

# University hosts conference on religion, media

By Travis Langdon  
Old Gold and Black Reporter

How should the media cover religion in America's pluralistic society, and how should their coverage reflect religion's role in people's lives? These topics, among others, were discussed in a Feb. 7 conference held in Carswell Hall.

The religion and media conference was sponsored by the university in collaboration with the Poynter Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing training to journalists aspiring for excellence.

"We're very happy with the way the conference turned out. Last spring term, during the Year of Religion planning process, a committee started discussing ideas about events to be incorporated into the year. One of the things we were interested in was how the media portrays religion," said Kevin Cox, the director of media relations.

"From that point, it was just a matter of getting in touch with the Poynter Institute, and they were very interested from the start," Cox said. "It was a long process, but it all ended up running very smoothly."

Attending the event were representatives of the Poynter Institute, faculty members from the university, religion professors from other colleges and radio, print and broadcast journalists from around the country.

Throughout the day, attendees listened to speakers discuss their experiences in trying to provide their audiences with an adequate portrayal of the numerous faiths present in America and traded insight as to how that process might be improved in the future.

The conference culminated with a panel discussion titled "Faith in Focus? The Media and America's Search for its Soul," moderated by Scott Libin of the Poynter Institute.

On the panel were Bob Abernethy, the

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executive editor and host of *Religion Ethics & News Weekly*; Sharon Greene, the senior cultural affairs editor for National Public Radio; and Cecile Holmes, the religion editor for *The Houston Chronicle*.

Each panelist represented a different genre of journalism but shared the common goal of giving religion an amount of media coverage proportionate to the role it plays in the lives of its practitioners.

A consensus was reached that the expense of airtime and print space make it difficult to cover religion without what journalists refer to as a "peg." Specifically, this means featuring stories about children of Jewish-Christian marriages only around the holiday season, or specials about witchcraft on Halloween.

The panelists agreed that such coverage was offensive to viewers and that it trivialized religion and the important role it plays in people's lives. The panelists also addressed ways to overcome these obstacles in reporting.

"Religion challenges the convention of journalism, because it makes reporters present opposing viewpoints in a manner in which the personal is important. It forces us to present someone without characterizing them, or boxing them in, or telling people



Noel Fox/Old Gold and Black

Cecile Holmes, Sharon Greene and Bob Abernethy sit on the panel of "Faith in Focus? The Media and America's search for its Soul," the last event in a recent religion and media conference held at the university.

what they should think about what this person believes. That is not sound, strong journalism," Greene said.

During the discussion, the panelists presented their own work and explained how it applied to the issues at hand.

A topic that kept resurfacing was how to present American Muslims in journalism, in light of the misconceptions that many Americans have that relate the group to the terrorism they often see on the news or the doctrines of The Nation of Islam.

Greene presented a piece that she did on National Public Radio called "We are Muslims and we are Americans." She said she

hoped it would alleviate some of the existing prejudices by portraying the human side of one Muslim, rather than generalizing an entire group of people.

"We received a lot of feedback on this piece, and some of it was from people who thought we were being unjustly positive. That let us know we were on the right track," Greene said.

The panelists also discussed Americans who are accepting of other faiths but do not know how to appreciate them without losing sight of their own. The panelists suggested that by showing the public the sincerity involved in the services of various

religions, Americans might come to the conclusion that perhaps all people pray to the same God, but in many different forms.

"The increasing religious diversity in this country means that we have to work harder to find interesting stories about traditional faiths. But what we've found is that people like to hear about other religions. So much of the feedback that we receive comes in the form of 'I never knew that about such-and-such religion.' We grow up so isolated from our neighbors spiritually that we tend to know everything about each other except how we worship," Abernethy said.

## Administrators teach too

*Hearn, Zick, Anderson instruct in areas of expertise*

By David Cunningham  
Old Gold and Black Reporter

To many, the university may look as if it is composed of three groups: students, faculty, and the administration.

However, a closer look shows some administrators taking the role of professors too.

Many of the senior administrators at the university also take the time to teach. Although this is rarely more than one course a semester, it is something which they do in addition to all of their other responsibilities.

According to President Thomas K. Hearn Jr., last fall the university's president, the provost, and the dean of the college all taught classes, and he said that it is probably rare that a university has that kind of administrative involvement in teaching.

"I think it is very useful for the lines between faculty and administration to be blurred," Hearn said. "In a larger sense we are all here to serve the purpose of higher education."

Hearn came up through the faculty at another university and holds a position in the philosophy department at the university. He was a full-time professor for 15 years of his career and his teaching load became reduced as he entered the administration.

Hearn said administrators are encouraged to take the time to teach in their area of expertise. "We would like as much as possible for people who work in the administration to participate in the instructional process," Hearn said.

Ken Zick, the vice president for student life and instructional resources, usually teaches a course each semester.

Last fall he taught the History of the English Common Law for the history department and this spring he is teaching Freedom of Speech for the communications department.

"I enjoy (teaching) tremendously," Zick said. "It's a liberating experience."

Zick said that teaching is an especially good opportunity for him since his job involves working with

students. "I find that I have a need to come in closer contact with undergraduates because that is the nature of my work," said Zick.

"I look at (teaching) as the dessert of my day," Zick said.

John Anderson, the vice president for finance and administration, also teaches a class every semester. In the fall he co-teaches a research course in the counseling program with Pamela Karr, the program manager.

In the spring he co-teaches group counseling with Marianne Schubert, the director of the university counseling center. "Teaching takes some time but I think it's really important to touch that which we are about, which is working with students," Anderson said.

"In teaching, one discovers how really good the students here are. It's really a nice thing to find out," he said.

Anderson said that he really enjoys teaching even though it takes more of his time.

"It's simply a pleasure in my life," he said.



Hearn



Zick



Anderson



Noel Fox/Old Gold and Black

### Happy days

Senior Karen Frekko and sophomore Margaret Turner share a laugh on the Quad. The recent mild weather has allowed more students to spend more time outdoors.

## Babcock team wins second in marketing case competition

By Will Johnson  
Contributing Reporter

The Babcock Graduate School of Management's case competition team took second place in the eighth annual Southeastern MBA Marketing Case Competition Jan. 29-31 at the university. Graduate students from leading business schools competed for honors in the marketing competition.

Teams from six schools competed in this student-initiated event. First place went to the team from the University of North Carolina, and third place was claimed by the team from the University of Florida.

Also competing with the university team were five-member teams from Tulane University, the University of Tennessee, Vanderbilt University.

The teams arrived in Winston-Salem by the evening of Jan. 29 and received information about the case along with the contest rules and judging criteria the following day. The case was created to resemble a complex business issue that a corporation or a small firm would likely face in the real business world. This year's case was written by Charles Kennedy, a professor of politics.

The judges for the event were members of the inter-

national business community and faculty of business schools.

The university team has won the competition twice — in 1993 and again in 1997. The 1998 team prepared hard for the event by going through many practice sessions.

This year's team included Angela Sigmon, Blake Reynolds, Clark Ellis, James Austin, Samantha Lima-Campos, Manoj Panjwani and Mark Merner. Ram Baliga, a professor at Babcock School of Management, coached the team. Members of the Babcock School of Management were pleased with the performance of the team and with the overall success of the event. Patricia Divine, the director of the Office of External Relations and Publications, said she is confident in the benefits of the program and its future.

"This event provides Babcock the opportunity to network with other top MBA programs and their students. Participants are given the opportunity to showcase their marketing skills in a stimulating, competitive exercise," Divine said. "Additionally, hosting the competition on our campus provides visibility for Wake Forest and Babcock students."

The case competition began in 1991 and is organized by the Babcock Marketing Association.

## Catholic Community gives back to campus and local community

By Laura O'Connor  
Contributing Reporter

At a university where Catholics outnumber all other denominations, it is not surprising that the Catholic Community is one of the largest religious groups on campus, with over 250 active members. The community was granted a lounge in Davis House and is one of only two religious groups on campus that has its own lounge.

Within the community are eight committees. "We are in charge of informing members of upcoming events by fliers, e-mails, and bulletins which are distributed at mass," said freshman Phil Schmidt, the co-chairman of the communications committee. "I enjoy being involved with the community. I would feel like I was missing out on something if I was not a part of the Catholic Community. They are a great group of people."

Other committees include the Spiritual Life committee, the Lounge Committee and the Service Committee.

"The Service Committee volunteers more than three times a week," sophomore Amanda Epstein said. "They work includes helping out at Kimberly Park. They are also working on having Valentine's

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Amanda Epstein  
Sophomore

Day at a nursing home," she continued.

Among the many different activities that the community sponsors are monthly community dinners, Living in Faith Experience and masses.

LIFE is a spiritually centered program. "It is a Bible study that also discusses some controversial issues," Epstein said.

Along with masses every Sunday and daily masses, the Catholic Community plans to hold special masses and after-mass activities for the Passion. The Promenade Passion Play will debut on Palm Sunday, April 5. It will continue to run April 6-8.

"The Catholic Community is dedicated to fostering community between every aspect of campus life focusing on Catholicism," Epstein said. "It is a very caring, yet individual, community that centers around and involves the community."