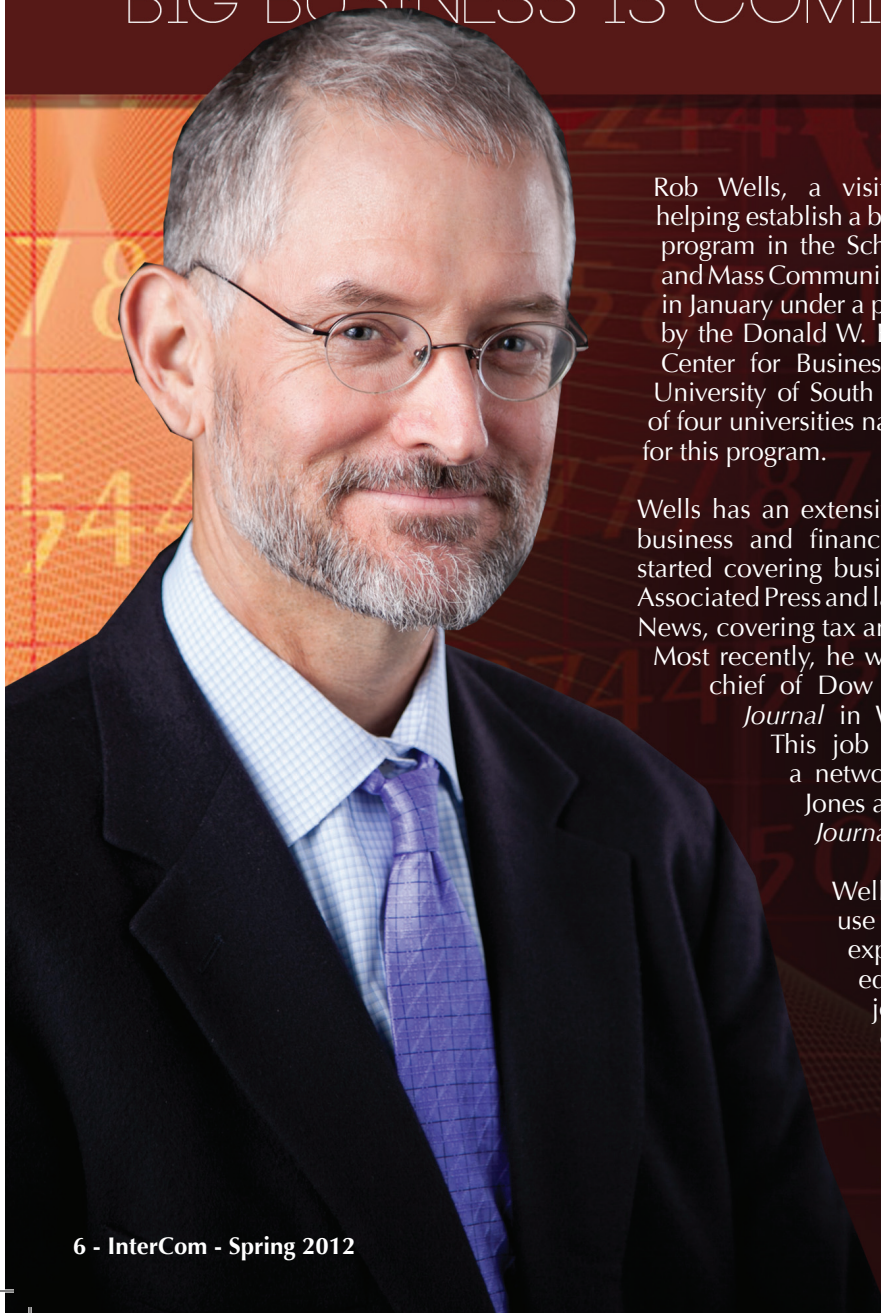


THE BUSINESS JOURNALISM INITIATIVE:

BIG BUSINESS IS COMING TO THE SCHOOL OF



Rob Wells, a visiting professor, is helping establish a business journalism program in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. He arrived in January under a program sponsored by the Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism. The University of South Carolina was one of four universities nationwide selected for this program.

Wells has an extensive background in business and financial reporting. He started covering business issues at the Associated Press and later for Bloomberg News, covering tax and banking policy. Most recently, he was deputy bureau chief of Dow Jones/*Wall Street Journal* in Washington, D.C. This job entailed building a network between Dow Jones and the *Wall Street Journal*.

Wells has decided to use his professional experience to educate aspiring journalists. He currently serves as adjunct professor at the University of Maryland in the Philip

Merrill College of Journalism. Due to his comprehensive portfolio as reporter and educator, the Reynolds Center selected him to assist with emerging business journalism programs.

Strong alumni and organizational support of the J-school helped secure the Reynolds Center's grant of \$50,000. Ken Baldwin gave the Baldwin Business and Financial Journalism Endowment Fund to the J-school in 2009. Baldwin is a 1949 alumnus, and it is his intention that the school becomes a force in reporting business at local, state and national levels. Baldwin said, "This visiting professorship is a tremendous opportunity for students and the community that will lead to synergy between the School of Journalism and the business school."

The Reynolds Center also considered another ongoing business journalism initiative at the University of South Carolina, the David J. Morrow scholarship. This \$90,000 gift from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers (SABEW) is dedicated to the memory of David Morrow, an alumnus of the J-school and business writer for *Fortune*, *The New York Times*, and *SmartMoney*.



Journalism and Mass Communications

By John Simmons

Wells taught two business journalism courses in the spring semester. One focused on the basic economic reporting issues, and the other examined the interplay between corporations and the media. Wells said, "These are small, intimate classes. The material is pretty challenging as these are pretty tough courses. The students have been getting into it quite a bit. They're looking at legal documents to find information and interpret the legal 'mumbo jumbo.'"

In addition to Wells' work in the classroom, he is trying to make this program sustainable. The journalism school is collaborating with SCETV to launch a new business journalism news program as part of the program's outreach to the community. This program, "Paydirt," will have a website and a radio program on SCETV Radio that will tap student interns. The program segments will range from a feature story, to a newsmaker interview, to a segment on financial literacy. This program is set to launch early in 2013. Tom Posey, director of public media for SCETV and a J-school alumnus, has been integral in launching this media program. He said, "I'm very optimistic it'll work out. Wells' business reporting experience paired with the experience

of our web developers can bring this together. If we can get some good underwriters, this will tie together and be a great program."

When this media program launches, it will be a major step in the J-school becoming a force in business journalism.

Robert Appel, director of marketing for the Darla Moore School of Business, worked with Wells to establish the synergy necessary between the business journalism program and the business school. Further coordination between the schools will create opportunities in the form of internships for students, expert content and story ideas from the business school for media outreach, and assistance in developing courses.

"In a lot of 'lay' media, business journalism is underrepresented," Appel said. "It's important to craft the message to show the effects business has on our daily lives. When I first met Rob Wells, I believed his knowledge and expertise would serve the university well in establishing this program and that he'd be a source of inspiration to his students in exploring opportunities in business journalism."

Wells described his time at the J-school. "It has been an excellent experience. The faculty has been supportive and go out of their way to help. I'm impressed with the knowledge and expertise this school has to offer its students."

Dr. Carol Pardun, SJMC director, and the faculty will determine the next step for the business journalism program. Wells established a network between the J-school and the Darla Moore School of Business to get this program running and worked with other key figures. These include Baldwin and Fred Monk, former president of SABEW, the men who have been the driving force behind this effort. Wells has provided the necessary tools for Dr. Pardun to further refine this new program.

The business journalism program will be the focal theme for this fall's media and convergence conference, an annual conference created by SJMC in 2002. The 11th Annual Convergence and Society Conference will take place Sept. 27-28. 