

Opening Session

Panelists:

Rosental Calmon Alves, Professor and Knight Chair in Journalism and UNESCO Chair in Communications, University of Texas at Austin

Lorraine Branham, Director, School of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin

Rod Hart, Dean, College of Communications, University of Texas at Austin

ROSENAL CALMON ALVES: It's a pleasure to have you here. I'm sorry about the storm. We have not managed the weather as we wish so we had a few delays and problems with flights but I think we are ready to start.

We have a wonderful lineup of speakers again. We are very happy to be here at the ACES Building and I have last night received an email from someone outraged that I was emphasizing so much in newspapers on this conference instead of television stations. So I want to start with an apology for that. But this year was on purpose so next year we're going to do a little more of television.

And I have here with me the, my big boss is here, the Dean of the College of Communication, Rod Hart, and the Director of the School of Journalism of The University of Texas at Austin to welcome you. So I'm going to ask the Dean to say a few words first and then Lorraine Branham will follow him.

ROD HART: It's a pleasure to have all of you here and when I say that I mean here, in this building, because you are a large and mangy group when you were in my building and you outgrew us. We didn't, we could not accommodate you so it's really wonderful to have these facilities. We are, as we say in Texas, we're fixin' to build a new building and you say fixing when you don't actually have all the money. So I'd like to be telling you that we're going to build a building and we will but it will take a bit and then at some point when you come back to one of these conferences in the future, we'll have you in our new building, which is now a parking lot but it'll be a building one of these days soon.

I think this conference, as evidenced by the number of people here, attests to the importance of this discussion that you're having. The University of Texas is one of eight schools that's been part of something called a Carnegie Knight Initiative and every three or four months or so the deans from the various schools and colleges get together in New York and think about the future of Journalism education and where it's going and how it's going there. And the kinds of issues that you're focusing upon in this conference are very much a part of that discussion.

I've, I was talking to someone the other day and they said, talking about young people and how tech savvy they are and I said, you know, "Well we have a lot of reverse mentoring going on in the College of Communications, School of Journalism," because these young people come to us, these kind of cyber athletes come to us and

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they know all the tricks in the trade and that sort of thing but I was comparing it to Mack Brown who is the football coach here. Very successful one. And Mack can't run the 100-yard dash very fast anymore and these young people that he brings in can run really fast. But they don't really know where to go. And his job is to tell them where to go and how to go there, even though he himself is not a great cyber athlete.

And I think to some extent that's probably true of, in an era of online journalism and online everything, that the students comes to us with a lot of technological knowledge but they don't necessarily have anything to say and so in some sense we're in an odd moment in history where these wonderful cyber athletes come and our job is to do the job that journalism education has performed for years and years and years and that is to tell them, help them to figure out how to tell a story. And that story telling is different in a web based era than it was in a print based era but in some senses we are caught in the, in between the jaws of the cyber revolution and the old, and the oldest challenge which is to tell a story with authority and integrity and with some ability to engage an audience.

So you folks are here to help us think through those things. And on behalf of the College, I sincerely welcome each and every one of you.

ROSENAL CALMON ALVES: Thank you, Dean. And Lorraine Branham.

LORRAINE BRANHAM: Well the Dean...

ROSENAL CALMON ALVES: You have to push that.

LORRAINE BRANHAM: All of my great lines about the, what we're doing in journalism education. I, too, want to welcome you to The University of Texas. I won't apologize for the weather. I promise you it will change. It always does.

This is my fifth online journalism symposium and it's been fascinating to watch the evolution of this symposium at the same time observing what's been going on in our industry. And it's especially crucial for us in journalism education because we're busy trying to train the next generation of journalists and trying to figure out exactly what they need to know, what skills they need to have to be successful in the marketplace and how we can help you do what you need to do to change the business.

And it's also somewhat of a frightening time because none of us know where it's going but what I love about this symposium is having the opportunity to bring folks from the industry together with professors and students who are also looking at these things from different angles and working together to try to figure out how we get to where we need to go. How do you engage young readers? How do you transform the newsroom? How do you give people inside the newsroom and people coming into the newsroom new story telling skills? And also how do we preserve the journalism that we all know and love and that got most of us into this business in the first place while at the same time exploring new business models and figuring out how do you make money in this darn brave new world that we're embarking upon?

So I hope that over the next two days some ideas will come forth, that we'll all leave here a little bit smarter, a little bit more I guess positive about the business that we're in and that we continue to work together as journalism educators and

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journalists to make the business that we all want to be in a strong business, a new business, a fun business because journalism should be fun. But also a business that understands that it has to change, it has to be different and it's not what it used to be.

So thank you all for helping us engage in this conversation and I look forward to talk with you about some of these things later.