COMMTRACKS is an annual magazine published by the Communications Department at Simmons College. The magazine is led by a team of students as an independent study advised by faculty members. The team and other seniors were responsible for the magazine content. Content was structured to highlight the many aspects of the department that come together to produce successful graduates. Each year the magazine selects different faculty and alumnae to feature in the publication. As students, we appreciate all of our talented faculty and their contribution to the department and chose to feature a few of the professors whose personal interests brought valuable perspective to classroom experience. Alumnae were chosen for profiles based on their ongoing engagement with current students through class panels and internships.

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Letter from CommTracks Team

Dear Readers,

When we began brainstorming themes for this year’s CommTracks, there was a long list of ideas and concepts. What struck us most, however, was how well the Simmons College Communications Department prepares us for careers beyond the Boston metropolitan area and all the ways we are taught to communicate to a global audience.

As we researched this theme a bit more, we realized that many Simmons alumnae are global communicators. They felt that our department was one of the primary sources of encouragement for their ventures, as each professor shares the same passion for our success as we do.

We decided that the 2014 issue would capture the global nature of communications and the global reach of our Communications Department at Simmons.

What does globalization mean? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as the “process by which the experience of everyday life, marked by the diffusion of commodities and ideas, is becoming standardized around the world. Factors that have contributed to globalization include increasingly sophisticated communications.” Simmons embodies globalization.

During our four years, Simmons has shown us how important cultural connectedness is and how to foster relationships with people across the world. Whether it is through a Study Abroad program, at a networking event, or pursuing a career internationally, we are molded into becoming global communicators.

The breadth of courses offered in our Communications Department not only extends to a global audience, but also offers a plethora of opportunities to broaden our cultural experiences beyond the United States. And if the courses weren’t enough, the personal stories and experiences our dedicated professors share, give us a deeper understanding and love for communications that you cannot receive anywhere but at Simmons College on the third floor of Lefavour Hall.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate last year’s CommTracks team on winning the Columbia Scholastic Press Award. Your hard work and final product were an inspiration to us as we endeavored to create a fantastic issue as well.

The production of this magazine would not be possible without the guidance and constant support and motivation from our beloved Professors, Andrew Porter and Judy Richland.

Sit back, relax, and enjoy your global adventure through the eyes of Simmons Communications students.

Thank you for reading,
The CommTracks Team

1. Paige Biron
2. Ryann Tufts
3. Kaitlyn Mazan
4. Nafeesa M. Connolly
5. Kate Michaud
6. Hayley Collins
7. Katelyn Allen
8. Amy Bliss
Talking about Professor Mailoux reminds me that Simmons College Radio was a finalist in the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Awards for both Best Use of Social Media and Best Streaming/On-Line Only Radio Station. Being a double finalist is pretty amazing for a station that is only five years old.

PRSSA, led by Professor Andrew Porter, is also celebrating a milestone this year—the 14th anniversary of its annual trip to Onnicon in New York. Over 30 students attended this year’s trip. Although Communications alumni and Simmons Board of Trustees member Carmen Baez is now retired from Onnicon, the company still rolls out the red carpet for our students each spring.

It’s been an exciting and productive year for our faculty as well. Professor Judy Richland initiated the first ever International Women’s Film Forum at Simmons, which took place on April 5, 2014. Professor Porter has developed several partnerships that benefit our students. The Boston chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) is now providing mentoring, internships, and classroom speakers, and Harvard Medical School is now a preferred internship sponsor.

The theme of this issue of COMMTRACKS is “kvells” (one of my favorite Yiddish terms—it means “to beam with joy”) as I list the accomplishments of our students and faculty members.

I’ll start with some overall statistics. Our students have had 45 internships this year, sponsored by Harvard Medical School, Joslin Diabetes Center, the Boston Herald, CBS Radio, Brodus, 451 Marketing, Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Project Bread, Save the Harbor, Lantern Financial, and other organizations. Students in Studio 5 did projects for 21 non-profit organizations, including Boston Children’s Hospital, Project Bread, Harvard Medical School, A Little Easier Recovery, Strong Women Strong Girls, and Boston Boys and Girls Clubs. Some of the same organizations where our students intern also use the services of Studio 5 says a lot about how much these organizations value the talent and skills of our students. They know how well educated our students are and how well they perform on the job. I attended the Studio 5 presentations in December and was so proud of the creativity, ability to think outside of the box in solving problems, and professionalism of the students. Over the years, our clients consistently report that the communications pieces written, designed, and delivered by Simmons Communications students equal (or better) the work of paid professionals in the field. This year I heard the same comment from our clients and I beamed with pride.

The theme of this issue of COMMTRACKS is the global reach of the department, so I also have to “kvell” about the work our students are doing in Professor Len Mailoux’s Globalization on a Shoestring class this semester. The class is launching an awareness campaign about the problems of “conflict minerals” in the Democratic Republic of Congo. These minerals, which include tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold, are used in our digital devices. Some of the mines have been taken over by rebels and the profits are funding the war in the Congo that has killed 5.4 million people in the last decade. The class has teamed up with The Enough Project in Washington, D.C., which is working to raise awareness and put pressure on high technology companies to buy their minerals from responsible sources. Our students do good work and do good at the same time.

One of the realities of academic life is saying goodbye to those students who graduate each spring. Saying goodbye to all of you is bittersweet. We will miss you. But we know that we will have many more opportunities to “kvell” over your professional and personal accomplishments. And that makes this moment of sadness very sweet indeed.
An open window left the classroom chilly, and weak sunlight streamed in through the glass. It's January, on one of the first days back from winter break. This—a room in the Main College Building—isn’t a typical spot for Communications classes at Simmons, but the strange setting seems fitting.

Eleven students have gathered here for the first official meeting of COMM 268, also known as POLS 268, or the South Africa course, which takes students through one of the most politically tumultuous countries in the world. This unique study abroad experience involves one semester of weekly meetings and classes before three weeks of highly intense travel through various parts of South Africa.

Dan Connell, a popular Communications and African Studies professor, leads the biannual trip. The idea for the trip was formed during a section of one of Connell’s classes on African politics where he taught some of the exciting things going on in South Africa.

“Students said to me afterward, ‘Why couldn’t we just go there?’” said Connell. “And I thought to myself, ‘Why can’t we?’”

Amanda Gross graduated from Simmons in 2011 with a degree in Communication that she decided to get in part because of the South Africa trip.

“When [in South Africa], I realized that journalism was what I really wanted to do,” said Gross. “Dan’s stories about his journalism career in Africa always inspired me, and while we were there we all felt like we were living out those careers ourselves.”

Gross confirms that what the students learn on this trip can only be learned from Connell. “We saw not only the cultural effects of apartheid and explored the impact those gross human rights violations had,” said Gross, “but we also formed relationships with the people we met. That’s because of Dan.”

Beginning its journey in Johannesburg, one of the largest cities in the country, the class continues to the southernmost part of Africa in Cape Town. Along the way, students will learn about the human rights situation, and try to put the experiences into words, blogging and writing for the college’s newspaper, The Simmons Voice.

Since the inaugural trip in 2005, Connell has gone three more times. This year’s trip will be his fifth. Professor Jamie Ward, chair of both the Africana Studies Department and the Education Department, went with him on the last one and will travel on this one in what they both hope will be a hand-off so the program can continue after Connell retires this year.

Connell sees the South Africa trip in part as a way for students to gain perspective—both abroad and at home. He believes that South Africa in particular is a “mystical world,” and the trip helps to demystify it.

“Going to South Africa is, in a lot of ways, a schizophrenic experience,” said Connell. He also warned that when students return, they will, for some time, feel as though no one understood the experience they had. The class sits, in awe, some tense, some excited.

When Connell says schizophrenic, he’s referring to the economic and social extremes in South Africa.

“In certain parts, it will remind you of the more upscale parts of Cambridge,” he said. “In others, it will be poverty beyond what you can imagine. You’ll come back, and for the first story you tell, your friends and family will be hanging on every word. Less so for the next five stories you tell.”

Liz Fasko ’10, a journalism and political science major, takes time out from her human rights research in Khayelitsha to play pat-a-cake with the kids on the street. (Dan Connell)
Dan’s stories about his journalism career in Africa always inspired me, and while we were there we all felt like we were living out those careers ourselves.

—Amanda Gross

Connell stressed during the first meeting and through multiple emails that it’s important for everyone to attend the classes, not just for the educational aspect, but to bond as a group.

After all, students will be sharing close quarters and life altering experiences for three weeks.

In addition to speaking with human rights experts, the students will hike up Table Mountain, make a haunting visit to the Apartheid Museum, and have a meeting with the South African Gender Commission at a former women’s prison.

Some students preparing for this year’s trip have been gunning for it all along, just as Amanda did.

Kaylie-Ann Flannigan, a sophomore at Simmons, has been planning to go on the South Africa trip since her first year.

“I was checking out the faculty-led abroad trips,” said Flannigan. “I fell in love with the trip and emailed Professor Connell right away, which was slightly embarrassing because I was planning so far ahead.”

She was unsure if she wanted to commit a whole semester to studying abroad, which made the three-week course perfect for her. Flannigan has always been interested in working with human rights issues, and was thrilled to find a study abroad opportunity that felt tailored to her curiosities.

“I am excited to begin to write again, and to really be able to connect with people and their stories,” said Flannigan.

With every meeting the class has, the students become more empowered to ask questions, and are clearly gaining curiosity for the basis of human rights in South Africa.

This trip is expected to be Connell’s final class with Simmons after 12 years, making it emotional for the students, and for him.

Participants in the 2009 South Africa trip ended their journey with an outing at Cape Point, the most southwestern point of Africa.

(Dan Connell)
Before 11 a.m., when students begin to take their places around the table, a video camera is set up at the front of the room. Don’t be confused; this isn’t a film class. It is Globalization on a Shoestring, a communications class taught by Professor Len Mailloux. “It is my hope that we will all learn more about the world we all share and the people we share it with. Let us use technology to make the world smaller and better,” said Mailloux.

It is a unique experience for Simmons students as they participate in a “virtual study abroad” course, looking at various cultures, history, food, and issues in a number of countries.

The course has a long-standing relationship with the African University College of Communications (AUCC) in Accra, Ghana. In mid-February, AUCC and Simmons co-hosted a radio show. To listeners, it sounds as if they are in the same room, when in actuality, they communicate nearly 5,000 miles across the globe.

“There are variations of this type of course, but I have not heard of any others that involve internet broadcasts,” said Mailloux. “Other courses are mostly just classroom-to-classroom.”

“This course is truly about the human experience. It gives us the opportunity to talk to people from half a world away and gives them the chance to tell us their stories,” said sophomore Lindsey Stokes. “It really teaches you not just how to talk to someone, but how to listen, and that is often a more important skill.”

Annie Callaway, advocacy associate for the Enough Project, who works in Washington D.C., is just one of the many “guest speakers.” Callaway spoke to the group about the Enough Project’s Raise Hope for the Congo campaign, which raises awareness about conflict minerals such as tin, tungsten, tantalum, and gold. These metals are frequently found in consumer electronics, like laptops, cellphones, and music devices, but are often traded illegally. Conflict minerals come from mines controlled by rebel militias in the Congo like the group M23 or the Lord's Resistance Army. These militias come into rural areas all around the Congo and take over the local economy.

Buying electronics that contain conflict minerals is essentially funding the ongoing hostility in the Congo. In 2008, the Second Congo War became the deadliest conflict since World War II, according to a study by the International Rescue Committee.

The Enough Project asks companies to monitor their supply chain and only buy metals from certified, conflict-free smelters. They also rank technology companies using a green-yellow-red scale on their efforts to have a more just supply chain.

“Conflict minerals are a big problem, and subsequently deserve a bigger amount of consumer awareness that just isn’t there right now. I think that our work with The Enough Project and our own campaigns for student awareness at Simmons will have the potential to make a difference,” said sophomore Jessie Kuensel.

The class took the information and planned an awareness campaign at Simmons with posters, public service announcements, tabling, and video displays.

“The bond of our global community is fractured,” said Stokes. “Classes like this allow us the opportunity to fix what is broken and learn what life is like outside our borders.”

Through Globalization on a Shoestring, students become global communicators, taking on issues people across the world face and explaining them to a local audience.

“This is the kind of class where you get to put the theories you learn in other courses, visual communications, writing across the media, etc., to use. I’m looking forward to putting more of the communications skills I’ve learned here to work in a more real life setting,” said Kuensel.

“Let us use technology to make the world smaller and better.”

—Len Mailloux
Diani Liz Matos  
Communications (Media Arts)  
Minor in Marketing

Where are you from?  
Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

Why did you decide to come to Simmons College?  
I decided to go to Simmons because I wanted to experience something new, while pursuing a career I was passionate about. I wanted to meet new people, explore new cultures, and push myself to become more independent.

What are some of the struggles you have faced?  
Though I am really not an international student because of Puerto Rico’s status as a U.S. territory, I consider myself fully international. Besides the different language spoken, I’ve had to adapt to a completely different lifestyle and culture in Boston. The two biggest challenges, however, have been being away from my family and friends and, of course, adapting to the cold weather. I went from being able to wear shorts and t-shirts year-round to wearing multiple layers, sweaters, coats, boots, scarves, and gloves most of the time.

What are some of the benefits of being an international student?  
Despite the challenges that come with the territory of being in an unfamiliar place far from everywhere and everyone I grew up knowing, going to school overseas has had many rewards. I’ve grown as a person, become more independent, and made friendships that will last me a lifetime.

What do you like about Simmons’ Communications Department?  
The Communications Department prepares students for the fast-paced and ever-changing field of communications in our era. Students acquire a vast amount of skills that enable them to become multi-skilled communications professionals who will be sure to succeed in the professional world. One of the reasons I chose to major in Communications is because I knew I would be able to further develop my creative, interpersonal, and analytical skills. Since it is such a broad field, I know that all the skills I gained would be applicable in any career.

Shaden Almutlaq  
Communications (Media Arts)  
Minor in Marketing

Where are you from?  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Why did you decide to come to the U.S. to go to college?  
I wanted a better college education and to experience a different culture than where I grew up.

What are some of the struggles you have faced being an international student?  
Adapting to a different method of teaching since it’s more interactive in the U.S., which gives me as a student more rights to take an active part in my education.

What are some of the benefits of being an international student?  
It’s always good to experience different cultures, and I like that I was able to use my background as a subject in a lot of my communications projects.

Why did you choose communications as your major?  
Because it provided the skills that I want for my future career: PR, design, writing, video, as well as more specific classes like advertising.

Do you plan on moving abroad after graduation or staying in the states?  
My plan for now is to move back home and be a part of the development in the region. There’s a lot of support for local youth in Saudi Arabia and I would love to be a part of that. And after getting the work experience I need, I would definitely consider doing my Master’s in something more specific like advertising or branding.

What is your dream job?  
I’m not really sure, it’s too big of a question for me to answer now. I definitely know that I want to be in a creative agency, whether it’s advertising, digital, or branding, I will be very satisfied as long as I’m in a creative zone!
Tracks of the Communications Department

The Communications Department at Simmons offers four different concentrations that cater to the interests and aspirations of the students, making sure that they are well prepared for the work place. Those concentrations are: Public Relations/Marketing Communications, Graphic Design, Journalism, and Media Arts.

Within those concentrations, students have the flexibility to explore other areas through elective courses. Electives give students the opportunity to tailor their future careers by building upon their required courses.

Public Relations/Marketing

Students who focus their studies in Public Relations/Marketing Communications learn to unite organizations and the public through communicating. Through electives such as, public speaking, motion graphics, and advertising, PR majors are able to tailor what they are learning to their varying interests. With strong writing, presenting, and marketing communications skills, PR majors are able to create content, social media, and written pieces that clients are excited about.

Graphic Design

Students in the Graphic Design track focus on print, web, multimedia, or a combination. The students learn the fundamentals through Introduction to Graphic Design, Typography, Type and Image, and Advanced Design. Graphic Design students gain experience through electives such as, Media Convergence, Design for the World Wide Web, and Digital Imaging for Design. Students become expert multi-dimensional designers through the Graphic Design track.

Journalism

Students focus on professional writing and editing through the Journalism Track. Courses such as Media and the First Amendment, Journalism, and Editing Copy and Proof help students refine their writing skills. Journalism students are exposed to writing for Public Relations, radio broadcast, and web design. In addition to writing for different mediums, Journalism students learn what it takes to tackle ethical issues that media writers face everyday.

Media Arts

Students in the Media Arts track learn a combination of written, visual, and electronic media. By taking classes such as Communications Media, Animation, Radio Operations, and Broadcast Writing, Media Arts students get a taste of every track. Media Arts students are versed in multiple disciplines to prepare themselves to work in a world that is increasingly driven by media convergence.

Faculty and Staff of the Communications Department

The faculty and staff of the Communications Department at Simmons

Left Column: Judith Aronson Bob White Lydia Hardy Briana Martino Dan Connell

Right Column: Judith Richland Len Mailoux Marlene Fine Dane Groves Yasmin Solomon Andrew Porter
Columns to the Left:

Emlyn Perry
PR/MarComm
New Zealand & Ireland

Ruthy Rickenbacker
Journalism
Argentina

Chelsea Keys
PR/MarComm
Bali, Indonesia

Dedra Bailey
Graphic Design
7 Wonders of the World

Ashley Shepard
PR/MarComm
Poland

Hayley Collins
PR/MarComm
Bora Bora & Italy

Megan Chamberlin
Graphic Design
Italy

Ryann Tufts
PR/MarComm
London, England

Taylor Rapalyea
Journalism
Andes Mountains, Chile

Sara Balghonaim
PR/MarComm
Madagascar

Columns to the Right:

Katherine Michaud
Media Arts
Egypt

Shaunden Almutlaq
Media Arts
Moscow, Russia

Margaret Teague
Journalism
Hawaii

Paige Biron
PR/MarComm
Argentina & Greece

Taylor Nealand
Journalism
Greece & Maldives

Sarah Kinney
Journalism
48 states by blue VW van

Kelsey Duchesne
PR/MarComm
Copenhagen, Denmark

Katie Langerman
Graphic Design
Greece

Diani Liz Matos
Media Arts
Australia

Nafeesa Connolly
PR/MarComm
Portland, Oregon
Seniors, what is your dream travel destination?
For years Simmons students have had the opportunity to visit an Omnicom Group office in the heart of New York City. It is because of the generosity of alumna and trustee Carmen Baez ’79, former president of Latin America at Diversified Agency Services (DAS). Baez has hosted the Simmons students since the program began. Professor Andrew Porter, the faculty advisor of PRSSA, helped in the planning process and accompanied the students on this year’s trip.

My introduction to the Omnicom trip all started when I joined the Simmons chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). As a first-year, I gravitated towards the group as an undecided Communications student. As one of very few first-years who attended that year’s trip, I can honestly say the experience not only shaped my decision to be a Communications major, but it also made me realize how much of an advantage we have as Simmons students.

The morning of the annual visit, about 30 students board a bus at Simmons at 7 a.m. typically arriving in New York City by noon. We are then fortunate to hear executives at Omnicom present about everything from their career paths, HR advice and projects they have worked on. Students also have the opportunity to ask questions and make connections with people in the communications field.

After an afternoon of presentations at the agency, we are treated to a networking event with New York City alumnae courtesy of the Simmons Office of Advancement. “As a first-year trying to figure out my major, going to Omnicom was definitely beneficial,” said sophomore Leah Kossak. “I was able to see the corporate side of PR and marketing, and decided to declare after that. It shows you how far you can go in this field after leaving college. The alumnae event afterwards demonstrates the great network Simmons provides students with after graduation. Whether you’re attending as a first year or senior, the Omnicom trip can be beneficial to everyone, even those not in the PR/marketing communications field.”

Those who have attended past Omnicom trips know how beneficial it is for personal growth in communications and business. But it is also helpful for developing your personal brand. As Simmons students, we are taught to think globally and on the annual Omnicom trip, you can begin to apply that teaching.

Senior Communications major and PRSSA Co-President Hayley Collins said, “Our annual trip to Omnicom in New York City is the highlight of my spring semester. It gives me the opportunity to hear from professionals in the Public Relations field. We also get great insight into what companies are looking for when it comes to hiring college graduates.”

The goal of the Omnicom trip is to prepare Simmons students for their futures in communications. As a co-president of PRSSA, I have seen the trip’s impact. This year, another group of Simmons students made the trip. Although Carmen Baez has retired from Omnicom, Elizabeth Cornish, Omnicom Human Resources vice president, agreed to host the students and put together another exciting day. The evening networking event was held at Marina Maher Communications, with a networking event moderated by Jane Wesman ’69.
Professor Judy Richland is passionate about film. She sees film as a fantastic teaching tool to introduce students to issues concerning marginalized populations throughout the globe. With her film program “Diversity of Film Genres,” developed with her Presidential Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council grant, she feels that she has empowered Simmons students to become citizens of the world. “With the films we have shown in our “Diversity of Film Genres” program our students are developing an awareness of global human rights issues,” she said. “No other medium permeates the consciousness the way film is able to. When one sees a film, for that short time, reality is suspended. The viewer totally identifies with a character and has empathy for their predicament.”

To produce the event Richland enlisted the help of a Studio 5 team as well as a student intern, Alissa Berstein (writer) and Kate Michaud (photographer). Simmons professors and students hosted the screenings and introduced filmmakers.

Senior Sara Balghonaim, who hosted and organized the panel for the Saudi Arabian film “Wadjda” said, “I have never been as excited for a Simmons event. I am glad I was a part of the Simmons International Film Forum. I got to meet many accomplished women directors from around the world.”

“Part of the thrill of producing the International Women’s Film Forum was that you got to work with students and faculty from across the college. My students from Motion Graphics and Media Convergence essentially worked behind the scenes coordinating registration, greeting participants and filmmakers, running panel discussions and introducing films. Faculty from the School of Management, Social Work, Sociology, Psychology, Art and Music, Education, and Gender Studies all generously gave their time as panelists. It is rare to find an event that brings together such a plethora of talent and diverse intellect at a college,” said Richland.

Films viewed at the International Women’s Film Forum:

- “Josh: Independence Through Unity” Pakistani Filmmaker: Iram Parveen Bilal
- “Changing Minds at Concord High” American Filmmaker: Susan Finley
- “Living Thinkers: An Autobiography of Black Women in the Ivory Tower” American Filmmaker: Dr. Roxana Walker-Canton
What were some of your favorite Communications courses? Which ones helped you most in your current position?

I loved the writing courses like Feature Writing and Op/Ed writing, but I think the courses that have helped me most in my current position would be my Intro to Design course with Judith Aronson and my internship class. You may think going over your resume the 8th time is going to be pointless now, but that class actually taught me so much about thriving in a professional setting.

This is part of the strength of the Communications Department—it encourages a really well-rounded, all-purpose curriculum. While doing the journalism major, I took all of these courses that seemed irrelevant or superfluous at the time that I’ve now realized have positively impacted my professional life.

What kind of internships did you do during your time at Simmons?

I had an editorial internship at the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)’s magazine, Outdoors. I wrote blurbs about hiking trails in New England and posted articles to the website, which I loved! I also got my name in print in the magazine! There I learned to write short, succinct pieces and use a content management system, both of which helped me with my first job after graduation.

Perhaps most important, though, was my time working for The Simmons Voice. I went from being a writer to Features Editor to eventually Editor-in-Chief, and I cannot even begin to list the many things I learned from that experience. From collaboration and teamwork to accountability, research and an extraordinary eye for detail, even when your eyes just want to close, working for the newspaper is one of the most important and useful experiences I had at Simmons, and one I recommend the most.

What events after graduation led to your current position in New Zealand?

I was offered my job as a news and content writer at Brafton a week before graduation. While there, I was eager to move up and get more responsibility, so I asked for performance reviews on a regular basis and sought out opportunities to take on more advanced work.

Brafton has a sister company called Castleford that is based in Sydney and Auckland. Two years into my career at Brafton, Castleford was in its early growth stages and wanted some people from Brafton to come down and put their experience to work, especially in the editorial department. They advertised a role as an editor, managing a team of six to eight writers, kind of like my job as Editor-in-Chief at the Voice, which I had been starting to miss. I raised my hand and, after agonizing three months during which I seriously considered a move to Austin, Texas among other plans, I got it. I started the job six weeks later.

How would you describe your typical day at work?

Since coming to Castleford, it is still growing rapidly. I’m now managing a writing team of eight to heading up the entire editorial department, which means I oversee these writing teams and the graphics department. My typical day at work involves a lot of meetings with team editors and writers, calls with clients, problem solving with account managers and, of course, editing.

Can you describe what living abroad has been like?

Living abroad has been unbelievably rewarding, but also probably the most difficult thing I have ever done. There’s nothing easy about leaving all of your support systems behind to set off entirely on your own, not to mention the culture shock. But I believe that in doing so, you get these immense, intense opportunities to decide who you want to be and what you want to do. There’s a lot of learning that happens when you are the “outsider” in a culture and I have found that really really cool.

I get to live in a world where crystal clear turquoise sea water and taking steam snow-covered volcanoes is the norm, and I get to do things like go cave diving to see glow worms and sail through fjords surrounded by sky scraping cliffs. Plus, I’ve met some incredible people who have undeniably changed my life for the better.

What advice do you have for graduating seniors pursuing a career in communications?

Whatever task you are given professionally, no matter how small or mundane it may seem, do it well. Your employer, current or prospective, will notice. You will stand out.

It’s also important not to close your mind to any options—communications is such a vast field and with technology on the rise, there are millions of different jobs, and types of companies, being created. I had never heard of content marketing when I graduated, and now people are calling it the future of marketing. Nor had I ever imagined myself working for a marketing company, but I love it.

Communications people are creative—just remember that just as you can use that attribute to design a great graphic or craft the most descriptive feature articles, you can use it to apply your strengths to tasks and roles you may not have thought of before.
Below: Yvonne exploring Taiwan (Yvonne Fu)

Interviewed by Paige Biron

Yvonne Fu ‘07
Current Job: Production Coordinator at Infocus Asia

When looking at colleges, what did you find most appealing about Simmons College?

Location. Simmons is located right in Boston, neighboring with many other colleges and universities. The fact that it’s right by the Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is definitely another plus for me as well. The Communications Department offers a variety of courses, and the fact that Simmons students can take courses at other Colleges of the Fenway makes it even more appealing.

What were some of your favorite Communications courses that helped you in your career?

Since I was on the design track, my favorite courses were definitely all the design related ones. Though, I enjoyed all the other courses I took during my years in Simmons as well; PR, Writing, etc. In regards to what were helpful to my current career, I think all of them are helpful in one way or another. In the classroom, you not only learn from the textbook or projects assigned, but you also learn from your professors and the life experiences they can share with you.

What kind of internships did you do in your time at Simmons?
The only internship I did was in the Communications Department’s very own Studio 5. I was the designer for the Wall of Honor and second edition of CommTracks.

What events after graduation led to your current position in Taiwan?

Luckily and unluckily, the year I graduated and the year that followed, 2007-2008, were the two years that jobs were hardest to find for new grads. I signed up with a staffing agency and worked as a freelance designer and part-time retail for a while. Since my return to Taiwan, I have worked with a film director, a PR firm, and a film commission that allowed me to travel to international film festivals. I am currently a production manager for a documentary production company. Like taking classes at school, you discover what you are truly passionate about through different jobs.

Have you always been interested in living abroad?

Yes. My family has been traveling and living abroad since I was 15.

How would you describe your typical day at work?

Lots of communications are involved: emails, phone calls, conversations, texting, meetings, etc.

How has living and working abroad affected your career?

It opens up a different perspective and expands my view. I have become more tolerant to things that I could not stand in the past, and it helped me realize that everything’s possible as long as I try.

What cultural experiences would benefit a communications student the most?

Cultural experiences, or rather “cultural impacts,” Communications is based on human interaction, I believe. Without impacts, a communicator would always be in hestia comfort zone, and growth would be limited. So, I’d say any culture you are unfamiliar with can become a learning experience and can impact your views.

What advice do you have for seniors that are pursuing a career in the field of communications?

Go out of your comfort zone and experience new things. You will find pleasant surprises along the way.

Below: Yvonne Fu exploring Taiwan (Yvonne Fu)
The Abroad Experience

by Ryann Tufts

Some students may ask “Why is traveling abroad so important?” Many think that it is either a waste of time, or it will not work in their busy schedules. But it is a beneficial part of the college experience. Here are some stories of seniors from the Simmons Communications Department and how they took advantage of exciting opportunities abroad.

Emlyn Perry, a Communications major with a concentration in Public Relations and Marketing Communications, decided to take advantage of all Studying Abroad had to offer. She traveled to Granada, Spain where she wanted to work on her Spanish and accomplished her goal of traveling to Europe. While studying in Granada, she had the opportunity to visit seven countries and learned how different life could be across different borders. While traveling around Europe, she learned how to appreciate kindness from others. “No matter where I was, I had meaningful, human interactions,” she said. Most of the time she was completely out of her element, but she overcame the obstacles and figured it out for herself. The people whom she met during her travels have become friends. “It’s an experience unlike any other, traveling, speaking a different language, saying yes to every opportunity you get and the people around you feel the same and are just as excited as you are,” said Emlyn. “I have amazing memories of world travel, and I shared them with wonderful people.”

Emlyn’s advice to students thinking about traveling or studying abroad is: “If the chance comes up to travel, whether studying abroad or another way, DO IT. It’s an opportunity that is incomparable. Do it when you’re young and naive. I learned more about myself and life in general in that semester than I ever have before.”

Katie Mazan, an English and Graphic Design major at Simmons, studied abroad in London because of the great works of literature that have been produced in England. “I think that traveling is so much fun and exciting. I wanted to experience new things and meet other students, and to expand my horizons beyond just what I know at Simmons.”

Katie loved the program she attended in London. “I took a course on Jane Austen and we actually went to her home, saw her original handwritten manuscripts, and took a walking tour around London of places that inspired her writing,” she explained. She felt that it was a nice change that learning was so interactive and they had the opportunity to create new experiences.

Katie could not pick a favorite part of studying abroad. She loved it all. She enjoyed learning about the history of London, making new friends, and trying new things. “I loved that there was a new activity to do every day and that I had the chance to explore a new city.” The only regret she has is that she did not extend her trip for another semester. But she would have missed Simmons too much.

Taylor Nealand, a Communications and Photography major at Simmons, did not study abroad, but recently traveled to Bangladesh and Thailand. She travelled with another Simmons student and close friend Tanisha Huq, who is originally from Bangladesh. Tanisha’s brother was getting married in Bangladesh and asked if Taylor would photograph some of the wedding. This was the perfect opportunity for Taylor to travel abroad.

Taylor decided to make her trip to Bangladesh a month long and add a visit to Thailand. “The purpose initially was to photograph Tanisha’s brother’s wedding, but in all honesty Tanisha and I had been talking since freshman year about how I had to make a trip out there sometimes. It was the perfect excuse,” she explained. Before meeting Tanisha, she would have never even thought to visit Bangladesh. “I’m extremely thankful that our relationship opened my eyes to that part of the world.”

From the weeklong wedding, to celebrating New Year’s in Bangkok, to going to the Shilpin where The Hangover was filmed, every experience was exciting for Taylor. She had the opportunity to be immersed in a culture different from her own, try new things, and make some memories that will last her a lifetime.” I really can’t pick a favorite part. There were so many incredible experiences that were life changing. Dressing up in a traditional sari for the wedding events was definitely one of my favorite things. Feeding a baby tiger was thrilling, snorkeling in a school of fish was hysterical, and just being with some of my best friends really made it amazing,” she said.

From Left: London’s Big Ben (Katie Mazan); Emlyn with a monkey (Emlyn Perry); Katie at Jane Austen’s Home (Katie Mazan); Taylor in Bangladesh (Taylor Nealand)
The 2013-2014 academic year marks a milestone for Simmons College Radio—its fifth anniversary. In addition to listeners in all 50 states, the station has an international audience of more than 75 countries, with listeners tuning in from as far away as Europe and Africa. Simmons Radio has also won several awards since it first went “on the air” in 2009.

The idea for Simmons College to have a radio station came from the Communications Department Chair James Corcoran. Corcoran began to design and plan the station when he met Professor Len Mailloux. With a background in radio, Mailloux has brought more than 30 years of radio experience to the position of station director.

“The station started with a small six channel mixing board, two microphones, and two CD players in an unfinished room that is now Studio B of the radio station,” said Mailloux. “A year later, we had our new, fantastic studios.”

Simmons Radio includes many weekly shows led by faculty and student hosts.

“We have about 30 shows on air now and more being developed. Plus we have a number of special broadcasts coming up this semester, including a planned program with the Enough Project in Washington, D.C. and the Democratic Republic of Congo,” said Mailloux.

The station gives teams of students the opportunity to manage the station each year, providing students with valuable experience. This year’s radio team is made up of four students from the Communications Department.

Amelia Cordischi, a junior, is the station manager who helps to oversee each aspect of the team and also hosts her own weekly show, "The Find." Leah Molle, a senior, is the director of public relations and is responsible for promoting the radio station and handling advertising. Sophomore Caroline Qualey serves as the station’s music director. She is responsible for clearing what music airs and making suggestions. Senior, Marija Navarro, the director of video and social media for the radio station, is responsible for filming interviews and events and posting them online.

The students reach a wide audience.

“We’ve had listeners from all over the world including Paris, Istanbul, The Cayman Islands, Columbia, and Australia,” said Cordischi.

“The radio has listeners tuning in from Iceland, Finland, and a lot of other European countries like France, Germany, and England,” added Navarro.

Over the past five years, Simmons College Radio has won numerous national awards from the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System (IBS). In 2010 the station received the award for “Best Public Service Campaign,” in 2011 won “Most Innovative Show,” and in 2012 won the award for “Most Creative Radio Show.”

For the last three years, Simmons Radio has been the recipient of IBS’s “Platinum Microphone Award for Broadcast Excellence.” This award honors stations for outstanding operations, management, and service to the college and community. This year, Simmons College Radio qualified as a national finalist in a number of categories including “Best Social Networking” and “Best Internet Only Radio Station.” In March, a group of students representing Simmons College Radio attended the IBS Conference in New York, where they participated in the awards ceremony and various radio and broadcasting seminars.

When asked which award has meant the most to her, Navarro said, “When the radio won Most Innovative Show.”

This award was given to Simmons Radio for their three-country Globalization broadcast linking Boston, Accra, Ghana, and Freetown, Sierra Leone. Though the show was broadcasted from different locations, the listeners only heard one simultaneous radio show.

Simmons College also hosted an IBS Radio Conference in the fall, which included representatives from other college radio stations, as well as seminars and workshops led by local broadcasting professionals, including Mailloux and Simmons alumna, Erica Moura, who manages video news at the Boston Herald.

Simmons Radio has made celebrating its fifth anniversary a year-long event, with opportunities for the greater college community to mark their milestone and achievements along with them. In the fall, the station sponsored a live performance from YouTube sensation and featured Chronicle musician, Rhett Price, in the Trustman Gallery.

“We’ve had listeners from all over the world including Paris, Istanbul, The Cayman Islands, Taiwan, Columbia, and Australia.”

—Amelia Cordischi
True or false? Test your global knowledge and competency.

1. In Japan, slurping soup is considered bad manners.
2. In Italy, giving chrysanthemums is appropriate for a festive event.
3. In Ecuador, it is generally acceptable to be a few minutes late for a business meeting.
4. In England, the "V" sign formed with two fingers means victory when the palm faces outward but is an ugly gesture if the palm is facing inward.
5. In China, a person's surname is often given or written first with the given name appearing after.
6. In Japan, shoes are generally not worn past the doorway of a home.
7. In Brazil, hugs among business associates are considered inappropriate.
8. In Germany, use of formal titles when addressing another person is very common.
9. In Saudi Arabia, crossing one’s legs in the typical style of U.S. men may cause problems.
10. In China, green hats are a symbol of achievement for men.
11. In China, a gift wrapped in a red paper or enclosed in a red box is appropriate for celebrating a successful negotiation.
12. In Kuwait, an invitation to a pig roast would be warmly received.
13. In India, a leather organizer would be warmly received as a gift.
14. In Iraq, passing a bowl or plate with the left hand is appropriate.
15. In Saudi Arabia, ignoring a woman encountered in a public place is insulting to the woman’s family.

What is Your Global IQ?

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. T
7. F
8. F
9. F
10. F
11. F
12. F
13. T
14. T
15. F

Quiz source: Organizational Behavior, 3rd Edition (Hitt, Miller, Cateora)

International mastery: 13–15 points; international competence: 9–12 points; international deficiency: 5–8 points; international danger: 1–4 points