With the economy in such rough shape, college students are left wondering what their post-graduate lives will bring. Yet, recent success stories of Niagara graduates Jackie Eckel, Christina Crane, and Shena Lee show that starting a career is challenging, but not impossible.

In the field of Communications, networking is the key to success. Christina Crane graduated from Niagara in 2009, when the economy was at one of its lowest points. Throughout her college career, she was a part of the Niagara Index, the CMS Review, and was the first General Manager of WNIA Radio. Continuing to build on her resume, Crane took on a New York City internship for CBS News.

"As a Communication Studies major, I felt it was important to be involved in many aspects of the communication industry because, not only were these positions media related, they were relative in the Sales/ Promotions/ Marketing and Technical fields as well," she said.

Crane’s search for a job was admittedly frustrating at times. After working part time for radio stations like STAR 102.5 and doing promotions for Budweiser and Labatt Blue, connections and experience finally landed her a position as a sales and marketing representative for AEP Books and Media in Buffalo.

“It took me a year and a half, two cases of resume paper, and over 50 interviews before it happened for me. You have to stand out and always be on the hiring manager’s radar,” Crane said.

Like Crane, Shena Lee found the devastating shape of the economy anything but encouraging. Four days after graduation, she took a leap of faith and moved to Northern Virginia with her fiancé, in hopes of a better job market. Lee’s exciting new life outside of DC brought on new obstacles.

A Future Beyond the Recession

The recession may have ended in 2009, but the fragile economy still hasn’t fully recovered. For the millions of Americans who are barely making ends meet, economic prosperity is still just a distant reality. Gas prices are on the rise, making something as little as transportation a nuisance. Some worry that the value of the American dollar isn’t what it used to be.

With Americans becoming more frugal with spending, businesses take a hard hit. The market is becoming heavily dominated by monopolistic powerhouses. Smaller businesses are unable to compete against these corporate giants who make entrepreneurship seem like financial suicide.

Americans are becoming less picky about their dream jobs, settling with anything just to get by. Graduating college students enter a job market that is more competitive than ever. It’s almost expected of graduates to start off working part-time to put a dent in their student loans before they even think about starting a career.

During a time of economic recovery, it becomes hard to tell whether or not conditions are improving. However, as bad as things may seem
Realizing that finding a job wouldn’t be easy, Lee visited a temp agency for some guidance and accepted a temp job at an attorney’s office. It wasn’t long before a full time position opened up, and now, Lee is an office action specialist at a patent and trademark attorney’s office.

“Don’t give up and try a temp agency, they have a lot of positions which can help you get your foot in the door,” Lee said. “It may not be what you want to do forever, but it is a start.”

Jackie Eckel can say that the economic downturn did not stop her from finding her dream job. But just like anyone else, getting there wasn't easy. Graduating in 2010, Eckel joined the millions of other college graduates in an endless job search.

“I searched for a job like it was my job. It was a painful and disappointing process,” she admitted.

Eckel explored her options on Craigslist, and by January, she was applying to a job she imagined getting since 2008. Eckel now works as an editor/producer of a local TV station in Orchard Park.

“The advice I would give grads looking for jobs is not to discourage them to look on Craigslist,” Eckel said. “Since I got lucky and found the job I’ve wanted since 2008 (and I graduated in 2010), it was a real surprise myself!”

To ensure a promising future, college students aren’t waiting until the last minute to polish up their resumes. Vince Schiano, sophomore Communications studies major at Niagara, is already looking forward to a summer internship for CBS News.

“One thing I love about Niagara is the opportunities they offer to students, especially early on,” Schiano said. “Most colleges seem to only offer internships to upperclassman.”

Colleges like Niagara University are full of clubs, organizations, and internship opportunities that build real-world experience and connections. The best thing for students to do is take advantage of them.

On the Web...

For more information about local internships, go to www.niagara.edu/jobs. Type “communications” into the career field bar.

Check out www.niagara.edu/communication-internships-co-ops/ for more information about CMS internships!

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Internship Opportunity as an Editor!

As I am relinquishing my position, the CMS department is looking for a new intern to become the editor of the CMS Review! The internship counts for 3 credits and lasts from Fall 2011 to Spring 2012. As the editor, you are responsible for brainstorming and editing stories, writing articles and/or providing photographs, and most importantly, laying out the newsletter. The editor is also responsible for also creating the Media Awareness Week program.

For more information, contact Dr. Kalen Churcher at kchurcher@niagara.edu.

This is a fantastic opportunity to fine tune your design and writing skills! Take advantage of it!

- Emily Kaufman, '13
Get Experience without Leaving Campus!

By Anna Hoffmann

With all the pressure to get real-world experience in the media before graduating, Communication Studies students on campus without their own cars can feel like they are stuck between a rock and a hard place. Luckily, Niagara University offers a number of media internships right on campus that provide academic credit and experience working in a semi-professional environment.

Meet Andrew Hart. A senior Communications major, Andrew jumped on the opportunity to tape NU's home hockey games when Mark Barner, chair of the Communication Studies Department, brought it up during video production class. After getting in contact with the Athletics Department and setting up the internship, Hart attended every hockey game at Dwyer, camcorder in hand.

"I got more experience with the camera and with sports videography," he said. "I sort of got to know the team a little bit and see that dynamic so that was cool, too."

Hart was able to work alongside representatives of Time Warner when they came to tape NU's hockey games, and the internship has spurred his interest in camerawork for live-action sports.

"That was the first time I'd really worked with a camera, and I really did take a liking to it," he said. "You feel like you kind of help the team out, you know? As little as it is, at the end of the day it's important and someone's gotta do it."

Hart recommends finding internships on campus to other students, and several other Communication Studies majors have already found other opportunities.

Rianne Farrugia, a senior Communication Studies major, recently completed an internship in the Athletic Communications office. She was able to work with Photoshop and Media Player, and was actively involved in TV broadcasted games from pre-production to tear down as a Production Assistant. Farrugia built connections with professionals from sports television networks such as ESPN, CBS Sports and NSN, and she worked with official press throughout the events.

"I have learned how to work with a team and communicate well with others under pressure," she said. "It gave me taste of how the industry is."

Farrugia has completed several internships in broadcasting already, and she recommends that students start on campus.

"It helps them be sure where they want their next internship to be and it will be easier to pick an internship off campus."

The Athletics Department is not the only place to find on-campus internships. Kaity Augustyniak is currently interning with Brian Rock, the media specialist on campus that is responsible for NU's promotional videos. Augustyniak works closely with Brian on projects like the admissions video and short videos for campus organizations. She helps schedule shoots, does camerawork and helps edit the final product.

"The internship was highly recommended and I can see why! Brian lets his interns get a lot of hands-on experience," Augustyniak said. "I have learned a lot especially about design and working on making things visually and artistically pleasing."

Augustyniak feels that she is gaining skills that will help make her marketable in the media industry, and the internship is helping solidify her interest in cinematography and photography.

"Even if you have an internship that isn't what you may end up doing, it is a good way to find out whether or not it is something you want to do," Augustyniak said.

Although a larger media organization might provide more networking opportunities and perhaps a better view on how the real-world industry works, internships on campus are a good place to start.

"I consider it a good way to learn in a comfortable environment to prepare myself for the real world," Augustyniak said.
Are men better than women in sports? Are men's sports more fun to watch?

That question that seemed to create much debate during a recent lecture, held in part for International Women's Day.

Kelly Poniatowski, an assistant professor of Communication Studies at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, presented You're Not Allowed Body Checking in Women's Hockey. The discussion focused on the United States and Canadian 2006 Olympic women's hockey games and examined how masculinity and femininity were expressed in the media commentaries.

The event was organized by Kalen Churcher, assistant professor of communication studies. More than 85 Niagara University students, staff and faculty chose to attend, well beyond the 35 students in Churcher’s class. Though the original intention of the event was to include more of a Q&A format, Poniatowski made some last minute changes to accommodate the crowd.

“Asking lots of questions, like I normally do when I teach, with such a large group was difficult,” she said. “So I switched to more of a straight lecture to get through the information and save time.”

There was time for some questioning, though, and the big one was: Are men really better than women when it comes to sports, and in this particular case, hockey?

“Obviously a men's game (in any sport) is going to be faster and probably more exciting to watch than a women's game, said Sam Goodwin, a center for Niagara University’s men's hockey team. "However, I don't think that comparing these two should lead to the conclusion that men are better than women; they are two different games."

Theresa Berg, associate athletic director and senior woman administrator for Niagara University also said that "to make a general statement that men are better than women in sports is not fair because there are too many variables and ways to view and analyze sports.

"Much progress has been made in how we view and treat female athletes but as [Poniatowski] indicated, we still have a ways to go."

Although the presentation was meant to discuss the ways in which the media portrays women athletes, many students believed that only the negative lights were discussed and that it really wasn't fair to compare the two, since they are such different games.

However many students enjoyed discussing what has continued to happen in the media since Poniatowski’s original research even if they didn’t agree with what was said.

“I thought Dr. Poniatowski gave a solid presentation,” Goodwin said. “She made some interesting points that I had never thought about before and it was nice for me to be a part of a coherent lecture dealing with two interests of mine — communication studies and hockey.”
Alumni Panelists Give Advice

By Marc Davies

Niagara University communication graduates gave advice to current university students during an alumni panel sponsored by the Communication Studies Department. The panel was part of the annual Media Awareness Week, a series of events designed to educate the on- and off-campus communities about the impact of media.

“The best advice I can give to current students is to always be looking for internships,” said Beth Neil, a senior marketing coordinator at ATTO Technology in Amherst, NY. “Internships lead to networking and networking leads to jobs.”

In addition to Neil, panelists included Marissa Bailey, an anchor at local TV station WGRZ; Amanda Wade, producer, director, and editor at etc production services at the Rochester Institute of Technology; Jessica Garfinkel, a graduate student at Syracuse; and Chris Smith, assistant director of athletic communications at Niagara University.

Communication Studies Chairperson Mark Barner introduced the panelists before the floor was opened up for students to ask questions.

“Talking to alumni who have gone through the same process and getting advice from them will help students prepare for a job search,” Barner said. “It really gives students an advantage when it comes time to go get a job.”

Sophomore Matthew Cook thought the event was a success.

“It was nice to hear first-hand what it’s like to get into the job industry and the flexibility you have to have sometimes,” he said.
Industry Panelist Share Insights into the Future

By Hannah Ranney

“Don’t be afraid to try and fail,” was the advice given by one of the professionals at an industry panel, which took place as part of Media Awareness Week.

Media Awareness Week is an annual event hosted by Niagara University’s Communication Studies Department that aims to educate students and the public about the impact of media.

The industry panel was the first of five on-campus events occurring throughout the week. Panelists included Tim Schmitt, former sports editor at Greater Niagara Newspapers; Gabe DiMaio, program director at WNED Radio; Paul Ivancic, television news photographer and editor for WIVB-TV; and Karen Renzi, partner and executive director of marketing and sales for Beyondus Inc. Design and Marketing.

The professionals spoke about the media industry, their experiences at various positions and jobs, and the best ways for graduating students to get involved in the media industry.

More than 50 people attended the event.

Jeannine Alsous, an involved sophomore at Niagara University, asked about the marketability of recent graduates.

“How do you feel about us?” Alsous asked. “Will there be more or less opportunities for those of us graduating soon?”

Schmitt and Renzi agreed that students entering today’s industry have the ability to create their own opportunities and to discover and pursue their own niche.

Ivancic and DiMaio emphasized the importance of marketability and being able to “sell yourself” in order to pursue a career in the industry.

“How important are internships?” asked Mark Barner, chair of the Communication Studies Department.

Ivancic and Renzi concurred that students need to take the utmost advantage of internship opportunities in order to land a job in the industry.

“They are invaluable,” Ivancic said. “You can’t do enough of them.”

DiMaio added that students should take their time and do as much as they can in order to find the most suitable career for the student entering the media industry.
What do zombies, texting and driving, and over-consumption have in common? They can all be made into a public service announcement, especially when you add some creativity and a bit of skill.

As part of its annual Media Awareness Week, Niagara University's Communication Studies Department hosted on March 29 a PSA competition of videos promoting media literacy. University and high school students competed for top places in two divisions: college and high school. First place winners were awarded $100; second place received $50.

“It’s always fun to see who submits and what they present,” said Mark Barner, chairperson of the Communication Studies Department. “We study media effects and media literacy, so it can be cool for them to put their production skills to use on that topic.”

Kat Smith, a senior and first place winner in the college category, created her video on media consumption and the negative impact of too much media. She symbolized the media as zombies that attacked an unsuspecting victim.

Sarah Kim, a senior and second place winner in college category presented a PSA on ‘sexting,’ and the fatalness of the activity.

A group of students – Chris DiLauro, Sean Toomey, and Justine Walker – from St. Joseph’s High School in Ottawa, Canada, took first place in the high school category with their PSA about the ‘crazy’ products advertised. Their PSA featured a ‘magic stick,’ which could fix virtually anything.

The second place winner in the high school category was Holly Norris from North Tonawanda High School. Her PSA also focused on advertising.

“Her PSA is very meaningful because I think it speaks volumes about how advertising is artificial and you get the wrong idea with it,” said Patty Norris, Holly’s mother.

All of the public service announcements were reviewed by three judges as to educational value, creativity, originality and technical competency.

Above: Two Niagara University students and one local high school student were presented awards for their media literacy public service announcements. First row: Holly Norris (North Tonawanda High School) and Sarah Kim (NU senior). Second row: Mark Barner, Communication Studies chair; Kat Smith, NU; and Kalen Churcher, assistant professor.

Photo by Anna Hoffmann
Music Panel Notes

By Doug Richards

This year, Niagara University’s Media Awareness Week ended with a surprise guest appearance from none other than Cali Swag District. The hip hop group’s unexpected arrival took place during a music panel discussion in the Castellani Art Museum.

Participants included Randy Bowen and Chenjerai Kumanyika, major-label recording artists of See Spot Run and The Spooks, respectively; Armand Petri, a major-label producer; and Ken Culton, musician and assistant professor of sociology at Niagara University. Panelists discussed how pop music and pop culture intersect, and the future of the music industry.

The experts also led discussions addressing the changing music industry and how they cope with it. They described current music as very synthetic, dense and over-produced. The music industry now uses records to advertise live performances and selling their brand to fans. This is the opposite of performers in the past who utilized live performances and music videos.

Cali Swag District’s surprise appearance allowed audience members to hear the group’s point of view of the music industry. Members emphasized the importance of live performances.

“It’s a steady grind in the music industry. If you slow down then your music will slow down, along with your audience,” stated C-Smoove, of Cali Swag District.

In addition, panelists discussed the current rise in music downloads. The decrease in CD sales is a direct cause of sites providing entire discographies to be downloaded for free.

“Music is seen as water by people,” Kumanyika said. “It’s always there, and you can turn it on and off whenever necessary.”

Kumanyika said if people acted together, a switch in power could take place. Music is currently controlled by advertising culture focusing more on profits instead of the meaning of music. He suggested sites like artistshare.com and sellaband.com that give fans a financial stake in their favorite artist(s).

“The topics covered in the panel were appropriate for today and the future of the music industry in relation to the large influence media has upon what we listen to,” said NU student Rachel Osinski. “This was a great panel choice.”
Ben Sweet ’13 flashes a quick smile before handing in a paper as Mike Ferraro ’13 looks on.  
Photo by Sarah Kim

Geoff Redick ’11, finds himself busy in — and out — of the classroom.  
Photo by Sarah Kim

Jeannine Alsous ’13, spends some time studying before the start of class.  
Photo by Sarah Kim
What’s it Like to Go from “On Campus” to “On Air”
Profile on Marissa Bailey and Maryalice Demler

By Tiffany Hyman

Have you ever thought about being a news anchor, sitting in front of the camera and knowing everyone is watching you? Although broadcasting may look easy, it requires much more than just simply reading off scripts. Niagara University graduates Marissa Bailey and Maryalice Demler concur; broadcasting is not a simple career. Both work long hours and demonstrate the true meaning of commitment.

In a sit-down interview, Bailey and Demler of Channel 2 News reflected on how they utilized their time NU, how they decided on a broadcast journalism profession, and what it is like to be a news anchor.

Bailey always “had her heart set on broadcast journalism.” She spent her college career as a Communications Studies major and a Criminal Justice minor. She was a member of Niagara University Student Government Association (NUSGA) and become the Program Director of NUSGA her senior year, a member of Phi Sigma Sigma, and worked periodically for the department newspaper.

Eventually, she went on to the Masters Program at Syracuse University.

Bailey described her influence to go into broadcast as “two-fold.” She disliked sitting behind a desk all day and she loved writing and meeting new people.

I felt like journalism was the best way to do that, but TV was just more fun,” Bailey said. “It’s just more fun because of the visual and you have video and all that.”

One of the classes at NU that demonstrated that visual perspective was TV Production, currently called Video Lab and Production.

Mark Barner, chair of the Communications Dept. said the course “emphasizes the teamwork that is necessary to take a script and turn it into a finished video, whether that is a single-camera piece like a feature film or a multi-camera piece like television news or interview shows.”

Demler, on the other hand, did not major in Communications Studies. In fact, her career plan did not involve the media; her double major was in Political Science and French.

She emphasized the importance of taking a wide variety of courses in college.

“Philosophy and religion are very helpful to understanding social problems,” Demler said.

Bailey and Demler agree there is not a “typical day” in the life of a news anchor. Normally both women work from 3 to 11 p.m. At 3 p.m., the station holds an editorial meeting, where new stories are discussed and each member of the newsroom is assigned a story.

Bailey offered advice to students considering going into broadcast journalism. She explained internships are a good tool “get your foot in the door.” The internship should be something a student really enjoys.

“People need to find something they love to do and do it,” she said.
Creativity for a Cure was organized by Communication Studies major Kaity Augustyniak. Augustyniak and the NU Marketing Association, in which she is president, raised nearly $1,000 to donate to the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. The total was nearly double the group’s goal.

Great job!

Photos by Sarah Kim
Spotlight on Joel Brenden

Recently, Sarah Kim, a senior Communication Studies major, sat down for an online chat with Joel Brenden, a photography instructor at Niagara University. The following is a series of edited excerpts from their discussion. Editors note: The online chat was edited not because of content, but because of space issues in the newsletter.

Sarah: Tell me a little background information about yourself...where you grew up, where you went to school, what did you study...things like that.

Joel: …more recently I was in the Visual Studies graduate program at UB. Visual Studies is the visual art and theory program there. I finished that in 2008. It's an interdisciplinary degree. I worked in drawing, typography and design, and installation-based art. My area of study also had to do with critiquing nostalgia in popular and DIY culture.

Sarah: Wow! That sounds awesome! So with that background knowledge, did you always want to become a professor?

Joel: Haha! It always surprises me to hear I'm thought of as a professor. I work an average of 4 part-time jobs at any given time except summer. But as to your question, for those of us in Arts and Sciences, it's understood that the University system is one of the most reliable supports for new and innovative work. Universities don't just hire people because they're professors. They want the people that are out there leading and shaping the field. It's for this reason that a position as a full-time professor is one of the best situations an artist can have. It's often the one they seek.

Sarah: Alright, with that in mind, what do you want to "lead and shape" for NU students?

Joel: …Creativity, intellect, and initiative are all things that are increasingly thought of as luxury items, or recreational activities, irrelevant to daily life. These are vital things for a fulfilling life and meaningful social life. At NU and everywhere else, I want to promote these through action, which is how I try and model my syllabi. Students forget that the kind of activity they do in college is what they're training to do for a lifetime. Meaning: If I treat college as a time to do repetitive, drone-like activity that gains no recognition and contributes very little, and then when I'm done I eat and hang out, that's pretty much what I can expect from the rest of my adult life. If I use every chance I get in college to initiate, to develop my own ideas, to share, create, engage and experiment without fear of extreme failure, then that's what I can look forward to in the years after. Sarah, which would you choose?

Sarah: I would rather choose to initiate to develop my own ideas.

Joel: Great! me too...

Sarah: I looked at few of your websites, and your work, they are incredible, by the way. I just wanted to know a little bit more about your project and what you are hoping to do with that.

Joel: Communications is an interesting field: communication is the fact of daily life of course, and we're in an environment of and is constantly accelerating and intensifying the pace of it all. From a certain perspective, it's hard to identify what can NOT be considered communication. So it's interesting to see a department like CMS continue to redefine itself, to shape the future of broadcast and other media.

Sarah: Because NU is a small school, how is your interaction with the students, and what advice would you give to students – not just CMS students?

Joel: It's funny, I've never considered how NU's size affects my interactions with students. I use email as best as I can since I'm also not on campus as often as some students might wish. Oh, and I'm always glad when my talented, energetic and interesting students return to me to say hi and keep me updated. A few of my former students have just been accepted into very prestigious grad schools, too!

Sarah: That's awesome!

Joel: Advice for an entire student body of about 4,000? It's just going to be impossibly generic. How about "live healthy, fer crying out loud!" Exercise and nutrition feed sharp minds, keep you popular, all those good things. If you want something more philosophical how about this instead: Decide what you want your life and the world around you to be like and do whatever is in your power and resources to make it that way. If you don't decide, or wait for someone else to make it for you, it just seems like it will always turn out disappointing. Oh, and seek the astonishing instead of the simply amusing.