BOONE, NC – Twenty new broadcasting students from four universities join the growing list of industry-educated talent to successfully complete the Kellar Radio Talent Institute on the campus of Appalachian State University. Students from Appalchalnchian State, Marshall University, UNC-Greensboro and N.C. State made up the largest class of students to participate in this intensive 10-day Institute, which began five years ago. The Kellar Radio Talent Institute is supported in part by the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters.

The Institute’s mission is to attract, train and coach talented students who have a passion for the broadcast industry as well as possible ownership. Students selected for the program were taught all aspects of radio broadcasting from 28 of the top broadcasting professionals from around the nation. Students learned about a variety of topics including transitioning from college to the professional world and industry-specific issues such as sales, marketing, on-air, programming, and ownership. In addition, some of the guest professionals taught sessions with RAB sales training modules, with all 20 students passing the RAB exam to become certified as Radio Marketing Professionals.

Taylor Vaden, a UNC-Greensboro student, explains that “Kellar Radio Talent Institute has been one of the best learning experiences I have ever had…This program will give you the courage to go make your mark and grow within the industry. Bottom line, it has been an AMAZING experience that can’t be described in words or actions.”

A unique aspect of the Kellar Radio Talent Institute is the hands-on experiences students are able to gain. On the third day of the Institute, the students traveled to Charlotte, NC to learn directly from sports broadcasting professionals at Charlotte Motor Speedway and The NFL Carolina Panthers.

Two days after their action-packed day in Charlotte, students started their day at 6:00 a.m. as WKZL’s Murphy in the Morning Show broadcasted live from the Institute. Students were able to see first-hand what goes into a live broadcast and participated in the show. Jack Murphy and his team followed their show with a participatory session on show prep.

Students were also given the opportunity to network with guest faculty members during the social hour after each day’s sessions. “The Kellar Radio Talent Institute goes beyond what you learn in the classroom,” said Lauren Brigman, a rising junior at Appalachian State. “We received valuable lessons about how to be successful broadcasters from professionals who are icons in the broadcasting industry. Through numerous networking opportunities I have already begun to form relationships with potential employers.” Many of this year’s students agreed that the connections made, both to industry professionals and their peers, has been one of the most important aspects of the Institute.

The guest faculty members, all professionals with broad experience in the industry, recognize the value of the students’ experience in the Kellar Radio Talent Institute. The Institute is a “great place for students to gather a
wealth of knowledge from the pros,” says Chase Murphy, Program Director and On-air Talent at WFBC-FM and WSPA-FM in Greenville-Spartanburg, SC.

The Institute concluded on Wednesday, July 20, with a reception and dinner in the students’ honor. Appalachian State University leaders, as well as many of the guest professional faculty members from the Institute, along with Danny Highsmith, President of the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters and Regional Vice President of Beasley Broadcast Group, congratulated the students on taking an important step in preparing for their future in the industry.

“One thing we had never done at Marshall was really focus on selling and getting a hands-on opportunity to explore the sales world. With the help of the Kellar Radio Talent Institute, I have begun to further understand the sales business. These types of people and these types of influence are the kinds of mentors of sorts that I believe everyone needs to have,” commented Bobby Iddings, a recent graduate of Marshall University’s W. Page Pitt School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Arroe Collins, Production Director for Clear Channel Charlotte states, “I share with every school that says yes…there are no students like at the Kellar Radio Talent Institute. The moment my message is over the clock begins..51 weeks and six days and I get to come back”

“I’m constantly impressed, and not the least surprised, by each professional’s preparation to teach their sessions and their unwavering willingness to give their time to these students and the Institute.” said Dan Vallie, Creator and Director of the Institute, 40 year broadcast veteran and also Founder of Vallie Richards Donovan Consulting. “They, and this Institute, are helping to bring to reality what the industry has said and known its needed for years, a ‘go to’ place to find young talent with a desire to enter and succeed in radio broadcasting.”

Jonathan Mauney, Director of Interactive Media for Greater Media Charlotte, Inc. said, “It’s obvious from my short time with them that the Kellar students are the best of the best and are excited about the program and the industry. Any radio station with openings should look here first if they want the most qualified, well-rounded employees.”

Andrew Gibson, an Appalachian State Student from Andrews, NC said, “This institute helped tremendously to broaden my horizons in each and every aspect of radio broadcasting. I think what I have learned through my work at a hometown radio station (WCNG) and through campus radio station WASU, this institute helped to bring everything full circle in terms of hitting on each aspect of the industry. It provided in depth, inside information, that I don’t believe you could find anywhere else. This institute was an absolutely incredible experience for me and one that I will cherish the rest of my life and broadcasting career.”

To participate or contribute to the Kellar Radio Talent Institute, contact Dan Vallie at 828-262-3919/828-262-7621 or valliehill@appstate.edu. To learn more about the Kellar Radio Talent Institute at Appalachian State University visit www.kellarradiotalentinstitute.appstate.edu.