



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

IN THE CLASSROOM

Learning from Michael Vick: A Case Study in Leadership Failure

As the 2007 fall semester began, Professor John Lammers found himself immersed in a conversation with communication graduate student Dan Wilbrandt (AB '07, AM '09)

about the possibility of connecting their interests: organizational leadership, communication, and sports coverage. As they continued to talk, a unique research project started to develop.

“Dan described his interests in intercollegiate and professional sports, and I talked about how I was more interested in leadership failure and organizational causes than personality and professional success,” Lammers explains. “The bookshelves are full of leadership success stories and famous personalities, but there are lessons we can learn from failure, too.” That’s when the conversation turned to Michael Vick, the talented but troubled Atlanta Falcons quarterback whose career at the time was in trouble because of his involvement in gambling and dog fighting.

“We hatched a plan whereby Dan would compile as much detailed information on the

Michael Vick story as he could, and I would coach him in readings on structural theories of leadership failure,” Lammers says. It wasn’t long before the two realized that there wasn’t

much communication literature on leadership failure, so they continued to meet weekly well after the semester was over to develop a theory. The result was a paper Wilbrandt and Lammers presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association in November 2009, entitled “Failure by Degrees: The

Performance Evaluation Model of Leadership.”

“This project is a great example of the synergy that can develop between students and faculty,” Lammers says. “It would not have happened without Dan’s interest and knowledge of professional sports.” Lammers makes no bones about the fact that he is clueless when it comes to sports. But together with Wilbrandt’s enthusiasm for sports, his background in institutional theory led the two to a unique theory of communication failure.

“The paper really carries us far beyond Michael Vick,” Lammers explains. “We realized that from a communicative point of view, we could understand Vick’s failure in three ways: he was given a negative

evaluation by the Atlanta Falcon’s football team (the organization), by the public at large (his illegal dog fighting behavior drew widespread criticism and he lost endorsements from sponsors), and also



Professor John Lammers

by legal institutions and even the NFL (he was sentenced to a 23-month prison sentence and suspended from the NFL). We realized that failure in any one of these areas might not have brought him down, but failure in all three doomed him. Eventually, we developed the theory to be applicable to leaders in many settings.”

And Michael Vick’s comeback? “It doesn’t hurt the theory,” Lammers says, “as he systematically repairs the relationships with the public, the legal institutions, and the football team.” Lammers and Wilbrandt have plans to revise the paper and even have plans for a book-length project. But it might have to wait. Wilbrandt is in his first year of law school at John Marshall in Chicago, with hopes for a career in politics—and some pretty good ideas about how to avoid failure. ■



FALL COMMUNICATION FAIR



headlines . . .

A LOOK BACK AT THE YEAR IN COMMUNICATION



Greetings from Champaign-Urbana! I'm looking out the window of our temporary home at 1207 W. Oregon (while Lincoln Hall is being renovated) and appreciating the signs of spring.

We've had some trying times this year—perhaps the most significant part of our current crisis is the campus budget. The state of Illinois is dealing with a serious budget shortfall and owes over \$480 million in late payments to the University. Interim President Stanley Ikenberry recently emailed alumni of the University of Illinois encouraging you to write to Governor Patrick Quinn and our state legislators. To read President Ikenberry's message about how you can help, go to the University of Illinois website: www.uillinois.edu/president/speeches/2010/Feb18. Alumni.cfm.

President Ikenberry describes how you can act on our behalf, even if you do not currently reside in Illinois. This is a critical time for the University, and we can use your support to get our message out. (If you didn't get that email, please contact the Alumni Association to make sure

they have your current email address for situations such as these!)

Despite the challenges of our budget situation, the Department of Communication continues to work on our core missions of educating undergraduate and graduate students, and producing research that can help improve our society. We have many exciting bits of news about our department, including those you will find in this newsletter. Our faculty members continue to be highly productive, and our students continue to excel in their studies and on the job market. Some other important bits of news include:

- The Caterpillar Foundation has awarded \$10,000 in scholarships to our undergraduates over the past two years. The Caterpillar Excellence Scholars for 2008-2009 were Jennifer VanTuyle and Tanisha Joyce and for 2009-2010 were Jacques Anderson and Lee Ann Sangalang. Caterpillar also has hired many alumni from our program and has provided internship opportunities for our undergraduates. They have been an important and loyal corporate partner for the University of Illinois and the Department of Communication.
- The Ruth Anne Clark Student Scholar Award Fund continues to grow. This endowment will provide money for undergraduate and graduate student projects (including undergraduate honors theses, master's theses, or doctoral dissertation research). We still need to increase the endowment to enable us to make awards. You can find out more about how to contribute on page 7.
- We will start a new master's degree program specializing in health communication beginning in Fall 2010. The degree will be offered online through our Division of Academic Outreach. See story at right for details.

I enjoy hearing from you, our alumni, about how you use your degrees in law, business, nonprofit work, education, and research. Please feel free to email me at dbrasher@uillinois.edu with any comments, questions, or suggestions you want to share with me. I hope you enjoy an amazing summer!

Dale Brashers
Department Head

New Online Master of Arts Degree in Health Communication

Beginning Fall 2010, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will have a new online degree available: a master of arts in communication with a specialization in health communication.

The degree, which will be delivered completely online, is offered through the Department of Communication. Students who aspire to become communication specialists within health environments, as well as those who wish to continue to a doctoral program in communication research, comprise the target audience for the program.

Faculty members associated with this degree program are engaged in cutting-edge research and teaching that addresses major societal challenges related to communication and health. Major areas of research and teaching will study the relationship between communication and health in interpersonal (e.g., family communication and health, doctor-patient communication, social networks and social support), organizational (e.g., communication about health care reform, health delivery systems and communication patterns, health care teams and decision making), and mediated contexts (e.g., health campaigns, the influence of media on health attitudes and behaviors, health informatics).

Students will complete 32 hours of coursework to receive a master of arts degree in communication with a specialization in health communication. Coursework will include four hours of health communication research methods and four hours of a capstone individual study project.

Application deadline: **July 15, 2010**
www.communication.uillinois.edu/healthcomm
Email questions to health-comm@uillinois.edu

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COMMUNICATION LEADERS MAKE IMPACT ON DEPARTMENT'S GROWTH



Communication Leaders Ayla Ault (class of 2011, Greenup, Ill.), Samantha Suranne (class of 2010, North Riverside, Ill.), Brandi Marinko (class of 2011, St. Charles, Ill.), and Lee Ann Sangalang (class of 2011, St. Charles, Ill.) asked to write this piece for the newsletter in order to express what it means to them to be Department Leaders.

With the help of their group advisor, Professor John Lammers, the Communication Leaders currently are completing their fourth year as a registered student organization. In addition to the annual events they coordinate, the Leaders have been ready and eager to help with other functions, such as Quad Day, the Majors and Minors Fair, and graduation.

There are currently 28 Leaders contributing to the ongoing success of the department. Over 900 undergraduates are pursuing a major in communication, and approximately 150 students are pursuing a minor. This growth in undergraduate programs is due in part to the efforts of the Communication Leaders.

In Their Own Words

As Communication Leaders, we have been given the chance to express our sentiments about being communication majors and serving as ambassadors for the department. The following perspectives are representations of what it means to us to serve the department, share our experiences with fellow students, and work closely with peers and faculty.

"We are able to give back to the department after it has given us so much."

Thanks to the department's trust in us, we have been given the opportunity to influence students' future choices through our events. These events are great opportunities for us to share our passion for communication with fellow students. Communication has given us the skills and resources to represent the department as well as showcase all it has to offer. It is so fulfilling to hear students say how much they learned or how they were influenced by the information we gave them.

"I really enjoy sharing my passion and experiences in communication with other students, and then to see them actually decide to major in communication as a result of our efforts is truly rewarding," says Samantha Suranne, Communication Leaders president. It is so satisfying when students tell us, "I'm definitely going to be a communication major now!"

As Ayla Ault says, "I love being a Leader so much, and I enjoy talking to and being around other communication majors. As Leaders, we have so much loyalty to our department—many of us plan on pursuing graduate degrees in communication."

"Communication in three words: Flexibility, relevance, and pervasiveness."

Communication goes with everything; it is compatible with other majors and minors. We all have to learn about communicating in order to be successful in our lives and careers, regardless of what paths we take. We learn to express ourselves in a variety of arenas.

As a freshman in communication, Lee Ann Sangalang, now vice president of the Communication Leaders, was concerned about the career options available with a communication degree. After attending the Communication Fair, she discovered that not only could she declare a specialization within the major, but also that a degree in communication would al-

low her a great variety of career options. With the help of the Leaders, Lee Ann realized that, without question, this was the major for her.

"Our major unites us."

We are able to get to know and work closely with the faculty and staff. Not only do we, as ambassadors, get to know each other, but we also are able to make strong connections with other students in the major. Even though we all have a variety of career paths, we have the same foundation for our interests: communication.

"I have met so many great people as a result of being a Communication Leader, and it has broadened my perspective of the field in depth and breadth," says Sangalang. "There are so many endless possibilities with communication, and I have enjoyed learning about the variety of career paths students want to take. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to reach out to my peers. Being a Communication Leader has allowed me to give back to the department that has given me so much to be proud of." ■

AWARD WINNERS

We are pleased to announce the following teaching awards:

Tom Costello received the LAS Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by a member of the instructional staff. **Troy Cooper** received the LAS Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by a graduate teaching assistant. Both were nominated and received the same awards at the campus level: Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching—Instructional Staff and Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching—Teaching Assistants.

Trina Wright received the Student Choice Outstanding Faculty Award presented by the Illinois Student Senate (ISS). This award is presented by the ISS Committee on Academic Affairs, which has the goal "to maintain high-quality instructors who understand the importance of teaching."

DEPARTMENT FACULTY TEACH FOR OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with support from the Bernard Osher Foundation, is part of a national network that recognizes learning has no age limits. Through a rich array of lifelong learning opportunities, members are inspired to take a fresh look at themselves, their world, and the possibilities that await them.



OLLI at U of I is a member-led community of peers. It provides its members with a number of special perks and offers them exciting courses, a wellness program, and educational trips, as well as small-group discussion opportunities, a meeting place, and special events. Professor Pat Gill has taught several film courses over the past few years, and Professor Inger Stole taught one during the spring semester 2010 entitled "How Media has Changed Our World," in which she and seven of her communication colleagues will each teach a class session in his or her specialization.

OLLI serves the local community with an outreach program for the over-50 generation, providing interesting courses, programs, and events where people can gather to learn for the sake of learning. ■

faculty NEWS

Faculty News

Scott Althaus and several graduate student coauthors received the 2009 Paul Lazarsfeld Best Paper Award for the best paper on political communication presented at the 2008 American Political Science Association annual meeting. Their paper, "Uplifting Manhood to Wonderful Heights: Newspaper Framing of Casualties from World War One to Gulf War Two," examined for the first time how war casualties were reported to Americans through news coverage over the past 100 years. Professor Althaus also recently published a coauthored research article in *Political Communication* that demonstrated that interest in news content is as much a product of media supply as it is of its audience characteristics.

Ken Andersen is the parliamentarian for the Campus Senate and serves on the Senate Benefits Committee and as a campus representative and legislative committee chair of the State University Retirement System Members Advisory Committee. As he says, "General MacArthur was half right, old retirees never die, they just find new things to do." The November NCA convention marked the end of his two-year term as chair of the Emeritus/Retired Section, although he will serve two more years on the Section Executive Committee and in the NCA Legislative Assembly. In terms of non-campus activity, he is the parliamentarian for the state PTA and a member of the University YMCA Building Committee and Bylaws Revision Committee.

Mardia Bishop's new book, *Mommy Angst: Motherhood in American Popular Culture*, was published in November 2009.

John Caughlin (AB '91) received the 2009 Bernard J. Brommel Award for Outstanding Scholarship or Distinguished Service in Family Communication from the National Communication Association (NCA). His research was also recognized recently with the Distinguished Journal Article Award from the Family Communication Division of NCA and an Arnold O. Beckman Research Award from the University of Illinois. Caughlin's research examines communication in close personal relationships. Most of his recent work has focused on topics such as conflict, disclosure, and secrets. For instance, one recent study examined different ways that people disclose an HIV-positive diagnosis, showing that the way a person reveals this information shapes how others view it. Studying secrets has convinced Professor Caughlin that just about everyone has some secrets and that people are usually even more interesting than they appear on the surface.

Tom Conley gave the keynote address at the conference "Savage Words: Vituperation as a Literary Genre" at UCLA in February 2009. In July, he gave a talk in Montreal on Bonaventura Vulcanius, a prominent 16th-century Dutch humanist. He has two book chapters scheduled for publication in 2010 in both the Netherlands and the United States.

Susan Davis's article "Ben Botkin's FBI File" was published in the *Journal of American Folklore* in January 2010. Additionally, Professor Davis, Cara Finnegan, Nancy Abelmann, and Peggy Miller published an article in the *Oral History Review* titled "What is StoryCorps, Anyway?" Davis has also conducted ethnographic research with students on the history of Halloween celebrations at the University of Illinois. She will be teaching a new undergraduate course in 2010 entitled "Oral Narrative."

Cara Finnegan celebrated 10 years on the faculty of the Department of Communication in 2009-2010. Her third book, *Reading Photography's Viewers: Recognizing Visual Politics in U.S. Public Culture*, will be published next year by the University of Illinois Press. She has launched a new research project on the visual politics of the Obama White House and recently gave a lecture on the subject at an interdisciplinary conference on President Obama held at Texas A&M University. This past year, Finnegan was elected to the board of the Rhetoric Society of America and also began a three-year term as book review editor of *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. She continues to teach rhetorical criticism and visual politics at the graduate and undergraduate levels. She also continues to run half marathons, though sometimes she's not quite sure why.

Grace Giorgio is enjoying her new position as course director of Communication 111/112, the hybrid (speaking and writing) course that meets the Composition I writing requirement. She also teaches "Gender and Language" and "Communication and Controversies in Public Policy." Grace published her book *Contesting the Utopia: Power and Resistance in Abusive Lesbian Relationships* (LAP, 2010) this year and is working on a collection of short stories/autoethnographies about contemporary rural life. Along with her work for the department, she teaches yoga in both rural Atwood and Urbana.

Lauren Grill, a recent Northwestern PhD, has joined the teaching staff to work with and help develop the new online master's program in health communication (see article on page 2).

Kristen Harrison was awarded a William T. Grant Foundation Faculty Scholars Award in spring 2002, which funded a five-year research program aimed at studying how media images and messages lead child viewers to develop discrepancies between their actual and ideal self-images, and in turn how these discrepancies increase the risk of low self-esteem, a poor body image, and disordered eating. She has spent the past year publishing reports from this project as well as grant writing and collecting data for the STRONG Kids Project at the U of I. The STRONG Kids Project is a multidisciplinary initiative funded by the state of Illinois to study media and marketing

influences on childhood obesity within family and community contexts. Professor Harrison is the lead author on the first published research article to emerge from this project, forthcoming in the journal *Child Development Perspectives*.

Kay Holley teaches both the Bridge/Transition sections and the international student section of Communication 101. In addition to her teaching, she recently directed a successful run of John Kolvenbach's play *Love Song* at the Station Theatre in Urbana. Her biggest excitement this year, however, is the birth of her first grandchild, Dante William Holley.

Marian Huhman has studied the results of a nationwide child obesity campaign, and the findings were sweeter than candy: kids are listening. She has led a study concluding that "social marketing"—that is, marketing meant to affect social behavior—effectively convinced kids over a four-year period to be more physically active. The VERB campaign (not an acronym) was conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 2002 to 2006. The final outcome paper that describes the positive effects of the VERB campaign was published online ahead of print in the *American Journal of Public Health* in July 2009. The print version will appear in the journal's April 2010 issue. The success of the VERB campaign was an important factor in the CDC's recent decision to fund a \$30 million media campaign to support U.S. states and 40 communities being funded under the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative, a \$350 million program targeting obesity and tobacco use prevention.

Leanne Knobloch spent the spring 2009 semester on sabbatical. Besides writing at her desk, writing on her backyard deck, and writing at the beach, she collaborated with clinical psychologists at Northwestern University on a study of communication among individuals suffering from depression. She also traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in strategic planning sessions for the National Communication Association. The fall 2009 semester found her writing less but happy to be back in the classroom.

John Lammers was on sabbatical in the fall of 2009, suspending most local duties like classes, but continued in his role as the advisor of the Communication Leaders. At the November 2009 meeting of the NCA, he was elected to the position of vice chair of the Organizational Communication Division. He will serve a three-year term that culminates as chair of the division. One of his duties will be to plan convention programs for the 2011 annual meeting.

Bob McChesney remains active hosting *Media Matters*, his weekly radio program on WILL-AM radio. In addition to numerous articles, he also has coauthored a new book with John Nichols: *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution that Will Begin America Again* (Nation Books, 2010). He is also a frequent subject of attack on the Glenn Beck television program on the Fox News Channel.

Peggy Miller's new book *The Child: An Encyclopedic Companion* was published by University of Chicago Press in September 2009. The volume is unique in that it brings together the best of scholarship from across the disciplines (including child development, pediatrics, law, communication, education, history, anthropology, etc.), with an eye to representing the diversity of childhood experiences within the U.S. and around the globe.

Ned O'Gorman was elected president of the American Society for the History of Rhetoric. Among other duties as president, he will be organizing a special symposium in May 2010 on "Rhetorics of Reason and Restraint." The symposium topic follows both his book project's interest in Cold War realism and the course he taught last year at Illinois on Abraham Lincoln.

Scott Poole was named director of the Institute for Computing in Humanities, Arts, and Social Science, which is part of the Illinois Informatics Initiative. He was also named as a research fellow in the Department of Organizational Science at Vrije University (VU) in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. As part of this fellowship, Scott spends two weeks a year in the Netherlands, working on research with VU faculty and consulting with their PhD students. Scott and former communication colleagues Noshir Contractor and Dmitri Williams have been working on a multi-university project "Virtual Worlds: An Exploratorium for Theorizing and Modeling the Dynamics of Group Behavior." This project investigates groups and networks of participants in the online game Everquest2. Additionally, Professor Poole was awarded a \$1.95 million grant from NSF (under the Cyber-Enabled Discovery and Innovation (CDI) initiative) for a four-year project entitled "GroupScope: Instrumenting Research on Interaction Networks in Complex Social Contexts." Scott taught Communication 413: "Advanced Group Communication" in Fall 2009 and continues to develop a newly designed, large lecture plus discussion version of Communication 212: "Introduction to Organizational Communication."

Brian Quick's research examines media coverage of health issues as well as how individuals process these mediated messages. During the past year, his work has continued to investigate the measurement of psychological reactance as well as beginning to encourage health practitioners to use trait reactance as a segmentation variable when adolescents are the target audience. Just recently, he garnered funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration to identify the best practices to promote organ donation among African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic American adolescents.

Christian Sandvig was appointed academic fellow of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, where he is spending his sabbatical year. He is also a visiting research scholar at the innovation laboratory of the Sloan School of Management at MIT. Sandvig's recent writing on social networking websites is forthcoming in *American Behavioral Scientist*, and a new article on research methods appears in the volume *Research Confidential*. This year his graduate

student collaborators received a Focal Point award from the Graduate College to bring speakers to campus on a topic chosen by graduate students collaborating with a faculty member. The topic, "Intersections Between Social and Technological Systems," is slated to bring speakers related to communication technology to discuss mp3s, gaming, information theory, developing countries, satellites, and robotics.

Michelle Shumate's coauthored research related to corporate-nonprofit alliances and the impact of nonprofit-inter-governmental organization (e.g., World Health Organization, United Nations Development Program) relationships has been published in the *Journal of Communication and Communication Monographs*. In November, with two undergraduate alumni, she founded a nonprofit organization, *Nuestra Voz*, designed to enhance collaboration among Costa Rican nonprofit organizations focusing on sustainable development. The organization uses a social networking site and digital literacy training to promote collaboration. In the coming year, her work will focus on the reasons why local NGOs choose to collaborate with their chosen partners and the obstacles they experience when they choose to do so.

Inger Stole is presently working on *A War on Many Fronts: Advertising, Its Critics, and the U.S. Government during World War II*, a book under contract with the University of Illinois Press, and is coediting an essay collection on mass media history for Marquette University Press.

David Tewksbury and several graduate students in the department are conducting research on the selection and consumption of news on the Internet. One recent project examined how a person's general level of decisiveness can condition the effects of selective exposure. The results of the study suggest that reading decisions of generally indecisive people are most strongly guided by their political ideology. Other research projects have focused on the aggregate-level effects of news exposure patterns on cable television and the Internet.

Joe Wenzel and his wife, Patricia, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with their children and grandchildren. Both Joe and Patricia have been retired for 10 years and are beginning to take it seriously, devoting more time to travel and visiting with family in Boston, Chicago, and elsewhere.

Barbara Wilson is currently serving as vice provost of Academic Affairs. She assists the provost in campus-level academic initiatives, faculty hiring, promotion and tenure, academic affairs, and resource management. She also works closely with the college deans on campus. Her days are filled with meetings and her background in communication comes in handy on a regular basis.

class notes

1950s

Ruth B. Fee (AM '52) currently volunteers for several Ohio-based groups, including the Akron Symphony, the University of Akron Retirees, and the Garden Club of Akron. Ruth provided support for her husband as he earned his PhD and their two children as both earned two degrees of their own. She and her husband have been busy traveling the world. Throughout the past several years, they have been on 20 cruises and visited four continents.

1970s

Dr. Bernadette Anderson (AB '70, AM '71) is the president of the Speech Excellence Center, Inc., and the author of a new book *My Fellow Americans...It's Cool to Speak Like You've Been to School!* It is the number one speech and voice makeover manual helping young African Americans, Latino Americans, hip-hop lovers, and others get jobs faster.

1980s

Alicia Banks (AB '84) is a veteran radio host, producer, columnist, musicologist, and activist. Publications nationwide have stressed Banks's ability to command the airwaves for decades. As the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* stated, "Banks is no ordinary talk show host. She's articulate, intelligent, and above all, she's fearless." She has been selected to receive two awards in 2010 for her professional accomplishments.

1990s

Robin Lyons McNatt (AB '94) serves as the director of People for Restaurants on the Run. Her duties include, but are not limited to, heading their human resources and organizational development departments. Robin recently joined the sketch and improvisational comedy troupe the OC Crazies. Founded by two members of the LA Groundlings, Kathy Griffin and Cherie Kerr, the OC Crazies perform in Orange County. She enjoys living in Irvine, Calif., with her husband, Tom, and daughters, Emma and Courtney.

Todd Short (AB '95) is the director of emergency planning at the University of Illinois. He is responsible for coordinating the emergency planning and crisis response initiatives and activities for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus. Todd works with the campus community and local interagency representatives to ensure the safety of University personnel and property resources during an emergency situation or crisis.

Tara (Spangler) Ritchie (AB '99) is working as a service line finance manager at the New York Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. After leaving Champaign, Tara worked as a sales representative for Cardinal Health in Virginia and Washington, D.C. She returned to Chicago after receiving her MBA from George Washington University in D.C. Tara worked as a Department of Medicine administrator at the University of

Chicago in Hyde Park until she relocated to New York City after getting married in April 2008.

2000s

Kristopher J. Anderson (AB '00) is currently an analyst for the Cook County Department of Revenue. He is also an Executive Committee member of the Young Democrats of America in Cook County.

Kate Rouker (AB '00, AM '01) is enjoying her position as a senior underwriter for Chartis Aerospace Insurance Services, Inc. As a sales and marketing professional, she relies on the skills and theories learned as an undergraduate student of communication to establish and maintain relationships with coworkers and clients. Kate reports that she loves her job and is very proud to be a graduate of the department.

Megan Kosovski (AB '03, AM '05) is enjoying her new role as an academic advisor and instructor for the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois. After graduating, she worked in the hospitality field as a sales coordinator and as an instructor at a local community college. She returned to U of I with the goal of helping students understand the variety of options that comes with a degree in communication. She also teaches courses in public speaking, persuasion, business communication, and interpersonal communication. She lives with her husband, Jason, another communication graduate, and their two puppies, Vegas and Domino.



Tom Meersman (AB '05) After graduating from the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois in 2005, my life headed down a path that I never expected: I became sick. Being a brash 22-year-old with the inherent sense of invincibility that most young adults feel, this was a completely unexpected turn of events. After a lifetime of impeccable health, I was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, an incurable, chronic disease of the colon, in November 2006.

After diagnosis via a colonoscopy, I was sent home with a couple of prescription medications believing that the worst was behind me. However, two days later I discovered that wasn't going to be the case, as I was hospitalized for the first time in my life. My life was turned upside-down as I continued to wake up day after day in a hospital bed. Finally, after 24 days, I was released with the realization that I was now going to live the rest of my life managing a disease that wasn't going to go away.

Over the next year, battling my illness became a daily struggle. Each passing day was greeted with new, intriguing, and often embarrassing experiences as I tried to balance my desire to live my life like I was healthy, with the understanding that I wasn't. By October 2007, it was apparent that medicine wasn't going to provide me with a life that was manageable. I had no choice other than to have my colon removed.

Losing an organ took a tremendous toll on me physically and mentally. The months following surgery were extremely difficult. However, after a couple months of recovery, I started to regain the health that was vacant from my life for the last one-and-a-half years.

While living through an illness was a constant battle, there were several positives that I was able to take away from it. It certainly made me grow up in a hurry, allowing me to realize the value of one's health and life. The delight I have now for all the little things in life is unmistakable. I now have the ability to sit back and appreciate the simplicity of life when things are going well, with the resolve to fight through times when life has me down.

I knew I was a changed man after my illness, and I wanted to do something that I hoped could help change other people's lives as well. With that thought in mind, I decided to write a book about my journey. I always knew I enjoyed writing, and now I felt like I had something meaningful and powerful to write about.

Throughout the 300-plus pages of my book (entitled *Hell's Toilet*), I bared all as I shared every experience I went through while battling my disease, with the hope that it could help both sufferers and non-sufferers of ulcerative colitis. I dreamed that my book would help remove the unjust isolation that many feel as they battle an illness.

Today, with the success of my surgery, I feel that I am a completely healthy individual. Learning from my experiences, I now embrace any opportunity I have to speak with fellow ulcerative colitis patients. I have spoken with many patients throughout all parts of the country, helping them by sharing my experiences and answering any questions they might have. After being sick, I realize that sometimes an understanding voice can be the best medicine.

Tom is currently working as a sales and service manager at US Bank in Loves Park, Ill.

Carly Scheer (AB '04) is a campus recruiter for Ernest and Julio Gallo and lives in Modesto, Calif.

Kelly (Caywood) Minter (AB '06) is a communication strategist for the corporate Public Affairs Department at State Farm Insurance. In her role, Kelly provides executive speechwriting and strategy support to three of State Farm's most senior corporate executives. She is involved in enterprise-wide communication strategies for some of the company's largest business initiatives and crisis communication. Over the past year, Kelly has led an effort to redesign several sections of State Farm's external website, including their virtual newsroom. Outside of work, Kelly resides in Bloomington, Ill., with her husband, Chris, and four-year-old yellow lab, Riley.

Anjali Shankar (AB '08) is a law student at the Hamline University School of Law in St. Paul, Minn. After graduating, she worked for a year as a youth and family advocate for victims of domestic violence. Anjali reports that her degree in communication has given her the skills she needs for law school. She hopes to some day work in the field of international human rights.

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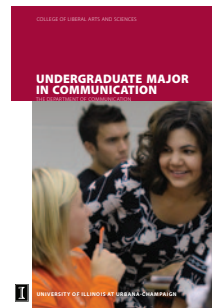
NEW PUBLICATIONS ADVERTISE DEPARTMENT

When the department changed its name from speech communication to communication in July 2008, we used the occasion to reintroduce ourselves to students and colleagues. We noted how our new name more accurately describes the range of our teaching and research. We are one of the largest and most comprehensive communication departments in the nation, and we wanted to make sure people knew about our breadth.

The principal component of our outreach was the development of undergraduate and graduate brochures. The undergraduate brochure for prospective students describes the flexibility built into the communication major and highlights our award-winning faculty and graduate teaching assistants. The graduate program brochure emphasizes the research success of our faculty and graduate students and describes the dynamic character of our programs.

We are excited about these publications and their potential as marketing tools for prospective students, as well as for employers who have internships for our current students.

For copies of any of our new publications, please contact Barbara Hall at b-hall@illinois.edu. ■



INVEST IN OUR DEPARTMENT'S FUTURE

Your support for the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will ensure continued excellence in teaching, research, and public engagement.

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WHERE ARE OUR COMMUNICATION PHD ALUMNI NOW?

Name	Year	Current University	Unit	Specialization
Donovan Conley	2004	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	Department of Communication Studies	Rhetoric
I-Ling (Elaine) Hsieh	2004	University of Oklahoma	Department of Communication	Health Communication
Young Mie Kim	2004	University of Wisconsin-Madison	School of Journalism & Mass Comm.	Political Communication
Virginia McDermott	2004	University of New Mexico	Department of Comm. & Journalism	Interpersonal Communication
Robert C. Whitbred	2004	Cleveland State University	School of Communication	Organizational Communication
Claudia Carlos	2005	Carnegie Mellon University	Department of English	Rhetoric
Allwyn Tellis	2005	Northwestern University in Qatar	Department of Communication Studies	Rhetoric
Jennifer Jones Barbour	2006	Texas A&M University	Department of Communication	Rhetoric
Joshua Barbour	2006	Texas A&M University	Department of Communication	Organizational Communication
Jeremy Engels	2006	Penn. State University	Department of Comm. Arts & Sciences	Rhetoric
Karen Sadowsky	2006	Valdosta State University	Department of Communication Arts	Health Communication
Andrew Weaver	2006	Indiana University	Department of Telecommunications	Mass Communication
Kay Yoon	2006	DePaul University	College of Communication	Group Communication
Richard Besel	2007	Cal. Poly, San Luis Obispo	Communication Studies Department	Rhetoric
Jennifer Bute	2007	Ohio University	School of Communication Studies	Interpersonal Communication
Gregory Goodale	2007	Northeastern University	Department of Communication Studies	Rhetoric
Meikuan Huang	2007	California State Univ., Stanislaus	Department of Communication Studies	Organizational Communication
Jakob Jensen	2007	Purdue University	Department of Communication	Mass and Health Communication
Robin Jensen	2007	Purdue University	Department of Communication	Rhetoric
Chunke Su	2007	University of Texas at Arlington	Department of Communication	Organizational Communication
Kevin Coe	2008	University of Arizona	Department of Communication	Political Communication
Erin Donovan-Kicken	2008	University of Texas at Austin	Department of Communication Studies	Interpersonal Communication
Kama Kosenko	2008	North Carolina State University	Department of Communication	Health Communication
Kristin Lindholm Gumminger	2008	Trinity International University	School of Language, Lit., and Comm.	Interpersonal Communication
Nicole Martins	2008	Indiana University	Department of Telecommunications	Mass Communication
Jessica Eckstein	2009	Western Conn. State University	Department of Communication	Interpersonal Communication
Ryan Hurley	2009	North Carolina State University	Department of Communication	Mass and Health Communication
Jiyeon Kang	2009	Western Illinois University	Department of Communication	Rhetoric
Kathleen Lamp	2009	Prairie State College	Department of English	Rhetoric
Laura Miller	2009	University of Tennessee	Department of Communication Studies	Interpersonal Communication
Cortney Moriarty	2009	College of Mount Saint Vincent	Department of Communication	Health Communication



WE'VE MOVED

Because of Lincoln Hall's renovation, the Department of Communication is now located at 1207 W. Oregon St., Urbana, IL, 61801. Our phone number remains (217) 333-2683.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
1207 W. Oregon St., MC-456
Urbana, IL 61801

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GOT INTERNSHIPS?

Communication students are eager for real-world experience. We offer our students class credit for interning with organizations that put them to work in a supervised learning setting.

Employers who partner with us report that they benefit from our students' communication skills and gain from evaluating the on-the-job performance of potential employees. Communication interns are skilled, enthusiastic, and recognize the value of a realistic preview of practical work experience.

If you have internship opportunities to offer or would like more information, please contact Dr. Shirley Faughn or Amy Holland via email: comm-internships@illinois.edu.



Alumni Advisory Board Seeks Your Participation

The Alumni Advisory Board is looking forward to an exciting year in its continued efforts to support the department. Alumni can participate in ongoing projects in several ways:

- **Internships:** We've got motivated, talented students eager to work with your business or organization. Please help us create opportunities for these students, and you'll get terrific benefits at the same time. The board has worked with the department to provide new materials that explain how you can benefit and how the placements work. Please contact comm-internships@illinois.edu to learn more.
- **Webinars:** Look for an announcement soon (make sure the department has your email address!) about an exciting new series of free online seminar programs on hot-button communication issues featuring department experts and special guests. The first programs will focus on key issues in health communication.
- **Fundraising:** This year will focus on supporting the Ruth Anne Clark Student Scholar Award. Your tax-deductible gift online at www.communication.illinois.edu/alumni in any amount will make a real difference.
- **Alumni Videos:** The Board is producing brief video interviews with alumni to place on the department website to inform students about the diverse ways they can use their communication degrees.

Please consider helping the board in these or other projects. Alumni are encouraged to contact board president Michael Brandwein (AB '75) at michael@michaelbrandwein.com.

Michael Brandwein
Board President

Communication Alums: Let Us Know What You Are Doing

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Please indicate all U of I degrees:

AB year _____ AM year _____ PhD year _____

Current position and employer (if retired, indicate last position prior to retirement):

List accomplishments/publications/personal news for the past year:

Mail to: Department of Communication
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
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Urbana, IL 61801
or email to: communication@illinois.edu