Carol Marin, co-director of DePaul's Center for Journalism Integrity & Excellence, talks about the future of journalism. See page 3.
Education in a Time of Pandemic

It is hard to believe we have been dealing with the consequences of COVID-19 for more than a year. It has not been easy. Faculty and staff have worked tirelessly to maintain the high-quality education for which we are known while in a remote format, many while taking care of their own loved ones.

We have seen our students struggle with unanticipated financial and emotional stress. And we have missed both the daily in-person moments that help connect us and the larger events that bring us together in celebration.

While the challenges have been many, I can’t help but think this is also an incredible time to be doing the work that we do. We are all experiencing a historic moment, and the lessons our students learn will position them to emerge as adaptable leaders, practitioners, journalists and storytellers just when the world needs them most.

I continue to be inspired by the care and commitment shown by College of Communication faculty and staff and the resiliency of our students.

In this issue, we share a few of the interesting ways faculty members keep students engaged, as well as their insights on teaching and research while remote. News legend Carol Marin reflects on the industry, how the college prepares future journalists, and what’s next for the Center for Journalism Integrity & Excellence.

Media and cinema studies scholar Blair Davis’ research describes the influence and impact Black artist Alvin Hollingsworth had on the comic book medium and social change. Finally, author and educator Raechel Anne Jolie (CMN ’07, MA ’09) shares how she made the connection between studying communication, civic engagement and her career.

Soon we’ll be heading into summer and preparing for a new academic year. We remain hopeful that this next year will bring us back together in person, but also changed by the lessons we have learned during the pandemic. I hope you and your loved ones remain healthy and safe.

Alexandra Murphy
Acting Dean

Stay connected to the College of Communication through our online communities.

Visit alumni.depaul.edu to connect with the alumni network today.

In the cover: Carol Marin, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and journalism students (DePaul University/Jeff Carrion)
For more than 40 years, Chicagoans have relied on Carol Marin to give them the news—straight and unbiased. In December, still at the top of her game as a reporter and news analyst on NBC-owned station WMAQ-TV and PBS station WTTW-TV, Marin retired from broadcast journalism. The book, however, is hardly closed on Marin’s contributions to the vocation she loves. As a faculty member and co-director of DePaul’s Center for Journalism Integrity & Excellence (CJIE) with her long-time producer Don Moseley, Marin continues to prepare young journalists to succeed. We spoke with her about journalism and CJIE.

What changes have you witnessed over the course of your career, and what do they mean for emerging journalists?

The business changes radically every decade. When I started, we used film and then tape. We went from satellite to digital. The basic rule book of journalism—knowing how to write, get your facts right, do your due diligence—is one thing, but now journalists must adapt to the rapid-fire changes in technology. These days, whether you are a reporter or a producer, you have to understand the various and complicated delivery systems for news.

How do you help people become more news literate?

You have to start in grade school. You have to start teaching news literacy and civic literacy, something that’s really fallen to the wayside due to budget cuts. I think we need to reinforce—that’s not an ethical question—restart, really—an approach that fuses civic literacy and news literacy so that from the time kids are reading, they’re understanding the distinctions, that MSNBC’s newscasts are not NBC News’ newscasts or that there really is a news part of Fox News, not just commentary.

How do you prepare DePaul students to be working journalists?

We try to give to them genuine experience in complicated reporting that will give them a production credit on their resume before they graduate. We also explore what is and is not an ethical question. For instance, our last class worked as production assistants on the debate that I moderated at NBC with U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin and his four opponents. They did research, and we worked on formulating questions that were clear and precise. They did the rehearsals with us on five dedicated Zoom streams, which was a monumental task to try to make it work.

What future plans might you have for the center?

COVID-19 has put the brakes on some of the in-person activities we engage in. But we have one CJIE fellow and hope to add more, so we’re bringing scholars into the center. Right now, we want to do what we currently have done in a more user-friendly form, but always with an eye toward how we can better serve not just our students, but also the whole DePaul community.

“A Talk with a Journalism Legend”

Carol Marin, who has retired from the newsroom, devotes her time to DePaul’s Center for Journalism Integrity & Excellence.

How do you help people become more news literate?

You have to start in grade school. You have to start teaching news literacy and civic literacy, something that’s really fallen to the wayside due to budget cuts. I think we need to reinforce—restart, really—an approach that fuses civic literacy and news literacy so that from the time kids are reading, they’re understanding the distinctions, that MSNBC’s newscasts are not NBC News’ newscasts or that there really is a news part of Fox News, not just commentary.

How do you prepare DePaul students to be working journalists?

We try to give to them genuine experience in complicated reporting that will give them a production credit on their resume before they graduate. We also explore what is and is not an ethical question. For instance, our last class worked as production assistants on the debate that I moderated at NBC with U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin and his four opponents. They did research, and we worked on formulating questions that were clear and precise. They did the rehearsals with us on five dedicated Zoom streams, which was a monumental task to try to make it work.

What future plans might you have for the center?

COVID-19 has put the brakes on some of the in-person activities we engage in. But we have one CJIE fellow and hope to add more, so we’re bringing scholars into the center. Right now, we want to do what we currently have done in a more user-friendly form, but always with an eye toward how we can better serve not just our students, but also the whole DePaul community.

“I only want positive stories,” I ask, “Is a rainy forecast a positive or a negative story?” It may be a positive story if you’re a farmer, but a negative story if you’re a bride with an outdoor wedding. I think we oversimplify so much, even in our discussions of news, that we forget the nuances of our own lives.

“These days, whether you are a reporter or a producer, you have to understand the various and complicated delivery systems for news.”

–Carol Marin
The Virtual College of Communication

Faculty and students make remote learning work for them

The DePaul community had to pivot quickly when the coronavirus pandemic forced the university to move to remote instruction in 2020. The College of Communication got creative and even found some unexpected benefits to learning online.

Unexpected classroom guests
Instructor Adriane Stoner was scheduled to teach a special-topics class in relational communication when she had to think fast about what would make a virtual environment work. Her idea—teaching about the relational communication implications of “The Bachelor” franchise—was quickly approved.

A combination of industry shutdowns and the availability of video conferencing made guest appearances by franchise participants easier to arrange. Enthusiastic students used social media to snag show host Chris Harrison, who discussed the history of the 20-year franchise, and Tayshia Adams, the second Black woman to be The Bachelorette.

“Juan Pablo Galavis, who was The Bachelor several years ago and is a polarizing figure within the franchise, talked to us for an hour and a half. He is notorious for not talking to the media and not doing interviews. For the people we talked to, [the show] had a huge impact on their lives. I think they were excited to engage with us knowing that we have been taking a lot of time to think about the stuff pretty seriously,” says Stoner.

ME Lab
Activities at the Media Engagement Research Lab (ME Lab) also continued online. Assistant Professor and ME Lab co-director Juan Mundel says, “Although we were not able to use some of the equipment, we still continued to have biweekly Zoom meetings with the students and kept the studies going.” Rather than focusing on data collection using lab equipment like eye-tracking devices, Mundel and his colleagues trained students to collect data via interviews and electronic surveys.

VARC Lab
Associate Professor Bree McEwan, co-director of the Virtual and Augmented Reality Communication (VARC) Lab along with Professor Paul Booth, wondered how to teach her Discover Chicago courses when the city was off-limits. Using funds from DePaul’s Academic Growth and Innovation Grant Program, the VARC Lab purchased virtual reality (VR) headsets for every student in her class. After the headsets were distributed, the class was able to meet four times within the virtual classroom. “HTC, the company that designed the classroom we were using, did a guest lecture for my students about the classroom,” McEwan says.

Some lessons learned
Engagement online has been a challenge to all educators, but Mundel learned something about student motivation from the pandemic experience. “Students who work in the lab are volunteers, so they’re not getting credited or paid. We didn’t think they were going to want to free up some time to continue meeting. However, when students are passionate, they will make time for the things that matter to them. We have been able to continue teaching students something valuable.”

McEwan sees research opportunities stemming from this necessary pandemic accommodation. “I teach a lot of interpersonal classes, and I’m really interested in how social interaction happens within VR spaces. That’s one potential pedagogical framework for the future.”

From new webinars, such as “Examining the Sociocultural Impact of ‘The Bachelor’ Franchise,” to virtual reality classes conducted through the VARC Lab and activity in the ME Lab, the college helps its students succeed through the pandemic.
Among the attractions DePaul holds for prospective students is its emphasis on experiential learning. With campuses located in one of the most vibrant cities in the world and a well-developed network of university-community partnerships and alumni mentors, DePaul has been able to help students learn through experience even during the pandemic.

Not that the task hasn’t been a challenge. Michael Elias, director of internships for the College of Communication, says, “Shelter-in-place in Illinois started at the tail end of our winter quarter, so we already had a bunch of students who had secured a spring internship. Almost all of those companies agreed to work with students on a remote basis, but we had to figure it out, especially for companies that hadn’t operated remotely. We saw a dip in the summer quarter, but by midsummer, we noticed an increase in remote internship opportunities being promoted to our college and DePaul’s Career Center.”

Among the companies with which the college has worked are Discovery Networks, BerlinRosen, Silverline Communications, Fusion92, SEO Design Chicago and Milwaukee Magazine. Elias works to ensure that all participating companies provide a meaningful learning experience for students. “I help some employers with crafting internship descriptions, particularly if it’s the first time they want to offer an opportunity but are not sure where to start,” he says. “I want to make sure it’s an opportunity where the student can still get the mentoring that has been the crux of these programs. That can be challenging in a remote capacity or with a supervisor who is maybe very hands-off; they may not be aware that new interns require consistent communication to understand expectations and succeed.”

Several academic courses geared exclusively for communication majors and minors are offered each quarter to help students make the most of their internship experience. First-time interns learn how to engage with their supervisor appropriately and effectively, understand workplace ethics and manage priorities. Students also put together a final portfolio they can use to secure internships and employment. Experienced student interns can take a topics-based course that offers strategies for growth and development.

Joey Pollizze, a junior concentrating in sports journalism, credits the internship class with helping him get a leg up on his career. “It was really helpful. The portfolio I built with the feedback from my teacher was especially helpful.” He investigated internship opportunities, interviewed with online sports and esports publisher Game Haus, and was hired as a writing intern. “I was responsible for writing articles about the Dallas Cowboys and the Chicago Cubs,” he says. “I would talk to my supervisor once a week to go over things like how to improve my writing, and then I would talk to my editor on certain things I needed to do with my stories. I feel that I’ve really progressed as a writer.

“If I hadn’t had the internship, I feel like I would be behind in my career because it helped me realize that if I just put my mind to it, I can accomplish anything.”
“Ecstatic. Shocked.” That’s how Raechel Anne Jolie (CMN ’07, MA ’09) described her reaction to learning that her memoir, “Rust Belt Femme” had made NPR’s list of the best biographies and memoirs of 2020. “The book was put out from a small press that doesn’t often get attention from big media outlets like that. So I was really honored and excited,” she says. Belt Publishing, which published the book, describes it as a story of how “rural Ohio poverty and alternative ’90s culture made Raechel into who she is today: a queer femme with PTSD and a deep love of the Midwest.”

Jolie recalls that despite recounting some of the toughest times of her life, writing the book was a “mostly enjoyable process. Creative writing has always been my passion, so it was really enjoyable to get back to a style of writing that wasn’t strictly academic.”

Jolie is referring to the writing she does as part of her “day job.” Since earning her PhD in communication studies, Jolie has pursued an academic career that has taken her to teaching positions at Merrimack College, Tufts University and Normandale Community College. She is now the Making Media, Making Change program director with the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA), a nonprofit that offers community-based, experiential-learning classes with a social justice bent to students across Minnesota.

This unorthodox position in higher education suits Jolie’s preference for a varied and flexible career—a preference she discovered at DePaul. She recalls her internship at a nonprofit during her senior year: “It was a great place, but I realized that sort of 9-to-5 life really was not for me.”

Her faculty mentors in the College of Communication, Dan Makagon and Barb Willard, helped her apply very late for the college’s master’s program. Once in the program, Jolie became excited about the possibilities of a career in academia. “I remember very vividly thinking that when you’re a professor, you get to kind of do social justice work through teaching, but you also get to write,” she says. “Teaching and writing have always been the focus since about my senior year of college.”

Jolie feels that her political and activist education was nurtured alongside her more traditional academic education at DePaul. Professors Makagon and Willard, she says, “opened my eyes that communication studies could be this space where I could think about social change through a lens that just felt more flexible and more comfortable than some of the other disciplines that I had been taking classes in.”

DePaul also nurtured her social and civic life in ways that still resonate with her today. She was involved in a student activist group called DePaul Students Against the War. “I still have lifelong friends that I’m very close to from that group,” she comments. She also was interested in Chicago’s vibrant punk rock scene and attended concerts at the Fireside Bowl, a mecca for punk rock enthusiasts. “Student life at DePaul really stands out,” she says. “I really loved my time there.”
Over the summer of 2020, in the wake of global protests demanding social justice following the death of George Floyd, I began writing an essay about artist Alvin Hollingsworth (1928–2000) for the forthcoming book collection “Desegregating Comics,” edited by Qiana Whitted, a professor of English and African American Studies at the University of South Carolina.

When I was asked to contribute to this new project in 2019, few could have predicted the global impact that the Black Lives Matter movement would soon have. The need to study Black creators has always been of pressing concern to media studies scholars, and Hollingsworth’s contributions to the comic book industry form a vital area for research.

Hollingsworth was a major artist of the Golden Age of comics of the 1930s through 1950s whose work remains mostly unknown to date. He worked in comics in the 1940s and 1950s before going on to become a painter and educator. His career was especially notable for the shift he made from making comic books to using art for civic engagement.

In 1963, Hollingsworth was part of the art collective Spiral, one of the first groups of Black artists in the United States to attract wide attention since the Harlem Renaissance movement of the 1920s. By the 1970s, he was teaching art as a professor at the City University of New York. In moving from drawing horror, crime and jungle comics, as well as love stories targeted specifically to Black readers in the 1950 series “Negro Romance,” to creating paintings with political intent, Hollingsworth’s career is a vital example of how the comics medium can serve as a training ground for an artist seeking to do more than just entertain. Indeed, many of Hollingsworth’s later stylistic traits as an avant-garde painter can be traced back to his early work in comics.

Hollingsworth’s art notably anticipates that of popular artists in later eras of comic book production such as Jae Lee, Mike Mignola and Tim Sale, all of whom eschew traditional approaches to their figures in favor of a more distorted style. Hollingsworth managed to weave his interests in avant-garde art into many of his comic book assignments (especially horror tales). His comics artwork served as an important precursor to both his own fine arts career and many of the stylistic trends made popular by modern artists, proving that an interest in distorted figures, heavy shadows, scratchy lines and uneven textures is not a recent development in the comics medium.

Several of the stories Hollingsworth drew about witch doctors and jungle tribes were full of racist tropes concocted by their white writers. Later in his career, he was able to reclaim how he drew Black bodies by updating his use of figurative expressionist techniques within the new artistic media of his paintings, sketches and multimedia projects. His work provides a rare example of a Black comics artist who was able to evolve his style toward more overtly sociopolitical ends for new audiences.
Our students work hard to overcome obstacles to their education and thrive...but they cannot do it alone.

**Now We Must: The Campaign for DePaul’s Students** provides resources that support students’ most urgent needs:

- Scholarships and Financial Aid
- Emergency Assistance
- Technology Access
- Career-Readiness and Experience
- Mental Health and Wellness

Your generosity will help DePaul students remain focused and on track to finish their degrees.

**MAKE A GIFT TODAY.**

For more information or to make a gift, visit give.depaul.edu/NowWeMust.