

Professor helps shape forum advancing global journalism

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Alfred University communication studies professor Robyn Goodman is at the forefront of assuring a future for journalism in the fast-paced and issue-challenged industry.

Goodman, a founding World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) executive officer, helped organize and participated in the third WJEC, July 3-5 in Mechelen (near Brussels), Belgium, where journalism educators from around the globe shared their research on how to improve journalism education worldwide.

“At a time in which the field of journalism is being rocked by economic challenges, technical advances, and ethical issues, the WJEC conferences (congresses) fill a very important need,” said Goodman. “Meeting with educators worldwide facing surprisingly similar problems preparing future journalists for quality coverage provides all of us with a rare opportunity to look at our most challenging issues through a global prism and gain invaluable insight.

“And on a personal note, these conferences greatly enhance not only my classroom teaching but my scholarly contributions as well,” she added.

The WJEC conferences, sponsored by the WJEC council, are dedicated to the advancement of journalism worldwide; the WJEC also conducts a global census, and produces scholarship. Learn more at: (<http://wjec.ou.edu/congress.php>)

The World Journalism Education Council is an informal coalition representing 32 academic associations that are involved in journalism and mass communication at the university level. By bringing organizations from six continents together, the Council hopes to provide a common space for journalism educators from around the world and to focus on issues that are universal in the field, explained Goodman.

The three-day Belgium conference (WJEC-3), hosted by the European Journalism Training Association and the Flemish/Dutch Network of Journalism Institutes, focused on educators discussing and figuring out how to help their journalism students become the best advocates possible for quality journalism. For example, conference sessions focused on everything from the need for future journalists to be accountable and transparent as possible to innovative ways to fund their future work.

During WJEC-3, Goodman also helped oversee “the Syndicates” portion of the Congress, a series of interactive meetings focusing on the day’s most pressing journalism education issues. She will be summarizing and publishing findings from these sessions.

As for the WJEC’s non-conference-related work, it has created an important list of universal journalism principles and standards and a world journalism education census. The list is already helping journalists worldwide in closed or partially closed societies who are struggling with reporting information more freely, Goodman said.

“When reporters tell those trying to suppress news about these global journalism standards they are sometimes given more leeway in doing so and/or face less dangerous reprisals,” she said. View the principles at:

<http://wjec.ou.edu/principles.php>

“We’re also very proud of our world journalism education census, which is the first known to gather such an extensive list of journalism education programs worldwide,” added Goodman. “We’ve done this so we can find one another and work together to improve journalism education worldwide.” Find the census at:

<http://wjec.ou.edu/census.php>

The WJEC-3 was preceded by the WJEC-2 in South Africa (2010) and the WJEC-1 in Singapore (2007). Currently, bids are being accepted for hosting the WJEC-4 in 2016. For more information: <http://wjec.ou.edu/congress.php>

