

SWOSU Receives \$60,000 Grant for Media Convergence Lab

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The Communication & Theatre Department at Southwestern Oklahoma State University recently received a \$60,000 grant to create a Media Convergence Laboratory on the Weatherford campus.

The grant was awarded by the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation.

Professors Dr. Joel Kendall and Dr. Lisa Schroeder wrote the grant with the help of Jim Waites, assistant to the president for institutional advancement.

Media convergence requires professionals to use a variety of communication skills in getting news to the public. Increasingly, journalists are required to employ written, photographic, broadcast and internet skills while performing their jobs. The laboratory will use modern technology to teach students a variety of communication theory and skills, from written word to media production to podcasting.

Funds from the grant will be used to purchase iMac computers, digital video cameras, digital cameras, video editing software, webcasting software and podcasting software.

Through the use of this laboratory, Kendall said the following will be accomplished:

- With 20 new computers and applicable software technology, students will learn media convergence skills.
- With new digital video cameras and a broadcast set in the lab, students will produce broadcast news programs for local cable channels, podcasts and webcasts.
- With new creative software, students will increase the visibility of the university's student news site and improve the content within.
- Through a speaker series, professional journalists will be brought in on a monthly basis to speak specifically about new media technologies.
- With the availability of adequate technology, students will graduate from SWOSU with both traditional and cutting-edge journalistic skills.

The Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation was established in 1982 by Edith Kinney Gaylord for charitable, scientific and educational purposes, including the improvement of the quality of the practice of journalism among various media. This support includes funding for creative projects and research that promotes excellence in journalism and instills and encourages high ethical standards in journalism. Funding is not available to individuals but is available to formal organizations via an application and review process.

The Media Convergence Laboratory is just one of the many projects of the newly-created Communication & Theatre Department. A new Black Box theatre is being constructed on campus, and the department is one of the campus leaders in service learning projects.

For more information on the Communication & Theatre Department, contact chair Dr. Robin Jones at 580.774-3080.