

Andrews Presents, Wins Awards at SAC

Annual international communicators event sees large Andrews presence

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Andrews representatives (students, staff, faculty) enjoyed a tour of Washington D.C.'s Newseum as part of this year's Society of Adventist Communicators conference. (Photo by Francis Tuffour)

By: Becky St. Clair

The 26th annual Society of Adventist Communicators conference took place in Washington, D.C., October 14–18, 2015. Andrews University was well represented with four students presenting (and several more attending) and two professors in attendance, one of which also presented. In total, nearly 200 Adventist communicators from around the world attended the event.

“My professors encouraged us all to come to this conference,” says Felicia Tonga, graduate communication student. “I’ve always found it refreshing to be reminded of our purpose as communicators and to just mingle with like-minded people.”

Joel Thompson Jr., a 2015 graduate of the Department of Communication graduate program, presented his thesis on being a professional playwright and director.

“Like all art forms, people tend to neglect the fact that there is a business component to the work,” says Thompson. “In a world such as we have today where everyone is glued to their

technology, theatre is an opportunity to connect with people—to live in the moment with them. It’s one of the most intimate art forms still existing.”

2015 alumna of the Department of Communication graduate program Kryzia Abacan presented her thesis: a public relations strategic plan for the student association at Burman University (Lacombe, Alberta, Canada).

“Student leaders really need a public relations plan,” she explained. “Their success depends on it.”

And how did it feel to present to a room full of communication professionals?

“It was definitely adrenaline-pumping at first,” says Abacan. “When I finished though, it was helpful to hear comments and suggestions from people who have been doing this kind of thing much longer than I have.”

Alex Thomas, senior communication major, was glad he came to SAC.

“Video production is my passion,” he says. “After this conference, I’m definitely going to change some things about the style in which I make videos. I learned a lot and walked away inspired to do even greater things with my passion and skills.”

Thomas hopes to be involved in sports communication following graduation next spring.

Before becoming a fulltime student, Francis Tuffour was a pastor and communication director in Ghana, West Africa. He appreciated the opportunity to attend SAC this year and felt like he learned a lot that can be applied to any future role he plays.

“From the technologies we’ve talked about to how we can develop television programs for the secular audience, I’m going to take a lot home with me,” he says. “I’m so glad I came because I was able to network and gain additional knowledge to develop new skills from veterans in media communication.”

Students weren’t the only ones glad they came; Rachel Williams-Smith, chair of the Andrews University Department of Communication, attended SAC in Jacksonville, Florida in 2014, and was determined to share the experience with others in the future.

“Coming here is an opportunity to see what the landscape looks like for communicators within the Adventist church,” says Williams-Smith. “I think it’s important that I know that so I can share it with my students. If I want to be able to develop and shape a program and help young people go out there and make a difference, I need to know what that looks like and this is an excellent place to do that on an annual basis.”

Williams-Smith was also able to present her own research during the conference.

Andrews University was also well represented during the Awards Banquet on Saturday evening, the final event of the conference.

Envision magazine, a student-produced annual publication out of the Department of Communication, came home with three awards: Best Design Project, Best Feature Writing (“Finding Love When Least Expected” by Kryzia Abacan) and Honorable Mention for Best Feature Writing (“Trending Millennials” by Emmanuel Leonard).

Three members of the team in the Division of Integrated Marketing & Communication brought in an award for Best Project Design: Honorable Mention for the Prospective Student Brochure. Team members were Jason Webster, former enrollment strategic marketing manager; Justin Jeffery, art director; and Becky St. Clair, media communications manager.

In addition, Melodie Roschman, a 2015 English and journalism major and J.N. Andrews Honors Scholar graduate, was awarded the 2015 Student Award, designed to recognize students who have demonstrated excellence not only in the classroom but on the job as well.

“I’m very pleased and proud to see Andrews represented in such a big way,” says Williams-Smith. “I’m looking forward to seeing what our students, staff and faculty accomplish in the coming year.”

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