

Media Ethics Division

Annual Report 2000-2001

1. Current officers:

Chair:	Elizabeth Blanks Hindman, North Dakota State University
Vice chair/program head:	Virginia Whitehouse, Whitworth College
Secretary/newsletter editor:	David S. Allen, Illinois State University
Research chair:	Paul Husselbee, Southern Utah University
PF&R chair:	Stephen Ward, University of British Columbia
Teaching standards chair:	Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri
Web/listserv chair:	Genelle Belmas, St. John's University
Graduate student liaisons:	Mavis Richardson, University of Minnesota Patrick Plaisance, Syracuse University
Liaison to Commission	
on Status of Women:	Pat Dooley, Wichita State University
SPJ liaison:	Rick Pullen, Cal State-Fullerton
NCA and ICA liaison:	Cliff Christians, University of Illinois

Research

3. Briefly analyze the strengths and weaknesses of our research activities this year

Strengths:

- ⊙ In this, our second year as a division and our fourth year of existence, we made some good progress. We are beginning to work with the editors and leaders of the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* and the annual Colloquia 2000 Series. The Colloquia is a decade-long project designed to “promote civil dialogue of mass media ethics, develop scholars and improve the quality and quantity of scholarship in the field, enhance the body of knowledge, and inform curriculum and practice.” Each year a different university will host the colloquium. November 2000 marked the first colloquium, and a number of our members participated. We anticipate even closer ties in the future.
- ⊙ The quality of research papers accepted for the national conference was very good. We could have accepted more (with the scholar-to-scholar session we had space) but that would have diluted the quality, so we chose to keep our number accepted small.
- ⊙ We had a good mix of methodologies and approaches, as well as topics, this year. We accepted papers using both quantitative and qualitative methods; half were devoted to specific ethical issues (like privacy and codes of ethics, for example) and half were devoted to larger theoretical or social issues.
- ⊙ Related to quality of research was the good mix of faculty and student acceptances—we were even with six acceptances from each group.
- ⊙ For the second consecutive year the Media Ethics Division will offer a mentoring session, where young scholars can meet one on one with “seasoned” scholars for suggestions on research and teaching. This is a regularly scheduled panel session, sponsored by Media Ethics and co-sponsored by Religion and Media. (this item cross-listed with Teaching)

Weaknesses:

- ⊙ Last year a major weakness was number of paper submissions, and one of our goals for this year was to increase the quantity of submissions. Unfortunately, we were down two from last year—this year we had 23 submissions. Clearly this is something our division will have to consider. With so much interest in Media Ethics (as evidenced by our membership) why don’t more people submit their research to us? One suggestion from our Research Chair was to offer a cash prize for the top faculty paper (we already have cash awards for the top two student papers). We will consider this at our business meeting in August.
- ⊙ We also had intended to participate in the Southeast Colloquium in winter 2001, but by the time we decided who would be our representative/research chair for that conference it was too late. We fully intend to participate this year, and believe that also will help raise people’s awareness of our division and encourage ethics research in the future.

<u>4. Number of faculty research paper submissions:</u>	9
Number of acceptances:	6
Acceptance rate:	66%

<u>5. Number of student research paper submissions:</u>	14
Number of acceptances:	6
Acceptance rate:	43%

Total submissions:	23
Total number of acceptances	12
Total acceptance rate:	52%

6. Judging form: see attachment

7. Judges

Total number of judges:	24
Number of papers/judge:	3

List of judges/affiliations:

1. James Aucoin, University of South Alabama
2. Sherry Baker, Brigham Young University
3. Jay Black, University of South Florida
4. Tom Brislin, University of Hawaii
5. Lucinda Davenport, Michigan State University
6. Lou Day, Louisiana State University
7. Thomas Eveslage, Temple University
8. John P. Ferre, University of Louisville
9. Kathy R. Fitzpatrick, University of Florida
10. George A. Gladney, University of Wyoming
11. Ted Glasser, Stanford University
12. Louise W. Hermanson, University of South Alabama
13. Beth Blanks Hindman, North Dakota State University
14. Lou Hodges, Washington & Lee University
15. Paul Husselbee, Southern Utah University
16. Larry Z. Leslie, University of South Florida
17. Margaret J. Patterson, Duquesne University
18. Michael Perkins, Brigham Young University
19. Brian Richardson, Washington & Lee University
20. Herb Strentz, Drake University
21. Annette M. Taylor, University of Dayton
22. Virginia Whitehouse, Whitworth College
23. Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri
24. K. Tim Wulfemeyer, San Diego State University

8. Research awards:

- ⊙ We give one faculty research award, to the paper that makes the most useful contribution of information or includes findings that can be applied by working professionals.
 - This year's winner is Dan Berkowitz of Iowa and Yehiel Limor of Tel Aviv University for their paper "Social Dimensions of Ethics Decisions in Newswork: A Comparison Across Ethical Situations"
- ⊙ As for our student award, we administer and award the Carol Burnett/University of Hawaii/AEJMC Prize for excellence in ethics research by a graduate student. The top student paper and runner-up are recognized and receive cash awards from the Carol Burnett Fund for Responsible Journalism.
 - This year's winner is Robert L. Kerr, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, for his paper "Impartial Spectator in the Marketplace of Ideas: The Principles of Adam Smith as an Ethical Basis for Regulation of Corporate Speech." The runner-up is Taegy Son, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, for the paper "Leaks: How do Codes of Ethics Address Them?"

9. Primary research-related accomplishment

- ⊙ We are proud of the research papers accepted for presentation in Washington. We had a strong competition with strong student participation, and that competition yielded several outstanding research papers, each of which will contribute to the body of knowledge about mass media ethics.

Teaching

10. Curriculum

- ⊙ In-convention activities: None this year
- ⊙ Out-of-convention activities: None this year

11. Leadership

- ⊙ In-convention activities:
 - Division's annual pre-conference teaching workshop ("Advancing the Art and Substance of Media Ethics Teaching") was re-vamped this year, and offered as a chance for new and seasoned ethics teachers to "explore fundamental issues facing the 21st century media ethics classroom." In past years the workshop has centered around how to teach the basic ethics course.
 - For a second year, the Division will offer our popular mentoring session, in which young media ethics scholars sign up for a one-on-one session with a veteran scholar to discuss research and teaching. We are the organizer of this session; Religion is a co-sponsor (this item cross-listed with Research)
- ⊙ Out-of-convention activities: None this year

12. Course content and teaching methods

- ⊙ In-convention activities:
 - See explanation of the pre-convention teaching workshop, listed under Leadership
 - Panel titled "International and Cross-Cultural Theorists in Ethics," coordinated by Media Ethics and co-sponsored by Cultural and Critical Studies. This panel will focus on non-Western philosophers as resources for the U.S. media ethics course. We supplied the moderator and some panelists.
 - Panel titled "Teaching Religion and Media: Journalism and Spirituality," coordinated by Religion and Media and co-sponsored by Media Ethics. We supplied some panelists.
- ⊙ Out-of-convention activities:
 - Article in Ethical News, vol. 4:2, by Beth Blanks Hindman, "Election debacle provides media ethics teaching fodder" discussed ways in which teachers could use the Florida election and media coverage of the election as examples.
 - Article in Ethical News, vol. 4:2, by Rick Pullen, "Resolution of 'Doing News' lawsuit reached" offered update on legal/ethics case, which teachers could use in the combined law/ethics course, or as an example in either class independently.
 - Article in Ethical News, vol. 4:4, by Beth Blanks Hindman, "Extended

Case Studies Allow Application of Theory” discussed how teachers could use the case studies provided by the Project for Excellence in Journalism to apply ethical theory in situations relevant to students (in press 6-01).

13. Assessment

- ⊙ In-convention activities: None this year
- ⊙ Out-of-convention activities: None this year

14. Other

- ⊙ Use of newsletter relative to teaching
 - Throughout the year we used the newsletter as a vehicle for teaching ideas, as well as for announcements about our teaching workshop and other paper/conference calls related to teaching
- ⊙ Activities this year compared to previous years in area of teaching
 - Roughly the same level of activity—pre-conference workshop, conference panels, and newsletter articles
- ⊙ Most significant achievement related to teaching
 - Our most significant activity was the re-vamping of the annual teaching workshop, and its use as a vehicle for examining the state of and future of teaching of media ethics.

Professional Freedom and Responsibility

Given that this is only our second year as a division (and our fourth overall) we're pleased with the progress we've made in the area of Professional Freedom and Responsibility. In addition to our conference sessions, we're working on several proposals that should yield results beyond the annual conference by this fall.

15. Conference programming on free expression

- ⊙ Panel titled "Fighting Speech with Speech: Using the First Amendment as an Enforcement Tool," coordinated by Media Ethics and co-sponsored by Law. We provided the moderator and some panelists. This panel will examine the issue of whether codes of ethics should be legally enforceable.
- ⊙ Panel titled "Media Law Advocacy: Defenders of the First Amendment or Media Apologists?" coordinated by Law and co-sponsored by Media Ethics. We provided some panelists.

16. Conference programming in ethics

- ⊙ The very nature of the Media Ethics division means, of course, that all our programming in and out of the convention deals with ethics. In addition to our work with issues of ethics, we provide a logical co-sponsor for other divisions and interest groups that want to focus on ethics.
- ⊙ Panel titled "Beyond Monicagate: Covering the Ethics of Government," coordinated by Media Ethics and co-sponsored by Public Relations. We provided the moderator and some panelists. This panel will examine the issues surrounding reporting of the ethics of government and government officials.
- ⊙ Panel titled "The 'Phoenix' of Public Relations Ethics: How Can a Function Originating from an Unethical Base of Puffery Now Claim to be the Ethical Conscience of the Organization?" coordinated by Public Relations and co-sponsored by Media Ethics. We provided some panelists.

17. Conference programming in media criticism and accountability

- ⊙ Panel titled "When Advertising Masquerades as News," coordinated by RTV and co-sponsored by Media Ethics. We provided some panelists. This panel will examine the growing dependence of media companies on cross-promotion, and the ethical issues involved.

18. Conference programming in racial, gender and cultural inclusiveness

- ⊙ Panel titled “What if the Outs Don’t Want to be In?” coordinated by Media Ethics and co-sponsored by Media and Disabilities. We provided the coordinator/moderator and some panelists. This panel will discuss the issues surrounding “mainstreaming” of out groups, and fits the conference theme.

19. Conference programming in public service

- ⊙ Mini-plenary titled “Giving Community Voice with Low-Powered Radio,” co-sponsored by Media Ethics, Radio-TV, CCS, and Media Management. We provided a panelist. This panel will provide an update on legislation about, implementation of, and ethical issues surrounding low-power radio.

20. Number of non-member invited convention speakers (only for panels for which Media Ethics is the primary sponsor or MED-supplied panelists)

Janice Brown, Editor, Washington AfroAmerican
Kristina Campbell, Editor, The Washington Blade
Vickie Beck, Reporter, Tampa Tribune
Mercy Coogan, P.R. Director, Gallaudet University
Cheryl Leanza, Deputy Director, Media Access Project

21. Pre-convention activities, with description of activity and division’s role

- ⊙ The Media Ethics Division offered our annual Ethics Teaching Workshop, which included a number of presentations, including “Educators and Professionals: Where Shall the Twain Meet?” which will focus on how professors can better establish ties with professionals.

22. Out-of-conference activities, with description of activity and division’s role

- ⊙ The Division has begun working with the World Press Institute to create a journalism ethics forum, which will allow journalists around the world to discuss online a number of ethical issues and cases. The forum will be part of WPI’s web site, and our PF&R chair, Stephen Ward, will be the editor. Members of the Division will be asked to submit cases. This is still in the planning stage but should be up and running by Fall 2001. The project was the subject of an article in Ethical News.
- ⊙ This year we’ve been working on establishing a research paper award that would honor the work that best contributes to professional ties or is most applicable to working journalists. We would encourage the winner to prepare it for publication in a trade magazine such as Quill, as well as the standard academic journals.
- ⊙ Article in Ethical News, vol. 4:1, by Herb Altschull, titled “Ethical journalism and partisan politics: filling time and space,” discussed reporting of the political

conventions.

- ⊙ Article in Ethical News, vol. 4:1, by Stephen Ward, titled “Developing Professional Ties: From Idea to Reality,” offering ideas on strengthening ties to the profession. This article led to the contact between Media Ethics Division and the World Press Institute.
- ⊙ Article in Ethical News, vol. 4:1, by Paul Hesselbee, titled “A second chance for ‘fallen’ journalists?” on journalists who plagiarize.
- ⊙ Article in Ethical News, vol. 4:3, by Robert Jensen, “Young people do care: Indian journalist P. Sainath inspires students,” on the influence of an editor-turned-freelance journalist who covers India’s poor.
- ⊙ Article in Ethical News, vol. 4:3, by Deni Elliott, “Journalism teachers should think about inclusivity,” on how teachers of media professionals might want to examine how their actions exclude others.
- ⊙ Our PF&R Chair, Stephen Ward, is participating in public consultations in Canada on federal amendments to Canada’s Freedom of Information Act, and gave an ethics workshop on journalism codes of ethics to the Canadian Association of Journalists in May 2001.
- ⊙ Our Vice Chair/Program Head, Ginny Whitehouse, worked with SPJ in putting together the Quill education edition in August 2000.

23. Primary accomplishment in area of PF & R

- ⊙ The tie with the World Press Institute in developing the discussion area for ethics on their website (see above) is definitely a highlight.

24. Newsletters. Please see three newsletters included in this packet (the fourth issue was not available at the time the Annual Report was due)

25. Final statement

- ⊙ Goals we did not reach: One of our goals this year was to encourage more ethics research and submissions to our paper competition. We didn’t manage to do that.
- ⊙ There may be a couple of reasons why our submissions didn’t go up, and in fact decreased slightly.
 - One could be the introduction of the Colloquia Series sponsored by the Journal of Mass Media Ethics and several universities, which will offer a two-day conference on some aspect of media ethics each year this decade. It could be that people who would normally prepare papers for us are instead focusing on this venue. That said, we don’t see this as competition and applaud the Colloquia. We would like to work more closely with them.
 - Two, we didn’t participate in the Southeast Colloquium this year (our timing was off) which would have raised our profile a bit more.
- ⊙ In addition to continuing the work we’ve started this year, our three most

important goals for upcoming (2001-2002) year are:

1. to encourage evaluation of the impact of media ethics instruction
 2. to continue to strengthen the quality of ethics research, including having another special paper competition
 3. to encourage more application of research to the profession, which may include adding a cash award to our top faculty paper award
- ⊙ How might the Standing Committees help us in our goals for this year?
 - We would love suggestions from the Research Committee on how to increase the number of paper submissions (we made this same comment last year)
 - Because one of our goals for this next year is to work on assessment, we would welcome any suggestions from the Teaching Standards Committee on how to go about that.