



READY FOR THE **SPOTLIGHT**

INCOMING DEAN BRAD HAMM BRINGS EXPERIENCE, ENERGY AND A TRACK RECORD OF INNOVATION.

STORY BY MATT PAOLELLI (BSJ05, MSJ06)
PHOTOS BY RAY WHITEHOUSE (BSJ12)

When you have a conversation with Brad Hamm, a few things are immediately apparent: He loves journalism, and he loves higher education. But what he loves most is directing traffic at their intersection.

That is just one of the many reasons why Hamm, who brings a professional background featuring a robust balance of reporting, teaching and administrative experience, is so excited to take the reins as dean of Medill, a school he considers “the place to be if you want to do journalism and journalism education at the highest level.”

“It has a terrific history, it has incredible alumni, it has a very strong faculty and staff, and it’s well respected by everybody throughout Northwestern,” he says. “It has an incredible strength in terms of what it’s done in the past — the kinds of people associated with it — and where it stands right now.”

Hamm was announced as the dean-designate in May and officially started his tenure Sept. 1, nearly one year after the search for outgoing dean John Lavine’s successor began.

professor who was hired by Hamm, describes him as an “innovative and strategic thinker” who not only has great ideas but can also get them done while inspiring others to think creatively.

“He supported programs that I developed and my scholarly endeavors, too,” Barnett says. “I never felt like he was trying to do what was best for him but rather what was best for his faculty and staff and the program overall.”

Soft-spoken with a slight Southern drawl, Hamm is the epitome of a calming presence, a persona who seems almost at odds with the stereotypically hectic pace of the journalism world.

“He won’t be the most talkative person in the room, but you’ll remember what he says,” says Sue Porter, the vice president of programs at the Scripps Howard Foundation, who worked closely with Hamm on several collaborations with the Indiana journalism school. “He’s a scholar, an educator and a journalist who thinks like a business professional.”

Hamm’s professional journalism career actually began in high school, when his track coach — who also served as assistant sports editor for the Salisbury (N.C.) Post — hired him to cover sporting

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“There were lots of things we were looking at, and I think we were aware that it was going to be hard to find everything we were looking for in one person,” says Professor Jack Doppelt, who chaired the 17-person search committee. “We were looking for somebody with multiple exposures and vantage points on where both journalism and higher education are heading.”

Hamm leaves his post as dean and professor at the Indiana University School of Journalism, where he served since 2005. He was previously a professor and administrator in the School of Communications at Elon University in North Carolina.

Hamm admits that leaving Indiana was difficult, but he looks forward to making an impact at Medill.

“When you look at great programs around the country or the world, you have to start with Medill,” he says. “It offers the kinds of opportunities for anyone to excel. My goal then would be to make sure that we make it possible this year, next year and 10 years from now.”

Former colleagues agree that, with Hamm at the helm, Medill can only get better. When Elon founded its communications school in 2000, Hamm was named interim dean and helped build the program from the ground up. Brooke Barnett, an Elon communications

events for the family-owned daily newspaper.

Hamm’s career at the Post extended through his time at Catawba College in Salisbury, when he routinely worked almost 20 hours on the weekend and spent countless weeknights covering sports and local news.

A committed academic with a strong grounding in media history, Hamm holds a Ph.D. in mass communication research from the University of North Carolina and a master’s degree in journalism from the University of South Carolina.

Despite widespread hand wringing over shuttered newspapers and shrinking staffs, Hamm is far from alarmist about the current state of journalism and says history proves the industry has weathered worse.

“When we look back across 100 years, almost every 20 years and sometimes every 10 years, there’s a change in the media world,” Hamm says. “Certainly the traditional model has changed for any number of reasons, but what Medill does is important now, it was important in the past and it will be important in the future.”

Despite his positive outlook, Hamm is not one to ignore the challenges of an evolving industry or changes in higher education, says Paul Parsons, current dean of the School of Communications at Elon.

“He has high standards and challenges students, faculty and staff to do their best in order to make an impact on the world of journalism and communications,” Parsons says. “He can be both an internal dean who builds a strong faculty, deepens student engagement and manages a budget, and an external dean who attracts major gifts, establishes partnerships and engages alumni.”

Overseeing Indiana’s undergraduate, master’s and Ph.D. journalism programs on both the Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses, Hamm significantly increased student enrollment and diversity, developed more international educational opportunities and created a master’s in public relations on the Indianapolis campus. He established new programs, encouraged students to study abroad and forged institutional relationships with the Scripps Howard Foundation, the Poynter Institute and USA Today.

“Brad was interested in fully understanding our objectives before he offered his thoughts on how we might fine-tune our programs and sponsorships to better serve students and the profession,” Porter says of Indiana’s collaboration with Scripps. “I think his ability to put his ego aside for the good of whatever program he’s addressing enables him to accomplish remarkable things.”

Another of Hamm’s pet projects, the National Sports Journalism Center at the Indianapolis campus, has seen tremendous success since its 2009 inception by offering the nation’s first master’s degree program in sports journalism and creating partnerships with the Associated Press Sports Editors and the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association.

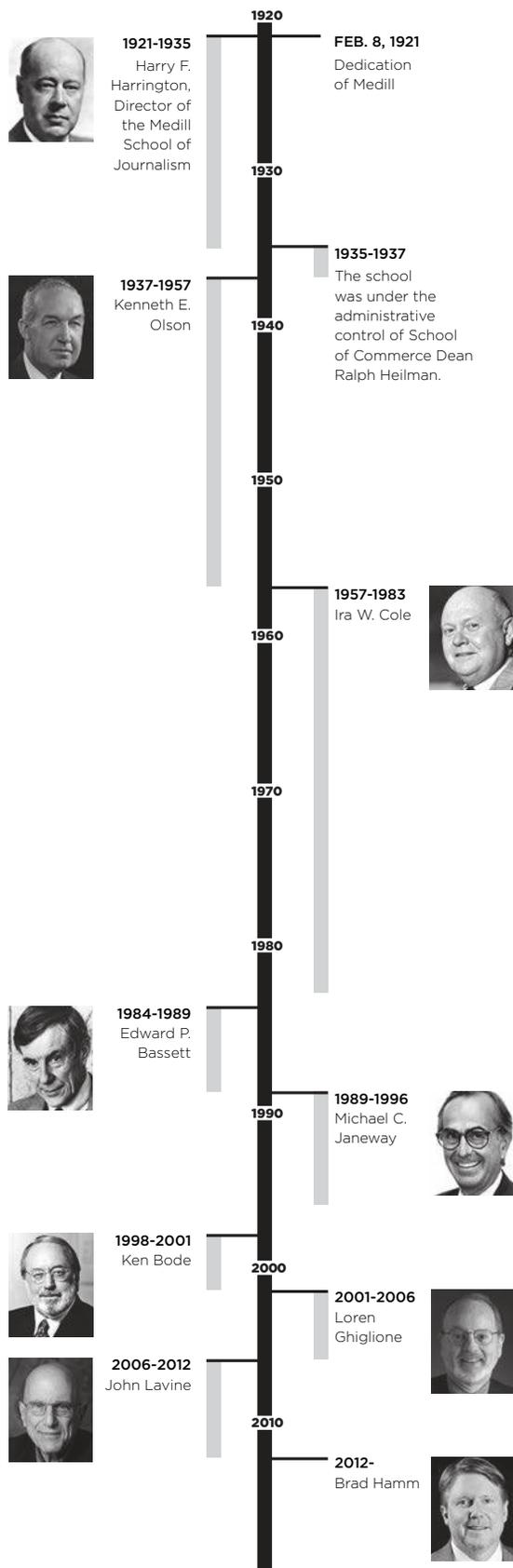
“A lot of leaders will say they want to be the best at something. It’s one thing to say it, and it’s another thing to actually provide the support and resources to make it happen,” says Tim Franklin, managing editor of the Washington, D.C., bureau at Bloomberg News and the sports journalism center’s former director. “Dean Hamm backed up his words, and he made it clear he was serious about building the center into a program of national distinction.”

Doppelt says Hamm’s track record shows him to be a great listener who will “put Medill in a dynamic place” at a time when the school has gifted students and faculty who are poised to make significant strides in journalism and IMC education.

“John [Lavine] put us in a position where we really have an immense reservoir of talent,” Doppelt says of Medill’s 75 full-time faculty members, many of whom were appointed during Lavine’s



PAST MEDILL DEANS LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE YEARS



deanship. “It’s a matter of marshaling that talent, both out of people individually and being able to come up with the right chemistry where people can work together in a dynamic, cooperative way within Medill, across the University and with programs that we’re developing within the industry.”

Hamm recognizes the skill level inherent in the Medill community and says it is the dean’s job to “get the resources to talented people so they can do great things.” The timeless necessity of journalism combined with the potential of emerging technologies make it an ideal time for journalism schools to be as forward-thinking as possible, he says.

“No matter how good a place is, you have to keep moving or else you’ll just maintain rather than excel,” he says. “If you’re going to be at the forefront of any field, you have to be willing to take chances. Not everything will work out, but you have to be willing to try things.”

Some of this innovation is already happening at Medill, and Hamm says he expects the school to continue to push the interdisciplinary envelope on his watch.

“If you plan to be the comprehensive journalism education school in America or the world, then you need to be the leader in ideas, too,” he says. “You can train undergraduates and graduate students well, but there is a need throughout the journalism and IMC world for the ideas that will shape the future.”

Hamm is no stranger to brokering mutually beneficial interdisciplinary connections within a university. One of his final projects at Indiana was to partner with its Kelley School of Business to establish an entrepreneurial journalism initiative.

“No one lives in a zoned-off world — regardless of your field — and there is significant work done across areas,” he says. “Medill is already doing it in their work with computer science and engineering, and I think you’ll see these kinds of partnerships, however structured, just increase.”

Hamm, his wife, Hiromi, and their 2-year-old son, Yoshiki, moved to Evanston in early August. As he continues to learn the lay of the land in the city, and at Medill, Hamm says he is still sending notes to various colleagues and alumni from Indiana “to let them know how much I appreciated getting to know them.”

According to Scripps Howard’s Porter, Hamm’s leadership skills come not only from his friendly and inclusive nature but also from his ability to push others toward success. “Medill is exceptional, but the Brad I know won’t permit it to rest on its laurels,” she says. “He’ll want to hear what faculty, staff, students and alumni envision for their school. He’ll preside over practical and aspirational goals, inspire and motivate people to achieve them, and then ask, ‘What’s next?’”

For Hamm, what’s next is Medill, and he couldn’t be more excited. “I only left Elon because of IU, and I only left IU because of Medill,” he says. “There are these opportunities that are once-in-a-lifetime, and you have to be able to think that you can make a difference. So I hope that with my experience and my work ethic, Medill will make a difference.”

MATT PAOLELLI IS A WEB CONTENT PRODUCER FOR NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY AND TEACHES A MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM COURSE AT MEDILL.



Watch a sit-down interview with Brad Hamm in the tablet edition.

First Medill students in Qatar graduate, set path for future journalists

Like almost every other member of the Medill Class of 2012, Shannon Farhoud walked across the stage of Cahn Auditorium in June to receive her journalism degree. But Farhoud never had a class in Fisk Hall or the McCormick Tribune Center. She spent her college years on a campus more than 7,000 miles from Evanston.

Farhoud (NU-Q 12) is one of 15 pioneering students in the inaugural class of graduates from Medill's Middle Eastern outpost at Northwestern University in Qatar — a region that until recently was largely unaware of Medill's reputation for journalistic excellence and still grapples with the notion of a free press.

"These students took a chance on us. They'd never heard of Northwestern," says Senior Associate Dean Richard Roth, recalling the process of interviewing prospective students. "We had no classrooms, no facilities and no faculty. We didn't have much of anything except a story about Northwestern."

That story in the Middle East began in 2006, when then-University President Henry Bienen arranged for Northwestern to join five other American universities already offering undergraduate degree programs in the burgeoning Education City in Doha, Qatar. Funded by the Qatar Foundation and at the invitation of Qatar's Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser, Medill and the School of Communication welcomed the freshmen class in 2008. Four years later, the two schools would produce 36 graduates from 17 different countries.

"The whole process of putting together a curriculum and a faculty and a student body was very, very quick," Roth says. "All we had to

teach were freshmen classes, and for Medill that was one class, so it was relatively easy to get up and running that first year."

Despite an easy takeoff, the first year at NU-Q was not without its share of turbulence, Roth says. Northwestern initially lacked a dedicated space for its academic programming, so classes were held in unused areas of Texas A&M's building. Assistant Professor Abraham Abusharif, one of three journalism faculty members to join Roth in Doha for the first year, says he remembers holding office hours in a library cubicle or hallway.

Beyond the makeshift facilities, Roth faced more immediate concerns about the international students' ability to exhibit the strong writing skills demanded by the Medill curriculum. The first cohort consisted largely of ex-pat children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds who grew up in Doha and applied to Medill after seeing newspaper advertisements heralding the school's arrival in Education City.

"English is their second, third or fifth language, so halfway through that first year, I was concerned about what was going on with the students' abilities because they just couldn't write what we were asking them to write," Roth says. Faculty members hosted "grammar slammer" sessions to reinforce AP Style and point out key distinctions between the British English that most students were familiar with and the American English taught at Medill.

As the freshmen became sophomores, the program expanded to meet the needs of Medill's multimedia-based curriculum. "We created a class called Visual Journalism, and they take it in the first semester of their second year," Roth says. "It was in that semester that I realized that these kids really know how to find and tell stories — visually."



Read Q&As with nine of the graduates in the tablet edition.

NAZNEEN ZAHAN

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA ANDREWS (NU-Q14)

FACES OF NU-Q

Meet the nine students who traveled from Doha to Evanston to walk the stage at graduation in June.



BENAZIR KARIM

FROM: Tanzania
WHAT'S NEXT: After graduation, I'm going to be going to France. I'm interning there with Euro TV for two months, and after that hopefully I'll be working in Doha.



CAMILA FERREIRA

FROM: Brazil
WHAT'S NEXT: Currently I'm going back to Brazil where I have a couple freelance jobs. I'm thinking about applying for my master's.



NAZNEEN ZAHAN

FROM: Bangladesh, but family lives in Qatar
WHAT'S NEXT: I have interviewed with Qatar TV. I'm also applying to PR companies because I also did the PR certificate that we have at NU-Q.



OLA DIAB

FROM: Sudan
WHAT'S NEXT: I'm very interested in print journalism — I think I'm one of the very few! So far I'm freelancing, but I want to find a job in print journalism in Qatar.



SHEREENA QAZI

FROM: Pakistan, born and raised in Qatar
WHAT'S NEXT: I've got an internship at Euro News in Leone, France. I'm also planning to apply for a master's eventually.



ZAINAB SULTAN

FROM: India, grew up in Saudi Arabia
WHAT'S NEXT: I got a few job offers in Doha, and I definitely want to be in Doha because I think it's such a young industry and we're just starting off.



ASHLENE RAMADAN

FROM: Lebanon
WHAT'S NEXT: Create a production company [with Shannon Farhoud and Rana Khaled]. We won free office space and 30,000 Qatari riyal (\$8,000) to start up.



RANA KHALED

FROM: Palestine
WHAT'S NEXT: To produce clips [with the company] about our culture to educate the West and to give perspectives of people who live in the Middle East.



SHANNON FARHOUD

FROM: Syria and Canada
WHAT'S NEXT: [With the company] we're using Sheikha Mozah's vision of empowering women and journalism. There are a lot of stories no one is talking about.

Opportunities to increase their storytelling acuity abounded as students took more advanced classes and flexed their newfound journalistic muscles in a Middle Eastern society where freedom of the press remains more of a goal than a reality. Although the Al Jazeera news network is headquartered in Doha, the station mainly covers regional and global news, so students found a wealth of underreported stories that local media outlets had ignored for years, Roth says.

"Part of the culture there is that you don't question authority," Roth says. "These students are fearless — or maybe they just didn't know any better — but they were asking questions that hadn't been asked before and coming up with some really interesting stories on some taboo subjects."

Zainab Sultan (NU-Q 12) produced a documentary on breast cancer that Roth cites as inspiration for the creation of a breast cancer awareness organization in Doha. The group frequently screens Sultan's work and encourages women to seek treatment for a disease that was previously viewed as a fatal divine punishment, Roth says.

"I've seen terrific work produced by these students, both in terms of writing and multimedia storytelling," Abusharif says. "I would hold the work of these students up as an example to any Medill student."

Evanston-based Medill Professor Jack Doppelt taught a five-week law and ethics course at NU-Q in Winter 2011, just as the Arab Spring revolutions were providing the perfect teachable moment. With a front row seat to the seismic changes taking place in the Middle East, NU-Q is a golden opportunity for everyone involved, he says.

"We are there at a moment in time when we can actually produce students who are knowledgeable about the environment, who are positioned to take jobs in the region and who are in a position for there to be jobs opening up because there isn't a tradition of having there be reporters in a lot of places like this," Doppelt says.

Many students in the inaugural graduating class are seizing the novelty of their situation and looking for journalistic work in the Gulf — or making their own opportunities.

"Just like at Northwestern, where we had a chance to be pioneers and really start off this program and lay the foundations, I think with the media industry [in the Middle East] we have an opportunity to do it all over again," Sultan says.

Farhoud and three of her classmates are starting a production company together to educate Western audiences about Middle Eastern culture through local stories and voices.

"The revolutions broke out, and everyone would refer to the Arab world as if it were one big country, but it's not," Farhoud says. "Every country is so different, even within the Gulf, and we want to show that."

Roth says the NU-Q odyssey is gaining traction. And soon, the program — which has been housed in Carnegie Mellon University's building since 2010 — will have its first dedicated building in Education City. Construction recently began on a 350,000-square-foot facility that will provide cutting edge multimedia tools, state-of-the-art studio space and plenty of room for growth. It is scheduled to open in 2014.

"I believe we're going to have some impact on the media, not only in Qatar, but in the region, either as Qatar becomes an example for other parts of the Gulf or as these students go to work," Roth says. "I think we've decided that it's no longer an experiment — it works."

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