New Century Journalism Program
Belmont University

ANNUAL REPORT 2005

Belmont Snapshot

Belmont University is a comprehensive, liberal arts-based, Christian institution. We have a fast-growing community of about 4,000 students from 42 states and 28 countries. Belmont is committed to premier teaching with a focus on success in the real world. Our purpose is to help students explore their passions and develop their talents to meet the world's needs. We provide more than 50 areas of study, eight master's degrees and two doctoral degrees.

Journalism and Belmont

Since 1985, Belmont University has been committed to journalism. In its early days, the program focused primarily on print journalism. However, in 2002, under the leadership of the university president, Dr. Robert Fisher, a plan was implemented to change the direction of the program. The president asked Thompson Storey, associate dean of the School of Social Sciences and then chair of the journalism department, to explore ways to engage young journalists of the 21st century to traverse the changing technological landscape with an ethical foundation. Storey recruited an initial advisory board of professionals working in print, broadcast and online media.

The New Century Journalism Program is the culmination of that work. The journalism major was expanded to include broadcast and online journalism, and Dr. Sybril Bennett was appointed executive director in the summer of 2003.

Building Blocks

In fall 2004, the newly renovated, 7,000-square-foot Media Studies Center opened. It houses the award winning student newspaper, The Vision, as well as its online counterpart; the radio station, The Voice; and space for a broadcast studio, a multimedia lab, a classroom, editing suites and a student lounge.
**Student Achievements**

Senior, **Chasity Gunn** was a summer 2005 recipient of a National Association of Black Journalists scholarship and worked full-time as a reporter for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. As a junior she was selected as a Freedom Forum Chips Quinn Scholar. She spent the summer of 2004 at the Gannett-owned *Tennessean* newspaper in Nashville. She also works part-time at *The Tennessean* covering education issues.

Senior **Joe Woolley** is working at the First Amendment Center at the Freedom Forum, as a junior he worked at the Diversity Institute.

Junior **April Watkins** received a summer research internship at the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center.

Alum, **Tamara Tatar** had an article published in *The City Paper*, a Nashville daily newspaper, and completed the first New Century Journalism senior project, a documentary on the 1963 Nashville lunch counter sit-ins and non-violence protest movement of students at Fisk University and their supporters.

Sophomore **Sarah Snyder** and **Joe Woolley** attended the Radio Television News Director’s Association in Las Vegas, Nev., in April 2004. They helped pay for their trip by stuffing registration bags.

**Chasity Gunn** and alumna **Amanda Wheeler** worked in the student newsroom at the Online Press Association held in Evanston, Ill., in November 2003.

**Sarah Snyder** and **Chasity Gunn** worked in the Online News Association student newsroom, Hollywood, Calif., November 2004.

**Accomplishments**

The groundbreaking nature of our program that sets it apart from others is that it literally converges the broadcast, print and online media in classroom instruction and training. Because of this unique aspect, institutions such as Western Kentucky University and Rowan University have consulted us. In the 2004-2005 academic year, representatives from the University of Missouri-Columbia and Samford University made site visits to see how we deliver our product in a multi-media environment. Following is a list of other accomplishments:

- The first annual Shop At Home Summer Journalism Camp was held June 26-29, 2005. Thirty high school students participated in the successful event from several local schools as well as from Canada, New York and Maryland.
- Faculty worked with the Scarritt-Bennett campus to plan and facilitate the Preview Forum, a national initiative funded by the Ford Foundation to help communities get more engaged in relevant issues. The topic was media related.
• Professional presentations were made on working in the media and convergence at a Middle Tennessee Scholastic Press Association event that drew 400 high school students.
• New Century Journalism Speaker’s Series included Brian Wilson, Fox News; Lorrie Grant, USA Today; Rob Curley, The Naples Daily News; Marianne Szegedy-Maszak, U.S. News & World Report; and Lonnie Isabel, Newsday.
• Advisory board members actively participated on Belmont’s campus with Al Tompkins, broadcast/online group leader, Poynter Institute, conducting three days of seminars regarding ethics and online journalism, and participating in the Shop At Home Summer Journalism camp. Former board member Wanda Lloyd, then executive director of the Freedom Forum Diversity Institute, conducted a diversity seminar.
• A partnership was created with the Nashville Association of Black Journalists for faculty and professional journalists to share experiences with students at Maplewood High School to increase the number of journalists of color.
• Faculty attended conferences and/or workshops at the Poynter Institute, Ifra Newsplex at the University of South Carolina and other locations.
• Thanks to Ethics and Excellence, a minority faculty member and a minority student attended the Media Center at the American Press Institute’s Digital Master Storytelling Seminar in Nashville.
• Student staffers of the Belmont Vision won six individual awards, including first place in photojournalism, public relations and media ethics, in competition at the Southeast Journalism Conference. In addition, the Vision was named the No. 5 Best Overall College Newspaper in the conference, which includes more than 50 public and private institutions.

New Century Journalism Speaker’s Series

The New Century Journalism Speaker’s Series hosts media professionals known for their converged roles and those committed to reporting and ethics excellence. The professionals come to campus for a public address as well as to teach classes. Among the 11 journalists who visited the campus in spring 2004 were Brian Wilson, Fox News correspondent; Lauren Green, Fox News anchor; Victoria Lim, the Tampa News Center’s senior investigative consumer reporter; Marianne Szegedy-Maszak, U.S News & World Report senior editor; Rob Curley, then director of new media and convergence for Lawrence Journal-World; and Dr. Julianne Malveaux, economist and national commentator. Among the local journalists and professionals who also participated were NewsChannel 5 reporter Phil Williams and photojournalist Bryan Staples, who won the Dupont, Peabody and Investigative Reporters and Editors awards.

The Speaker’s Series serves multiple purposes. Fundamentally, it provides an up-to-date curriculum for our students and faculty. It is open to the public so local news operations can benefit from free access to relevant information. Further, since most of the talks are taped, they can be repurposed for future educational access channels, lectures or seminars.
**Advisory Board**

**The Advisory Board**

The New Century Journalism Project Advisory Board is comprised of industry leaders from various news media. Board members assist with curriculum and internship development as well as keeping Belmont faculty abreast of media trends and needs. Board members have provided guidance to the faculty regarding the curriculum, media center, and future of the program.

**Rob Curley.** Mr. Curley is the Director of New Media for the *Naples Daily News.* He is the former head of one of the most critically acclaimed and award-winning Web development teams in the world. Curley was Director of New Media and Convergence for The World Company and leader of World Online, the Internet division of the *Lawrence Journal-World.* In this role, he leads the Kansas-based media company's converged operations for the combined news gathering staffs of the Lawrence Journal-World, 6News television station and World Online.

**Brice Minnigh.** Mr. Minnigh, a 1992 Belmont journalism graduate, is Asia-Pacific bureau chief for Reuters/Basis Point Business Wire, based in Hong Kong. Previously he wrote for *China Day,* the English language newspaper in Beijing. As a Fulbright Scholar in 1993, he researched and wrote on press reform in the Baltic region following the Soviet breakup. He is an award-winning photographer and works extensively in online journalism.

**Lorrie Grant.** Ms. Grant is a veteran retail reporter for the Money section of *USA Today.* She’s been with the Gannett owned paper since 1997. In 1998, she was among a select number of journalists who participated in the Case Media Fellowship on Business Reporting at Vanderbilt University. She started her reporting career in 1988 at Reuters. While at Reuters, she covered financial news and was promoted to bureau chief in Charlotte, N.C.

**John Seigenthaler.** Mr. Seigenthaler was named anchor of the weekend editions of “NBC Nightly News” in July 1999. He anchors the top-rated broadcast on both Saturdays and Sundays, in addition to serving as contributing anchor to MSNBC, NBC’s 24-hour all-news and information channel. Seigenthaler also anchors “MSNBC Investigates,” a documentary series that has included hour-long programming on topics such as Bio Terror: the New War, Back to Ground Zero, Inside Afghanistan, and Bin Laden’s Trail of Terror.

**Scott Simon.** Mr. Simon is host of National Public Radio’s *Weekend Edition Saturday,* and has won many major awards in broadcasting including the Peabody Award for radio essays. His book, *Home and Away: Memoir of a Fan* (2000), was cited as one of the best books of the year by *The Boston Globe* and *The Washington Post.*
**Al Tompkins.** Mr. Tompkins is broadcast/online group leader at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. He writes and teaches about trends in media convergence. He focuses on writing, producing, storytelling, ethics and leadership in broadcast newsrooms. He is winner of more than 100 journalism awards, including a 1999 Clarion Award for co-producing “Saving Stefani,” an hour-long documentary for *Dateline NBC*.

**Board Notes**

In June, 2005 Al Tompkins led an in-depth seminar on writing, storytelling and ethics for the 30 students who participated in the Shop at Home Journalism Camp sponsored by the Scripps Howard Foundation. Many local journalists participated as well.

In April, 2005 The annual board meeting was held.

In April 2005, *USA Today* retail reporter Lorrie Grant agreed to serve on the New Century Journalism Advisory Board. We are extremely pleased that she will serve our students in this way.

In May 2004, board member Wanda Lloyd resigned her position to concentrate on her new appointment as the executive editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser*. We wish her every success and sincerely thank her for her service.

A conference call was held with advisory board members in February 2003.

**Faculty Notes**

Dr. Sybril Bennett was named a Radio Television News Directors Foundation, Educator in the Newsroom for the summer, 2005. She worked at WTVF, News Channel 5 as an online producer, fill-in reporter and provided assignment desk support. The fellowship is funded by the Knight Foundation.

Professor Pam Parry had an article published entitled “Study shows changes coming for J-Students” in the May 2004 edition of *Quill Magazine*.

Dr. Sybril Bennett had an article published entitled “Staking a claim in the converged media world” in the July 31, 2003, edition of *Black Issues in Higher Education*.

Dr. Sybril Bennett had an article published entitled “Keeping Up with Convergence” in the February 2005 issue of the *RTNDA Communicator*.

Student media/ extracurricular activities

The Award winning student newspaper, The Belmont Vision, added an online counterpart, www.belmontvision.com, in spring 2004, and the news team has tackled some prominent news events including a visit from presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry during the campaign and election night coverage on campus.

In fall 2005 the student radio station, The Voice, began webcasting its programming.

Then, junior Mallory Gabard founded the Journalism Club in the fall, 2004.

Professional Development

Through university, personal, and professional funding (fellowships, etc.), the Belmont faculty members have done a commendable job of keeping up with the changes in journalism and technology. They have attended numerous seminars all over the country including:

The Media Center at American Press Institute’s Digital Storytelling Seminar held in Nashville; Poynter Institute-Convergence Journalism for College Educators, St. Petersburg, Fla., and the Ifra Newpalex, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.

Conventions attended:
Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication
Broadcast Education Association
College Media Advisers
National Association of Broadcasters
Radio Television News Directors Association
Online News Association
Southeast Journalism Conference

Presentations

Broadcast Educator’s Association
Ifra Newpalex Conference
National Association of Black Journalists, local and national
Middle Tennessee Scholastic Press Association
Society of Professional Journalists
Southeast Journalism Conference
**Diversity**

Diversity is a priority for the New Century Journalism Program. We have added a required course called Covering Diverse Populations.

We have formed a partnership with the Nashville Chapter of the National Association of Black journalists to provide learning experiences for high school journalism students at Maplewood High School. We plan to expand the program to additional high schools in fall 2005.

The NABJ and New Century Journalism Program sponsored a Diversity in the Newsroom workshop in the spring, 2005.

Through the New Century Journalism Speaker’s Series students are exposed to journalists with diverse experiences, ethnicities and identities. It is an ideal way for a small, private university like Belmont to embrace diversity.

**Funding**

Belmont University has committed $390,000 over a three-year period to help equip the print, online and broadcast components of the New Century Journalism Program and operations of the Media Studies Department. In fall 2005 we enter the third year of this allocation. In addition, the university funded the renovation of the space now occupied by the Media Studies Department which totaled approximately $400,000.

In January 2005, the New Century Journalism Program received a $54,000 grant to be disbursed over a three-year period from the Scripps Howard Foundation for summer internship grants and a summer high school journalism camp. The inaugural camp kicks off in June 2005.

In February 2005, the program was awarded a $75,000 grant from the Ethics and Excellence Foundation to help equip the broadcast studio. This amount is in addition to funding from the Freedom Forum and the Gannett Foundation.

To date, the nearly three-year old program has garnered nearly a quarter of a million dollars in grant support.