The Mass Communications Message

Delaware State University

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Olaniyi Areke
President and CEO of Majestic Pictures LLC,
is an Emmy Award winning filmmaker and
DSU Professor

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ON THE COVER

Olaniyi Areke, President/CEO of Majestic Pictures LLC, is an Emmy Award winning filmmaker who has experience in all aspects of video and film production. He has written, produced, directed, shot, and edited several video and film projects in the last 27 years. Areke made a name for himself with his video documentary “Descendants,” which won an Emmy Award, and a dramatic feature film entitled “Disillusion.” (page 4)

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Skype Lectures with the Advertising Educational Foundation

What makes a great insight? What does revelation mean to you? Can you differentiate the two? These were just a few of the questions asked during a Skype lecture in one of the Mass Communications classes this semester. As a result of a partnership with the Advertising Educational Foundation (AEF) the students took part in the first of many Skype lectures presented by practitioners who volunteer their time with the AEF. The AEF created the Inside Advertising Speakers Program to bring professionals to universities nationwide to conduct various lectures and trainings with students and faculty. Programs are customized to meet the class objectives. The lecture on insight in advertising was presented by Gina Christie, a New York native who has been working for the international advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi for five years. She has over two decades of experience in the industry and her list of clients include Johnson & Johnson, AT&T, Ford Motor Company and Motorola to name a few.

We had the opportunity to ask Ms. Christie questions about everything from internship experience, to preparing portfolios and we even asked her about some of the accounts that she’s worked on. She responded to every question which helped many of us to gain a better understanding of what we can expect when we start working in the field. She also told us that having a minor in Psychology has helped her in the advertising field because she understands how people think, especially when it comes to things like persuasive, purchasing power and opinions. Teryn Chamberlain, said “Gina [Christie] has changed my insight on advertising and made her career seem like a fun and interesting environment to work in. My point of view about advertising has changed and I’m now considering it a possible career choice.”

Danasha Wise
Passion is a feeling one develops through a fervid liking toward something. This feeling is exactly what Emmy Award winning, Professor Olaniyi Areke possessed as he discovered his love for film making in the latter part of his teenage years. Upon graduating high school, Areke was torn between attending medical school and film school, as he had developed a strong desire towards both fields. “Doctors heal the body and film makers heal the mind,” said Professor Areke, which led him to the decision of attending film school. After heavily weighing his options, Areke opted to attend Howard University for both undergraduate as well as graduate school. There he studied Broadcast Production and obtained his MFA in film. While he was still in school, he created his first film, called *Who Laughs Last*. This was a silent film based on two robbers that robbed a man at a bank, but the twist of the story is that after robbing the man they found out that he stashed the real cash in a safe place while the robbers were left with shredded pieces of paper. Professor Areke also created a 12-minute film entitled *When Innocence is Guilty*, which depicts a black man convicted for a crime he didn’t commit. The longest film Areke made was a feature film called, *Dis Illusion*, based on what a relationship between Africans and African Americans would be like and the cultural differences they share. Areke classifies his films as “docudramedies”; a mix between reality, drama, and comedy, everyday factors of life that should be appreciated.

After all of the success Olyaniyi Areke has acquired, he has decided to share his plethora of knowledge with the mass communications department here at Delaware State University. Here, he is a professor, teaching all of the television and film classes. Prior to Areke teaching at this university, he taught at his alma mater, Howard University. The classes that Areke teaches allows students to get first-hand information from a professor that is truly well accomplished but it also gives Areke the opportunity to stay up to date with the latest technology. Today, mostly everything is digital which forces him to become more knowledgeable about technology. “My job isn’t done until my students have a job and have become successful in the film industry,” said Professor Areke. He goes on to say that his ultimate goal is for his students is for them to become professionals in the field once they have met his demanding requirements.

Professor Areke says that when he writes and produces a film he wants his audience to walk away appreciating life as a result of his cinematography and see life beyond one’s imagination.

Tomi Canty
Too often we underestimate the power of having a teacher who believes you can learn. But believing in some students isn’t easy. So many chips are stacked against them. After teaching a while, most of us get pretty good at guessing who is and isn’t going to make it in our courses. But we also learn, although sometimes forget, that students are in charge of their success or lack of it in a course. They are the ones doing the learning. This ultimate control over the learning process allows us to face them honestly. We can lay out the criteria for success—what a student must know and be able to do by the end of the course. We can offer descriptive feedback. “Here’s where you are and here’s what you need to do to get where you need to be. And yes, you do need to do a lot, but I am here to support your efforts. I can teach you lots of things that will contribute to your success.”

Students with little faith in what they can do need to experience success. Most already have plenty of experience with failure. Teachers need to design tasks that challenge but tasks that can be accomplished, if not completely, then in bits and pieces. If you don’t believe you can do something, having somebody tell you that you can isn’t usually persuasive. But if someone points out your progress, you still might not be convinced that you’ll succeed, but that progress does give you something to be reckoned with. If a poor writer comes up with a fine sentence, and I ask where that sentence came from, the student will often say, “Oh, I just got lucky.” “No,” I explain, “good sentences aren’t born of luck. That came from within you. Now you must find the place from which that came because I’m pretty sure there are more like this one in that place.”

Finally students need to be disavowed of the notion that academic success is a function of ability—that the bright students have big brains and those who aren’t bright, well, they have small brains. The variable that determines success in college is not brain size but how hard that brain gets worked. Sometimes it helps to get students started by challenging them to work hard on one thing—to spend twice as much time on a paper than they usually do, to see what happens when they come to class prepared and ready to answer the study questions, to commit to doing all the homework problems—just so they can see that hard work does makes a difference, provided it does.

Read more from Dr. Weimer at http://www.facultyfocus.com
Marissa Bazemore’s Classroom Take-over

Students enrolled in several Mass Communications courses welcomed back one of the department’s esteemed alum, Marisa K. Bazemore, as a guest lecturer earlier this semester. Bazemore, a marketing communications specialist for Corning Inc., has been given the opportunity to travel to Japan, China, and Taiwan and she spoke to students about how she initially began her career as a journalist. Bazemore started her journey as the editor and chief of DSU’s Hornet Newspaper and she later interned with the Star-Gazette, in Elmira, New York. She was offered a fulltime job as copy editor of the Star-Gazette upon graduation. There, she was responsible for editing print content and publishing web content.

Bazemore put the public relations students to task by administering a writing test that’s used at Corning, Inc. Before the student submitted their writing samples, Marissa shared a story about a past intern candidate that didn’t have the writing skills to make it in this business. “It’s tough out here for graduates, but if you have strong written and oral communications skills, you can get a job,” Bazemore said. Junior and Mass Communications major, Isaiah Boone said “the assignment she gave us [was timed] and kinda gave a realistic look at how working in PR is really going to be. I appreciated her professionalism and coming to talk with us.”

Marissa also talked about some of the challenges of being an African American woman in a predominantly male corporation. “The corporate world is a game,” Bazemore told the class. She described how she has to be more conscious of how she handles herself in business meetings, making sure that she doesn’t come off too aggressive and how she’s had to adapt to other cultural norms, as much of her business is done overseas. Marissa really opened the student’s eyes to another facet of the public relations field and made them aware of all that is needed to be successful in this arena and encouraged students to think outside of the box in terms of seeking jobs.

Marissa Bazemore was invited back to DSU by Dr. Marcia Taylor who created a lecture and workshop series that would bring alumnae back to campus to work with student’s one-on-one and to provide career insight for budding journalists in the department.

Contributors: Nafis Nelson, Desiree Murray and Shanice Justice
Judy Smith Steps from behind the Scenes into the Limelight

Judy A. Smith is the founder and President of Smith and Company a leading strategic and crisis communications firm with offices in Washington D.C. and Los Angeles. Over the last 25 years, Ms. Smith has brought her unique combination of communication skills, media savvy, legal and political acumen to clients facing a wide array of issues and challenges throughout the United States and abroad.

Ms. Smith honed her skills through her experiences with some of the most historic and sensational events of our time, including the Iran Contra investigation, the prosecution of former Washington D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, the 1991 Gulf War, the Los Angeles riots, the Supreme Court confirmation hearings of Justice Clarence Thomas, the President Clinton scandal involving Monica Lewinsky, the congressional inquiry of Enron, and the United Nations Foundation and World Health Organization response to the SARS epidemic.

Perhaps best known in media circles for her expertise as a crisis management advisor, Ms. Smith has served as a consultant for a host of high profile, celebrity and entertainment clients over the course of her career including, but not limited to, Monica Lewinsky, Senator Craig from Idaho, actor Wesley Snipes, NFL quarterback Michael Vick, and the family of Chandra Levy.

I recently got the opportunity to meet Judy Smith who delivered the keynote address for the Philadelphia Black Public Relations Society, Philadelphia Public Relations Association and the Public Relations Society of America’s Philadelphia Chapter’s annual State of the Industry event.

Judy Smith explained what a career in crisis management was all about. She told participants that she deals with corporations and individuals that are in crisis, tries to develop a strategy that will best fit the crisis situation and then figures out the best way to execute it; while protecting the persons or the entities reputation. As a woman, Smith told us that she does not look at gender as something that holds her back. After working for a number of Presidents and CEOs of major corporations, she gained great experience. Smith says what makes her a good crisis consultant is her ability to connect with people on a basic level, “Kind of like a chess game,” she said. Good communication skills, a level head, and the ability to remain calm no matter what, is how she solves many of the problems her clients face.

Ms. Smith is also the co-executive producer as well as the inspiration behind the Olivia Pope character (played by Kerry Washington) in the ABC hit series “Scandal” which premiered in September, 2011 on ABC. One thing Kerry Washington, was quoted as saying in a Los Angeles Times interview was that when she prepared for the role, she found very little about Judy Smith and that she soon realized that Smith was successful at her job because she was nearly invisible and extremely discrete as a crisis communicator.

Ms. Smith’s final words of her keynote address were those of encouragement. She suggested that all African Americans in the public relations field to, “step out of your comfort zone because you won’t know what your strengths are and some of your weaknesses.”
Mass Comm Students Make Connections at the 2012 Howard University Job Fair

The ultimate goal for each and every student at Delaware State University is to graduate and obtain a lucrative job in the field of their choice. What better way to prepare for that as a Mass Communications student than to attend the Howard University Job Fair in Washington D.C. This year, DSU’s Mass Communications students were a standout.

Upon arrival, Delaware State University students filled the first seminar in the Gallery Lounge. This program was held to inform students on how to maximize their opportunities. There, featured moderator and Council of PR Firms, Donna Renella, along with several panel guests from different public relations firms such as Edelman, MSL, and Verizon engaged in an open forum with students. Once the panel introduced themselves and described what they did, the discussion opened up to the students to ask questions about the workforce.

The students asked great questions and the panel gave excellent advice on internships, graduate level education, and shared personal success stories. One of the key points panelists shared was that when interning for a company, always look for mentors to help you build your portfolio which could potentially further you in your career. They also shared three rules that are imperative in the media industry: have a ‘self’ definition - know who you are and follow your heart, always have a platform or know how to obtain one and lastly, always maintain ‘CEOness’, meaning whatever you do, do it to the best of your ability.

Once the seminar was over, students were free to attend other workshops. Topics included preparing for a career in the radio industry, television and film workshops, and sessions about graduate school. The afternoon was dedicated to the recruitment fair. This gave those in attendance an opportunity to network with recruiting companies and to get on-the-spot interviews. Recruiters came from companies like Fox News, Viacom, Chrysler, CSPAN, and NBC Universal to name a few. All in all, the job fair was a complete success. Delaware State University was one of 21 colleges invited to this exclusive fair and we made sure we made our mark, with several of our students walking away with possible internship or job opportunities.

Tomi Canty
IN THE NEWS...

Tattoo Taboo...or Not?  Tattoos in the Workplace

Today, it is more common to see working men and women with tattoos. About 85 percent of people working in a corporate office have some form of visible markings. At Delaware State University you can walk onto the campus and see students and even staff with visible tattoos. Dr. Francine Edwards in the Mass Comm Department has several tattoos but makes a point of not showing them in a corporate setting. Dr. Edwards said “even though tattoos are popular, I still think there are stereotypes associated with those who have tattoos so I’m selective about who sees them.” Students don’t share the same perspective. One student in particular is freshman Malik Davage. Having tattoos visibly on his body; many would question how he will be successful in corporate America. “Being a music major, tattoos are more expected in my line of work. I plan to be a singer and tattoos are just another way to express myself,” said Davage. Another students, a campus DJ, DJ OvaFlow thinks that his tattoos do not affect his line of work and that they add to his character.

While the debate over tattoos being taboo or not will go on, there are some that think the trend will change as more younger workers with tattoos enter the work force.

Isis Overton

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Fall 2012 Open House:  Welcoming Perspective New Students

Each semester DSU hosts an open house for perspective students. Perspective students can learn about the admissions planning and selection process, discover financing options through scholarships and financial aid and explore our many academic offerings. The students also get to meet with the various deans, chairpersons and faculty members and tour the beautiful campus, including residence halls and dining facilities.

This October a number of Mass Comm students worked with Dr. Raythatha to welcome perspective Mass Comm majors. There were a number of high school juniors and seniors on hand to find out all they could about DSU and specifically the Mass Communications Department. “It’s important to have students on hand for open house events because the parents like to hear what students have to say. The perspective students can also get tips from DSU students which can help them be more productive when they get here,” said Zac Exume, Junior. Dr. Raythatha has coordinated the Mass Comm open house for the last three years.

Staff Writer
WHAT’S TRENDING

How Reporter’s Are Using Social Media

Everyday thousands of people use social media to interact and connect with people all over the world. Social media not only influences everyday people; it also affects journalists and the work they do. Ever since Facebook and Twitter emerged as key tools for news, journalists in newsrooms across the country have used these tools to engage with their audience in new and inventive ways. These mediums also allow readers to access information on a constant basis and journalists now have the opportunity to break stories faster and reach a broader audience in the process. In Journalism Next, Mark Briggs describes how the Internet has opened the door for new career paths. “Your opportunity may come from a traditional news company, start-up or a new enterprise you launch yourself. Journalists are always looking for a way to tell their stories and with the Internet that has become easier to do.”

With the increasing popularity of blogs and Twitter, freelance journalists are able to report their own stories without needing the backing of big news companies. Additionally, young journalists have the chance to launch careers through the Internet. Briggs states that “journalists powering these new sites have infused them with a level of energy, commitment and passion that can only be found in a start-up company.” With the help of the Internet and blogs they are allowed to report on anything they want and are not held to the same constraints that a major news publication would put hold them to. An annual global survey of journalists by the Oriella public relations firm found that more than half of reporters now use social media as a source for story ideas. According to a recent mulinblog.com article, editors are using Twitter to solicit witness accounts, photos, and videos in covering stories like airplane crash and protests. “Quite honestly after 20 years [of being a journalist] I feel that the social media has become, probably not the most valuable tool but I think it’s very important. I wouldn’t use it exclusively to follow a story but I think it’s very important to use now a days,” says Joseph Backer, a Delaware State University Mass Communications Professor.

The downside to using social media also has to be acknowledged. First is the challenge for journalists in this social media-entrenched environment to remain ethical. This can be rocky for some because of the opinionated nature of blogs and other forms of social media. Another challenge is trying to tell a story in 140 characters or less.

As new innovations in social media are introduced, the face of news and news making will continue to change but for now, the benefits of being able to report minute-by-minute, second-by-second, to engage with readers and to create fresh opportunities for oneself as a journalist definitely make this an exciting field.

Danielle Harvey and Danielle Williams

Read more at:


http://ijnet.org/blog/social-media-etiquette-journalists-how-rules-have-changed

1 Journalism Next is a novel by Mark Briggs about the effects digital media and reporting has had on Journalism. Briggs is novelist and journalist.
As technology continues to evolve, journalists’ using social media is almost inevitable. iPads, iPhones, tablets, and other sources of technology makes it easier for journalists to access social websites to share what they see or hear; but is that good or bad? “Most say journalism has changed for the better, but others like Jerry Lanson, Associate Professor of Journalism at Emerson College, say journalistic standards are now in question.” Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and other sites, allow reporters to send out information with no verification, which opens the door to greater risks of inaccurate information being reported. According to Lanson if a reporter doesn’t verify if information is accurate, that is an “aberration of journalistic standards.”

On the other hand, some people do not think that social media being used by journalists is bad, but how it is used can be detrimental. Sreenivasan, Dean of Student Affairs and professor at Columbia Journalism School, does not view social media as a problem, but says, “It’s the incorrect use of social media by journalists that cause the problems in the first place.”

While the use of social media in journalism is still questionable and there are no true standards with regard to how it should be used, media companies such as ESPN have implemented policies on how social media can be used. ESPN instituted a social media policy in August 2011 that states [in bold] “Do not break news on Twitter.” News cannot be posted to social media sites, unless ESPN has reported the story on TV or the Digital News Desk. Such policy allows for news stories to be verified and edited before reaching the web.

Ultimately, the use of social media in journalism all depends on how it is used. Journalists should make sure their stories are verified and accurate before releasing them on the web.

Felicia Houston

Read more www.socialmediatoday.com
A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

I was excited when Dr. Edwards asked me to become the student editor for the Mass Communications Message. In this short time as editor, it has been a rewarding and extremely humbling experience. I especially want to thank Dr. Edwards for believing in me enough to hand this position over to me.

Growing up I had so many aspirations from being a singer to an actress to wanting to be an obstetrician. Singing failed because I just didn’t have a voice remotely close to Beyonce’s. Acting failed because I was always too shy to do anything in front of a crowd, especially like pretending to be somebody I wasn’t. Becoming an obstetrician was my true passion until I discovered that I actually hated math and science on top of realizing the number of years it took to become a doctor.

I scratched all of these ambitions off of my list until one day I saw a movie that changed my life completely. When I was in the ninth grade I went to see The Devil Wears Prada, which was based on a journalist that stepped into the fashion industry unintentionally and began fulfilling her dreams through writing. This doesn’t seem like a movie that could possibly change one’s life, but it did for me because in that moment I found what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

When I arrived at Delaware State University, I initially chose Business Administration as my major because I wasn’t sure if Mass Communications was as dependable. After a miserable first semester, I decided to switch my major to what I was most passionate about; writing. I am now a junior at DSU, with a concentration in convergence journalism working toward being a writer and eventually an editor for Essence Magazine. Ideally, I want my writing to focus not only on the black community but also on black women. Throughout my life I have been heavily inspired by profound and prolific words whether they have been spoken or written. By becoming a journalist, it will enable me to inspire young black girls the way I was inspired.

The field of journalism is ever-changing and it’s very competitive but I’m committed and remain focused on to pursuing the dream of becoming a journalist. That is also what the faculty and staff in the Mass Communications department encourage students to do as well; stay focused, network with industry professionals, and work to attain your goals even when you face obstacles. I encourage you...my fellow peers to get involved. Write for the Hornet, get involved with WDSU Radio “The Hive” or WDSU TV. Its also important to be a part of professional organizations such as NABJ, PRSSA and even the Mass Comm Society. As a budding journalist, publicist, producer or videographer start making your mark now because the sky’s the limit when you graduate with a solid foundation.

Sincerely,

Tomi Canty
Editor

NOVEMBER ISSUE CONTRIBUTORS

Student interested in writing for our upcoming issues can submit stories (and story ideas) to Tomi Canty at tccanty10@students.desu.edu.

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