



**2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT  
STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

**Section 1: Major Goals and Initiatives**

Student Publications provides professional and administrative support for the staff of The Shorthorn, UT Arlington's award-winning student newspaper, and other publications. In doing so, it provides the main student-produced source of news and information for the University community, daily experiential learning and leadership opportunities for students, and a designated public forum for the University community. The department also produces the Maverick Housing Guide twice a year and, this year, introduced commercial, student-produced photography and videography services on campus. All department initiatives engage the student in experiential learning that affords them academic and career placement success.

Major initiatives in 2016-17 included:

- Increasing readership of Shorthorn digital products, including theshorthorn.com and the daily e-newsletter which serves as a daily "front page" to news and information about UT Arlington. Efforts included an overhaul of training workshops and tools, revitalized organization of the website, adjusting publishing times for stories and earlier distribution of the e-newsletter to engage commuter students. To date, the number of pageviews on theshorthorn.com has increased by at least 18 percent, with 2,291,514 million pageviews. In addition, daily readership of the e-newsletter has increased to an average of 16,000 users a day, based on click-through data. With 67,000 subscribers, this achieves an average open rate of 26 — surpassing news industry standards.
- Developing and implementing a sustainable business model for Creative Services, the student-produced commercial photography and videography unit within our department. In its first full academic year, the unit coordinated and produced 67 projects for university departments and provided five students with on-campus employment directly related to their intended careers. As a zero-funded startup, it achieved a modest profit and has room to develop further in future years.
- Developing and implementing Headlines and Deadlines, a first-of-its-kind tabletop role-play game focusing on journalism ethics and critical thinking. The training initiative was backed by the Next Generation Initiatives grant from the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs. Feedback on the training, presented during the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association, was 100 percent positive. Several campuses have asked the department to present the game during their upcoming orientation sessions.
- Growing the portion of Shorthorn sales revenue related to digital products. This was accomplished via a revamp of advertising packages, as well as an overhaul of sales team training, that netted a 9 percent gain in this area over last year. Digital sales made up 25 percent of our total sales for the fiscal year and remain an area for high attention moving forward.
- Improving retention of student staff in all areas from fall to spring. In our department, students are hired on a semester-to-semester basis, allowing them to explore communication work in a variety of ways during their time with Student Publications. However, the department recognized the need to retain students in key areas to allow them to develop deeper skill sets prior to graduation. This year, the department achieved its goal of retaining more than 75 percent of eligible students from fall to spring, with 87 percent returning to employment. Efforts included a morale program, career planning, focused training opportunities, and regular coaching.
- Educating the UT Arlington and student media community about the importance of student journalism. Recognizing a need to connect work done in Student Publications to a more global view of media, as well as its connection to student success and university initiatives, the department developed and presented Student Publications as a case study for the Career Continuum Model championed by the Division of Student Affairs and in line with the University's strategic plan. The model is available in our Box.com folder

## Section 2: Program/Service Areas and Subcomponents – Milestones and Major Accomplishments

In addition to the initiatives listed in Section 1, the department achieved the following major accomplishments:

### DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

- Four major professional organizations recognized The Shorthorn as the best in its class among student media. For the second consecutive year, the Associated Collegiate Press named The Shorthorn a Pacemaker, the highest award in collegiate journalism. In addition, both the Society of Professional Journalists and the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors, composed of professional journalists from across the state and nation, and the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association named The Shorthorn the best college newspaper and website in Texas.
- Provided partial or full funding for 62 student employees to attend local and national conferences and conventions for skills development and networking. The department's ability to increase the number of opportunities was based on the location of a state and a national convention, both held in Dallas.
- Assisted in placing 13 students in internships, part-time jobs and full-time employment related to their work at The Shorthorn.
- Held four Shorthorn open-house employment events attended by a combined 213 students.
- Professional staff and student employees represented the university as presenters on various media-related topics at eight local, regional, state and national conventions.
- Collaborated with Communication Department on several projects: National News Engagement Day activities, Comm Day, and implementation of new practicum credit for Shorthorn employees.
- Started a new billing/collection process with the University Attorney's Office and collected on past-due accounts.
- Revamped accounting spreadsheets to be more user friendly and to reflect UTShare categories.

### NEWSROOM/THE SHORTHORN

- Developed and initiated new Community Voices program, the first of its kind in college media to identify and improve coverage of underserved student populations. Held training session for guest opinion writers who applied to the program and published more than 30 columns.
- Expanded social media team to include the first social media editor. Social media successes included wider reach, as The Shorthorn became verified on both Twitter and Facebook and crossed the 10,000 "Likes" mark on Facebook.
- Held training sessions with 30 visiting media professionals who donated their time and skills to the student staff. In addition, organized and implemented the newsroom's first professional photographer-taught, three-hour student workshop on lighting.
- Designed and implemented a new editorial workflow that emphasizes digital readership, with stories published at intervals. Doing so involved realigning staff schedules and workflow.
- Newsroom adviser Laurie Fox celebrated her first full year in the role.

### ADVERTISING

- Restructured sales program to emphasize digital products. This included an analysis of three years of advertising data and projections that showed a need to develop strong ad packages and campaigns that showcase customers across digital platforms. Workflow, training and client meetings were rebuilt from the ground up.
- Established relationships with 85 new customers/accounts over the course of fall and spring.
- Organized and published three theme pages with online components. Students led the initiatives, identifying potential new revenue and customers.
- Increased ad sales in the annual Dining Guide by 12 percent.
- Coordinated with student marketing team to deliver a presentation about The Importance of Analytics at the College Media Business and Advertising Managers national convention.
- Raised \$639 for the university's Emergency Assistance Fund from ad sales for a specially designated issue of The Shorthorn.

### PRODUCTION/TECHNOLOGY

- Off-site data backup system implemented at the end of summer 2016 has been operating flawlessly for a year. This measure was part of the department's Business Continuity Plan.
- Refined theshorthorn.com's homepage design and streamlined the navigation bar.
- Organized and implemented new photo equipment checkout system, which has resulted in 100 percent compliance with inventory requirements.
- Implemented new design production workflow, an effort to better manage and track projects that come from multiple units within the Department of Student Publications.

#### MARKETING

- Organized and held Press Fest, a two-hour event focused on promoting Shorthorn services for students (attended by 150 students). This program was included in the Commuter Incentive Program.
- Delivered 23,000 Student Publications print products (16,000 Shorthorn newspapers and 7,000 Maverick Housing Guides)
- Produced four Maverick Housing Guide promotional videos that were viewed more than 5,400 times.
- Staffed Shorthorn booth at more than 30 campus events.
- Produced six employment/recruitment videos they've been viewed more than 1,300 times.
- Created 10 promotional campaigns and placed more than 450 posters, table tents and banners to publicize them.

#### CREATIVE SERVICES

- Provided services for 67 photo and video projects with on-campus customers.
- Worked on first graphic design project, a collaboration with the university's accreditation team.
- Collaborated within department to set up permanent online archiving and sharing system.
- Developed and implemented new training workshops for commercial visual work.

### Section 3: Areas for Improvement in 2017-2018

Through regular, real-time assessment of readership, retention and revenue, along with a broader perspective on projected needs of a diverse and changing student populations, the department has identified the following needs as we move forward:

#### REVENUE/FUNDING

It's no secret that professional media outlets are suffering from a decrease in advertising revenue; Student Publications is no different, although we have more flexibility to "move the needle" while providing good experience to student employees. We are entering FY18 projecting a 30 percent decrease in traditional, print advertising sales and have adjusted what we are able to account for increased costs associated with successful readership. The predicted loss in print revenue is based on advertiser feedback and sales, which did not hit the target by the end of F17. Anticipating this, we adjusted M&O spending. We have also developed a business plan for expanding Creative Services. Neither will be enough to combat the issue; print advertising will not return to levels we've seen before, and we simply must innovate. At the same time, we face competition from our university peers for community dollars, as all are encouraged to seek external funding. This creates a difficult challenge for the department.

#### CROSS-TRAINING STAFF/RETENTION

Assessment through Student Learning Objectives, partnerships with professional media contacts, and day-to-day interactions with our students show a need and a desire to be cross-trained; that is, the skill set expected of our graduating seniors is quite large and diverse, and our students know it. Moving into the next year, a challenge we are working to address is to modernize our staff structure to allow for cross-training earlier in a student's career with us without losing the attention on developing deep, fundamental skills.

#### READERSHIP

Serving a diverse community across a diverse set of platforms comes with a diverse set of challenges. The Shorthorn can no longer be "everything to everyone" across all platforms; it must devote staff resources to curating its content to the

unique audiences that use one or two, but not all, of the platforms our students publish on. Doing so requires us to employ new strategies that streamline processes and decision-making — with fewer resources (see above).

#### **Section 4: Community Partnerships & Academic Collaborations**

- National News Engagement Day: This event, co-sponsored with the Department of Communication, encourages college students to engage in any way with any news organization, with an emphasis on The Shorthorn. It's a national day held by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. It garnered 46 contributed images promoted across Facebook and Twitter, creating numerous engagement points.
- Director taught a section of the MAVS 1000 first-year experience course in Fall 2016.
- Professional staff and student employees represented the university as presenters on various media-related topics at eight local, regional, state and national conventions.
- Director named president of the Texas Associated Press Association after serving a year as vice president; in addition, she serves as a director on the Society of Professional Journalists' Fort Worth board representing student media. In that role, she represents The Shorthorn and UTA as a panelist and moderator on relevant topics and coordinates the annual Media Careers Conference, held in February. The Shorthorn co-sponsors that event.
- Regularly speak in classes on relevant media topics, as well as to recruit student employees through the journalism practicum established last year.

#### **Section 5: Awards and Accolades**

Student Publications student and professional staff earned an unprecedented 107 state, regional and national awards from professional organizations and associations in 2016-17. Among the most notable, The Shorthorn was named a Pacemaker for the second consecutive year by the Associated Collegiate Press, which recognizes only a handful of publications annually based on the following criteria: coverage and content, quality of writing and reporting, leadership, design, photography and graphics. In addition, both the Society of Professional Journalists and the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors, composed of professional journalists from across the state and nation, and the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association named The Shorthorn the best college newspaper and website in Texas.

The Texas Intercollegiate Press Association also named Student Publications Director Beth Francesco its Charles M. Choate Memorial Advisor of the Year based on a number of nominations from students, alumni, supervisors, media professionals and fellow advisers. TIPA also named Nia Bailey its student designer of the year, as well as Daniel Carde its student photojournalist of the year.

In addition, the College Media Business and Advertising Managers named student Austin Hutchinson its Sales Manager of the Year, as well as awarded second place in the country to assistant director Tammy Skrehart's training program.

A complete list of awards follows:

##### **Associated Collegiate Press**

Pacemaker, nondaily newspaper

2nd place, cartooning: Marian Bilocura

3rd place, multimedia feature reporting: Mara Lopez

4th place, photo slideshow: Daniel Carde

##### **College Media Association**

1st place, sports feature photo: Kelsi Brinkmeyer

2nd place, multimedia feature story: Daniel Carde

3rd place, best feature photo: Daniel Carde

Honorable mention, best portrait: Daniel Carde

### **Editor & Publisher awards (EPPYs)**

Finalist, Best College/University Newspaper Website

Finalist, Best College/University Investigative or Documentary Feature: Daniel Carde

### **Society of Professional Journalists Region 8**

Winners:

Shorthorn staff, best all-around daily student newspaper

Duy Vu, breaking news photography (Fort Worth Trump protest)

Shorthorn staff, online news reporting (Dallas shooting coverage)

Daniel Carde, sports photography (Seymour speaks)

Jayne Shedenhelm, feature photography (Eyes wide open)

Selby Lopez, sports column writing

Shay Odimayo, general column writing

Daniel Carde, online feature reporting (From the front lines)

Finalists:

Shay Odimayo, online opinion and commentary (Status of the Union)

Kelsi Brinkmeyer, photo illustration (The evolution of marijuana)

Matt Fulkerson, general news reporting (State of Water series)

Mara Lopez, online feature reporting (Fighting for Life Experience)

Victoria Cortez, breaking news reporting (Student shoots police officer)

Madelyn Edwards, in-depth reporting (Need for transit expands with the city)

Marian Bilocura, editorial cartooning (2016 portfolio)

### **Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence (National)**

Daniel Carde, online feature reporting (winner)

Daniel Carde, sports photography (finalist)

Duy Vu, breaking news (finalist)

### **Texas Associated Press Managing Editors**

Best Non-Daily Student Newspaper

### **Texas Intercollegiate Press Association**

Best of Show

#### Live contest

First place:

Anna Gutierrez, radio advertising

Kristianna Davied, copy editing

Second place:

John Hoang, critical review

Dylan Bradley, editorial writing

Duy Vu and Allee Austin, two-person photo essay

Shay Cohen, sports action photo

Kyle Cotton, public relations release writing

Sorayah Zahir, print advertising

Sorayah Zahir, editorial cartoon

Third place:

Nick Tarrant, television news writing

Arianna Verdia, television sports writing

Selby Lopez, public relations crisis management

Honorable mention:

Duy Vu, news photo

Individual Excellence

Daniel Carde, Photographer of the Year

Nia Bailey, Designer of the Year

#### First place

Staff, online breaking news package (Dallas police shooting coverage)

Dylan Bradley, breaking news video (Parks Mall shooting)

Jayne Shedenhelm, feature photo (Eyes wide open)

Nia Bailey, feature page design (Feb. 10, 2016)

Staff, best interactivity (theshorthorn.com)

Mara Lopez, best blog (German Journey study abroad blog)

Staff, best use of mapping (Crime map)

Dylan Bradley and Chanel Sassoon, interactive graphic (Who runs the world?)

Staff, community engagement (theshorthorn.com)

Staff, web site navigation (theshorthorn.com)

Staff, page one design (Finding meaning amid sorrow)

Samantha Douty, news feature story (Student's death devastates family)

Cody Bahn, best audio slideshow (State Fair excursion)

Staff, best use of data (Salary database)

Daniel Carde and Nia Bailey, picture story (From the front line)

Cody Bahn, single subject presentation (Cruisin' down Cooper Street)

#### Second place

Newspaper Overall Excellence

Joyce Liu, opinion page design (Sept. 14, 2016)

Joyce Liu, sports page design (Oct. 26, 2016)

Narda Perez, Jayme Shedenhelm and Mara Lopez, online breaking news package (Dallas anti-Trump rally)

Mara Lopez, multimedia package (Dallas anti-Trump rally)

Samantha Douty, best use of mapping (Construction around campus)

Staff, best use of data (Crime map)

Victoria Cortez, news story (Student arrested, shoots police officer)

Daniel Carde, sports feature photo (UTA volleyball finishes 3-1 in tournament)

Kelsi Brinkmeyer, sports action photo (Mavs Sun Belt Championship run ends)

Staff, special section (Housing Guide 2016)

Sean Ficht, ad design (Shorthorn Recruitment)

Daniel Carde, sports feature photo (Volleyball team beats Little Rock)

Mirian Bilocura, illustration (nonphoto)

#### Third place

Mirian Bilocura, illustration (nonphoto)

Sean Ficht, ad design (Housing Fair)

Cody Bahn, sports action photo (Lineup change possible for Wings)

Rodney Sanders, video package (Ramadan Iftar)

Jocelyn Hernandez and Dylan Bradley, interactive graphic (Bid Day)

David Dunn, best blog (The intern's desk blog)

Matt Fulkerson, in-depth reporting (Series: State of Water)

Nia Bailey, information graphic (New year, new you)

Zachary Smith, critical review (Review: The Miser brings farce ...)

Duy Vu, news photo (Protestors gather in Fort Worth)

Selby Lopez, sports news story (Wings' win streak snapped)

Staff, headline (How to deal with small talk)

### Honorable mention

Staff, headline (For engineers, love is a safe bet)

Alex Bihm, feature page design (Nov. 2, 2016)

Samantha Douty, feature story (Cancer fight makes sophomore...)

Ariana Vera, feature story (Get the best of both social media...)

Daniel Carde, photo illustration (Portrait: From the front line)

Alex Bihm, editorial cartoon (Get out of jail free”

Mara Lopez, \$1,000 Texas Auto Writers Association scholarship

Beth Francesco, Charles Choate Memorial Adviser of the Year award

## **College Media Advertising and Business Managers**

First place

Austin Hutchinson, best advertising manager

Second place

The Shorthorn, best training program

Third place

The Shorthorn, best college media sales program

The Shorthorn, best social media strategy

The Shorthorn, best printed rate card

The Shorthorn, best digital sales strategy

The Shorthorn, best sales incentive program

The Shorthorn, best sales strategy for a special section

Honorable mention

Kevin Le, best sales representative

The Shorthorn, best special event

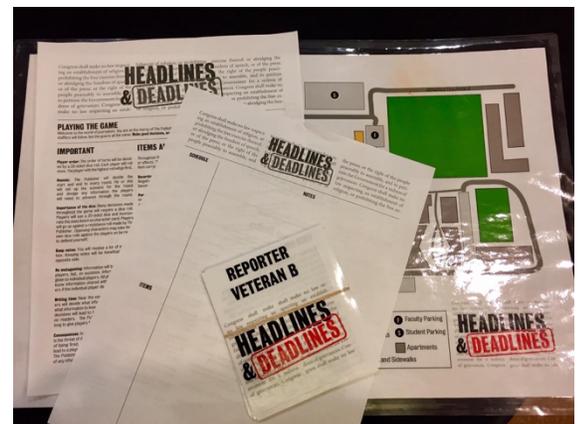
The Shorthorn, best promotion plan

The SHorthorn, best self-promotion ad-color

## **Section 6: Feature Story**

*Headlines and Deadlines* is a tabletop role-playing game created to develop understanding and skills used in the world of journalism: ethics, decision making, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.

Players take on roles with various skill levels and experience and are assigned a goal. The Publisher guides players through story, putting them in scenarios that require quick but critical thinking and teamwork to achieve their goals. Players face consequences, positive and negative, of their decisions — learning along the way to their shared goal.





Like other tabletop role-playing games, the players report to The Publisher or “game master.” Players describe their characters’ actions through speech, and those actions succeed or fail according to the rules of the game. Ultimately, the choices made by players will shape the direction and outcome of the game. Outcomes of choices are determined by a roll of a die, which is scaled from unlikely to happen to very likely to happen.

This academic year, Student Publications took on designing storylines, game pieces and sets of Headlines and Deadlines. Alumni and current students took turns testing iterations of the game, which culminated in a multi-game night during the Texas Intercollegiate Press

Association’s state convention in late March. Six Shorthorn staff members trained as publishers played the game with 30 students from across the state who had registered in advance to play. Feedback showed the game achieved its objective, which one survey respondent indicated she’d used the skills she learned in the breaking news scenario in a real-life situation back on her campus.

Student staff, working with Director Beth Francesco, developed the following materials:

- Publisher handbook
- Player character role and skills sheets
- Player worksheets
- Game board
- Rules book

Plans for this project include trademarking the work and distributing it for educational use to other college media outlets. There is revenue potential with this product.



