Let there be light: The move to Marshall begins

By Shawn Patrick Green

Journalism junior

The journalism department’s move to the new Louise Foucar Marshall Building has been rife with setbacks and complications, but action was beginning at last as the Cursor went to press.

Students and faculty in the journalism department had hoped to make the move earlier in the spring semester from the Franklin building to the third floor of the new Marshall building, located on the corner of Park Avenue and Second Street.

The move was delayed primarily because of technology and security concerns, according to Jacqueline Sharkey, journalism department head.

Paul Johnson, senior academic advisor for the department, said the other academic departments that occupied Franklin moved into Marshall during the winter, but none of them had technology needs as complex as those of the journalism department.

Jacqueline Sharkey, the journalism department head, said that a total of 114 students had graduated with journalism majors since last summer, “the largest group in recent memory.”

There are currently more than 600 journalism majors and minors, she said.

The growth is expected to continue into a new era as the department expands its teaching staff and moves into new, more comfortable, spacious and technologically utilitarian quarters in the Louise Foucar Marshall Building, Sharkey said.

The new faculty are: Iris Chyi, an assistant professor nominated by students. Jeanine E. Relly received the Hugh and Jan Hareshon Excellence in Teaching Award, which was given for the first time to an adjunct faculty member nominated by students.

Rolly, a former reporter for the Associated Press and the Arizona Daily Star who is working on a doctorate, will join the department as a full-time faculty member in the fall term.

Students who were recognized at the awards ceremony included three who attained the highest level of academic and professional achievement: Robert A. Purvis won the Sherman R. Miller Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Newsperson of the Year.

Purvis, a former reporter for the Arizona Daily Wildcat, also interned at the Arizona Daily Star. As the Don Bolles Fellow at the state legislature during the spring semester, his work was superb, Professor Susan Knight said. He will intern this summer at the Milwaukee Journal.

The Philip Mangelsdorf Award for Outstanding Senior was given to Jennifer E. Karlman, who maintained a 30-hour workweek as assignments editor at the Tucson CBS station, KOLD-TV, worked part-time at a restaurant, and kept up a stellar grade point average, according to Knight.

Karlman also was the inspiration and the driving force behind the revival of the UA chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, of which she was president.

The B.P. Campbell Award for Outstanding Junior went to Andrea C. Kelly, for her performance during the spring semester as editor-in-chief of the See “Just Desserts,” page 2

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University authorizes hires; new professors arriving for fall

By Shawn Patrick Green

Journalism junior

Two new faculty members have been hired for the fall semester and the journalism department will add five additional professors over the next three years, Jacqueline Sharkey, journalism department head, announced.

The new faculty are: Iris Chyi, an assistant professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Jeanine E. Relly, a 1991 UA journalism graduate who is at work on her doctorate at the School of Public Affairs at Arizona State University.

The faculty additions will eventually lead to reinstatement of both the journalism minor, which was suspended in the fall because of high enrollments, and the journalism graduate-degree program, according to Paul Johnson, the department’s senior academic advisor. The master’s program was suspended five years ago, he said.

Chyi, who received her master’s in media studies from Stanford University and her doctorate in journalism from the University of Texas in 1999, “is going to help develop the interdisciplinary minor in informational technology and society that will be organized by the journalism and communication departments and the School of Information Technology and Library Science,” Sharkey said. Though Chyi is a joint hire with communications, she will be based in the journalism department and spend 51 percent of her time there, Sharkey said.

Chyi’s research involves usage and perception of online and print editions of U.S. and Hong Kong newspapers, Sharkey said.

Relly, who will teach at the UA while completing her doctorate, was hired as an assistant professor of practice, Sharkey said. That classification means such professors have “little or no research requirement, so that they can teach additional classes and focus on curriculum development and service,” he said.

“I am greatly looking forward to teaching in the fall,” Relly said. “These are challenging times in the field, with critical issues such as press freedom, access to information and media consolidation influencing the very nature of journalism itself. The academic environment will be a great place to address these matters, which will impact all of us in the coming years.”
“Elephants of Style” worthy addition to writer’s shelf

By Walt Nett
Adjunct faculty

After reading Bill Walsh’s new look at language, “The Elephants of Style” (McGraw-Hill, March 2004), you might feel tempted to relegate that weathered copy of Strunk and White’s “The Elements of Style” to a used-book store, or a museum devoted to those who taught elementary grammar.

Don’t do it. They belong together on the bookshelf of anyone who cares about the craft of writing and treating language with respect.

Walsh’s volume returns to the basics — the stuff about capitalization, punctuation, numeration, abbreviation, apostrophization and all the other stuff we would have learned if we’d paid attention during Mrs. Torquemada’s class. “The Elephants of Style” is an entertaining and frequently funny read, which certainly can’t be said of many grammar classes or usage manuals, for that matter.

Walsh, copy chief for the national desk at the Washington Post and a 1984 alumnus of the UA journalism department, takes an eye-level approach in his comments, explaining without talking down to the reader. At times he preaches, but he makes many of his points with a mix of sardonic wit, a sprinkle or two of sarcasm, and the occasional leap to the absurd. For example, his section on done-to-death leads and openings includes a lengthy passage that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that resorting to using the “Rodney Dangerfield of” (as in “it’s the Rodney Dangerfield of Europe,” and so on, and on) is a practice that should be long past retire-

The clarity with which Walsh explains rules of language and usage makes this book an ideal buy for a reporter who’s thinking about making the jump to desk work. Sometimes writers may apply the rules well, but if you ask them to explain a rule it’s like asking someone to describe a goatee without stroking his or her chin.

Walsh’s best chapter, on plagiarism, is one that should be studied and discussed in newswrooms everywhere. The message isn’t so much about legalisms and examples, but instead is a question that should challenge every journal-

ist: “Are you a writer or a typist?”

Each chapter opens with a quote that underscores the topic. His chapter on spelling, for example, opens with a quote from the UPI stylebook: “A burn is an ass. A bur-
row is a hole in the ground. As a journalist you are expected to know the difference.”

Walsh uses a sardonic wit and has a good sense of when an absurd demonstration makes his point well.

For example, he pokes a hole in misuse of the word “compromise,” noting that most reporters wrote that fig-

ure skater Tonya Harding and the United States Olympic Committee had reached a compromise before the 1984 Winter Olympics. As the story went, the USOC barred Harding from skating, Harding sued, the USOC backed down and Harding dropped the lawsuit.

If that’s a compromise, Walsh writes, “We need to rethink our coverage of other events: ‘An area man agreed to give his wailer to another man yesterday in a compromise in which the second man agreed to not shoot him.’”

His discussion of capitalizing business names is some-
thing that every business journalist in the country should read and think about.

Walsh argues persuasively that using a business’s logo spelling — all lower case, for example, or all upper case, or with some gimmick such as using an asterisk to replace a character — makes a news story read as if it were the work of some corporate PR type. As he puts it: “You’re a writer, not a logo replicator.”

Admittedly, I suffered a few flashbacks to journalism classes and face-to-face grading sessions that included professorial dicta, rendered in a certain Moses with the Tablets style, such as, “use ‘more than’ for quantities and ‘above or over’ for physical location.”

This made a chapter titled “Lies your English teacher told you” a real pleasure to read (vindication after all these years). But the pleasure was freighted with a litt-

le chagrin as I remembered giving the same rules to reporters and journalism students in the same “carved in granite” imitation in which they were delivered unto me.

But it is a great chapter, and it presses a point that makes this book work:

Language evolves, and while we shouldn’t run out and adopt every weird little nuance that comes down the pike, we should see how usage changes and then go with the flow as needed.

Journalism’s growth makes it 15th largest undergrad major

By Shawn Patrick Green

Enrollment in the journalism department continues to rise, despite the university’s recent budget cuts and a shortage of staff within the department.

Phyllis Johnson, the journalism department’s growth

professor and head, stressed enrollment growth. “We’re the fifth largest among incoming freshmen.”

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Scholarship awards made to 57 students

Fifty-seven students were awarded 14 types of scholarships worth a total of $31,000 during the end-of-year “Just Desserts” celebration on May 5. Jacqueline Sharkey, journalism department head, noted that the scholarships were made possible by “the generosity of our many benefactors.”

The scholarships help support those with the highest need and recognize those who have attained a superior level of scholastic achievement and classroom leadership. Those selected are:

- Edith S. Auslander Scholarship, Monica J. Warren,
- Bernice Cofisich Scholarship, Dana Crudo, Lindsey H. Frazier,
- Emily M. Kraft, Jennifer R. Phillips,
- Dr. C. “Darn Cat” Gordon Scholarship, Shawn Patrick Green,
- Daniel D. McGuire, Marc J. Viscardi,
- Department Scholarship for Journalism Distinction, John Z. deDios, Andrea C. Kelly, Thuba L. Nguyen, Mitra F. Taj,
- Dorothy M. Martin Scholarship, Dean B. Knuth, Kenneth J. Wolverton,
- Hubbard/Milburn Scholarship, Brittany A. Brenner, Sarah S. Stark, Kenneth J. Wolverton,
- Eugene C. Pullum Scholarship and Scripps Howard Scholarship, both to Kenneth J. Wolverton,
- Arizona Daily Star Scholarship in memory of John F. Rawlinson, Aaron D. Mackey, Justin S. McAllister, Tracey C. Rineberg,
- Arizona Daily Star Scholarship in memory of Jacque Villa, Alesha F. Black,
- Lois Whisler Scholarship, Lindsey H. Frazier, Emily M. Kraft,
- Peggy Daum Judge Scholarship, Julianne Hurst,
- Jon Ruby Scholarship, Montgomery M. Matheson, Jacqui M. Pittel,

New international program

Additional faculty bring expertise in regional journalism, language

By Will Seeger

Journalism senior

The journalism department has begun an international journalism program in partnership with the University’s Center for Latin American Studies and Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

In the initial three-year phase, international journalism courses will be offered to graduate students in Latin American Studies and Near Eastern Studies, and to advanced undergraduates in the journalism department.

The first two classes were offered this spring, and involved students traveling to Chile to produce a series of newspaper articles and photographs (see related story below).

The program will provide the foundation for international master’s degrees in journalism and Latin American Studies and in journalism and Near Eastern Studies, said journalism department head Jacqueline Sharkey.

Students in the master’s program will take half of their units in regional and language studies, and half in journalism.

The international journalism program has enabled the department to hire two half-time faculty members with extensive experience in Latin American Studies. They include "far more" student applicants than he could have imagined.

"I personally gave students an oral Spanish test to determine how much they knew. It would do the group no good to go do Latin America and not be able to communicate effectively with the general population," Seeger said.

Seeger selected Chile as the focus of the class because the United States recently signed a trade agreement with the South American country.

"Chile has an enormous wealth of natural resources, and makes for a good trading partner with America. The question is what that means for Arizonans and other Americans," he said.

Weisman, students travel to Chile for examination of trade issues

By Will Seeger

Journalism Professor Alan Weisman and a delegation of UA students traveled to Chile in March to report stories important to Arizona and North American trade as part of a new international journalism program.

Weisman selected nine students, seven of them graduate students associated with the Center for Latin American Studies and two of them undergraduates.

"The purpose is to get the students to research a region, find stories that would interest their audience, go down there and write it," Weisman said.

Weisman began accepting applications in the fall term for the program, which requires good Spanish-language skills and is jointly operated by the journalism department and the Center for Latin American Studies. He said he received "far more" student applicants than he could have imagined.

"Weisman selected Chile as the focus of the class because the United States recently signed a trade agreement with the South American country. The question is what that means for Arizonans and other Americans," he said.

Weisman is the author of several books, including “La Frontera: The United States Border with Mexico,” and has written about the region for the New York Times Magazine, the Los Angeles Times Magazine, Atlantic Monthly, Harper’s and other publications.

"This class is 200 percent better than any other class I’ve taken," said Isabel Sapey de Seda, an international studies senior on the trip, who worked with Poole looking into copper mining, Chile’s largest industry. She said Poole gave her “a great crash course in journalism.”

"Weisman said he also will take students to a Latin American country during the next academic year. Countries on his tentative list include Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Brazil or a nation in Central America. "I want to go to a place where the UA isn’t real strong, unlike Mexico," Weisman said.
Long-awaited move finally under way

The journalism department’s business manager, Cris Ballard, is chairless at her cleared desk after completing her packing. Above, the moving crew begins hauling bookcases from Franklin. Below, all the chairs used by the department were collected in the old Great Hall, cleaned and then wrapped in plastic for the move to the new building.
Settling in begins at the new building

Moving vans back up to the rear, west-facing entrance of the Louise Foucar Marshall Building, above. Below left, a view from the interior of the building as workers begin unloading department materials. Below right, top, is a view over Park Avenue and the main campus from an east-facing window of the department, which is on the third floor. Below right, bottom, department administrative assistant April Thompson stands in a sea of packed boxes.
SPJ members mentor
Amphi High School class

By Cameron Wood

Journalism senior

Steve Hammel stands at the front of the Amphitheater High School classroom with his hand covering his eye and his head shaking in exasperation.

“How many people are going to have their rough drafts ready on Friday?” Hammel, an alumnus of the University of Arizona, shouts over the chatter of the room.

Very few students raise their hands.

“An underwhelming number of you, I see,” Hammel says with a half grin on his face.

While Hammel’s class seems like the normal high school classroom, full of rowdy 14- and 15-year-olds who would rather be hanging out with friends than be at school for the endless hours that only school can demand, they are actually pioneers.

Hammel and his Amphi High journalism students are, with the guidance and mentoring of 10 University of Arizona journalism students, reviving the Tucson school’s journalism program.

Once discontinued for lack of funding, the Desert Gazette has been back in circulation for two years.

In the past year, looking to bring more professionalism and direction to the Gazette, Hammel contacted the UA’s chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists through Eugenia Bas-Isaac, project director for Project SOAR, a youth mentoring program affiliated with the UA.

Hammel subsequently retained 10 SPJ members who earn $10 an hour for their club while coaching the Desert Gazette staff in the intricacies of effective journalism.

According to Hammel, the difference in the quality of the paper has been phenomenal.

“Once the SPJ kids started coming in, it has been night and day,” Hammel says, referring to the difference they have made in the paper, and adding, “The SPJ students have really been the ones teaching me how to teach journalism.”

The mentors come into Hammel’s class every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday to help the students with every-thing journalistic. Whether it is story organization, writing techniques or interviews, the mentors are there.

“The biggest help has been with interview-views,” says Adriana Moreno, a freshman in Journalism and one of the reporters for the Gazette. “They help you figure out how to ask questions right.”

Dave Waugh-Breigre, a sophomore editor and layout assistant for the Gazette, also believes that the mentors have helped.

“I think the quality of the paper has gone up so much and we have been a lot more successful on making deadlines,” says Waugh-Breigre.

Everyone agrees that the cooperation between SPJ and Amphitheater High has been beneficial all around.

“The SPJ students feel like they are really making a difference in high school journalism lives,” says Professor Susan Knight, faculty advisor for SPJ.

Hammel agrees.

“Most of these [high school] kids couldn’t put two sentences together with out ‘errs’ and ‘umms.’ Now we are getting them to ask the right questions and they are really strong,” he says.

The mentors are excited about the quality of work that they are involved in.

“They are still normal high school kids—sometimes you really have to pound it into them,” says Dan Mitchell, a journalism senior and a mentor. “But once they learn how to manage their time right, they really get going.”

Jean Karlman, the president of the SPJ chapter and also a mentor, sees the pro-gram as a success.

“I think that they listen to us,” she says. “They really seem to respond.”

By Cameron Wood

By Cameron Wood

Alumna Nancy Cleeeland on Pulitzer-winning team

By Cameron Wood

Finding sources at Wal-Mart’s factories was one of the most challenging tasks, according to Cleeeland, who went to a Honduras cloth-ing factory. She said such sources were in the manager and a seamstress, and they helped give the stories their edge.

“We tried to show every step in the process,” Cleeeland said. “We want the reader to understand that it’s not just a faceless corporation.”

Cleeland covered the labor beat at the Times.

Comments?

News?

Ideas?

Stay in touch!

Email the Cursor at: journalism@u.arizona.edu
1951 John C. Waugh is a journalist turned historical reporter. After 17 years as an award-winning reporter and editor at the Christian Science Monitor, he served as a media specialist for Vice President Nelson Rockefeller and then as press secretary to U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M. He began writing books on the Civil War in 1989 and has published six, including “The Class of 1846,” “Reckoning Lincoln,” “Surviving the Confederacy” and “On the Brink of Civil War.” Among numerous awards, he has received a History Award Medal from the Daughters of the American Revolution and a 2000 Dallas Civil War Round Table Grady McWhiney Award of Merit for contributions to the scholarship and preservation of Civil War History.

A Tucson native, Waugh lives with his wife Kathleen Diane Lively, in Pantego, Texas.

1969 Pam Ginsbach is retiring after reporting and editing for 29 years. She has served as economics editor for Daily Labor Report and was on the staff of Daily Report for Executives, both from the Bureau of National Affairs, a Washington, D.C.-based publisher of print and electronic news, analysis and reference products. In retirement she plans to freelance and to conduct seminars for journalism students on using economic material and statistics to enhance reporting.

1974 Michael Trout and his wife LuAnn traveled to the island of Cebu in the Philippines, where they adopted their 2-year-old daughter Deborah Joy Trout. Trout continues as an editor for the New York State Tax Department and serves as a loyalist corporal in Butler’s Rangers, a Revolutionary War reenactment unit.

1975 Ann Littrell is the only Democrat seeking nomination to be judge of the Superior Court, Division IV, in Coconino County, Arizona. She currently serves as a deputy county attorney advising Coconino County public school districts.

1976 Florence George Graves has won an Exceptional Merit Media Award from the National Women’s Political Caucus. EMMAs are given in recognition of outstanding coverage of women’s issues. Graves won for “The Complete Anita Hill,” a profile published in the Boston Globe Magazine.

1978 Paul Wattles is a regulatory affairs specialist for ERCOT, the company that manages the electric grid and the restructured electricity market, and resides in Liberty Hill, Texas.

1979 Dave Roberts is an assistant associate producer for the John Tesh Radio Show. His duties include making sure the radio show is delivered to 160 affiliates, updating the web site, editing, writing and doing research.

1980 Judith Wesley Allen has retired as managing editor of the University of Arizona Press and has been replaced by Harrison Shaffer, a former managing editor of the Tombstone Epitaph, who also was enrolled in the UA journalism master’s program in 1979-80.

1981 Laura Stone has taken a job with the Arizona State Library, administering its Library Services and Technology Act grants program. She had been program director of the Arizona Humanities Council. Before joining the council in 1994, Stone directed the Casa Grande Valley Historical Society Museum.

1986 Ignacio Lobos is an editor of Island Scene magazine and Island Scene Online, based in Oahu, Hawaii. He previously worked as a reporter for the Seattle Times.

1989 Abe Kwok is online editor at the Arizona Republic. He is also the Arizona Journalists Association’s national vice president for print.

1993 Savannah Guthrie, who graduated from law school at Georgetown University, is a reporter for Court TV. Before law school, she was a reporter for KVOA-TV, the NBC affiliate in Tucson.

1995 Heather Laurie, a reporter for the Orange County Register, won a second place award in the annual Associated Press Sports Editors contest in the breaking news category (papers 250,000 circulation and over). Laurie and her reporting partner, Marcia C. Smith, won for their coverage of the Kobe Bryant sexual-assault case.

1997 Eric Wein is a senior account executive at Edelman, a global public relations firm, where he concentrates on the Microsoft Xbox video games account.

1998 Ryan Schneider is marketing and communications director for Insomniac Games, where he oversees web site content and new product promotion for him in Burbank, Calif., comes after seven years in public relations, plus some blogging and freelancing on martial arts.

1999 Ann Chihak was married in October 2003 to Curt Poff. She is a copy editor at the Arizona Republic in Phoenix.

Heather Urrugides, whose daughter Isabella was born March 19, is an assistant city editor at the Arizona Republic.

1999 Atle Erlingson is a reporter for the late news on KLAS-TV, Las Vegas.

1999 Eric Anderson is working as a web site editor for the television entertainment-news program Access Hollywood. He is responsible for producing, maintaining and updating the content at www.accesshollywood.com. Anderson worked at several publications in Arizona before moving to California, and worked briefly as a web editor for KNBC in Los Angeles.

2000 Topper Johnson is a lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps assigned as a property officer based in Yuma, Ariz. After graduating from the UA, Johnson completed internships at the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Oakland Tribune, and worked at ESPN for a year before enlisting.

2001 David Crum and Jen Levario were married this spring. Both work at the Arizona Republic, Dave as public safety reporter and Jen as a page designer.

Jenna Duncan is a copy editor at Get Out Magazine, the weekly entertainment guide published by the East Valley Tribune in Mesa, Ariz.

Norma Greer is a juvenile probation officer for Pima County.

2002 Amanda Halligan has joined the U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee in Washington, D.C., as an assistant editor.

2003 Christopher Richardson is a police reporter for the Sioux City (Iowa) Journal. He previously spent 17 months working as a courts and police reporter for the Aberdeen (S.D.) American.

John C. Waugh

2004 Jennifer Karlman planned to join KEPR-TV in Pasco, Wash., in June as an anchor-reporter.

2005 Jennifer Shaygan is a news reporter for the Monitor in McAllen, Texas, Ryan Gabrielson is also a news reporter at the same paper.

Maxx Wolson was hired by GettyImages in Santa Monica as a sports editor and caption writer and is planning to go to law school to prepare for a career in sports management.

One of 10 students chosen to represent the UA journalism department in the 2004 Hearst Journalism Awards Program won a $500 scholarship in the contest. Jeffrey L. Sklar took 10th place in the In-Depth Writing category, and was also a national finalist in the Personality/Profile Writing category.

Other students who won department awards for their work and were entered into the contest were:

For Feature Writing, Jennifer L. Duffy and Lara A. Foresman; for Editorial Writing, Daniel L. Scarpinato and Christopher C. Wunsch; for In-Depth Reporting, Sklar and Michelle D. Shleton; for Sports Writing, Wunsch and Brett C. Fenn; for Personality/Profile Writing, Sklar and Jill L. Holt; for Spot News Writing, Robert A. Purvis and Ty E. Young.

Fall and spring winners of the Mark Finley Gold Pen Award for Best Beginning Newswriter were announced during the “Just Desserts” event on May 5. The fall 2003 winners were: first, Aaron D. Mackey; second, Dana Caudill and third, Monica J. Warren. The spring 2004 winners were: first, Allison M. Winters; second, Nina L. Conrad and third, Adam J. Gaub.

Both first-place winners received checks for $750. The second-place winners won $500 and each third-place won $250.
Updating news about the faculty

Professor Bill Greer will start a sabbatical in July. Greer’s project involves a photo documentary of life along the U.S.-Mexico border at the start of the 21st century. His research will include the U.S.-Mexico borderlands in Arizona and California.

Professor Greer plans to work out of a California office. His photos will be edited and selected for display on a research web site connected to the journalism department.

Professor James C. Mitchell’s second novel, “Choke Point,” is scheduled for October publication by St. Martin’s Minotaur. Tucson private investigator Brinker and all the other characters who survived “Lovers Crossing” will be back for the second in the series.

In “Choke Point,” Brinker works to solve a double murder case that begins with a riot on Fourth Avenue after the University of Arizona plays for the national basketball championship. Also, Mitchell was a featured speaker at the University of Idaho College of Law’s First Amendment Symposium on April 2.


When he isn’t traveling in his RV with his wife, Marilyn, Professor Emeritus James W. Johnson is at work on his book, “The Wow Boys: The Team That Revolutionized Football.”

Professor Emeritus Jim Patten, a former journalism department head, was among several journalism educators published in the spring 2004 Journal of the National Conference of Editorial Writers.

His article, “J-Students Have It Both Ways (Sort Of),” was part of a package devoted to the issues of whether a liberal arts education or journalism school was the best preparation for a journalism career.

SPJ panel explores impact of new privacy act revisions on the public’s right to know

By Andrea C. Kelly

Print and broadcast journalists, health care public information officers and firefighters may not agree on what exactly HIPAA means, but they agree that the law has changed their jobs over the past year.

The regulation, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, underwent changes last April. In the past year, those changes have contributed to confusion within the health care industry and between the industry and the journalists who cover it.

Specifically, there is no agreement on what exactly HIPAA means regarding information distribution — a problem for journalists, who try to provide information on public health, safety and welfare.

About 30 people turned out on April 22 when the UA chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists held a panel discussion to generate a dialogue among professionals affected by HIPAA.

Adam Goldberg, paramedic for Northwest Fire and Rescue in Tucson, said fire departments try to provide some of the same public health awareness services that journalists do, and that HIPAA has also limited them.

“We’re faced with some of the same challenges (as journalists),” Goldberg said.

Fire departments try to be a source for information on safety, Goldberg said, and if a story that others could learn from cannot be published in local news media, it is a loss for the whole community.

Firefighters cannot release information about victims.

“We are held accountable civilly and criminally,” Goldberg said, adding that the conflict between public safety and legality leads to an “ethical and moral dilemma.”

Jan Howard, public information officer for Carondelet Health Network in Tucson, said HIPAA creates more work for all parties.

A journalist must first find the patient’s name, Howard said, before a public information officer for the hospital can verify that the patient was admitted.

She said information officers have to do more work because they have to serve as intermediaries between patients and media.

Barbara Grijalva, health beat anchor for Tucson’s CBS television station, KOLD, said she will repeatedly call a hospital and ask the PIO to ask patients or the patients’ families if they will talk to her. She said she knows this creates a lot of work for the PIO, but she has no other option under HIPAA.

Another journalist on the panel said HIPAA needs to be clarified for all parties.

David Cieslak, public safety reporter for the Arizona Republic in Phoenix, said many of the problems with HIPAA stem from varying interpretations about what can legally be released. For example, he said, a journalist may interpret the act in a very liberal way, while a doctor may take a more cautious approach.

Another reporter, Leslie Anne Newell of the Arizona Daily Star, said HIPAA hasn’t precluded her from getting information, it has “just made it harder.”

Though there are details that can’t legally be reported now, Newell said, “there’s still a lot you can say.”

HIPAA was not intended to hinder public awareness, said Jim Penny of the Rabb Penny law firm in Tucson. It was supposed to prevent doctors or pharmacies from selling patient information, and also to allow patients to access their own medical information.

Though each of the professionals on the panel had a different role in public information, all said HIPAA changed their jobs in the past year.

The sentiment of the group seemed to be summed up in four words: “I don’t like HIPAA,” said Grijalva.