shenanigans in Chicago, is ready to be work-shopped.

Stay Connected With SMPA

With over 900 members, the SMPA LinkedIn group for students and alumni is helping connect Colonials like you to job openings and other discussions. Please join today.

We would also like to solicit your ideas on how you’d like to stay connected to SMPA and GW as well as fellow SMPA alumni. Please visit our SMPA alumni-only Facebook page and join the conversation!

GW’s Office of Alumni Relations also has a Career Advisor Network (CAN), which allows students and alumni to search for alumni who are in their fields of interest for networking and advice. Sign up for CAN now.

Connect with our students through programs like Dinner With Alumni, and keep up with SMPA news through the SMPA blog, Twitter page and Facebook page. Remember to keep your contact information updated here.

If you have any internship opportunities at your organization, please let our students know by emailing details to smpacomm@gwu.edu.

We Want to Hear From You!
We welcome reactions, commentary, and story recommendations. Contact us at smpacomm@gwu.edu.

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