



Kasovich named new department head, finds home in community

By Chris Singleton

While growing up in a U.S. Air Force family, A. Laure Chamberlain Kasovich's journey had stops in many places.

She was born in Nebraska and would eventually live in California, Michigan, Mississippi, West Virginia, New York and Tennessee.

She moved to Louisiana and joined the Nicholls State University Department of Mass Communication faculty as an instructor in 2011.

Kasovich said the unique culture of south Louisiana was the perfect place for her to satisfy her taste for storytelling as a journalist and professor.

She has lived in Thibodaux for 16 years, which is longer than any other place she has ever called home.

"It has been truly a blessing and a privilege to be able to explore this culture as an outsider, but with true appreciation and love for it," Kasovich said.

"It has been an adventure and I truly enjoy being able to tell the stories of this region. I've lived in a lot of places, but everything about South Louisiana, from the accents to the smells, is only here. It's so cool to me."

Kasovich said her love for storytelling and south Louisiana will continue as she prepares for the next chapter of her career at Nicholls.

She moved into the role of department head for Mass Communication June 1 as acting department head and took of the permanent position with the start of the fall semester.

Kasovich took over for former department head Dr. James Stewart, who held the position for since December 1997 and guided the program through five successful Accrediting Council on Journalism and Mass Communication reviews.

"I'm excited for the chance to serve our students in a more strategic way," Kasovich said. "And I look forward to carrying on Dr.



Kasovich

Stewart's legacy and continue what he started."

Stewart, who will remain on the MACO a faculty member, said Kasovich will be a great fit as department head. He has watched her shine as a classroom instructor and as an administrative leader of the Department's internship programs.

"Laure has been a valuable member of the department," Stewart said. "She has a lot of good ideas for moving the department from where we are now and to new things, which I think is good for the department."

Kasovich said she learned a lot about journalism, education and more from Stewart and the late Dr. Al Delahaye, a Nicholls professor emeritus of journalism who created the Department of Mass Communication in 1973.

He had over 52 years of service to Nicholls before his death in 2021.

"I feel the weight and the responsibility of what Dr. Delahaye started with his motivation and investment in young people in this region," Kasovich said.

Kasovich said she accepted the role because she understands the importance of journalism and public relations in society.

She demands excellence from all of her students, and she wants to help them reach their goals.

"I love doing things that benefit and impact other people," Kasovich said. "I didn't take this job for me. I'm taking this job because I was asked and because I love our students and I love our profession."

Kasovich has earned many accolades during her career. She earned her master's degree in

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Photo by James Stewart

Laure Kasovich, second from right, poses with MACO students alongside a statue of Martin Luther King Jr. following their presentation on the campus of Newcastle University in England. The statue was put in place to commemorate Dr. King's visit to the campus shortly before his assassination. Kasovich, along with Dr. James Stewart, took students to England and Scotland as part of the Nancy Sanderson Matherne Institute for Global Communication activities. This is the third year the Department was able to take students to the UK to make presentations for the institute, which was established by Kellie Daniels (second from left) and her father Dr. Brian Matherne of Houma. Also pictured from left are students Kate Clements, Sydney Hubbard, Cahil Picou and Emily Gramajo.

Martin retires from Nicholls, teaching

Dr. Linda Martin retired from Nicholls at end of the fall term after nine and a half years of service to the Department.

Martin, who earned her doctorate in Communication from the University of Tennessee, joined the Nicholls faculty as an assistant professor of Mass Communication in August of 2016.

Prior to her arrival at Nicholls, she had retired from the state system after having worked at a other institutions.

She taught courses in the public relations sequence, History and Principles of Mass Communication and Women, Media Research and Minorities in the media, among other courses.

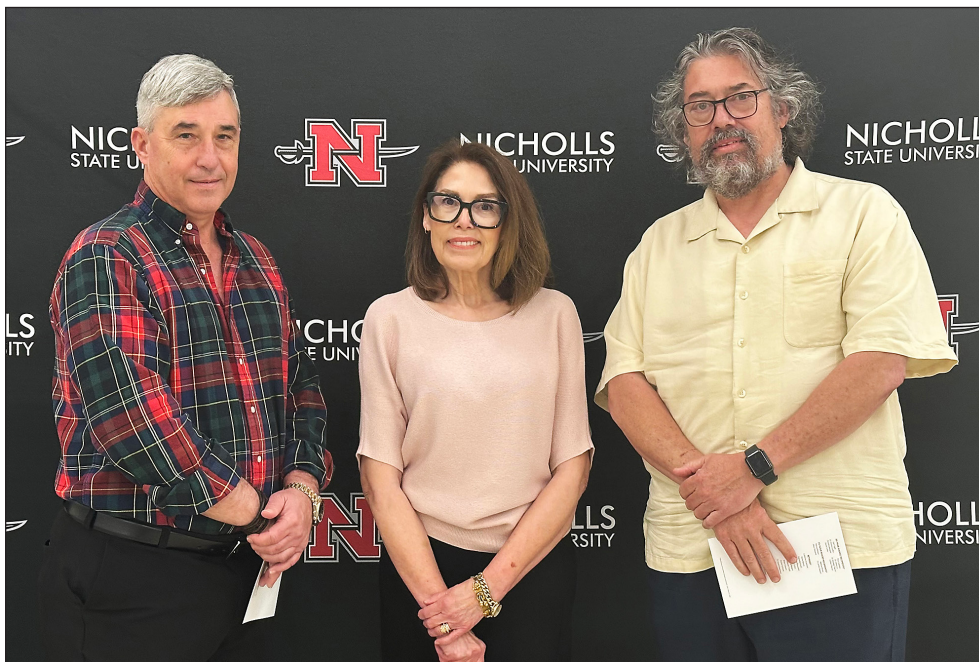
She also served as adviser to the Nicholls chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America.

"It was one of the greatest fortunes of my life that Nicholls needed a PR professor just as I was moving to Thibodaux," Martin said. "The MACO faculty became my new community, and the Maco students were smart, creative and had a genuine interest in the people and the world around them."

Active with the Thibodaux Chapter of Rotary International, she served as its president in 2020-2021. She received numerous awards from the organization, including twice being named as a Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow and a service award in 2026.



Martin



Service awards

During a spring ceremony, the University recognized three MACO faculty members for their years of service. From left are Dr. James Stewart (35 years), Dr. Linda Martin (nine years of service to Nicholls and 28 years of total service to the state) and Mr. Lance Arnold (25 years).

Singleton earns sports writing press honors

In June Mr. Chris Singleton, visiting instructor of Mass Communication and Fall 2006 MACO grad, won two awards at the weekend of the Louisiana Sports Writers Association and Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame ceremony in Natchitoches.

Singleton won first-place for best overall General sports column and honorable men-



Singleton

tion for best beat prep reporter in a class competing against pro reporters from The Times Picayune and Baton Rouge Advocate.

He also ranked in the Top Five in overall best reporters.

At the ceremony he was installed as secretary for the LSWA, which placed him on the leadership track to become its president in four years.

In this post he will be working closely with the Louisiana High School Athletic Association and professional/collegiate sports executives throughout the state.

Southern Miss grad joins public relations faculty

Dr. Sherin Farhana Moni joined the faculty as an instructor in August to replace Ms. Nicki Boudreaux.

Moni received her PhD from the University of Southern Mississippi in May.

Her dissertation is titled "Branding Black Beauty: A Content Analysis of Black Owned Beauty Brand's Instagram pages to understand advertising strategies and how that (re)constructed the identity of Black Women."



Moni

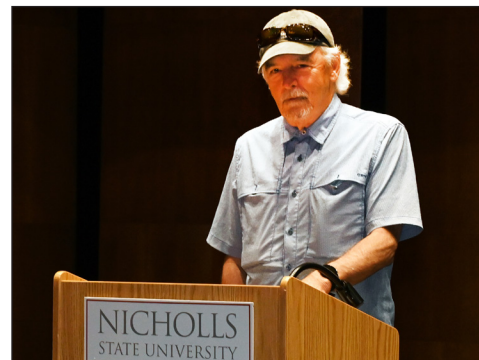
She received her master's degree in communication from the University of South Florida.

As a faculty member at Nicholls, Moni's focus is public relations.

Prior to joining the MACO faculty, she taught at Southern Miss, the University of Mississippi and the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, Bangladesh, among other institutions.

Her professional experience includes work as a communication specialist with Democracy International, Dhaka, Bangladesh, and as copy editor and translator for BBC Media Action, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

She has been an author or co-author of 19 scholarly conference presentations.



Reporter, author guest speaker

Ken Wells spoke to a group of Mass Communication students April 22 as a part of a promotional tour for his new book "Boudin," published by LSU Press. Ken spoke about the project and shared his views on the state of journalism.

Rousse returns as teacher, adviser

Ms. Meagan Rousse returned the Department of Mass Communication as an Instructor in August.

Rousse earned both her bachelor's degree in MACO with a minor in Vocal Music (2022) and her master's degree in Higher Education Leadership (2024) from Nicholls.

Rousse was serving as the advisor for the Student Programming Association and, most recently, as the Greek Life Coordinator at Nicholls.

This semester, she is teaching Mass Communication and Public Relations courses while also acting as the advisor for La Pirogue and coordinating student internships. She will also work with the Public Relations Student Society of America chapter.

Dr. James Stewart, who served as La Pirogue adviser, says Rousse will do an outstanding job with the book.

"We've worked together for a couple of years in her capacity with Student life, and she was always a great help," Stewart said.

Rousse said she is excited about the opportunity to help students grow both academically and professionally, while creating meaningful experiences inside and outside of the classroom.



Rousse

Stewart steps down as department head

In May Dr. James Stewart stepped down as department head after serving in that role since Spring of 1998, though he will remain on the faculty as a professor of Mass Communication.

"I have been fortunate through the years to have worked with a lot of excellent faculty and students. As result, in spite of pandemics, massive storms and frequent budget challenges, the Department has made tremendous strides" Stewart said. "I felt it was time for the Department to begin the next phase of its evolution."

Stewart said he is exited about the projects the Department has underway, and wanted to continue on the faculty.

"We have a lot of cool things going on, and I would like to remain a part of that," he said.

"Hopefully, I can continue to be an asset to the Department as it moves forward."

Stewart took on the role of department head following the retirement of Dr. E. Joseph Broussard, who had replaced Dr. Al Delahaye and who lead the Department to its first Accreditation by the Accreditation by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in May 1994.

"I slipped my feet into some pretty big shoes" Stewart said of his transition to Department head.

"Dr. Bousard guided us to our first accreditation, and, well there is just so much to say

about what Dr. Delahaye did for the Department and University," he added.

"That was the thing," Stewart said. "When I took over there was just such an amazing support system in place. Dr. Delahaye was still coming into the office everyday – including summers – helping wherever he could. Our administrative



Stewart

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assistant Irma Arceneaux was very experienced. She knew everybody on campus and knew how to do everything.

"As department head, I always felt I just had to build on the solid foundation Dr.

Delahaye established, and rely on the people around me," Stewart added.

During his tenure as department head, Stewart helped MACO through five re-affirmations of accreditation, with the unit only once being found out of compliance on any standard.

On the national stage, Stewart served as president of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication and on the ACEJMC Council.

On campus Stewart established the Nancy Sanderson Matherne Institute for Global Communication, and served as president of the Faculty Senate and the University chapter

Boudreaux joins BTNEP, focusing on environmental communication



Boudreaux

cation in May 2025.

Boudreaux now serves as the Education and Engagement Coordinator for the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program.

In this position, Boudreaux leads strategic communications planning, formal and informal education, community engagement and

After teaching and advising student media in the Nicholls Department of Mass Communication for almost 24 years, Ms. Nicki Lirrette Boudreaux (1998 MACO graduate, Faculty 2001-2025) began a new career in environmental communi-

outreach, and stakeholder relations efforts for Louisiana's only National Estuary Program.

While on the MACO faculty, Boudreaux's primary research interest was student media law. She was a strong advocate for the First Amendment protections of student journalists.

Almost 10 years ago, Boudreaux volunteered to chair a strategic planning effort for BTNEP. This partnership inspired her to expand her research agenda into coastal and environmental communications.

She created the department's first course in Environmental Communications and helped students create and implement multiple environmental public relations service-learning campaigns through the PR Campaigns course (MACO 440).

One of these campaigns culminated in the university's first Coastal Summit.

Boudreaux also directed the department's Nancy Sanderson Matherne Institute for Global Communications, accompanying students to England and Scotland where they presented award-winning work to the United Nations.

"It's hard to put into words what making a career serving my department and my university meant to me," Boudreaux said.

"I never anticipated starting a new career at this time in my life, but to have an opportunity to actively protect and restore our environment and our culture is a blessing," she said.

"How fortunate am I to know that one day I will be able to look back on my life and have had not one -- but two -- careers that I loved,"

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Magazine, Newspaper and Online Journalism from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and bachelor's degree in print journalism from Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee.

Kasovich began her journalism career as a government reporter at the Chattanooga Times Free Press and has since written for many other publications. She has also been an active graphic and web designer for more than 20 years.

Kasovich said covering hard news stories on pressure deadlines instilled discipline at a

young age. She recommends all communication students experience it during their careers.

"There is something really perfecting in having to be thrown into that daily environment on deadline," Kasovich said. "It gives you this realization that you can do anything and that you can do it fast. It helps you think faster. It helps you strategize and recognize patterns in a situation where you don't have a lot of time."

During her time as a Nicholls faculty member, Kasovich led and developed many key initiatives for MACO, including multimedia web design courses, the internship program and the digital media convergence capstone course.

She was awarded the Academic Affairs Award for Teaching Excellence in 2020 and the Outstanding Faculty Mentor in 2013.

She works closely with her students for Garde Voir Ci, a digital magazine produced every semester in her capstone course.

The magazine focuses on in-depth issues unique to south Louisiana.

Garde Voir Ci began a series in spring 2020 capturing the stories of south Louisiana's disappearing communities, people and culture, which Kasovich champions.

Garde Voir Ci has placed in two multimedia Hearst Journalism Awards and most recently won first-place for best website at the Southeast Journalism Conference in February 2026.

"In the last 16 years I've lived here, I've only scratched the surface about understanding and exploring and telling stories that impact people here," Kasovich said. "I look forward to doing

the capstone magazine every single semester because I love to have a reason to dig more into south Louisiana history and culture. To tell stories of different people who don't get to be told."

Kasovich said she never sees her classes as a large unit. She prefers to make it about each individual student, which is a reason why she loves the small-school environment at Nicholls. She gets an opportunity to know the students on a close personal level.

Kasovich said she requires students to always give their best, but to never be afraid to try new things.

"That's my favorite thing to tell students – do things that scare you to death and just keep trying," Kasovich said. "I'm most proud of the things in my life that I have done that have scared me and I did it anyway."

In her spare time, Kasovich said she enjoys traveling and spending time with her family, including her husband, Dr. Kevin Kasovich of Mitchell Family Eye Care of Thibodaux, and their two sons Patrick and Jack.

As she embarks on her new journey as a department head, Kasovich said she looks forward to becoming even more involved.

"I feel blessed that people here have been open and willing to tell their stories to me," Kasovich said. "I feel blessed that the students have been open and receptive to letting me be part of their journalism journey and lives. I'm grateful that I get to be a part of Nicholls and a part of these students' lives and their success."



Photo by James Stewart

Laure Kasovich moderating a panel discussion with faculty from Newcastle University as part of the Nancy Sanderson Matherne Institute for Global Communication activities.

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