

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Adcenter Alumni,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and that you enjoyed the rest of your summer. As the rising second year students return from their internships and the new first year students arrive in Richmond, this school year marks another milestone in the VCU Adcenter's history. This fall, the Adcenter celebrates entering its 10th year as VCU's esteemed advertising Master's program.

The Adcenter started as the first graduate advertising program of its kind, and I'm happy to say that we have maintained that unique position over the years. The industry has gone through a lot of changes in the last decade, and the program has adapted its program to reflect these changes. In many ways, our program is ahead of the industry, and I'd like to highlight for you some of our progress since the Adcenter's inception in 1996:

- The number of students accepted each year has increased from 47 to 95.
- Acceptance of female students has increased from 44% to 53%.
- Acceptance of minority students has increased from 15% to 38%.
- Acceptance of international students has increased from 4% to 12%.
- The number of tracks has increased from three (Art Direction, Copywriting, and Strategy) to four (Art Direction, Copywriting, Communications Strategy, and Creative Brand Management).

We have restructured the program even more since introducing the hugely popular Creative Brand Management track last fall. This year we combined the Creative Media Planning track and the Strategic Planning track to create Communications Strategy. This track will prepare students to develop a more holistic view of the consumer, researching and evaluating everything from demographic and psychographic information to media consumption habits. Read more about the merger under "Breaking News."

After ten successful years, it's time to look towards a future full of Adcenter initiatives fueled by creative innovation. I hope you'll stay involved with the Adcenter in these exciting times and keep us updated with your news and accomplishments.

Best,  
Rick Boyko  
Managing Director

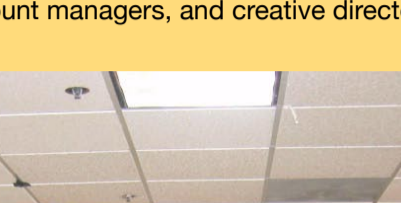
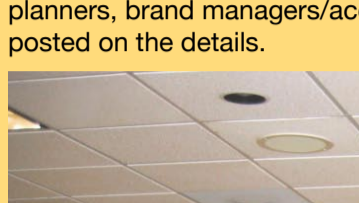
## BREAKING NEWS

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### Adcenter alum and students win Gold Planning Award at AAAA Planning Conference

In Rick Boyko's fall 2005 Brand Campaigns class, VCU Adcenter students helped The Martin Agency win a pitch for TLC (The Learning Channel). The strategic planning students conducted consumer research and helped develop the strategic insights used in the creative development of the "Live and Learn" campaign.

At the AAAA Planning Conference in July 2006, The Martin Agency was awarded a Gold Jay Chiat Planning Award for the campaign. The Martin Agency team was led by Adcenter alumni Katherine Wintsch (ST, 2001) and Emily Collier (ST, 2003). Strategic planning students Barrie Leimer (ST, 2006), Joanna Chopski (ST, 2006), and Alexis Takas (ST, 2006) also received credit for the award.



### Adcenter's First Executive Education Program a Great Success

The Adcenter held its first Executive Education Program for Creative Directors on June 5th - 9th. It was an intensive week-long session designed to provide advanced training for working creative directors. Workshops and seminars were led by industry leaders, Adcenter board members and faculty including: Paul Woolmington, Naked NYC; Brian Collins, Ogilvy BIG; Mike Hughes, The Martin Agency; John Butler, Butler, Shine & Stern, as well as many others. We had 26 attendees from agencies like Element 79, Cramer-Krasselt, Amazon, McCann BBDO, Ogilvy, RIGGS, FCB, Woodbine, among others.

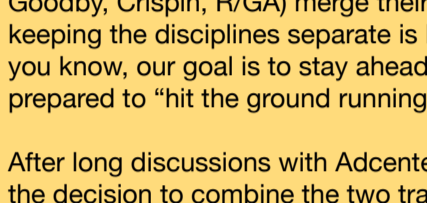
The Adcenter is in the process of hiring a Director of Executive Education to manage upcoming programs. We are tentatively planning future programs for account planners, brand managers/account managers, and creative directors. We'll keep you posted on the details.



Adcenter Executive Education Program for Creative Directors

### Adcenter and Dentsu conduct So-Hatsu Labo in Japan

Dentsu, Japan's largest advertising agency, hired the VCU Adcenter to lead a two-week program for 25 of their employees. The goal of the program, held July 10th - 20th, was to build a strong commitment to collaboration and creativity. The program was led by Rick Boyko, Peter Coughter, Peter Wood (adjunct professor and former CD at Ogilvy, Martin and Goodby), and Andrew Jaffe (board member). We hope to work with Dentsu on additional programs in the future.



### Adcenter Creates New Track by Merging Two Existing Tracks

The Adcenter recently merged Creative Media Planning and Strategic Planning to form Communications Strategy. Over the past few months, we have been studying the strategic tracks, the state of media planning and strategic planning and looking into the future a bit. As we see it, the industry is searching for strategists who are capable of moving between three areas easily and rapidly: culture, media and branding. We've watched several of the best agencies in the country (i.e. Chiat, Goodby, Crispin, R/GA) merge their media and planning departments. It seems that keeping the disciplines separate is becoming an antiquated way of working. As you know, our goal is to stay ahead of the industry so our graduates are more than prepared to "hit the ground running" when they graduate.

After long discussions with Adcenter board members and industry leaders, we made the decision to combine the two tracks to form a new model of planner. The role of the Communications Strategist is to help find new ways to communicate ideas with people. They will explore brand concepts and how they relate to the cultures they serve. They will study people and the messages that they are most interested in hearing. They will invent creative media strategies that can be employed to connect their ideas to people. Ultimately, the role of a Communications Strategist is to combine content + contact + context. Upon graduation, Communications Strategists will be prepared for many job opportunities: strategic planning in an ad agency; internal planning for a corporation; consumer research for an agency or corporation; or creative media planning for a media company.

## BACKSTAGE

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- We have several new adjunct professors this fall:
  - Brad Armstrong (Creative Brand Management) brings a wealth of both agency and client experience having worked at A.H. Robbins, Eskimo Pie, Eerie Palmer Brown, and The Martin Agency.
  - Kelly O'Keefe (Technology and Culture) is a respected authority on marketing, creativity and new media. He has owned two advertising-related businesses: Emergence and O'Keefe Brands. He also leads brand management programs at Circuit City.
  - David Voegelier (Technology) is a web programmer at The Martin Agency. He was the technical editor on the soon-to-be-released Flash 8 book.
- For the Creative Thinking class, we've invited several "visiting professors", who will each teach for two weeks. Mark Fenske will be here to open and close the class. The others are:
  - Nina DiSesa, Chairman, McCann Erickson
  - Bill Heater, President, Real Life Creative
  - Dave O'Hare, Freelance copywriter; currently working on a feature-length screenplay for Walt Disney Pictures
  - Charles Hall, Freelance copywriter
  - Peter Wood, Freelance, Art Director/Creative Director
  - Mike Lear, Creative Director, The Martin Agency
- We've hired Beth Harrington as our Senior Director of Development. Beth's charge is to build a strong entrepreneurial development operation and infrastructure in order to lead the Adcenter through its first-ever fundraising campaign. Funding priorities include support for the new Adcenter building, endowment, scholarships, and programmatic needs which will be identified by the Managing Director in order to 1) raise a minimum of \$10 million; 2) position the Adcenter for future growth; and 3) build upon the already growing base of visibility and respect for the Adcenter.
- Coz Cotzias was honored by students and alumni at the Adcenter Orientation on August 22nd for his dedication to the school. He is the only faculty member who has been here since the school's inception, 10 years ago.

## HOTLINE

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- Recruiters often call us with job openings, which we forward on to the Job Seeker e-mail group. If you'd like to be included in this e-mail group, please send an e-mail to [asommardahl@vcu.edu](mailto:asommardahl@vcu.edu).
- If you change jobs or addresses, please remember to let us know. Please e-mail the updated information to [asommardahl@vcu.edu](mailto:asommardahl@vcu.edu).
- If you've been working for 4-5 years and you're interested in being a professional mentor to a 2nd year student, please e-mail [asommardahl@vcu.edu](mailto:asommardahl@vcu.edu).
- Please keep us posted on new work you've produced. We like to share that information with our current and prospective students.
- If you think your agency would like to be informed about Adcenter interns and recruitment fairs, please e-mail [asommardahl@vcu.edu](mailto:asommardahl@vcu.edu) and we'll add them to our database.
- If your agency has any real world projects for the school, please e-mail [rboyko@vcu.edu](mailto:rboyko@vcu.edu) or [asommardahl@vcu.edu](mailto:asommardahl@vcu.edu). The students are currently working on real world projects for Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Virginia Tourism, HealthSouth, and new business pitches for agencies. If you're looking for some strategic and creative firepower, please let us know.

## 60 SECONDS

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### Jason DeTorris (ST, 2002)

Agency: Deutsch Inc.  
Position: Senior Account Planner

**1. What's the one thing you never did while at the Adcenter that you wish you had?**  
I never stood on looking while Fenske relieved himself in an alley. Wait, I did do that. I guess one thing that I never did was go to Hollywood cemetery. I think I'm one of five people who've lived in Richmond and never checked that out.

**2. What advice do you have for current students?**  
I remember sitting there in the "big" room downstairs listening to a guest speaker during my first year at the Adcenter. At this point I don't remember who it was. It might have been Bill Westbrook. What I do remember is that he said, "You all know more know than most people who are already in the industry."

It was a statement that I didn't believe. I never believed it until maybe five years later. It was best summed up in a speech I heard from Chuck Porter at this year's Account Planning Conference, "Experience is only valuable if the future is going to be the exactly the same as the past."

When you are in your cube, and yes - for many years it will be a cube, you will have to do everything you can to stay relevant to anticipate change so that you are someone who is leading your clients instead of catching up to them.

I feel that the Adcenter has always done a superior job of being up-to-date and challenging students to live in a culture that thinks fast and incessantly churns out good ideas.

So now I will tell you: you all know more know than most people who are already in the industry. You may not have all the experience you need but you probably have a few big ideas written on a scrap of paper somewhere. Bring them with you because your boss doesn't give you a promotion, your ideas do.

**3. Are there things about the industry that have surprised you or were different than you anticipated?**  
Bureaucracy. Both on the client side and the agency side. Sometimes it's like being stuck in that movie The Labyrinth. You just have to keep your goals straight and rely on the relationships you build to help you when you need it.

**4. What's it like working at Deutsch?**  
For me, the best part about working here is that I have my media teams, data strategists and interactive department in most of my meetings. You learn a lot when everyone is at the table and ideas never start in a "general advertising place" they get born with lots of legs. That kind of collaboration really raises the level of your game.

**5. Do you have a favorite campaign?**  
Motorola

**6. Can you tell us a bit about your experience working on it?**  
If you really get into a client's business, you feel like you work for their company as much as your own agency. I worked on the Moto campaign at Ogilvy for about three years.

The best part of that campaign was introducing new capabilities like text messaging or video phones that people hadn't really considered using yet. A phone was just for talking and mobile culture was in its infancy in the U.S.

It was a great assignment to redefine a brand that had lost its way and to make it attractive to a new audience. Motorola had invented the cell phone and the car radio but was mostly irrelevant to youth culture and Nokia was beating them up pretty bad. I got a lot out of it, and, in the end, the brand was able to contemporize itself during the few years when they hadn't yet nailed the product design that is changing the marketplace for them now. Oh - and travel on a global account is never a bad thing!

### Craig Forrence (AD, 2003)

Agency: Martin/Williams  
Position: Art Director

**1. What's the one thing you never did while at Adcenter that you wish you had?**  
One of my classmates flew to Amsterdam for a long weekend. Yes, I had weekend. That would have been amazing. I wish I had traveled more. Anywhere. London, Montreal, or Newark. Somewhere I could get arrested and have an amazing story to tell. The type of place Primetime Live and Dateline do "hidden camera" exposés about. The type of place where the food isn't safe to eat and one must survive on Mike & Ike's and pocket lint.

**2. What advice do you have for current students?**  
• Don't be a dick. Advertising has enough of them. There is nothing wrong with a healthy ego as long as you keep it in check.  
• Consider freelancing for a bit. You'll wish you had.  
• Cigarettes and Red Bull®. Never a good idea.  
• Don't take Richmond for granted. You'll actually miss it someday.  
• Take a break between semesters.  
• Don't worry, it'll happen.  
• Good Taste II. Chinese food by the pound (twice as good as Good Taste I).

**3. Are there things about the industry that have surprised you or were different than you anticipated?**  
"Client meeting leftovers in 28 kitchen," is a phrase that isn't spoken over the intercom enough. It's the equivalent of holding a Honus Wagner Rookie card. It's a gold mine. You have the potential to double your salary with free food and drinks. At the editing house. On production. The "Agency-sponsored" Happy Hour. Other agencies' Happy Hours. Going-Away parties. New Hire parties. Hotel mini-bars. I mean seriously, how many boneless chicken wings can a person eat? \$50,000 worth, that's how many.

**4. What's it like working at Martin Williams?**  
M/W is a great place to get your "feet wet." From the beginning, I was given way more freedom and responsibility than I should have been, but it forced me to think fast and smart. I was also surprised at how many layers there aren't. You don't have to worry about having your idea watered down by all the various channels because your ideas typically go from your brain to the client with only one layer... your CD. That's what everybody wants, right? You don't want the account peeps and focus groups to get their hands on it. If they do, it's certain death. The kind of death that is so messy they don't even invite you in to identify the body. And because of that, you have no excuse not to sell that idea that you think is "fucking brilliant."

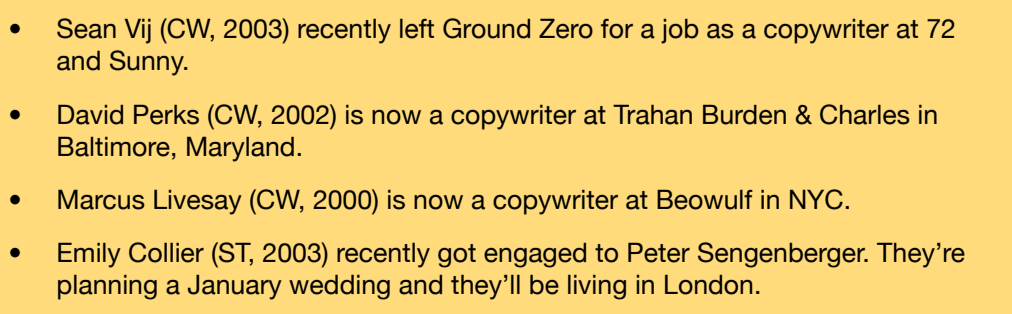
**5. Do you have a favorite campaign? Can you tell us a bit about your experience working on it?**  
When I first started at M/W, we were given an assignment to work on Donatos Pizza. Our budget was \$60,000. We were encouraged to use existing food footages, title cards, music and V.O. So, we conceptualized a spot where live chickens were partying in hotel rooms and swimming pools (a la "Girls Gone Wild"). The client bought it. Some how our producer found a hotel that was willing to ignore various health codes in order to accommodate us. We even had a "craft service" table that had multiple containers of Pringles, strawberry Pop Tarts and those fancy Goldfish crackers (pizza-flavored, I think). When it was all said and done, my partner got food poisoning (from bad Thai food), the entire crew got sick (from mild avian flu) and two chickens were dead from fighting each other. No lie.

Humans: -10 Chickens: -2.

## WHO? WHAT? WHEN?

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- David Fredette (CW, 2002) is a copywriter at Berlin Cameron United in New York.
- Jason Smith (AD, 2001) is an art director at Grant, Scott & Hurley in San Francisco.
- Chantal Panozzo (CW, 2003) is a copywriter at McCann Erickson in Zurich, Switzerland.
- Alexis Brandolini (ST, 2006) married Jordan Takas on July 22nd. They are the parents of a deaf dog named Brian.
- Mohamed Salim (ST, 2002) is freelancing in Singapore, India and Dubai.
- Cary Lee (ST, 2003) is a strategic planner at Ogilvy & Mather in Beijing.
- Christy Chan (CW, 1998) is a freelance copywriter at Goodby, Silverstein & Partners.
- Anupama Bhoopathy (ST, 2005) is leaving her job as a strategic planner at Carmichael Lynch to move back to India.
- Kristin Erwin (CW, 1998) recently left The Martin Agency and will be starting a new job as a copywriter at AKQA in Washington, DC.
- Ray Del Savio (CW, 2005) is a copywriter at DDB NY. His campaign to get Webster's Dictionary to recognize the word "concept" as a verb has been covered by national news media like slate.com and Fast Company magazine. You can check out his online petition at <http://verb4concept.blogspot.com>.



- Dawn Waters (former Assistant Director of the Adcenter) is the Director of Communications for the VCU School of the Arts. You can e-mail her at [dkwaters@vcu.edu](mailto:dkwaters@vcu.edu).
- Rachel Everett (AD, 2001) completed the new Old Navy Back-to-School campaign. She wrote the company's first-ever tagline: Get Your Fash'On. She recently resigned from Deutsch LA and is currently freelancing.
- Mira Kaddoura (AD, 2002) is an art director at Wieden + Kennedy in Portland. Her Nike "I Feel Pretty" spot with Maria Sharipova was recently named one of Adcritic's Best Spots.
- Charles Gschwend (CW, 2003) is a copywriter at Wieden + Kennedy in Portland. He was previously at Butler, Shine, Stern & Partners.
- Jacob Fields (CW, 2000) is starting a job as a copywriter at The Buntin Group in Nashville in mid-September.