

# MME Record

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Winter

Number 56

## Report from Midwinter Meeting: AEJMC planners continue to rethink mission, organization

By *Cindy Price*  
*Division Head*

Imagine there's no divisions. It's easy if you try.

I know that's a bad take on John Lennon's classic song, but as AEJMC is examining its future, the Strategic Planning Committee

is considering eliminating or reorganizing divisions so they wouldn't be divided by medium, but by topic area.



That is one of several subjects that was discussed at the Winter Meeting in St. Louis in December. For about 11 hours, representatives of each of the divisions, each subcommittee, such as research, teaching and professional freedom and responsibility, and current and former AEJMC presidents talked about where we want AEJMC to be in five years.

### Special Research Issue

#### "Setting Agendas and Priorities" Page 3

One of the first considerations is that of a name change. Those for a change said that the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication is too long. Even the acronym, AEJMC, doesn't really ring in people's ears. Other people said that different parts of the name are no longer appropriate, such as mass communication or journalism.

Those against the change say that the name has been around for quite a while and has a strong association for those who know it.

Another consideration is the way the group is organized. As it now stands, the members only meet once a year and the officers meet an additional time in December. Therefore, very few policies can be set at the executive level because voting only takes place twice a year. So AEJMC is an organization that is run primarily by its executive director. Some people mentioned that in order to give the group more agenda-setting

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### Focus on Research

## *Defining an agenda, finding the time to fulfill it*

*Editor's Note:*

*The cliché of publish or perish has never been more true than today. With fewer and fewer tenure track positions being filled across the United States, academics are under pressure to maintain a steady stream of published work and contributions to the academy while teaching and serving on com-*

*mittees and professional associations.*

*With this imperative in mind, some members of the Media Management and Economics division were asked how they maintain their research schedules and their lives at the same time.*

*Their suggestions and tips start on Page 3*

### Dates to Remember

**2008 AEJMC Convention**  
Chicago  
August 6 - 9  
Downtown Marriott

## Midwinter planning meeting focuses on big issues

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authority about topics that are important to the international membership, the president needs to have more power to make statements or other executive decisions.

As I said in the opening paragraph, another consideration is elimi-

### *Judges needed for paper reviews*

The MME Division needs judges to review papers for the AEJMC annual convention.

Papers for review will be available electronically through All Academic, a secure website, after the submission deadline April 1, 2008.

Judges will have a choice of downloading papers for review, or reading them on the website. Judges will submit reviews to the website using forms that contain both standardized criteria and room for narrative critiques. The paper chair will provide detailed instructions on how to use the website.

The number of papers will depend on the number of submissions and the number of judges. Judges generally will review three or four papers per judge, according to Gracie Lawson-Borders, the 2008 paper chair.

A point system is used to select the papers. Judges are also urged to write critiques because these are especially helpful to the authors. You will have approximately three weeks to read and review the papers.

MME policy states people who submit papers cannot serve as judges for the division. If you are not sure you will be submitting a paper, please consider volunteering as a judge now (we can always remove your name later, if you decide to submit a paper). Of course, judges for the MME division can submit papers to other divisions.

To volunteer, send an e-mail to Gracie at: glawsonb@uwyo.edu .

nating or reorganizing divisions. The thought is that the medium is becoming less important, but topic areas are crossing lines of media. Therefore, since media management and economics relate to all media, it is unclear how a reorganization would potentially affect our group.

Another discussion topic is our role as educators in this changing media landscape. What ethical considerations do we have in training people as newspaper, radio or television journalists if those fields are in decline? How do we train managers to adapt to technology? What kind of training do we need ourselves to prepare us for changing times? How does research fit into this?

Other topics that were discussed included moving the headquarters from South Carolina to Washington, D.C., fundraising, public relations, and diversity.

### Call for papers for Chicago convention

The Media Management & Economics Division invites original research paper submissions to be considered for presentation at the 2008 AEJMC convention in Chicago, August 6-9.

Researchers interested in any aspect of media management or media economics are encouraged to submit papers. The division welcomes the use of diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to relevant topics. Papers presented at the Midwinter Conference and then revised are also welcome.

Faculty and student papers compete on an equal footing. The division gives named awards to recognize the top three submissions from faculty, and the top three from graduate students (faculty members cannot be included on student competition papers). Top graduate papers also receive monetary awards to help offset the cost of attending the convention.

In addition to the overall AEJMC future, President Charles Self asked each division to come up with a report about where we foresee our divisions being in five years. I appreciate the feedback you have already given me about this, but we will also be having a lunch meeting during the convention to discuss the topic. The meeting will be held at the Chicago Tribune Building and will host top names in media management. I look forward to seeing you there.

If you have any questions or comments about the topics that were discussed in this article, please contact me at cprice@uwyo.edu.

Because of all of the changes that are under consideration, I hope that you also take the time to go to the AEJMC Business Meeting at the convention in Chicago.

Examples of relevant topics in media management and economics are: analysis of economic or management questions affecting media firms; historical discussions of interesting and important developments in the field; policy issues from a legal, regulatory or economic perspective; technology and its effects on management or economics; political economy; effects of changes in the environment where media firms operate; international and cross-cultural studies; the sociology and culture of media organizations; or teaching media management and economics.

Paper submissions should be a maximum of 25 pages.

For questions about submissions, contact Gracie Lawson-Borders, University of Wyoming, by e-mailing glawsonb@uwyo.edu. Lawson-Borders can also be reached by telephone at (307) 766-2482.

## The Research Issue

### Finding the balance between scholarship and family

**By Louisa Ha**  
**Bowling Green State University**

At the last AEJMC Conference in Washington DC, I organized a joint research panel of MME and the Commission on the Status of Women in which five women scholars shared their experiences and tips on maintaining research productivity while balancing family needs. Unlike panels that lament on how women are being unfairly treated in the academe, the panel offered practical tips on how to maintain research productivity while balancing family needs. Many of the tips apply to male scholars who take care of their families as well.

The idea of the panel came from my feelings that many in the academe do not treat women faculty as serious scholars and the reason for such perception is that there are not many productive research scholars who are women. One cause of such perception and the major challenge to women scholars is that they have to balance family needs while maintaining research productivity, unlike many of their male counterparts who are not expected to take a key role in taking care of family members. The situation is particularly unfavorable to those who are the sandwich generation that have to take care of both the elderly parents and younger children. For example, Tamara Baldwin, moderator of the panel and a Professor at Southeast Missouri State University, needed to take care of her aging parents.

All panelists offered useful tips to the audience. Laurie Thomas Lee, professor, University of Nebraska,

emphasized the importance of outsourcing household chores to allow quality time with children. Instead of arguing about who is going to do the chore, she suggested hiring someone to do the work to take the pressure off yourself. Carolyn Lin, a long-time professor now at the University of Connecticut, recalled how she trained her children as early readers so that they can be independent and engaged in reading activities rather than sticking to their parents. She also suggested good use of the time waiting during children's extra-curricular activities by bringing homework to grade and articles to read instead of using other precious time to do it.

Berrin A. Beasley, associate professor, University of North Florida in Jacksonville, is the mother of an active 4-year-old boy and commutes 10 hours round trip at least once a month to Panama City, Fla., to assist with the care of her 87-year-old grandmother. She suggested faculty to save grading time by using in-class peer review grading and avoid unnecessary service duties.

As a professor at Bowling

Green with two young children, I told the audience not to be a lone fighter. Each of us should seek the support of our spouse in handling family responsibilities and sharing your vision to be a scholar. You must be committed to your research in order to be productive. Time management is very important and self-discipline is needed to make sure time is not wasted. It is impractical to avoid doing services for the department, but one should be selective in doing the service. Select the service that you excel in so that your performance will be recognized and you can also enjoy the service.

Participation in professional organizations may be limited so that you can focus on research. Preparing a solid research foundation is also important. If you can establish a good research agenda and strong publication record early in your academic career, then it's easier to continue the research after you have children than to start a new research agenda after having children. The chance of getting denials and challenges will be much less when you are up for tenure because your track record speaks for itself.

## Q&As on Setting the Agenda

**By Steve Lacy**  
**Michigan State University**

**Q: How do you define your research agenda? In other words, how do you choose topics to focus on and ones to ignore?**

The process is not that formal, and it reflects a variety of factors. The long-term agenda reflects my

basic interest in media economics, content analysis and the processes that journalists use to collect information. Recently, I have increased my work about Web content. In the short-term, the primary goal is developing ideas with collaborators that can be empirically studied. Some ideas can be examined using existing

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## Lacy: Making choices, commitments

data that are available from organizations that collect industry data, while others require the generation of data through content analysis or survey. Often projects involve both existing data about media institutions and generated data. In other words, I look for research questions that are interesting and can be completed with available resources. Interesting research questions are not difficult to find if a scholar has a strong knowledge of a research area. The more problematic step is finding reliable, valid and generalizable data to answer those questions or finding time and/or funds to support data creation.

**Q: How does research fit into your schedule? Do you set aside time each day or week or focus breaks and summers on it?**

My research schedule has changed during periods of my career. As one's career progresses, the demands for time increase in some areas other than research. The time commitment for teaching varies somewhat, but the time saved from having taught a course many times before can disappear when you teach

a new course. However, any time saved from being a more experienced teacher tends to be taken up by new service, advising, and thesis/dissertation committee commitments. These seemingly small time commitments sum to a significant amount of time during a year.

*“small time commitments sum to a significant amount of time ...” -- Lacy*

As a result, my research schedule has become erratic. Little of the “normal” workweek (9 to 5, Monday through Friday) goes to research. Most of my research time now comes from nights, weekends, breaks and summers. I have always used summers for research for two reasons. First, I enjoy research. Second, I figured that the research productivity from summer research would increase my yearly raises and offset any income from summer teaching. For me, this has been true.

For some communication

scholars, the increased demand for grant activity has added an additional demand on their time. The grants are needed to generate indirect funding and support for graduate students, but they can drain time from producing refereed articles and books. I advise any graduate student entering the job market to think about the role of grants in her or his research agenda and the consequences of the role she or he accepts. I would not argue that grant seeking is always interference for research, but grants do not always result in publications in refereed journals. Young scholars should be aware of this.

When I was younger and had fewer commitments outside of teaching and research, I would set aside time periods of at least four hours specifically for research. Having specific times seemed to help motivate me. I felt I was obligated to use those periods for research because I had set them aside. So, I recommend a somewhat regular schedule during the academic year, even if the time commitment cannot be great.

## Keeping many responsibilities in balance

**By Gracie Lawson-Borders  
University of Wyoming**

**Q: How do you define your research agenda? In other words, how do you choose topics to focus on and ones to ignore?**

My overall interest is in media management and media convergence. After completing my recent book on convergence (2006) I have continued to focus on how organizations will manage change with emerging technologies, e.g. strategies for management and leadership

in a converged environment, training and development, cross-platform distribution, changing multimedia needs. I have broader interests in theory, teaching and application as well as ethics in this age of information technology.

I think staying focused is a matter of prioritizing what I would like to complete as well as keeping ongoing, long-term projects nearby. I also feel collaboration with others is a good way to keep some research areas in sight by working with people who have similar interests.

**Q: How does research fit into your schedule?**

With a joint appointment that includes administrative responsibilities, I find it important to carve out time to work on research. The primary times are usually in the early mornings, e.g. rising at 5 a.m. to get a couple of hours of work completed before starting the day. Also during the week, to use a couple of days to work at home in the morning and come in the afternoon to complete administrative work.

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## Future AEJMC Conference Locations

- **2009: Boston**  
Sheraton Boston  
Aug. 5-8
- **2010: Denver**  
Adam's Mark  
Aug. 4-7
- **2011 St. Louis**  
Renaissance Grand and Suites  
Aug. 10 -13