Letter From the Director
Inspired by the Woody Guthrie centennial and presidential campaign, fall 2012 was memorable for the number of outstanding talks by UT-Austin faculty and one especially packed talk by hip-hop scholar Tricia Rose from Brown University.

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Senior Fellows Rocks!
This fall, Symposium focused on legendary folk singer and political activist Woody Guthrie as the opening riff in a wide-ranging dialogue about media, culture and politics. In honor of Guthrie’s centennial, acclaimed Austin folksinger and Guthrie authority Jimmy LaFave gave a wonderful performance of Guthrie’s songs and writings.

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Letter from the Director:
Great Talks on Politics and Culture Showcase
Fall 2012

One sign of the high regard for Senior Fellows is the number of top UT-Austin faculty who take time out of their busy schedules to give guest lectures and special talks for us each semester.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank the UT-Austin faculty who took the time to give talks for us this fall, some as public lectures, some as special Symposium classes. It’s this kind community support from the College and across campus that makes Senior Fellows a rich and rewarding undergraduate experience.

On the eve of the presidential elections, Communication Studies professor Talia Stroud presented a highly informative talk on partisan news coverage of politics and political campaigns. “Niche News and Campaign 2012” was scheduled to coincide with the Senior Fellows seminar Campaign Communication, taught by Sharon Jarvis and Ashley Muddiman. Stroud’s book “Niche News: The Politics of News Choice” won the 2012 Outstanding Book Award from the International Communication Association. Her talk was covered by The Daily Texan.

Also joining us from the College of Communication were journalism’s legendary Gene Burd and R-T-F’s legendary Charles Ramirez Berg. Professor Burd visited Symposium for a class on the way communication has evolved from the Dust Bowl to the present. It was one of our discussions on the topic of Woody Guthrie, whose centennial provided the centerpiece for Symposium’s critical focus on politics and culture. Students were fascinated by professor Burd’s first-hand accounts of life in the rural Southwest, as radio, the automobile and TV each emerged to change the way we live and communicate.

Taking a cue from Woody Guthrie’s “Deportee,” a song critiquing biased media coverage of a 1948 plane crash that killed 28 migrant workers, professor Ramirez Berg delivered an insightful lecture on the nature of stereotypes and how they are both created and reinforced via mass media. “Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance” is the last of his three academic books.

The Woody Guthrie theme allowed us to do something we don’t often do, host live music. In October we brought in singer-songwriter Jimmy LaFave for a beautiful performance of signature Guthrie tunes. The Austin-based LaFave is well known as a leading interpreter of Woody Guthrie’s music. He founded a travelling show called “Ribbon of Highway, Endless Skyway: A Tribute to Woody Guthrie” and he appeared across the country this year for conferences and tributes to Guthrie, including a performance at the Lincoln Center in New York.

You can read more about Symposium’s focus on Woody Guthrie and LaFave’s performance in an article by Marc Speir, who also shot an excellent video of LaFave and his band playing “Bound for Glory.”

On a related note, UT-Austin history professor Karl Hagstrom Miller gave a popular lecture on music and the politics of protest. Starting with Woody Guthrie and ending with Pussy Riot, professor Miller examined an array of protest songs through various critical categories, adding nuance to our Symposium discussions in the weeks that followed. He is the author of “Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow.”

Last on our list of talks given by UT faculty was the appropriately titled “Second Last Thoughts on Bob Dylan’s ‘Last Thoughts on Woody Guthrie’” by the effectively provocative Tom Palaima, professor of classics. He also teaches a class on music as social commentary and writes frequently about Bob Dylan and other artists. His talk presented tangible evidence of Guthrie’s influence on Dylan, shedding light on
Internet-age debates about copyright law and creative culture.

We hosted two speakers from off campus this semester. Although a scheduled talk by University of Maryland political economist Gar Alperovitz had to be cancelled, Tricia Rose's talk on the politics of hip-hop helped everyone get over it. Rose's talk, “Hip-Hop, Mass Media & Racial Storytelling in the Age of Obama,” was packed to overflowing with students and faculty from across campus. You can read more about it in this article from The Daily Texan.

With Spring 2013 on the horizon, scheduling is in the works for talks and other special events that supplement the following lineup of courses: Art and Cinema, by R-T-F professor Nancy Schesari; Science Fiction as Communication, by Communication Studies professor Joshua Gunn; and Storytelling in Digital Times, by Journalism professor -- and 2012 Regents Teaching Award-winner -- Tracy Dahlby.

Sincerely,

Dave Junker

Senior Fellows Rocks!

As the introductory course to “Senior Fellows,” the honors program housed within the College of Communication at The University of Texas at Austin, Dave Junker’s symposium class is an initiation into the program’s culture of critical inquiry and open dialogue.

“The mission is to get students to ask ‘why’ about what they find interesting or puzzling or horrible – to foster free and rigorous debate – and to arm them with some critical tools for understanding the questions they find important,” said Junker, Senior Fellows director and lecturer in the Department of Advertising and Public Relations.

This fall, the focus of symposium joins a critical conversation via American folk singer Woody Guthrie, who would be celebrating his 100th birthday this year. Across the country, conferences and concerts have paid tribute to Guthrie’s influence and legacy to mark his centennial.

Through Guthrie’s music, writing and activism, the singer-songwriter critiqued big issues in American life: democracy, social and economic justice, the role of war, the nature of American character, individual freedom and communal responsibility, and material versus spiritual value.

Of the more than 1,000 songs Guthrie wrote, “This Land is Your Land” is his most famous. Guthrie was and remains controversial, considered by some a loud-mouthed leftist whose hometown of Okemah, Okla., for years refused to honor its native son based on charges that he was a communist.

“By focusing the class on Woody, my students can be part of this current effort to better understand his contributions to American culture,” said Junker. “He’s also a fascinating character whose body of songs provide an array of entry points for talking critically about the issues of our own day.”

Austin folk favorite Jimmy LaFave, a Guthrie expert, has been bringing Guthrie’s work to the masses for more than ten years as the creator of “Ribbon of Highway, Endless Skyway,” a roadshow tribute to Guthrie’s life and music. The show features modern musicians interpreting Guthrie songs strung together by narrated writings of Guthrie himself. The shows are performed at venues ranging from stadiums and elementary schools to bars and college campuses. The show has spun off an album featuring LaFave and an all-star cast of musicians, including Pete Seeger and Eliza Gilkyson.

“Woody is a major American character that I feel should be moved more to the forefront of what we study in our history classes,” said LaFave. “I hope—when I do these talks and sing these songs—that students come away with something tangible.”

In discussions sponsored by Senior Fellows, individuals such as LaFave share their special perspectives and give the program a seminar style of teaching similar to that found in graduate school settings.

“In seminars, learning flows in a number of directions: from me to them, from them to me and between each other,” said Junker. “That means there’s an element of spontaneity, of risk and reward that you just can’t get in a lecture-style class. It’s also interdisciplinary, as students come from all majors in the College, which has the effect of cross-pollinating the growth of ideas and perspectives.”

The Senior Fellows program is hosting more free, public events this fall that dovetail with the topics of symposium and the other two seminars that are part of the program’s curriculum. On Oct. 22, renowned Hip Hop scholar and cultural critic Tricia Rose will give a lecture on “Hip Hop, Mass Media and Racial Storytelling in the Age of Obama.”
Seniors Hebert and Bissinger Win Top Paper Awards for 2011-12

RTF major Grace Hebert was the inaugural winner of the award for Top Paper in a Senior Fellows Class, awarded for the 2011-12 academic year, and journalism major Julie Bissinger received honorable mention.


Her paper was notable for its well-researched overview of online privacy in the context of proliferating mobile technology, with clear explication of concepts, sound analysis and compelling conclusions.

Julie received honorable mention for “Post-9/11 Gender and Heroism: Issues Faced by New York City’s Firefighters,” a paper written for Dave Junker’s fall 2011 Symposium class.

Julie was recognized for her judicial use of sources, logically organized discussion, and clear and compelling prose.

Both winners were honored at the annual Senior Fellows reception in spring 2012.

Students Present Seminar Project at Austin Art Show

Students in Kevin Thomas’ seminar on advertising and society presented a class project at the Flipside Community Warehouse for the East Austin Studio Tour during two weekends in November.

The project grew out of Thomas’ Senior Fellows fall seminar, “Making Sense of the World Through Ads.” The objective of the course is to interrogate the ways advertisements influence the daily lives of people across cultures and the world. The purpose of the exhibit was to promote cultural reflection and civic engagement, and examine the values embedded in ads.

Students adopted a strategy of “culture jamming” used by subversive artists and social movements through manipulating the symbols of popular brands and ads. Their version of culture jamming included large posters, sculpture art, stickers, and various other visual media that carried a message critical of commercial and political advertisements.

“It’s a chance to fight back and respond to the advertisements instead of just being constantly bombarded by them,” said Courtney Wiese, a first-year Senior Fellow majoring in radio-television-film.

The project will culminate in a group-drafted manifesto and online culture-jamming portal created for the purpose of informing vulnerable communities about the harmful effects of advertising. The project can be found at www.ArtIsInFormation.org.

Kevin Thomas is an assistant professor in the Department of Advertising and Public Relations.
Journalism Professor Tracy Dahlby Wins Prestigious Regents Teach Award

By Dave Junker, Senior Fellows Director

In late August, The University of Texas System Board of Regents honored Journalism Professor Tracy Dahlby and Advertising and Public Relations Associate Professor Michael Mackert with Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Awards. The Regents’ highest honor, the system-wide faculty awards program is one of the largest and most competitive in the nation.

Since joining the School of Journalism in 2006, Dahlby – who holds the Frank A. Bennack, Jr. Chair in Journalism – has developed several courses.

In 2007, he created Reporting the World, a course that teaches students to think critically about how the news is created, analyze how ideologies, ownership and political power can shape it, and develop deep context on vital global issues.

In 2008, Dahlby created a Reporting China, a study abroad workshop that teaches students how to work a big, complex foreign beat. Students spend four weeks in China, reporting and producing stories for a dedicated news website, the most recent of which is China In Focus.

With the support of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York’s Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education, he created Reporting Texas – a digital media initiative that is now a capstone-style course in the School of Journalism’s new digital-based curriculum. Reporting Texas shares content with local, state and national media.

“Teaching is so intrinsically rewarding that to be recognized in this way is something that’s really doubly meaningful,” Dahlby said. “It’s a privilege to work in the UT community and learn from so many wonderful teaching colleagues.”

In spring 2013, Dahlby will be teaching his first Senior Fellows course, “Storytelling in Digital Times.” Through his courses, Dahlby said he likes to remind students that education is a lifelong pursuit and journalism is one of the best vehicles for fostering continuous learning.

“It can introduce us to unforgettable people and mind-stretching ways of looking at and dealing with life,” Dahlby said. “My goal is to help students develop the curiosity, methodology and confidence it takes to get out into the world and follow what really matters to them with gusto and at depth.”

Dahlby spent 13 years living in Asia, where he served as Tokyo bureau chief for The Washington Post and Newsweek, and has covered events in Japan, China, Korea and Southeast Asia. In 1987, he became managing editor of Newsweek International in New York, where he helped direct and coordinate worldwide news coverage. As a regular contributor to National Geographic magazine between 1993 and 2002, Dahlby specialized in writing about Asia.

“Tracy Dahlby brings his years of experience as a field reporter to the classroom every single day,” said Roderick Hart, dean of the College of Communication. “There is no wall between him and his students. He is a transparent about himself and his ideas. And his students notice.”

Senior Fellows Director Wins Teaching Award

Vitals: Senior Fellows Director, Lecturer, Advertising and Public Relations

Degrees: Ph.d., English; M.A., Afro-American Studies, University of Wisconsin

Favorite Woody Guthrie Lyric: “As through this world I’ve wandered; I’ve seen lots of funny men; Some will rob you with a six-gun; Some with a fountain pen.”

-- from “Pretty Boy Floyd”

Since the fifth grade, when he had an outstanding teacher named Mr. Oberg, Dave Junker has aspired to become an exceptional teacher.

So when the College of Communication named him 2012-2013 recipient of the College’s Teaching Excellence Award, Junker said he was humbled and grateful. A College faculty member since 2006, Junker
is the director of the Senior fellows program and teaches writing courses for public relations majors and special topics courses in communication and culture. “This award means a lot to me because teaching means a lot to me,” said Junker, a lecturer in the Department of Advertising and Public Relations. “To win this award from the College of Communication, which is so full of first-class researchers and amazing teachers, is a sign that maybe I’ve become that teacher I always thought I could be.”

Junker was presented with the award at the College’s Dec. 8 commencement ceremony.

When selecting an awardee, the judging committee noted several student letters recommending Junker. “Students overwhelmingly said that he not only enhanced their understanding of the topic matter, but that he inspired them to want to learn more,” said Roderick P. Hart, dean of the College of Communication. “Another running theme was the selflessness and humility that he brings to the classroom.”

Meg Weiss, junior public relations major, appreciates Junker for his respectful, down-to-earth and approachable demeanor. “He exhibits the qualities of your big brother and earns the respect a father demands when you sit in his class,” Weiss said. “He seems so at peace, and it's contagious in class to feel at ease just as he does.”

Junker’s public relations writing course teaches students practical skills they can use whether or not they pursue public relations careers. His public relations service-learning course teams students with local nonprofits, helping organizations to solve a communications problem. “The public relations service-learning project was not simply an assignment; it was a practical application of our skills that could benefit an organization,” said Laura Beth Williams, senior public relations major. “At the end of the semester, the entire class agreed that it had been a very fulfilling and useful project.”

Rachael Sperling, senior public relations major, said she has learned more from Junker than from any other professor. “His class was one that all of my friends mentioned among their favorites because he made you excited to come to class everyday and really work on improving your writing,” Sperling said. “Students especially liked when he would give them personal recognition in class for a job well done.”

As a musician and music publicist, Junker is looking forward to teaching a new class titled “Popular Music as Social Advocacy” (ADV 378) in the spring of 2013. The course will explore how songs, which often accompany significant events, shape people, affecting social consciousness and political advocacy.

Junker said he loves teaching because of the joy of mutual discovery. “It’s kind of like when you become a parent and you see things again from a child’s eyes,” Junker said. “That’s a gift that teaching also gives me. When I’m teaching students a new skill or explaining a concept, and they get it, I feel like I’m getting it, too. I hope I never lose that sensation because it means I would have lost a level of empathy that is essential to the process of understanding.”

Junker also serves as director of the College’s Senior Fellows Honors Program, a highly selective program designed to complement students’ undergraduate coursework. As director, Junker teaches the program’s introductory symposium class each year. This fall, the symposium focused on American folk singer Woody Guthrie, who would be celebrating his 100th birthday if he were alive. “My favorite thing about this class is being able to challenge students to think in new ways and not be afraid of where honest critical dialogue can take us,” Junker said.

Finally, he is faculty adviser for UT’s chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America and its student-led firm, Texas Tower PR. “These students are smart and motivated; they’re leaders here and they’ll be leaders wherever they end up,” Junker said. “It’s a privilege to know them and be a part of their journey.”

Before joining the University of Texas at Austin, Junker taught at Huston-Tillotson University, St.
Edward's University, Concordia University, The University of Texas at San Antonio and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He also has worked as a journalist and has regularly contributed to The Onion, including its best-selling books “Our Dumb Century” and “The Onion’s Finest News Reporting.” With a master’s degree in Afro-American studies and doctorate in English, he also writes about literature, popular music and public relations writing.

Remembering Christine Matyear

Christine Louise Matyear, senior lecturer in the College of Communication’s Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, passed away on Oct. 4 after her short battle with ovarian cancer.

Matyear worked at The University of Texas at Austin since 1992 – first as a research associate in the College of Liberal Arts’ Department of Linguistics, then as a lecturer and senior lecturer in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. She taught phonetics, hearing science, speech science and research. Her research interests included speech acquisition in infants and the acoustic analysis of speech sounds. In spring 2009, Matyear taught the Senior Fellows seminar “Social Aspects of Deafness.”

Colleagues and students said they would remember Matyear for her enthusiasm, kindness and sense of humor.

“Chris was such a dear friend who filled the shoes of a big sister for me,” said Dana Woolf, CSD department manager and graduate office coordinator. “She always brought joy and happiness to those around her. Her colleagues enjoyed her savvy wit, her daily humor and her caring spirit.”

Students often commented that Matyear inspired them to stay excited about a career path in Communication Sciences and Disorders. On any given day, there would be a long line of students outside Matyear’s office, hoping to speak to her during office hours. Matyear also advised the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association’s College chapter, receiving the chapter’s Teacher of the Year Award several times.

“Chris’ enthusiasm for teaching and zest for the academic life were both infectious and boundless,” said Craig Champlin, CSD chair. “She had high expectations of herself, students and colleagues – her bar was a high one and we loved her for that. Chris was consistently positive and solution-oriented, which made her a department chair’s best friend. Her contributions to the department, college and university are immeasurable. I miss her deeply.”

“Chris was a personal friend and treasured colleague of mine,” said Barbara Davis, CSD professor. “Moreover, she was a consummate teacher and an ongoing asset to The University of Texas at Austin. Her students valued her both for her ability to make complex material about their profession understood and for her generous humanity to them as individuals.”

Kayla Freeman Wins Women in Communications Scholarship

Senior Fellow Kayla Freeman, a double major in journalism and radio-television-film, was one of three recipients of the 2012 Jo Caldwell Meyer Scholarship from the Association for Women in Communications.

Freeman, along with communications students Torrie Hardcastle and Allison Wong, each received the $3,000 award at the AWC Austin’s annual Banner Brunch on April 28 at the Hyatt Regency Austin. Each year, the organization presents scholarships to a select number of deserving female communications undergraduates in central Texas at a brunch that more than 200 professionals from the field attend.

Freeman said the scholarship will allow her more time to work on a multimedia portfolio project that
documents the experiences of immigrants in Austin. “I love what I am studying because I believe that art and media reflect the cultural values of humanity at any given era,” said Freeman. “Not only is the money an amazing help financially, the networking opportunities within the AWC that this award may provide are invaluable.”

AWC Austin leadership said that 2012 marks the largest quantity and highest total dollar amount of scholarships awarded in the chapter’s history. “This year’s scholarship recipients were chosen from an exceptional field of candidates,” said Julie Tereshchuk, president of AWC Austin. “I look forward to following the progress of these rising stars and future leaders of our industry.”

Keri Bellacosa, anchor for KTBC Fox 7, was emcee at the annual awards presentation, which also honored five of Austin’s top female communicators. The keynote was delivered by Deb Bauer, director of strategic giving and community engagement for Dell, Inc.

Senior and Alumni Spotlights

Alumni Profile:
Mitch Baranowski
Vitals: Principal and Chief Creative Officer, BBMG
Degrees: B.A. French (’90), M.A. Radio-Television-Film (’92)
Favorite Senior Fellows Teachers: Steve Reese and Rod Hart

Mitch Baranowski is the co-founder and chief creative officer of BBMG, an innovative ad agency with an impressive client list, from green start-ups to global NGOs and Fortune 500 companies. Sitting at the intersection of branding, sustainability, technology and social purpose, the Brooklyn-based firm has deep roots in Mitch’s experience in Senior Fellows and The University of Texas at Austin.

What has been the most challenging thing about your position?

As an entrepreneur, navigating this recession. As a creative, it’s always “getting to yes,” defending and protecting the integrity of the idea.

On the BBMG website, you share an interesting story about how the company originated in a class on utopian literature at UT that you and your current business partner were teaching assistants for. This seems like an unconventional story for an integrated marketing agency. Could you explain why you chose to make this story BBMG’s story?

Well, for one, it’s true. And we thought, what better way to honor those life lessons than by recognizing the origin story on our site.

You seem to be the sort of person, like many of our Senior Fellows, who want to see both the forest and the trees, who can drill deep into a problem but also insist on stepping away from it to see what it means in a larger context. Has this been a part of your success in the business world?

Some call it “T-thinking,” and we aspire to cultivate that at the firm. So-called design thinkers -- creative strategists, or strategic creatives -- are highly desired.

How has the Senior Fellows program impacted you or your career?

The interdisciplinary, holistic thinking that Senior Fellows instilled in me has stayed with me since college. I definitely have been well served by working practically through a “cultural studies” filter -- how memes get created, co-opted, re-created and shared yet again.

How have you seen your communications field change since you began your career?

That’s an understatement. The advertising/marketing arena has gone through more stress and change in the last five years than in the preceding 50 years. All thanks to the rapid pace of technology, the “screening of our lives” and this nascent culture of interruption we’re creating. The futurist Alvin Toffler predicted the coming of the Age of Creativity and also the rise of
Alumni Profile:
Mary Grace Hebert

From: Abbeville, LA
UT degree: B.A., Radio-Television-Film (2011)
Favorite Class: “Politics and Public Opinion” by Talia Stroud

Grace Hebert may be a recent graduate, but as a communications scholar, she’s an old soul. After winning the first ever award for top senior fellows paper last year, she enrolled this fall at the University of Illinios to begin work toward a Ph.D. in communications.

I remember having a meeting with you during your first semester of Senior Fellows to discuss graduate school. When did you start thinking about going to graduate school?

That’s hard to say. When I was in high school, I always jokingly said that I would go to graduate school because I was kind of nerdy and my parents both had. I think I seriously started thinking about it around my sophomore year at UT, but I thought I would go to grad school for library science at the time. I asked you about graduate school because I was really enjoying the seminar style classes in Senior Fellows and had realized that I wanted to study communication in graduate school.

How did you decide on your current graduate school track?

Well, here’s the thing: you don’t actually have to know exactly what you want to do when you get to graduate school. I always thought you needed to know exactly how your thesis and dissertation were going to go before you got there, which really scared me and discouraged me when I was thinking about graduate school during undergrad. I don’t know exactly what I’m going to do, but my current interests are media and political communication, plus a little bit of criticism of the current power structure. I chose the University...
of Illinois because their department is strong in a lot of areas, in case I changed my focus. Plus, they’ve got some fantastic faculty members, like Dave Tewksbury, Scott Althaus, and Bob McChesney.

**While a Senior Fellow you were also one of the leaders of the LUG (Lego Users Group) on campus. Legos could, I imagine, be the subject of a child development study. I wonder if it could also be the subject of a popular culture study? There’s your thesis! Tell me, what’s the appeal of Legos?**

Haha! I appreciate that. Maybe I’ll change my emphasis after all. The appeal of Lego (that’s the proper plural form, too) is the ability to create. Although I’m definitely moving towards academia, I still like to do art projects. Lego allows me to transform things that I like into miniature sculptures in which I can add creative details and experiment with form. It’s fun because people think of Lego as limited to square blocks, but builders can repurpose them and show their creativity in that way. Right now, my boyfriend and I working on a mini-scale map of Westeros (from Game of Thrones). It will allow us to play with how we’ve seen the world through the books and combine it with what HBO has done.

**Last spring you were awarded the Top Paper Award for papers written in a Senior Fellows seminar (read the article in Backstories). Your paper was titled “Third Party Sharing and the Threat to User Privacy,” written for professor Wenhong Chen’s class on social media and globalization. What do you think are the most pressing concerns regarding privacy and social media?**

Well, right now, I’m actually working on a paper about the extension of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). I’m really concerned about the way that children can be targeted online using device IDs and IP addresses. Companies are forcing children to give up their privacy before they really understand it. Additionally, teenagers and adults are not offered a meaningful “opt-out” option. Opting out essentially means not using the site right now, which is not the case in the EU where citizens can really opt out.

**Do you have any advice for how social media users can protect their privacy?**

Well, you can turn off all platform apps on Facebook. I have that function turned off on mine. It means you can’t use apps, but it also means that your data will not be shared with the apps your friends use, even if you don’t use them or use any apps at all. Under the normal Facebook privacy settings, it is.

**What was your favorite Senior Fellows class?**

Politics and Public Opinion with Dr. [Talia] Stroud. That class made me even more interested in media and politics, which I didn’t know was possible. And we got to read an awesome book, Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy [by Diana Mutz].

**Do you have any Senior Fellows moments you’d like to share, i.e., moments of realization, epiphanies, eye-opening lectures or readings or discussions?**

I think that first Senior Fellows seminar [Symposium] may have been a moment of realizing that there were great discussions to be had with other students in the department, which hadn’t really happened before that moment. It was nice to see everyone’s input. We were certainly shy at the beginning, but we were having fun by the end of the semester.

**Now that you’ve been in Champaign-Urbana for several months, what do you miss about Austin?**

The Alamo Drafthouse! I have not unsubscribed from the Drafthouse email, so I keep seeing all the great events that I can’t go to.

**Alumni Profile: Julie Bissinger**

**Vitals:** Works at National Instruments  
**UT degree:** B.A. Journalism (2012)  
**Title of Honorable Mention Paper:** “Post-9/11 Gender and Heroism: Issues Faced by New York City’s Firefighters”

Julie Bissinger graduated in the spring with a degree in journalism and a plaque for winning honorable mention for best paper in a Senior Fellows class. Now she’s the employee communications coordinator at National Instruments.

**What are your job duties and what do you like about the job?**
I’m responsible for communicating information on important business messages, company events, and other related topics to the internal audience at NI. I help manage our internal newsletter and external social media accounts. I also work closely with many departments to form communication plans around internal campaign activities.

NI stresses the importance of community involvement, so I also volunteer as a robotics mentor at a local elementary school. Once a week, I leave work to help second graders during their robotics class. It’s a really fun program and a great way to promote [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] education.

What did you learn about robots in the Senior Fellows program?

I’ve always been a science and technology nut, so I was excited to take Kris Wilson’s course, “Communicating about Science and the Environment.” We covered a lot of science and technology concepts in his class. I’ve actually utilized quite a few of the communication methods that we learned in the class for my job.

After graduating and landing your first big job, 2012 was a big year for you. What are your big plans for the coming year?

I’ll complete the first six months at my job. If you think time flies when you’re in college, just wait until you start working. I also plan on training for a triathlon after the holidays.

Are you sure that’s a good idea? Have you ever run a triathlon?

I’ve never run in one before, so this will be a cool experience. The last race I ran in was on Halloween. NI sponsored a 5K called the “Halloween Hustle,” and employees were encouraged to run in a costume. I dressed up as Robin from Batman. It was awesome. The triathlon I’m entering is called the Capital of Texas Triathlon.

Where would you like to be in 10 years?

I’m not really sure. It’s weird to think about where I’ll be in 10 years because it seems so far off from now. Hopefully, I’ll continue advancing in my career and making the most of the opportunities that present themselves.

Senior Profile: Brittany Connors

From: Austin, TX
Majors: Journalism, Sociology
Favorite Class: Symposium - 9/11 and American Culture

Brittany Connors is graduating this fall with degrees in magazine journalism and sociology and a minor in rhetoric and writing. She is the online editor of Orange Magazine, the student-produced magazine of The University of Texas at Austin.

As a double major and a Senior Fellow, you’ve been a very busy Longhorn. How have you found your majors complement each other?

I believe journalism should tell the truth and I also believe that journalism can be used to shine a light on various issues in the world. Sociology studies how people come to be who they are and do what they do, and explaining these attributes in our journalistic stories is so important. Journalism is constantly trying to figure out how people work and sociology is doing the exact same thing.

Writing and working as an editor for Orange has given you a taste of what it might be like to work as an editor for a magazine or online publication. What have been your favorite things about working for Orange?

I have really enjoyed getting to know other students interested in magazine writing. It has been fun to learn more about online publishing as well. I think Orange

Continued on page 12
offers something different in a school that is more focused on hard news. Everyone has their own style of writing and we always make sure that their voice (not the voice of the editor) is heard, which I think is important.

**Newsweek announced that it will discontinue its print version of the magazine. How do feel about this?**

Do you think that one day magazines and newspapers will cease to exist as we know them? I think it's great that magazines are able to change with the time rather than just disappear, but it does make me sad. There's nothing like having a print copy of a magazine in your hands (much like having a printed book rather than a Kindle, etc.). Magazines and newspapers may disappear one day, but I don't think they will all go away anytime soon. Some magazines are doing well--especially in the entertainment, fashion and sports industries -- and I think it's just a matter of what news people want.

**What are your favorite magazines? Do you subscribe to any print magazines?**

I love National Geographic, National Geographic Traveler, AFAR, The New Yorker and Time. I probably have way too many print magazines strewn about my apartment. I love having print copies of everything and I collect older magazines (right now mainly LIFE because those have been the easiest to find).

**What is your dream job and what do you plan on doing when you graduate?**

My dream job is to write for National Geographic. Right now I am applying to jobs all over the country and hope something comes through. I am willing to move anywhere (even international), so I hope that helps me. I'd like to work for a few years and then go to graduate school for public policy or international relations.

**Can you recall any eureka moments in Senior Fellows or classes that changed the way you view the world?**

There are too many to count. Things happen every day where things I’ve learned in Senior Fellows help me