



THE COWAN YEARS:
LOOKING FORWARD
LOOKING BACK

Geoffrey Cowan says he's having fun living in 1912. Engrossed in the book he is writing about Theodore Roosevelt's 1912 presidential campaign and the birth of the primary election, Cowan is in his figurative time machine—exploring historic events of contemporary importance while looking ahead to his own future as well.

After more than 10 years as dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication, Cowan leaves his post in July. His legacy is impressive by any standard, evidenced by dramatic increases in the quality and number of faculty and students; unprecedented growth in endowment and funded research; the introduction of pioneering curricular advances; and a wealth of new research centers.

At the conclusion of his tenure as dean, Cowan will embark on a yearlong sabbatical as a fellow at the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government before returning to USC Annenberg

“Geoff Cowan has managed to be ahead of so many curves in our line of work that it is impossible to do justice to them all. His ferocious energy, disciplined intellect, wide-ranging curiosity and repeated willingness to try new things as they emerge are packaged in a personality that inspires others to give their best as well. Each stop on his way has been a success; each has left the institution he served much better than he found it.”



—Hodding Carter III

*University Professor of Leadership and Public Policy, University of North Carolina
Former President and CEO of the Knight Foundation and Former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs*

as the holder of the new Annenberg Family Chair in Communication Leadership in fall 2008.

During his sabbatical, he also plans to explore innovative business models for news (in collaboration with Orville Schell, retiring dean of the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism); participate in discussions about the government’s need for secrecy and the public’s right to know as part of a national college tour of his award-winning play “Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers”; and, in keeping with his longstanding efforts to further the field of public diplomacy, serve as guest editor of an upcoming volume of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. And he intends to immerse himself fully into the Roosevelt book.

His longstanding interest in Roosevelt is fitting. It was Roosevelt’s 1912 campaign that motivated Cowan, at age 26, fresh out of Yale Law School, to advocate—and achieve—sweeping reforms in the nomination process during the 1968 Democratic presidential convention. Both men also are known for their boundless energy and seemingly infinite curiosity.

1996

In late November, Geoffrey Cowan becomes dean.

1997

Associate Dean Martin Kaplan joins USC Annenberg.

Annenberg TV News—a nightly newscast produced entirely by Annenberg students working under professional supervision—begins production.

USC Annenberg unveils its distinctive “A” as part of its new graphic identity and branding program.

1998

RESEARCH INITIATIVES:

- Center for Communication Law and Policy (with USC Gould School of Law)
- Metamorphosis: Transforming the Ties that Bind

USC Annenberg establishes its first Board of Councilors.

USC Annenberg

1998

inaugurates undergraduate study-abroad programs, which today include London, Amsterdam, Singapore, Hong Kong, Paris, Prague, Buenos Aires and Geneva.

The school inaugurates the Online Journalism and Communication Program. The program builds upon the success of the *Online Journalism*



“Dean Cowan has helped carry forward the communication revolution in remarkable ways. In the process he has moved the Annenberg School to the top in its field.”



—C.L. Max Nikias
USC Provost

“It can be exhausting to be around Geoff Cowan,” says Alex Jones, director of the Shorenstein Center. “There is that apparently bottomless spring of energy, that constantly churning intellect, and that non-stop shower of ideas that he throws off like sparks flying off a sharpening wheel.”

But unlike Roosevelt, whose favorite proverb was “Speak softly and carry a big stick,” Cowan relies more on his infectious enthusiasm and inspirational leadership to encourage others to implement his far-reaching vision for what the school could become.

“He radiates a sense of enjoyment and an appreciation of the enterprise,” says Larry Gross, director of the School of Communication. “He has woven together fairly disparate cultures and groups, giving all a sense of common enterprise and shared participation.”

Transforming the Annenberg School

When Cowan became dean in early November 1996, he took on the daunting task of unifying the original Annenberg graduate school founded by Ambassador Walter Annenberg in 1971, the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, and the School

Review—launched earlier in the year—which *The Industry Standard* dubs as a “must-read” for Internet scholars and practitioners.

1999

CURRICULAR EXPANSIONS:

- Western Knight Center for Specialized Journalism (with UC Berkeley)

The school completes phase one of an \$18 million renovation of the Annenberg building, more effectively linking the east and west wings of the facility, creating a sense of community and integrating high technology into classrooms and newly created laboratories. The project includes a state-of-the-art auditorium seating 220.

The school’s strategic plan garners approval, targeting four initiatives—1) the pursuit of communication in the public interest; 2) the study of the impact of new communication technologies; 3) the study of the role of entertainment, communication and culture; and 4) the study of the consequences and potentialities of

globalization. Thomas Hollihan, associate dean for faculty and academic affairs, spearheads the process.

The school initiates graduate study-abroad programs in London, Capetown and Hong Kong.

1999

“The last ten years have been by far the best the School has ever known.”



—Joe Saltzman
Journalism professor



of Journalism. Although officially merged in 1994, the three academic units were not yet a cohesive entity, let alone a single whole greater than its parts.

“Not only did he do that, but he also oversaw unprecedented growth in the school’s reputation, endowment, faculty and size, and the creation of a constellation of new centers, institutes and research projects that have been at the leading edge of the communication revolution,” says Marty Kaplan, associate dean and director of the school’s Norman Lear Center.

Early on, Cowan began calling upon many of the heads of state, media giants and cultural icons he has associated with in his career. Throughout his tenure, he has brought a steady stream of such leading figures into his introductory journalism classroom and to a

2000

2000

RESEARCH INITIATIVES:

- Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture
- Walter Cronkite Awards for Excellence in Television Political Journalism
- Reliable Resources for Broadcast Political Coverage
- Local News Archives (with University of Wisconsin)

CURRICULAR EXPANSIONS:

- Institute for Justice and Journalism

- Under the direction of Marty Kaplan, the school announces creation of the Norman Lear Center, an interdisciplinary effort to study entertainment as a defining concept of 21st century life. The Lear Center soon emerges as the nation’s leading entertainment research program.

USC Annenberg pioneers a new joint M.A. program in global communication with the London School of

Economics. Graduates of the program receive degrees from both institutions.

2001

RESEARCH INITIATIVES:

- Pew Hispanic Center Hollywood, Health and Society

With a \$6 million gift, the Annenberg Foundation creates the school’s first two endowed chairs, named for Wallis Annenberg.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and former *Los Angeles Times* editor Michael Parks becomes acting director of the School of Journalism. His official appointment begins in 2002.

Governor Gray Davis appoints Dean Cowan to chair a bipartisan commission on Internet political practices.

2001

“Geoff Cowan made an immensely important difference at USC. Those of us who have watched his energy and dedication to enhancing the Annenberg School know he has created a world-class institution and, most importantly, touched the lives of students in profound ways.”



—Henry Cisneros
Executive Chairman, CityView
Former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

wide range of public events at the school.

“That Geoff has the largest Rolodex I’ve ever seen has been a great help,” notes Michael Parks, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and former editor of the *Los Angeles Times* who Cowan recruited first as a visiting professor and then as director of the School of Journalism.

While the caliber and quantity of events and speakers at the school fostered USC Annenberg’s reputation as a leader in the field, the primary beneficiary remains the students.

“When students have the opportunity to be exposed to such an amazing range of people, it’s potentially a life-changing experience,” says Cowan. “They become part

2002

2002

RESEARCH INITIATIVES:

- Strategic Public Relations Center
- USC Annenberg Program for the Study of Public Broadcasting

CURRICULAR EXPANSIONS:

- USC Annenberg / Getty Arts Journalism Program

The Annenberg Foundation establishes a \$100 million endowment for the school, fueling USC Annenberg’s continued growth and adding financial

resources for new research projects, new faculty positions and student scholarships.

The School of Journalism introduces its signature core curriculum in which all undergraduate students—regardless of their track of study—take orientation and skills courses in print, broadcast and online media concurrently, fostering proficiency in all media platforms they will encounter after graduation.

Former chairman and publisher of the *San Jose Mercury News*,

Jay Harris joins the USC Annenberg faculty as the Wallis Annenberg Chair in Journalism and Democracy and director of the new Center for the Study of Journalism and Democracy.

Under the direction of Peter Monge, the school inaugurates the Annenberg Colloquia, which brings top scholars to campus to present research and visit

classes. Participants have included A FEW NAMES TO COME.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation establishes the Knight Chair in Media and Religion with a \$1.5 million grant. Journalist and author Diane Winston, who previously directed religion and media projects at NYU and Northwestern, joins the faculty as inaugural holder of the chair in 2003.

of a conversation where everyone is equal, where their perspective is embraced and welcomed.”

The school also attracts some of the world’s leading communication professionals, scholars and teachers to the ranks of its faculty, which has grown exponentially over the past decade. According to Parks, a search for new journalism faculty this year has yielded more than 90 outstanding applicants, including Pulitzer Prize winners, duPont-Columbia Award winners in broadcasting, authors of bestselling books and finalists for the National Book Award. “There’s been a huge change in the caliber of people who want to join our faculty,” he says. “That’s a direct result of the accomplishments of Geoff’s tenure.”

A host of interdisciplinary research centers and programs established over the past decade further strengthen the school’s rich academic environment. They have ranged from the Center for the Digital Future—which conducts a widely respected longitudinal study of the Internet—to the Center for Communication Law and Policy—which hosted a Federal Communications Commission hearing on media ownership rules—and from the Norman Lear Center—the nation’s leading entertainment research program—to the

USC Annenberg Announces the Geoffrey Cowan Scholarship Fund

In deep gratitude for all that Geoff Cowan has done for USC Annenberg and particularly for its students, the school is pleased to announce that it is establishing the **Geoffrey Cowan Endowed Scholarship Fund** in his honor. We hope to raise a significant endowment from friends, colleagues, students past and present, parents and others whose lives have been touched and transformed by this extraordinary man.

Throughout his tenure as Dean, Geoff Cowan’s no. 1 concern has been for USC Annenberg’s students: providing them with intellectual challenges, a supportive environment and exceptional opportunities for professional experience. In addition, Cowan has taught a highly popular undergraduate course each year. He believes that students thrive best when they are freed from burdensome financial-aid obligations, and so he has actively sought support for students who must struggle to meet the costs of higher education. The Geoffrey Cowan Scholarships will therefore support undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need, enhancing the students’ financial aid packages by eliminating their loan and work/study obligations. In addition the scholarship will honor Cowan’s commitment to the importance of community service and equal opportunities by selecting students who best exemplify these values.

All gifts to the Geoffrey Cowan Endowed Scholarship Fund will pay tribute to a man whose vision, passion and extraordinary range of talents have helped to propel USC Annenberg to its current leadership position. Additionally, each individual who honors Geoff in this way may take pride in knowing that his or her gift will also enable USC Annenberg to continue, in perpetuity, the tradition of attracting and educating innovative and ambitious young people who—like Geoff Cowan himself—will re-imagine the future as they help to shape our society.

To make a gift to the Geoffrey Cowan Scholarship Fund, please call 213-821-1660 or send a check with Geoffrey Cowan Scholarship Fund noted on the memo line to:

USC Annenberg School for Communication
Development and Alumni Relations
3502 Watt Way, Suite 304
Los Angeles, California 90089-0281



“Dean Cowan has been a larger than life force—inspiring all of us with his energy, intelligence and dedication to education. Perhaps most importantly—despite his many responsibilities, projects and initiatives—he never fails to make students feel that they are his first priority.”



—Amelia Arsenault
Ph.D. Candidate

Pew Hispanic Center, the largest think tank and research operation studying Hispanic attitudes in America today.

USC Annenberg is reinventing journalism and communication education while also pioneering new fields of study. Together with the USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences’ School of International Relations, USC Annenberg now offers the world’s first master’s degree in public diplomacy as part of the Center on Public Diplomacy, a major research and teaching institute. The Charles Annenberg Weingarten Program on Online Communities enables students to enroll in a new track in the study of online communities, the first program of its kind anywhere. The school also launched a joint master’s program in global communication with the London School of Economics and

“Geoff Cowan is a world-class human being, and I’m proud to count him as a personal friend. I admire his wide open intellectual curiosity about everything, and the way he’s always thinking outside the box and across time.”



Gary Kusin
Partner, Texas Pacific Group
Former CEO of FedEx Kinko’s

unveiled sweeping changes to the communication management master’s program, enhancing its stature as a premier credential for professional communicators.

In the School of Journalism, all undergraduates—regardless of their track of study—now take courses in print, broadcast and online media concurrently, fostering proficiency in all media platforms they will encounter after graduation. A new graduate degree in specialized journalism has just won approval, while numerous programs for mid-career journalists—focusing on arts, health, justice, new media, science and technology, and theater and musical theater—have been introduced since 1999, benefiting more than 300 journalists each year.

“And those are just the formal programs,” adds Parks. “We have 20 other smaller, one-day workshops throughout the year.”

The remarkable growth of the school over the past decade necessitated and was fueled

2003

2003

RESEARCH INITIATIVES:

- USC Center on Public Diplomacy (with USC School of International Relations)
- USC Annenberg Local Broadcast News Initiative
- Annenberg Institute on Youth and Media
- Japan Media Review (with USC East Asian Studies Center and Center for Global Communications at International University of Japan)
- Annenberg Research Network on International Communication

On the eve of the Iraq war, the school launches the Dean’s Open Forum series—an informal lunchtime discussion of topics in the news that has attracted such leading figures as William Styron, Juan Williams, NEED TO ADD MORE.

After 35 years teaching communication at the University of Pennsylvania, Larry Gross joins USC Annenberg as director of the School of Communication. A specialist in the areas of media and culture, art and communication, visual communication

and media portrayals of minorities, Gross helped found the field of gay and lesbian studies.

A world-renowned authority on the information age, Manuel Castells joins the USC Annenberg faculty as the Wallis Annenberg Chair in Communication.

The school partners with the USC East Asian Studies Center and the Center for Global Communications at the International University of Japan to publish the *Japan Media Review*, an online-only journal examining how

emerging technologies are changing the practice, ethics, law, business and politics of journalism in Japan.

The school launches TriSight Communications—a student-run public relations firm based at USC Annenberg. The firm works exclusively with nonprofit and small-business clients providing strategic-planning services and integrated public relations campaigns.

Members of the Federal Communications Commission, along with

“Dean Cowan’s consistent articulation and delivery of academic excellence not only improved our institution during his tenure but also set important benchmarks for the future. Indeed, his legacy will no doubt only grow as time goes on.”



—Suzanne Nora Johnson
Vice Chairman, Goldman Sachs

by a corresponding investment in the school’s endowment and physical plant.

“The university and the Annenberg family have been wonderfully supportive,” says Cowan. “The Annenbergs have made it possible to do the things we dreamed of doing. And we’ve been part of the university’s overall improvement. As John F. Kennedy said, a rising tide lifts all ships. We made a contribution to USC’s rising tide, but we benefited from it as well.”

An \$18 million, three-phase renovation of the building begun early in Cowan’s tenure and completed in 2004 added more than 14,000 square feet to the facility, adding an auditorium, new media center and laboratories while more effectively linking the east and west wings of the building. The renovated Annenberg lobby, complete with a coffee card and a score of inviting seating areas, is conducive to the kind of interaction Cowan says is essential to creating a small college experience at a big university. With its big-screen

representatives from industry and the creative community gather at a USC Annenberg public forum hosted by the Center for Communication Law and Policy to discuss changes to rules governing media ownership.

2004

RESEARCH INITIATIVES:

- Center for the Digital Future (transferred from UCLA)
- Haptics Lab

USC Annenberg communication professor Rebecca Weintraub wins the 2004 Award

for Higher Education for Distance Learning Teaching presented by the U.S. Distance Learning Association for her Strategic Corporate Communication class (Communication 502).

The Doctoral Education Committee of the National Communication Association ranks USC Annenberg as the top program in communication and technology, the second leading program in intercultural and international communication, and among the top five in

four other sub-fields of the discipline. The Lear Center produces a series of events at the Tribeca Film Festival, including panel discussions and presentations featuring Peter Jennings, Norman Lear, *New Yorker* writer Ken Auletta and a host of other news, entertainment industry and government experts.

The school completes the third phase of the building expansion and renovation project, which adds more than 14,000 square feet to the facility, including a 30-

student seminar room, a 20-student multimedia classroom, a 2,300-square-foot new media center, 3,100 square feet for 21 student-services offices and 4,000 square feet for doctoral students.

The school develops a new certificate program in Communication Management for professionals.

2004

“I have watched Annenberg (and USC as a whole) do exactly what the alumni hope it will do—get better and better each year. Dean Cowan has created a dynamic environment for students and has attracted wonderful professors to the school who, in my view, offer very practical knowledge.”



—Seth Doane '00
Correspondent, CNN-International
New Delhi, India

televisions broadcasting news 24/7, it also helps students maintain a connection with the larger world.

While the school's physical alteration is readily apparent, its financial renovation is even more dramatic: endowment growth from \$6.5 million to more than \$200 million, including a gift of \$100 million from the Annenberg Foundation in 2002; creation of the school's first endowed chairs, now numbering five; and a twelve-fold increase in external research funding.

“‘Transformed’ is a word that gets used a lot in academia, but here it really fits,” says Gross.

“If you asked professionals 10 or 11 years ago to name the top journalism schools, I don't think Annenberg would have been in there,” adds Parks. “Now, without question, we would.”

Future of the School

The consensus is Cowan will be a tough act to follow.

“It's great to leave when people don't want you to leave,” says Cowan, whose advice to his successor is to take advantage of what's been built and “make it even better than what we dreamed it could be.”

2005

RESEARCH INITIATIVES:

- Grand Avenue Intervention Project

CURRICULAR EXPANSIONS:

- California Endowment Health Journalism Fellowships
- Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education
- NEA Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater

USC Annenberg becomes one of two U.S. locales to host the World Press Photo exhibition, the world's largest and most prestigious annual press photography contest.

The USC Annenberg Trojan Debate Squad celebrates its 125th anniversary. The squad holds the national record for the most consecutive qualifications to the prestigious National

Debate Tournament. Dean Cowan brought the Trojan Debate Squad under the USC Annenberg umbrella, providing funding for the team and making it into a signature program.

USC Annenberg and the USC School of International Relations launch a new master's degree in public diplomacy—the first of

its kind anywhere in the world.

“Impact,” the television news magazine produced by USC Annenberg students, takes first place in the 2004-2005 College TV Awards for best television magazine show.

2005

“It can be exhausting to be around Geoff Cowan. There is that apparently bottomless spring of energy, that constantly churning intellect, and that non-stop shower of ideas that he throws off like sparks flying off a sharpening wheel. It comes as no surprise to those who know him that he has put his powerful stamp on the Annenberg School, and I have no doubt that the next chapter will be just as glorious.”



—Alex S. Jones

*Director, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics & Public Policy
John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University*

“The school is in wonderful shape,” he adds. “It has great faculty and students, a great facility, strong interdisciplinary programs, an excellent reputation. The next generation has to define it its own way.”

In addition to a strong senior faculty, USC Annenberg has nurtured and retained an impressive mid-career and junior faculty. “A lot of us are veterans,” says Gross, “but the next cohort is extremely strong across the board. In 10 years, the school will be at least as strong, if not stronger in terms of faculty and in terms of resources. The field is dynamic and we are very well placed in the key issues and frontiers of the field.”

“For everything there is a season,” adds Cowan. “It’s time for the school and for me to engage in a type of repotting—to discover new skills and new forms of creativity. I’ve tried to create an environment where wonderful things can take root. It will be a great transition year for me. Then I will come back, thanks to the generosity of the Annenberg family, to a city and a school that have become enormously exciting places, and see other wonderful flowers bloom and enjoy another spring.”

2006

Top names in fashion, music, television, film and academia converge at USC Annenberg for Ready to Share: Fashion & the Ownership of Creativity—a groundbreaking conference on the cultural nexus of fashion and entertainment produced by the Lear Center, which also publishes a companion book on the subject.

2006

RESEARCH INITIATIVES:

- PopAndPolitics.com

CURRICULAR EXPANSIONS:

- Knight New Media Center
- Charles Annenberg Weingarten Program on Online Communities
- News21
- Edward R. Murrow Journalism Fellows Program

Dean Cowan is named the inaugural holder of the Annenberg Family Chair in Communication Leadership and director of the school’s Center on Communication Leadership.

The School of Communication introduces sweeping changes to the Communication Management master’s program with the first

cohort of students enrolling in the new program.

The Center for Communication Law and Policy holds an official Federal Communications Commission hearing—the first outside of Washington, D.C.

What's next?

When Geoffrey Cowan returns from sabbatical in 2008, he will begin a tenure of a different kind, serving in the newly funded position of the Annenberg Family Chair in Communication Leadership.

While “Communication Leadership” may seem difficult to define, Cowan knows exactly what he wants to do in the position. As chair, he will lead a series of research projects with the hope of reaching a better understanding of the effects media has on society. This mission touches on many of the research centers and programs started during Cowan’s term as dean, from the future of digital media to its effect on children and education.

The project is made possible by a generous gift from the Annenberg Foundation in honor of Cowan’s retirement, part of a \$6 million donation made at the direction of foundation trustees Leonore Annenberg, Wallis Annenberg, Lauren Bon, Charles Annenberg Weingarten and Gregory Annenberg Weingarten.



2007

The school announces the launch of the *International Journal of Communication*, a new scholarly publication co-edited by Larry Gross and

Manuel Castells. The first cohort of students in the Charles Annenberg Weingarten Program in Online Communities begins study.

USC Annenberg announces creation of its fifth endowed chair, the Norman Lear Chair in Entertainment, Politics and Society. The chair will be held by Martin

Kaplan, associate dean and director of the Lear Center. The center’s total fundraising also reaches \$20 million.

2007