

## **Advance-Titan takes 1st in WNA student press excellence**

**by News Bureau - Monday, March 05, 2012**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/17389/advance-titan-takes-1st-in-wna-student-press-excellence/>

The University of Wisconsin's own student newspaper the *Advance-Titan* took home first-place recognition from the Wisconsin Newspaper Association (WNA) Foundation annual awards on Feb. 23.

The *Advance-Titan* was one of two first-place general excellence award winners. The other was UW Madison's *The Badger Herald*.

"Student journalists are often viewed as 'kids' or as not being 'real journalists,' even though they are governed by the same laws and same ethical codes that all journalists are expected to follow," said Vince Filak, assistant journalism professor and *Advance-Titan* adviser. "Even more, they have a very crucial niche to cover that other media often ignore: the campus. That's probably the most satisfying thing about this award. During our critique prior to the award ceremony, Bill Lueders (a judge) said he was really impressed at how well the *Advance-Titan* covered the campus. He said that the paper gave readers not only important local coverage, such as changes to food policies and campus-wide events, but the staffers also did a great job of localizing big news."

In the 2011 WNA newspaper contest, the *Advance-Titan* was among many professional media outlets competing for top honors. This year's contest included 2,869 total entries from 135 state newspapers. Eligible entries were published between Sept. 1, 2010, and Aug. 31, 2011.

Some of the biggest challenges in the last several years for all categories of newspapers and media organizations have been budget cuts, challenges the staffers at the *Advance-Titan* have had to both write about and deal with internally.

"We actually just made the difficult decision to cut the salaries quite substantially because the funds just aren't there," said Emily Miels, editor-in-chief at the *Advance-Titan*. "Honestly, I think winning this award helped to soften that financial blow a little bit. It was just a good reminder that we do what we do at the *Advance-Titan* because we love it and enjoy improving our skills and growing as journalists, not for the paycheck. During these unstable times, it's nice to be recognized and see that all our hard work pays off in the end."

Filak, too, knows the economy is hard on everyone, including the students he mentors at the student paper.

"Student media has its own challenges that are economy-related. We have a smaller and continually shrinking base of people who are interested in purchasing ads. We have constant turnover of staff because people graduate or people need to take other jobs that can pay better. We have issues of trying to train people on limited budgets, knowing full well that we'll need to train another group fairly soon," he said.

But the challenges have not halted the students who comprise the *Advance-Titan* staff. They use their

extracurricular time to make sure the weekly newspaper is written, photographed, designed and edited professionally.

“The biggest thing for us is that we're doing our job to get the people on this campus news that matters to them,” Filak said. “If we're doing that, we're golden.”

Read more:

- [The \*Advance-Titan\* online](#)
- [Wisconsin newspapers earn awards](#)