As our publication students get the next edition of *WestWord* ready for press, my thoughts turn to the growth and change that is taking place in our industry. The communications field is evolving, and so are the offerings of the communications department at Walla Walla University.

We have updated and expanded our traditional concentrations of media, journalism, public relations and speech communications to include photojournalism, which emphasizes photography as the primary medium to tell a story. We are also proud that our department has the only bona fide speech communications major in the denomination. And our very-popular drama program, which includes a drama minor, continues to provide students and audiences with life-changing performances.

Students with talent and passion come seeking a degree from the communications department at WWU. We know that solid communication skills, analytical thinking and adaptability are the new keys to success in a world that is changing at an unbelievable speed.

As faculty, we see students enter our program using new media technologies such as texting, blogging and social networking, and it is our mandate (and challenge) to give our students the most up-to-date training possible. We balance theoretical instruction with hands-on experience. We educate in the classroom and in the field. We strive to help our students develop their talents as articulate, Christian communicators who are well-equipped to be successful in careers that attract the most competitive people from around the world.

Nancy Semotiuk, department chair
Walla Walla University has a new drama director, David Crawford. He replaces Marilynn Loveless who has accepted a drama teaching position at La Sierra University. Her final curtain call came at the close of the 2007 spring production season. Before she left the drama department, Loveless recommended Crawford, a former student actor.

Crawford was in Seattle when Nancy Semotiuk, chair of the communications department, called him about the position. He was working as a substitute teacher and doing commercials. They set up a meeting which was followed by a series of interviews, and soon after, Crawford accepted the position.

Crawford loves the stage, and his new position gives him the opportunity to be fully immersed. During productions he spends his time directing and producing—a time-consuming job that involves set design, costumes, casting and hours of rehearsals. Through his dedication, Crawford hopes to bring life to WWU drama productions and make them something that the students want to watch.

"Successful acting and theater life come from dedication to the craft and to God," says Crawford. By using students who are dedicated to the productions, finding their strengths and using them in ways that build on those strengths, Crawford hopes to make productions a showcase of what WWU students can do.

"I was in 'The Diary of Anne Frank' when I was here as a student. I loved it because it had so much historical significance," Crawford says. He was also in "Pirates of Penzance," a musical, even though singing was not his forte.

Though he hasn't worked on many films, Crawford has done some commercial work. Before accepting his current position, he was involved in numerous other productions and forms of drama. He completed his student teaching with the drama class at Walla Walla High School and organized a drama club while he was a student missionary in Pohnpei. Crawford loves traveling, writing plays and poetry.

Crawford is building a new website so that people can be better informed about events in the drama department. He is updating the material and tools used so that everyone can have easy access to current information.
“Make the pictures tell the story.” That was the advice Greg Lehman gave to Alex Rittenbach, a photography student and recent Walla Walla University graduate. “The whole key to photojournalism is faces. Don’t be afraid of people.”

Rittenbach put that counsel to practice by working as a staff photographer for the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin. He was able to get an insider’s view of the Walla Walla community during his practicum experience with the local newspaper. “The coolest thing about photojournalism is that you get a chance to go behind closed doors and see things that, as a general member of the public, you don’t get to see.”

Rittenbach is considering several job options directly related to the practical experiences he received from his photojournalism classes. “The photojournalism curriculum really prepares you well.”

PHOTOJOURNALISM: A DEFINITION

Photojournalism is the visual side of journalism. It conveys a story primarily through the use of pictures, or more simply put—photographic storytelling. Photojournalism transcends culture and language.

Some rules of thumb for a photojournalist are:
• Use images that present an instantly recognizable story.
• Attract the interest of the average viewer.
• Show good technique.
• Be fair and give an accurate portrayal of events.

Knowing that incoming university students are becoming more visual in how they receive and communicate information, WWU added a photojournalism emphasis to the mass communication curriculum in 2004. Photojournalism students have a chance to learn practical and relevant skills that directly apply to this ever-changing field.

The faculty train and teach their students the dual arts of journalism and photography, and help them find the balance necessary to be an effective communicator. “First we must understand that photography and photojournalism are different,” says Nancy Semotiuk, chair of the communications department. “A journalist tells stories. A photographer takes pictures of nouns (people, places and things). A photojournalist takes the best of both and locks it into the most powerful medium available—a single frozen image.”

For Liz White, a 2005 communications graduate who taught the Intro to Photojournalism course...
in 2007, the nine-month practicum she spent working for the Union-Bulletin helped her to find her footing as a photographer. "What really solidified photojournalism for me and helped me to become a better photojournalist was the practicum experience." This practical work opportunity complemented the theories she learned in class.

Journalism has been used in many different outlets over the years: print, radio, television, Internet and photography. Though print media is still the bread and butter of most journalists, photojournalism has become a cornerstone of modern storytelling and news broadcasting. Photojournalists visit the same communities and countries as regular reporters, but the timely nature of their work requires them to intimately confront profound—and sometimes dangerous—realities. Today's photojournalists are uniquely equipped to provide clarity and understanding into world events and local issues.

A mass communications degree from WWU is a significant first step towards a career in media, public relations and journalism. Not only does a student graduate with an understanding of communication techniques, but also with an intricate knowledge of how to effectively convey a message through multiple mediums. A WWU photojournalism graduate can apply the essential principles of journalism to articulate a silent narrative through targeted and thoughtful photographs.
THE OPTIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications

The Bachelor of Arts in mass communications integrates a strong core of communication study with areas of specialization, a minor in an area of the student's choosing and foreign language study to provide a breadth of experience in communication and related disciplines. Concentrations are available in:
- Media
- Photojournalism
- Journalism and public relations

The Bachelor of Arts graduate will possess the potential for advancement to media managerial positions and will be prepared for further graduate study.

Photojournalism Concentration and Minor

Photojournalism is offered both as a mass communication concentration and a minor. Courses include:
- Magazine article writing
- Photojournalism
- Advanced photojournalism

This area of study gives students a solid base in both photography and print journalism which will serve them well for a career in the news industry.

Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication

The Bachelor of Arts in speech communications prepares students for opportunities in business, education, government, public relations, advertising and more. Courses include:
- Interpersonal and nonverbal communication
- Argumentation
- Persuasive speaking

WWU is the only Seventh-day Adventist university that offers this degree.

Minors

The communications department offers minors in:
- Drama
- Journalism
- Photojournalism
- Communications
- Speech communication

Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications

The Bachelor of Science in mass communication provides a flexible but focused immersion in an area of student interest, allowing for specialization in such areas as:
- Audio production
- Digital animation
- Advanced video production
- Film studies and production

The Bachelor of Science, while not requiring foreign language study, provides opportunities for students to choose from department offerings, as well as related courses from other majors on campus, and to create an extensive and competitive professional portfolio.

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- Photojournalism
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1. Nancy Semotiuk, department chair, has been writing film scripts with her eldest son, Eli. She is also supervising editor of a vegetarian cookbook soon to be released.


3. Jerry Hartman is working on his Master of Fine Arts, concentrating in digital cinema, and is preparing to make a documentary in Suriname, a small country in South America.

4. Deborah Silva recently defended her dissertation and now has more free time to get involved in the community and take a long-awaited family vacation to the San Juan Islands.

5. David Crawford is the most recent addition to the communications department faculty. David is newly married and has been keeping busy scriptwriting and acting since graduating from Walla Walla University.

Photos by Carl Canwell & Courtney Rasmussen