Dear Communication Studies Family,

Welcome to the seventh installment of the UNC Charlotte Communication Studies EZine! We are pleased to offer you a retrospective look at the concluding school year, as well as a glimpse of what the immediate future promises to bring.

The 2016-2017 term has been quite busy for the Department. To be sure, we have witnessed a year of records and pace-setting; of glory, path-finding, and growth. For instance, the numbers of students joining the Communication Studies family is at an all-time high and our incredibly successful internship program continues providing more and more deserving students – roughly 300 per year – with opportunities for career training in multiple contexts across the region, state, nation, and world. Our faculty have broken records on the number of books published and book contracts procured. Notably, Dr. Ashli Stokes published her food-as-rhetoric project, Consuming Identity: The Role of Food in Redefining the South (Mississippi Press) in November to rave reviews. Senior Lecturer Sandy Hanson completed her Applied Small Group Communication (Kendall-Hunt) text and Dr. Christine Davis, too, published a volume on research methods. Other faculty members such as Dr. Dan Grano fulfilled a book contract to publish The Eternal Present of Sport: Rethinking Sport and Religion (Temple University Press) and Dr. Rachel Plotnick is well on her way toward completing A History of Pleasure, Panic, and the Politics of Pushing (M.I.T. Press). Also emblems of our success, faculty like Dr. Margaret Quinlan are creating projects being recognized with Emmy nominations and Dr. Tiffany Gallicano are winning top awards for their research and projects.

Moreover, the Department continues to shine on a global scale. We both sponsored a Fulbright student in our M.A. program from Togo (Desiree Bataba) and helped support Dr. Alan Freitag in his pursuits as a Fulbright Teaching Scholar in Poland. In addition, Senior Lecturer Cheryl Spainhour took a group of our students to London over spring break to study British media and journalistic practices. Dr. Dean Kruckeberg took a year-long leave, in part, to represent us in Germany over the past summer and Russia in the winter as a visiting scholar of global public relations. Dr. Min Jiang presented papers in Mexico and China; Dr. Jon Crane and Dr. Christine Davis spoke at a conference in Norway. And, Dr. Cliff Scott presented his work in Finland. We are proud to consider ourselves a committed and globally-minded Department, the best of what UNC Charlotte expects a faculty and student body to be in an expansive and polyvocal world.

Our future looks bright! Our newest faculty members, Dr. Erin Basinger and Dr. Tiffany Gallicano, are bringing new verve to our course offerings in Health Communication and Public Relations, respectively. The Department now has a Publicity Coordinator and Senior Lecturer Robin Rothberg has made great strides in her efforts to share with our many publics the stellar work our students and faculty do on a consistent basis. Our Freshman Learning communities, our third and fourth in the Department’s history, are flourishing under the direction of Hanson and Lecturer Craig Paddock. We are delighted that our undergraduate advising efforts continue to improve with the promise of a new Academic Advisor and an undergraduate staff specialist. Senior Lecturer Tim Horne has led our competitive Forensics team to numerous trophies this year. And, Dr. Loril Gossett is working on improving alumni relations – so, for those alums reading – stay tuned for more! Our community is indeed, prospering by all means.

Speaking of community, I want to take a moment to emphasize the importance of civitas, the spirit of a group’s commitment to respectful and plural communication. In this day and age, the need for rhetorical sensibility and interpersonal sensitivity is at a premium. We sometimes find ourselves locked into cultural spheres of divisiveness and incivility. But, all is not lost if we consider the potential of what ethical communication can do for us as a community. By leading the charge toward civil discourse and concord, dialogue and democratic traditions, the field of Communication Studies is certainly poised to serve as a balm to the cultural wounds we often experience. And, our Department exists as a crucible of such conscientiousness. Our students learn quite a bit in our classes about the three ubiquitous rhetorical proofs: logos (argumentation), pathos (emotional appeal), and ethos. Popularly conceived, ethos is defined as the use of credibility in communicating one’s point ethically. But the fruits of ethos are also sown in what is called a “dwelling place.” Ethos is not so much a utile tactic for communicating well individually. Rather, it is a public concept borne of communication for a community and within a community for the good of the community. What the Department represents is such a dwelling place, a “home,” where we instill civitas in our classrooms and engage in the practice in our advising, mentoring, and encouragement of student work. It might sound quotidian, but responsible communication – not more communication – can make all the difference in inhabiting our public spaces together productively and comfortably. This is what the Greco-Roman tradition called “the good life,” a pursuit on which we must never give up. As Janet Marguia, former leader of the National Council of La Raza, once put it: “When we are tired or struggling, let’s remember how our community came together at this moment in history. For, when we live democracy, when we live our values, our [community] will only be better for it.”

I am convinced that the prodigious work we do in the Department of Communication Studies, from classroom teaching and critical research to student development and mentorship, helps scaffold the capacities of the democratic arts. I wish us victory in our will and desire to communicate ethically.

As I close I would like to thank the faculty, staff, students, and our extended families in the Department for making 2016-2017 a fantastic year. As the new department chair, this is the kind of community I had hoped to join; this is the type of academic family I have always sought. My heart is fully-brimmed and I have experienced an embarrassment of riches. Thank you for your trust and thank you for your hospitality.

Respectfully,

Jason Edward Black
Department Chair
The Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender (OSCLG) held its 39th annual conference in Oak Park, Ill., last October. OSCLG, is often described as an intimate conference that invites interdisciplinary scholars with similar research interests to get together in a relaxed professional environment. Graduate student Emma Butterworth presented her paper, titled “LGBT Fans Deserve Better: How the Death of a Lesbian Character Started a Viral Revolution” and moderated a panel called “Superheroes!” UNC Charlotte faculty members Dr. Margaret Quinlan of the Communication Studies department and Dr. Bethany Johnson of the History department presented collaborative research papers.

Also in attendance was graduate student alumni, Jaclyn Marsh, a Ph.D. candidate at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Marsh collaborated on a paper with Quinlan and Johnson, titled, “Getting off the Conveyor Belt: Technology-Supported Communication and Nursing in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility Practices.”

ICA CONFERENCE DRAWS SCHOLARS TO JAPAN

The International Communication Association (ICA) held its annual conference last summer in Fukuoka, Japan. Dr. Min Jiang attended the conference, after co-organizing a preconference with international scholars on Chinese New Media. She says she greatly enjoyed the collaborative spirit among scholars at the conference, as well as traveling around Fukuoka and taking in local customs.

Dr. Peng Hwa Ang of Singapore Nanyang Technological University became the ICA’s first Asian president in its 52-year history, which Jiang says is clear “recognition of the integral and indispensable role of communication research out of Asia.” The international conference takes place every other year outside the United States. The 2017 conference will be held in San Diego, Calif.

NCA GETS POLITICAL

The annual National Communication Association Conference convened in Philadelphia, just days after a contentious presidential election. Scholars took advantage of the atmosphere to address political communication and rhetoric and deconstruct cultural communication post-election. UNC Charlotte Communication Studies Graduate Director, Dr. Christine Davis, attended the conference. “I felt that being with that body of scholars in the context of the election results yielded a plethora of scholarly ideas.” Other faculty members who attended included Dr. Jason Black, Dr. Richard Leeman, Dr. Dean Kruckeberg, Dr. Dan Grano, Dr. Maggie Quinlan, Dr. Loril Gossett, Dr. Ashli Stokes, Dr. Min Jiang and Dr. Erin Basinger.

Graduate student Emma Butterworth presented a paper titled, “Lesbians, YouTube, and Pregnancy Loss: A Feminist Narrative Analysis.”
The 2016 Carolinas Communication Association Conference was held last fall in picturesque Wilmington, N.C., with representation from UNC Charlotte Communication Studies students and faculty. The lively conference took place at the downtown Hilton on the water, which made for a pleasant, scenic stay. Department Chair Dr. Jason Black received the prestigious Betty Jo Welch Award (in absentia) for his years of dedication and service to CCA. Notably, Black is the department’s third faculty member to receive the award after Dr. Richard Leeman (1999) and Senior Lecturer and Undergraduate Coordinator Carol Leeman (2015).

Communication Studies MA student Joni Oleson presented her paper, “When One Door Closes, We Try to Figure out Why: Making Sense of Organizational Layoff Events” for the competitive Jarrard Graduate Paper Award. Fellow graduate student and conference attendee Corey Kelly said Joni “gave a great presentation on the sense making process that teleworkers go through after being let go by their employers, a topic that will undoubtedly become more salient in the changing economy.” Graduate Director Dr. Christine Davis added, “It was an outstanding paper and I was so pleased that it was recognized by CCA. We’re very proud of Joni and she represented us exceedingly well at the conference.”

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UNCC Communication Studies faculty member, Dr. Richard Leeman, won the 2017 Southern States Communication Association’s (SSCA) Michael M. Osborn Teacher-Scholar Award. The Osborn Award specifically honors “members who have balanced professional careers, having achieved excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.” The selection of Leeman came as no surprise to Dr. Jason Black, the Department’s chair. “Rich certainly embodies such balance and excellence – he is truly an exemplar of a well-rounded teacher-scholar,” Black said. “I am personally proud and grateful to consider Rich a mentor.”

In response to the award recognition, Leeman said, “I am humbled and deeply appreciative that students and colleagues of mine thought highly enough of me to write in support of the award.” He added, “Mike Osborn’s career has been the gold standard of someone who has been both teacher and scholar.”
HEALTH COMMUNICATION CONCENTRATION

The Communication Studies Department at UNC Charlotte is the largest major within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students can choose to pursue one of five concentrations within the Communication Studies major. One of those concentrations is Health Communication, which is designed to examine the role of communication in the understanding, promotion and maintenance of good health. Dr. Christine S. Davis, professor and graduate program director of the Department’s MA Program, says Health Communication can be “a life and death situation in which communication matters both in how people live and sometimes, if they live.” Davis says the Health Communication courses offered help students understand how to communicate about health issues to patients, families and healthcare providers, as well as how to communicate about health issues in mediated settings.

For students interested in following this academic route, it begins with the foundation “Health Communication” course. Additional courses include rotating “Topics in Health Communication” such as the recently added “Health and Media” course, created by Dr. Margaret Quinlan, associate professor. This course explores the ways health, illness (including mental illness), disability, gender and dying are portrayed in various forms of media. “Medical breakthroughs and health risks reach us daily through media reports,” she says. “The stories we receive via websites and magazines, dramatic portrayals in popular films and television, pharmaceutical commercials, and the conversations we have with our friends, family, significant others and coworkers about these varieties of media impact how we care for our physical, mental and emotional well-being.”

As with any program, the Health Communication concentration has its challenges. Although Dr. Erin Basinger, assistant professor, points out that writing assignments tend to come with the territory of any Communication Studies concentration, the fact that it is writing intensive may be intimidating to some students. Housed in Liberal Arts studies, it can also have reputational challenges, according to Senior Lecturer Sandy Hanson. “Liberal Arts students are, statistically, more successful and happier in their careers than other majors,” she says. “But the world out there still doesn’t understand us well.”

Health Communication is rewarding not only to the students who choose this concentration of study, but also to those who share their knowledge and experience with students in their classrooms. “In my teaching, and as director of our MA in Communication Studies, I encourage students to use their talents, knowledge and education to work toward a better society,” says Davis, who has been teaching at the university since 2005. Basinger joined the Department in August, 2016, and says she enjoys teaching Health Communication classes because the content resonates with students. Hanson, who has taught at the university since 1983, says her favorite course to teach is “COMM 3115: Health Communication” because it gives students their first taste of the concentration. “That makes me try to make it exciting and interesting, which in turn, keeps me on my toes,” she says. “I love it when a student comes back to me and says that I was the one that sparked their interest in the field!”

Davis tells students it is imperative for students to have compassion and be emotionally strong enough to work with people who have health problems. Basinger encourages students to confront their own biases about Health Communication and what they think might make it more effective. “The healthcare system (and our cultural system, more generally) are constrained by many, many structures that affect how healthcare is accessed and administered,” she says. “Students need to be willing to see what health is (and how to attain it) from a variety of perspectives.”

Students who choose the Health Communication concentration are generally interested in careers in the healthcare field, including positions such as patients’ advocates, public health information officers, medical office managers and pharmaceutical sales. Quinlan says there are many options. “I have a list of what you can do with a Health Comm degree, and the list keeps expanding.”

University alumni who studied in the program are putting their Health Communication skills to good use. Davis says one of her former students works as a patient liaison for the local hospital system. She adds that other alumni work with assisted living facilities and as communication managers for non-profits organizations. Hanson says one of her former students is a hospice employee. “She coordinates volunteers to help the family in need which, for her, is a fulfilling job,” she says, “and certainly a necessary one for the families.”

“I am always seeking ways to help others understand [the movement].”
Q: Why did you choose the Health Communication concentration?

While the healthcare field has always been an interest of mine, I initially struggled to pinpoint where I wanted to place my focus. My time at UNC Charlotte was instrumental in helping me develop my interests, and the discovery of Communication Studies gave me a new perspective through which to view health. I enjoy being challenged by new ways of thinking and love how communication theory can humanize what is made cold and clinical by the biomedical model. The Health Communication concentration is also incredibly versatile, and students graduate equipped for careers in everything from marketing, patient advocacy and beyond!

Q: What skills did you gain from your courses at UNC Charlotte?

I credit the quality of the instruction I received at UNC Charlotte for so many of my skills and accomplishments! I’ve developed my critical thinking skills through discussion and exposure to differing viewpoints, honed my ability to write professionally and learned how to conduct research. I count myself truly lucky for the education I’ve received, as I know that I will be prepared for any direction my professional interests might take me!

Q: How are applying those skills in the “real world”?

During my final semester at UNC Charlotte, I completed an internship in the Marketing and Communication department at the Charlotte affiliate of Susan G. Komen. My time with Komen Charlotte has helped develop my interests, particularly in health care campaigns, and I have continued to work with them since my graduation. I assist with content creation for our various media platforms, as well as the planning and promotion of Charlotte affiliate events like Race for the Cure!

Q: What advice can you offer for current or future Health Communication students?

Most importantly, I recommend that all students immerse themselves in the campus environment and the community that UNC Charlotte provides – this school is truly special! Academically, I highly suggest a minor for all Health Communication students. My minor in Public Health gave me a more comprehensive view of health and helped me identify my interests!

Students should also take full advantage of the resources that are offered to them - this includes professors! The Communication Studies department is home to an amazing faculty, and many of my professors have become my biggest champions and sources of guidance. I don’t think I would have realized my potential without them!

Q: What are your future plans and goals?

Right now, my biggest goal is the pursuit of a graduate degree, and I recently was accepted to the Communication Studies graduate program at UNC Charlotte! I have gained so much through my education at UNCC, and I want to continue to learn from and work alongside the same professors who sparked my love for Communication Studies. Because of my time with Susan G. Komen Charlotte, I have come to realize that I would love a career in the nonprofit sector. However, I also have an interest in research, and wish to have a deeper understanding of how healthcare organizations use narrative theory to create a culture around survivors and supporters. Ultimately, I’m just trying to let my experiences inform my passions, and to take each day as it comes!

Heather Stegner
(December ’16)

Major in Communication Studies
Health Communication Concentration
Minor: Public Health
FACULTY BOOK PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Christine S. Davis

Focus Groups: Applying Communication Theory through Design, Facilitation and Analysis

Publisher: Routledge, Dec. 1, 2016

Summary: Despite the fact that focus groups are a prime site to study group communication in context, no other books focus solely on the discursive aspect of focus groups—either in the process of facilitation or in the analysis. The purpose of this book is to use knowledge of interpersonal and group communication theory to explain how to be a better focus group facilitator and better understand and analyze the communication dynamics in the groups.

“In this book, I discuss how to conduct a focus group project from inception, planning, and facilitation—to coding, analysis, and presentation of findings,” Davis says. “I begin the book with an overview of the purpose, methods, and procedures of focus groups, then I spend the rest of the book describing and explaining the method from the vantage point of communication theory. Using group communication theories and concepts and a close interaction analysis approach, I provide detailed explanations, examples, and descriptions through all phases of a focus group project, focusing on the appropriate use and analysis of the interaction inherent in the focus group process.”

Dr. Ashli Quesinberry Stokes

Consuming Identity: The Role of Food in Redefining the South

Publisher: University of Mississippi Press, Nov. 1, 2016.

Summary: Southerners love to talk food, quickly revealing likes and dislikes, regional preferences and their own delicious stories. Because the topic often crosses lines of race, class, gender, and region, food supplies a common fuel to launch discussion. While many volumes examine Southern food, this one is the first to focus on food’s rhetorical qualities and the effect that it can have on culture.

“A lot of people are writing and talking about Southern food,” Stokes says. “What we have done is write about the way people are talking about Southern food. When we in communication studies use the word ‘rhetoric,’ we’re talking about persuasion and persuasive messages. We were interested in how the messages we send about food – by talking about it or serving a particular food – shape who we are.”
ABeeps, clicks and drips are familiar sounds in a hospital setting. Patients and caregivers are surrounded by hissing respirators, screeching alarms and clattering gurneys. These sounds are auditory reminders of a patient’s health and safety but lack emotional and psychological comfort. In “The Acoustics of Care” documentary, UNC Charlotte researcher Dr. Margaret M. Quinlan and colleagues profile Door to Door, a Chapel Hill-based organization that transforms the soundscape of the University of North Carolina hospitals. Founded and coordinated by Joy Javits, Door to Door brings professional performing, literary and visual artists to inpatient and outpatient settings. Musicians, dancers, drummers and storytellers connect with patients and caregivers through art. These artists shift the sights and sounds of healthcare settings to facilitate healing.

Quinlan, an associate professor in the department and core faculty with the Interdisciplinary Health Psychology doctoral program, has been researching Door to Door since 2010. She says the inspiration for the project came as a result of her observations at UNC Chapel Hill. “Dr. Harter, from Ohio University, and I decided that they would make a beautiful documentary,” she says. “We are inspired by the ways they shift the sounds and space of the hospital.” As a producer of the project, Quinlan says the biggest challenge was character building, since the artists are only with patients, staff and families for a short time. But she says the end result is rewarding in several ways. “I loved seeing the smiles on patients, family members and staff as they interacted with the artists in a difficult time.” Additionally, Quinlan says having her research on the screen means the information is more accessible to those who might not read academic book chapters or journal articles.

“The Acoustics of Care” is the third and final installment in the series The Courage of Creativity Initiative. The first and second films in the series, “Beautiful Remedy,” and “Creative Abundance,” were each awarded a regional Emmy nomination. The series won a regional Emmy award from the Ohio Valley Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. The documentary has been screened in academic settings around the world, including UNC Charlotte, Chapel Hill hospitals, the University of East London, Stratford Campus, The London School of Economics and Political Science and Royal Roads University, Canada. “The Acoustics of Care” is available to view on YouTube at: https://youtu.be/HK-4e0I70P1.

Dr. Dean Kruckeberg

Transparency, Public Relations and the Mass Media: Combating the Hidden Influences in News Coverage Worldwide (Routledge Focus on Public Relations) 1st Edition

Publisher: Routledge, Nov. 15, 2016

Summary: This book is about media transparency and good-faith attempts of honesty by both the sources and the gate-keepers of news and other information that the mass media present as being unbiased. Specifically, this book provides a theoretical framework for understanding media transparency and its antithesis--media opacity--by analyzing extensive empirical data that the authors have collected from more than 60 countries throughout the world. The practice of purposeful media opacity, which exists to greater or lesser extents worldwide, is a powerful hidden influencer of the ostensibly impartial media gate-keepers whose publicly perceived role is to present news and other information based on these gate-keepers’ perception of this information’s truthfulness. Empirical data that the authors have collected globally illustrate the extent of media opacity practices worldwide and note its pervasiveness in specific regions and countries. The authors examine, from multiple perspectives, the complex question of whether media opacity should be categorically condemned as being universally inappropriate and unethical or whether it should be accepted—or at least tolerated—in some situations and environments.
DR. ALAN FREITAG RECEIVES PRSA INFINITY AWARD FOR CAREER SERVICE

The Charlotte Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) recognized UNC Charlotte communications professor Dr. Alan Freitag with its prestigious Infinity Award at an evening gala on Nov. 2, 2016. The Infinity Award, established by PRSA in 1975, recognizes public relations professionals whose careers have demonstrated significant contributions to the practice of public relations.

Freitag joined UNC Charlotte in 1998. He helped found the UNC Charlotte’s Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter and petitioned for the public relations undergraduate program to be Certified in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) by PRSA. Prior to teaching, Freitag served in the U.S. Air Force for 22 years and achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel before retiring in 1995. His service included high-level public affairs responsibilities during his 10 years in Europe, two years in Hawaii and four years at the Pentagon. His work has been published in multiple Communication and Public Relations journals, and he was the lead author with Dr. Ashli Stokes of “Global Public Relations: Spanning Borders, Spanning Cultures” (Routledge Publishing, 2008).

Freitag says he is “deeply honored” by the award and is proud to have influenced the professional trajectories of those entering the public relations field. His advice to students is to engage in the professional field early by networking and finding mentorship opportunities. He also recommends students take undergraduate courses seriously, noting the courses students typically dread ultimately prove to be the most relevant. As a son of a mailman with “limited prospects,” Freitag was the first in his family to graduate high school. He encourages students to make bold decisions and be prepared for unexpected opportunities. “I always tell my students that I hope when you look back on your life that it’s a complete surprise to you,” Freitag says. “So get ready, put on your track shoes and do great things.”

THE NCA RECOGNIZES DR. DEAN KRUCKEBERG WITH 2016 PRIDE AWARD

The Public Relations Division of the National Communications Association (NCA) awarded Dr. Dean Kruckeberg with the 2016 PRIDE Award for lifetime achievement and contributions in public relations education. The PRIDE awards date back to 1989, and winners are determined by a committee of three NCA Public Relations Division members. Kruckeberg won the first annual PRIDE Award for co-authoring the book, “Public Relations and Community: A Reconstructed Theory.” He is also the author of many book chapters, articles and papers on the topics of international public relations and international public relations ethics.

Dr. Jason Black, professor and Communication Studies department chair at UNC Charlotte, says the PRIDE Award is a premier honor that represents Kruckeberg’s many years of writing, teaching, mentoring and service related to public relations education. “He has dedicated his professional career to the field and this lifetime achievement award is an emblem of how very much Dr. Kruckeberg is treasured by his peers and colleagues,” Black says. Part of Kruckeberg’s work, Black says, has always intersected with classroom landscapes and mentoring contexts involving public relations students and those working in the academic field of public relations.

Kruckeberg, APR, Fellow PRSA, has been a professor at UNC Charlotte since 2008 and was executive director of the Center for Global Public Relations from 2008-2013. He enjoys teaching such communication studies courses as PR Strategy, PR Writing, International PR and PR Ethics, and he challenges students to forge a deeper understanding of others that extends beyond their own worldview. “I like the importance of diversity not only because it’s the right thing to do, but it really brings a dynamic where people understand those other than themselves,” Kruckeberg says.
GALLICANO LEADS AEJMC PR DIVISION

Last August, Assistant Professor Tiffany Gallicano served as head of the PR Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. In this role, she oversaw all of the division's activities throughout the year and led the outgoing leadership and business meetings at the conference. She oversaw over 70 volunteers and held monthly conference calls with her leadership team of 20 volunteers. Division highlights from the year include having several PR professor Twitter chats, raising $2,450 for awards and activities, establishing reviewer incentives, creating new membership benefits, formalizing a structure for leadership succession at the committee level, and attracting a new division sponsor and corresponding award. Dr. Gallicano also presented her research with her Oregon graduate students, Jenny Tatone and Alec Tefertiller, which won the top teaching paper award in the PR Division. The paper was focused on assessing the use of Twitter in large lecture classes.
Alumni

FILMMAKER MAKES AWARD-WINNING MUSIC DOCUMENTARIES

Wes Orshoski (’96) is a New York-based director, producer and editor who merged his communication studies degree and passion for music into a remarkable career. His writing and photography appeared in such magazines as Rolling Stone and Billboard, but he is arguably best known for his work in the film industry. Orshoski made his directorial debut in 2010 with the award-winning documentary "Lemmy," a film about the life and career of Ian "Lemmy" Kilmister, frontman for the heavy-metal band Motörhead. His most recent project entitled "The Damned: Don't You Wish That We Were Dead," chronicles the journey of influential English punk band The Damned from their inception in 1976 to 2015. The documentary made its world premiere at the SXSW (South by Southwest) film festival in 2015. Orshoski, who wrote, directed and produced the film, says this has been his most challenging project so far. "People don't realize just how big a job it is to make a film almost completely on your own," he said. "It can take years off your life." But his hard work has paid off and the documentary has been well-received. One reviewer on IMDb (International Movie Database) declared Orshoski's film "one of the most honest, heartfelt and powerful rock band chronicles yet compiled."

Q. What brought you to UNC Charlotte?
A. My mother was moving to North Carolina from Ohio, and I joined her. I transferred schools simply because I was desperate to get out of Ohio.

Q. Why did you decide to major in Communication Studies?
A. It was the closest major to journalism, which is what I was majoring in at my previous school.

Q. Did you have any professors who inspired you to follow your current career?
A. I'm not sure I had professors who inspired my current path, but I definitely had inspiring professors. Most notably Dr. Jon Crane, a fellow music lover and all-around great person and friend.

Q. What class during your undergraduate studies do you feel best prepared you for your current career?
A. My coursework at UNC Charlotte didn't really prepare me for working in the documentary film world. But I think the whole college experience informs you and what you do for the rest of your life. The people you meet, the friends you make, the relationships and experiences you have, etc.

Q. What led you to be a film director?
A. I just sort of fell into it. I had been working as a music journalist for several years. I often wrote about reggae music and had befriended roots reggae legend Burning Spear. It all started when a documentary was being made about his life, and I began volunteering as a producer on that still-unreleased film.

Q. What is the best part of your career?
A. All of it. The crafting of the story in the editing and planning stages. The actual photography. The meld of music with the moving image. I love it all. And of course the feeling that you're making a contribution to the culture. Good or bad, you're participating in it.
Q. What are some of the reasons you chose the MA program at UNC Charlotte?
A. I chose the MA program at UNC Charlotte because of its interdisciplinary design. I enjoyed the freedom afforded to me in designing my own program of study. I also appreciated the emphasis on research and teaching through assistantships provided by the department.

Q. What was your favorite aspect of the program?
A. One memorable experience while in the MA program was being able to study abroad at Zeppelin University in Friedrichshafen, Germany. This opportunity remains one of the greatest opportunities of my academic and personal life. While in Germany I took classes including Critical Theory and Social Change, which focused on theorists such as Bourdieu, Blau, and Weber, all of who still inspire me today. I was able to travel to seven different countries and even learned a bit of German – although I am far from fluent!

Q. What lessons did you learn while at UNC Charlotte that has helped you in your academic career thus far?
A. My mentor, Dr. Maggie Quinlan, taught me the importance of asking questions that inspire. She instilled in me a desire to pursue issues of social justice and a longing to make the world more equitable for those who live on the margins. She taught me how to incorporate my passions in the classroom and led by example.

Q. When did you first decide you wanted to become a professor?
A. When I first came to UNC Charlotte, I was unsure whether I wanted to pursue a career in the academy, or in the private sector. I remember having a conversation with Dr. Dan Grano as I was nearing the end of my coursework. I expressed to him how unsettling it felt to think about never being in a classroom again. In his warm and collegial manner, he replied, ‘well, I guess you’ll just have to go to doc school.’ I have always remembered that moment. I cannot imagine life outside of the classroom. So, I decided to pursue a career where I do not have to make that decision! Thanks, Dr. Grano, for the nudge!

Q. What advice do you have for graduate students considering doctoral programs?
A. Whew. It seems like such a whirlwind. I remember applying for doctoral programs while abroad in Germany and all of the uncertainty and self-doubt that came along with the process. My first piece of advice would be to embrace the uncertainty (easier said than done, I know!). Second, research various programs. Be sure, when you apply, to know if there are faculty members who align with your interests and are able to mentor you. Third, as much as possible, talk to students who attend, or have attended, the institutions you are interested in. They will be able to give you a different and valuable perspective.

Q. What are you most looking forward to regarding your new teaching position at Clemson University?
A. First, I am looking forward to being closer to home! I am originally from Charlotte and am thrilled to have the opportunity to come back to the Carolinas! I am also looking forward to developing new and innovative curriculum at Clemson that incorporates service learning. There are many nonprofit organizations I am looking forward to partnering with. Go Tigers!

Kristen in Munich, Germany
“UNC Charlotte has left an indelible mark on my life. From faculty who inspired and challenged, to colleagues who I consider great friends today, I will always be thankful for the opportunities afforded to me at UNC Charlotte.”

Kristen Okamoto (’13) earned her bachelor’s degree from Appalachian State University in Communication before attending the Communication Studies MA program at UNC Charlotte. While studying for her master’s degree, Kristen was drawn to the areas of health communication, rhetoric and sport. Her thesis, titled “Running Alone, Together: An Ethnographic Study of the Embodied Identities of Runningworks Athletes,” chronicled how certain individuals formed community identity through participating in a running-focused non-profit organization. Her thesis won the university-wide 2013-14 Graduate Dean’s Master’s Thesis competition for the Social Sciences. After graduating from UNC Charlotte, Kristen attended the Ohio University School of Communication Studies, where she plans to complete her doctorate degree this May. Her dissertation is titled, “A Poststructural Feminist and Narrative Analysis of Food and the Body: Community Organizing for Social Change in a Farm-to-School Initiative.” She accepted a position at Clemson University starting in August (2017), where she will teach a health communication graduate seminar and communication theory at the undergraduate level.

Graduate student Alex Richardson caught up with Kristen and asked her about her experience at UNC Charlotte’s program, her academic path after her master’s and what advice she might have for someone potentially following in her footsteps.
DEFINING SUCCESS: NOAH WILLIAMS AND RACHEL BROWN

Success comes in many styles. For some, it means following a set agenda, ticking off predetermined milestones along a well-planned path. For others, success means embracing detours and delighting in happenstance. Ultimately, success is defined by who’s wearing it.

For Communication Studies major Noah Williams, embracing the detours began in middle school when he broke his wrist skateboarding. So he traded in his skateboard for a camera. After high school, he earned an associate degree from Davidson Community College. Then he took a semester off to do a marketing internship in New York City. Williams is now a professional photographer, style blogger and contributing editor for QC Exclusive. Last fall, he started taking classes in the Department, and plans to graduate in spring 2018 with a concentration in Public Relations and a minor in Journalism. Williams says his internship has helped him hone in on his passions and take college more seriously. “You have to know what you want to do and be passionate about it,” he says, “because if you aren’t, somebody else is.” One of his passions, he says, is the art of subtly telling a brand’s story through pictures. Through his blog and Instagram account (@NoahWilliamStyle), he paints inviting vignettes of luxury goods (think: Audemars Piguet watches, Rolls Royce cars and Brooks Brothers suits), with clever captions and artisan coffee sprinkled in for good measure. Each image is meticulous and intentional. Whether it’s J.Crew, or his college courses, Williams revels in the details. “Figuring out why people do what they do, and the details within that, is fascinating to me,” he says.

Like Williams, alum Rachel Brown (’14) also majored in Communication Studies with a concentration in Public Relations and simultaneously built a personal brand while pursuing an education. Brown, known by her Instagram handle @QueenCityChic, currently has more than 31,000 Instagram followers. During her senior year, she wanted to supplement her resume and show prospective employers her creative writing and photography skills. So she started a blog to illustrate her eye for web design and branding. “The Instagram account just took off from there,” she says. Now, as an online influencer, local lifestyle blogger and freelance writer, Brown offers social media consulting to help other blogs and businesses grow. Brown says real-world media keeps her on her toes, but she still applies some of the fundamental advice she learned in the classroom. “Networking is key, email techniques are important, and never say ‘like’ and ‘um’ when speaking,” she says. “These are just three of the lessons I’ve taken into my daily life.” She didn’t become “Instagram Famous” overnight. “I started by going to NoDa and East Boulevard coffee shops when I was finishing up school,” she recalls. “I’d go to events or places like that to bump elbows with the people who I knew were doing what I was into, and I just simply networked.” In addition to networking, Brown encourages students to stay inspired. “Make your own lane and stay true to what you are good at,” she says. As for future plans, Brown hopes to continue blogging about products and brands that inspire her, and hopes to utilize vlogs as an avenue for sharing social media techniques and fashion tips. “I want to show an even more real side of me,” she says. “This helps me build even more credit as an influencer.”
Alexus Wall was awarded Second Place (Honorable Mention) in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, and the Arts category at the Charlotte Research Scholars’ 5th Annual UNC Charlotte Summer Research Symposium. The senior Honors student worked with her mentor, Dr. Richard Leeman, on her project entitled, “Rhetoric of Protest and Confrontation: Understanding and Interposing the Dichotomy Between #BlackLivesMatter and #AllLivesMatter.” The Summer Research Symposium was created to highlight undergraduate research at UNC Charlotte. The symposium, presented July 26, 2016, by the Charlotte Research Scholars (CRS), featured participants from several other Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) programs.

A dual major in the Public Advocacy concentration of Communication Studies and Political Science, Wall says she chose to study the Black Lives Matter movement because it is a transgenerational, “hot button” issue. She also has a personal conviction. “I believe in it wholeheartedly,” she says, “and I am always seeking ways to help it progress and help others understand.” Wall’s research project examines the use of social media in the Black Lives Matter movement and analyzes the discourse of the hashtags “#BlackLivesMatter” and “#AllLivesMatter”. She states in her abstract that these debates on social media “represent a larger struggle over discourse on race and racism across the United States.”

Wall spent approximately two months working alongside Leeman to research and compile information for her project in addition to attending weekly CRS professional development sessions. Leeman says the best part of working with Wall is that the “scholarly exploration” was a mutual experience. “Through our readings and discussions and Alexus’s writing, I have found myself re-thinking earlier projects I worked on and re-conceptualizing new projects of my own.” He adds that Wall is a model CRS student: “intellectually curious, self-motivated and one who has selected a project that she is deeply passionate about.” The CRS program provides research opportunities for high-achieving undergraduate students at UNC Charlotte.

Originally from a small town outside Pinehurst, N.C., Wall has always had a desire to unearth answers. “I remember watching the Movie ‘Antz’ and thinking, ‘Is any of this true?’ So I walked outside and dug up an ant hill.” She says she chose her majors based on her realization that in order to make changes in the world, she had to be able to communicate effectively and understand the way others perceive situations. When she graduates in May, Wall plans to attend law school and study Human Rights Law or Civil Law. She believes studying the conversation between

All Lives Matter and Black Lives Matter illustrates ways to reach lawmakers and juries who may hold prejudicial views. She adds that the project helped prepare her for the long nights ahead she will spend sifting through laws and applying them to cases in law school.
Alexus Wall has been working on her honors thesis project for UNC Charlotte’s Communication Studies Honors Program. Dr. Ashli Stokes, director of the program, says it has been exciting to watch Wall’s project develop from a course paper to a full-blown honors thesis. “Alexus shows how interest and commitment to a particular project and idea results in a great product,” Stokes says. “She has really made herself stand out in the job pool and she will stand out among other graduate school applicants that haven’t had the chance to complete this type of major research project.”

To be a candidate for the Honors Program, students must have at least a 3.3 GPA and demonstrate commitment to the extra coursework and required honors thesis project. Additionally, Stokes says students should be interested in scholarly conversations in the Communication Studies field in order to explore a research topic on a deeper level. As of spring 2017, Wall is joined by Jamie Smith and Jasmyn Cobb in the Honors Program. Wall and Smith will graduate in May with honors (upon completion of their honors theses). “We will be accepting more students into the program once the spring semester concludes,” Stokes says. Students can find the honors application on the Communication Studies Department website (http://communication.uncc.edu/honors), or contact Stokes for more details.
FORENSICS RESULTS FOR 2016-2017 ACADEMIC YEAR

Shepherd University –
Sangeetha Ramachandran – 5th Declamation
McKenna Jahns – 5th Dramatic Interpretation

Randolph Macon College –
Jordan Boyd – 1st Impromptu; 1st Delamation

Lynchburg University –
UNC Charlotte – 5th place overall schools
Jordan Boyd – 1st Impromptu; 1st Declamation
McKenna Jahns – 1st Persuasion; 4th Impromptu

CFA Finals Ocean City, MD –
Jordan Boyd – 1st Impromptu; 2nd Declamation

CFA Overall Awards of the Year:
Jordan Boyd – Speaker of the Year Impromptu;
Speaker of the Year Declamation

LAMBDA PI ETA HONOR SOCIETY
2017-2018

SPRING 2017
Caitlyn Bergmann
Julio Cazares
Grace Cheviot
Riley Chuss
Lindsey Craven
Gordon Culletto
Chelsea Haigler
Cameron Johannesen
Nahim Kashani
Naomi Israel
Seth Nun
Hayley Oveman
Morgan Pike
Abigail Relyea
Kelisha Sellars
Sarah Shugar
Jamie Smith
Alexus Wall
Lindsey Workman
Cheyenne Zeiler

Nu Lambda Chapter Inductees

Advisor: Melody Dixon-Brown
The president of the UNC Charlotte chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), says the chapter continued to experience positive growth over the last academic year.

Simone McDougal has been a member of PRSSA since fall 2015, and currently serves as the organization’s president. She says she strives to help PRSSA members experience public relations in the real world. “We go on tours at firms and corporate offices and learn about how PR works in their environment,” she says. She adds that members attend mixers and get to “rub elbows” with public relations professionals in informal settings. “We attend conferences in both regional and national settings and invite recent graduates and local professionals to our meetings to give us advice on how to enter the PR workforce.”

PRSSA serves as a way for public relations students to enhance their education and broaden their professional network. A bonus of being a PRSSA member, McDougal says, is having exclusive access to industry insight, such as when local public relations companies are hiring.

McDougal says the group’s membership and involvement has continued to grow in the last year. Just two UNC Charlotte PRSSA members attended the regional conference in 2016 and 10 members attended in 2017. She hopes to keep that momentum going, and have even more members represent UNC Charlotte at the PRSSA National Conference in Boston in the fall.

McDougal says she joined PRSSA because she wanted to be involved in something that would benefit her beyond her time in college. But being a member of the organization has benefited her in a variety of ways she did not expect. “PRSSA has given me friends and mentors I can rely on for advice and support as I navigate through this field,” she says. She has enjoyed traveling with PRSSA, representing the UNC Charlotte chapter in states across the country. In the future, she would love for alumni including herself to be more involved with the chapter, such as when it is in need of program speakers. McDougal also hopes UNC Charlotte PRSSA can collaborate with Western Carolina University to host a regional conference at UNC Charlotte.

The faculty advisor for the UNC Charlotte chapter of PRSSA is Robin Rothberg, APR, and the professional advisor for the chapter is Jonathan Rochester. For more information on becoming a member of PRSSA, contact prssauncc@gmail.com, or visit their website at http://prssauncc.wixsite.com/49ers.

**2016-2017 PRSSA officers:**

- **President**
  Simone McDougal

- **Vice President**
  Ciyana Johnson

- **Secretary**
  Gralicia Jones

- **Treasurer**
  Kaliyah Jackson

- **PR Director**
  Kaivonya “Kai” Robinson

- **Historian**
  SheVan Alston

- **Executive Coordinator**
  London McKinley
JOURNALISM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

Senior Lecturer Cheryl Spainhour created and led a British Media and Culture Study Abroad program in London. Eleven students visited the city over Spring Break (2017) and toured news media outlets, including the BBC, The Guardian, The Times of London, The Independent and The Evening Standard. Students also visited The House of Lords while in session at The Parliament, the Tower of London, the British Museum, and several other cultural iconic places. Students had high tea at Kensington Palace and enjoyed live theatre in the West End of London. Students covered both media and culture events – you can view their work, including a photo slide show at https://uncchapelhilebritishmediaandculturespring2017london.wordpress.com/
Alexus Wall (left) was recognized at the Awards Ceremony on April 11 by the Department’s Undergraduate Coordinator Carol Leeman for her 2017 Communication Studies Research Paper Award.

### Scholarship Awards 2016-2017

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship</th>
<th>Recipient(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brycie Baber Scholarship</td>
<td>Zachary Burdick &amp; Jade Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cy N. Bahakel Scholarship</td>
<td>Delfina Erochenko</td>
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<td>Joe S. Epley Scholarship</td>
<td>Theodore Karabet</td>
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<td>Rebecca and Walter Roberts Scholarship</td>
<td>Julio Cazaras</td>
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The 2017 winners of the Target case study (left to right): Richard Rust, Jessica Benitez, Reid Murrow, Josh Scott with Senior Lecturer Melody Dixon-Brown (not pictured: Lauren Rogers). Ten teams competed in Dixon-Brown’s two business communication classes (COMM 3160). Each team had to write a proposal and present unique ideas to improve Target’s market share during the “back to college” fall season. The Target Corporation awarded the winning team $2,000.
Our MA program has completed another very successful year, thanks to the hard work and dedication of students and faculty. This year we are graduating the 113th through 118th graduates of our program! Thank you to all our graduate students who have worked hard this year to support the program through volunteering at colloquia; helping with speaker visits and program planning; attending programs and conferences; volunteering to join us in recruiting visits and participating in research poster sessions; and presenting research papers at academic conferences. Thank you also for all your hard work as teaching and research assistants and for contributing your thoughtful ideas and engaged anticipation to the intellectual climate of our classrooms. Thank you also to our graduate faculty who make all these accomplishments possible through teaching classes; mentoring students; serving on admissions, assessment, curriculum, and event committees; working with students – and me -- on research, and hours and hours of informal conversations. Thank you for your support.

As our graduate students move on to their new role as alumni of our program, I want to acknowledge some recent alumni of our program. MA alumni Nan Wilson Wilkenfeld set up a graduate travel scholarship fund, providing funding which enabled six of our MA students to attend our regional conference this year. [Read more about her gift in this edition in our EZine.] We encourage all alumni to consider making a contribution to this worthy cause.

In other notable recent alumni news, Kristen Okamoto (2012) will receive her doctoral degree from Ohio University this spring and will be joining the Communication Studies Department at Clemson University in the fall as Assistant Professor. [She is featured in our EYE on Alumni series in this edition of our EZine.] Chelsea Wilde (2012) will be receiving her doctorate degree from the University of Kentucky and will be Assistant Professor at Virginia Tech in the fall, and Debra Basalik (2016) will be receiving her Ph.D. from the Health Psychology program at UNC Charlotte. Several other alumni are currently doctoral students at prestigious programs around the country, and in analyst, specialist, consultant, and administrative positions in placements such as Eige Consulting, Developmental Disability Resources, Carolinas Healthcare System, NBC, Burke Communication, Council for Children’s Rights, Deloitte, 24 Foundation, Harvard’s School of Public Health, Fleishmann Hilliard, American University, and Brown University. Space doesn’t permit me to brag on every one of our alumni individually, but please know that we are very proud of all of them!

Please join me in congratulating the newest graduates of our program!

Christine S. Davis, Ph.D.
Graduate Program Director Communication Studies MA Program
**Elizabeth Ballard:** Liz Ballard successfully defended her comprehensive examination in early April. "I have been delighted to be Liz’s advisor this year and also supervised her in an Independent Study about caregiver-provider communication,” Dr. Davis says. Liz is from Harrisburg, North Carolina. "She’s had a very eclectic experience in our program." Her research topics have spanned from the rhetoric of C.S. Lewis to college students’ mobile dating communication habits to the NRA’s values advocacy campaigns. Liz says that the projects she’s been most passionate about have been on the experience of caregiving and patient & caregiver communication. “I’ve loved that everything I’ve written has been something I’m excited about,” she says, “and every time I’ve gone to a professor with an idea, I think it’s so cool and so meaningful that they share in my excitement.” Liz did an impressive job in her presentation at the SSCA conference in April with her paper on “I am the NRA: Values Advocacy and Identification Strategies of the Freedom’s Safest Place Campaign.” Liz REFUSED to pick a favorite class and says that “each class has challenged me in so many different ways and I’ve discovered interests and passions of mine I never knew existed!” Liz loves working with the faculty because “they’ve challenged me and pushed me, but never without loads of support and encouragement. I also love how supportive my cohort has been. We have laughed, and cried and panicked and celebrated with each other.” After graduation, Liz plans to pursue a career in medical sales. She wants to say that “this experience has been so meaningful to me.”

**Erik Brooks:** Erik Brooks is completing his thesis under the guidance of Dr. Richard Leeman. Erik came to our program from Gilbert, Arizona, a suburb of Phoenix. His undergraduate degree was in Political Science from Arizona State University, where he also minored in film studies. Key classes he has taken at UNC Charlotte have been Issues management, organizational rhetoric, textual analysis, and ethic, power and discourse. With very little monetary inducement from his advisor, Erik says that his favorite class has been textual analysis. Erik writes that he has enjoyed studying campaign slogans during his studies here, and not surprisingly political campaign slogans are the subject of his master’s thesis. Above all, Erik says, “my biggest highlight has been developing amazing relationships with this outstanding faculty and my cohort.” Erik presented his paper titled “Talking Tough: The White House Response to the 2013 Government Shutdown” at the SSCA conference in April. His future plans are open at this point, but may well involve working again in politics, that will certainly keep him in the Charlotte area. As anyone knows, Erik lives, breathes, and eats politics. His advisor, Dr. Leeman, says that one of his most vivid memories of Erik will always be the mutual, deepening consternation with which the two of them watched the Republican presidential debates throughout the Fall 2015 semester during ProSem. “We’ll leave it at this thought,” Dr. Leeman says, “Misery truly does love company.”
Emma Butterworth: Emma Butterworth plans to defend her comprehensive exams this spring under the direction of her advisor Dr. Margaret Quinlan and committee members Dr. Richard Leeman and Dr. Jaime Bochantin. Dr. Davis was impressed with Emma’s presentation of her paper “Emotions, Mental Health and Advertising: An Analysis of the Advertising Campaign for Disney/Pixar’s Inside Out” at the SSCA conference; this paper was awarded the Top Student Paper in the Mass Communication Division. As a communication scholar Emma is guided by narrative and post-structural feminist theories with a focus on topics dealing with the intersection of health, gender, media and sexuality. Within the topic of health her focus is on the narratives of women and couples who have used assistive reproductive technologies in order to have children. Emma also looks into how mental health is discussed in society both through interpersonal and media based communication. Emma’s favorite class was Dr. Quinlan’s Gendered Bodies. She was secretary of the Communication Studies Graduate Student Association this year, and has also been active outside the department, presenting papers at four conferences in her two years here. Emma is from Gastonia, and she decided to attend UNCC after meeting Dr. Davis at our state conference. Dr. Quinlan, describes Emma “as intellectually curious and she loves analyzing films and television. She is already working on a post-MA paper.”

Corey Kelly: Corey Kelly will be defending his thesis soon, under the direction of his advisor Dr. Dan Grano. Dr. Davis says she has had the pleasure of working closely with Corey this year in his role as president of our Communication Studies Graduate Student Association. “No one has put more effort or energy into CSGSA than Corey. Corey is from Stanley, North Carolina. While in our program, he has studied Public Relations- organizational rhetoric, textual analysis, and rhetorical criticism, and he did an independent study w/ Dr. Dean Kruckeberg on global community-building in the NBA. Corey says his favorite class was Dr. Ashli Stokes’ organizational rhetoric. He considers the highlight of his time in the program to be working for three semesters as a research assistant to Dr. Kruckeberg, who says “Corey has been indispensable to my scholarly agenda this year and has been capable of researching, analyzing, understanding, and appreciating literature that has ranged from globalization to Russian communication to community-building to an organic theory of public relations. Perhaps he has also saved my life; his thorough risk analysis to determine whether I should accept my latest invitation for an overseas consultancy has persuaded me to stay in Charlotte. Corey has high intellect, possesses an amazing depth and breadth of knowledge that comes from both higher education and a range of life experiences and is destined for great career success, whether that will be in academia or in professional life.” After graduation, Corey plans to work in sports public relations.
Meredith Alex Richardson: “Alex is intelligent, engaging, and incredibly well-organized,” says Dr. Davis. “I have had the great pleasure of having Alex as the graduate assistant for the graduate program this year. She is also willing and fearless.” She is originally from Roanoke, Virginia, and came to the Department via Coastal Carolina University. True to the nature of our generalist program, Alex has sampled courses from a wide variety of communication sub-fields, including Media and Society, Dark Side of Organizational Communication, Textual Analysis, and an Independent Study on family communication. She also took the course Teaching at the Graduate Level through the Graduate School. Additionally, she TA’d for Intro to Media Studies (3 semesters) and Communication Theory (1 semester), along with conducting research for Organizational Communication faculty. Her favorite class was Dr. Bochantin’s Dark Side of Organizational Communication. Alex says that being a teaching assistant to some of the brightest communication students at UNCC was by far one of her most rewarding experiences in the program. She also notes that attending conferences and assisting in the creation of on-campus colloquiums through CSGSA provided her with valuable professional experience and connections she may not have otherwise had access to. On a more general note, Alex has enjoyed learning not only from her professors, but also from her peers and cohort. Following graduation, Alex plans on completing a post graduate internship in Human Resources with the goal of maintaining a career in HR management or policy development moving forward. She is also looking forward to beginning renovations on a newly-purchased fixer-upper here in Charlotte and getting married to her fiancé, Zack in September! Dr. Jaime Bochantin says “Alex is the first student at UNCC who shares my love of conflict resolution via mediation. We bonded over that the first day we met. She is and was also my first official graduating MA advisee since my arrival to UNCC almost three years ago so that of course, makes her very special to me.” Alex is very special to all of us. Alex is getting ready to defend her directed project under the direction of Dr. Bochantin.
OUTSTANDING JOURNALISM STUDENTS (LEFT TO RIGHT): SUMMER BUTNER; EMILY LANE; AND AMANDA LEA

ALEXUS WALL WAS RECOGNIZED FOR HER HONORS WORK: (PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT): DR. RICHARD LEEMAN, WALL AND DR. ASHLI STOKES

FORENSICS CLUB MEMBERS WERE HONORED BY DIRECTOR TIM HORNE (FAR RIGHT)

SENIOR LECTURER DEBBIE BAKER(CENTER) RECOGNIZED UNDERGRADUATE COORDINATOR CAROL LEEMAN (LEFT) FOR HER 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT; DR. MIN JIANG (RIGHT) FOR HER 10 YEARS OF SERVICE; AND SENIOR LECTURER ROBIN ROTHBERG (NOT PICTURED) FOR HER 10 YEARS OF SERVICE.

2016-17 PRSSA MEMBERS WERE RECOGNIZED AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY
As part of UNC Charlotte’s Communication Studies Day on April 11, Dr. Mark Knapp, Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas at Austin, addressed students and faculty in his lecture “Understanding Lying & Deception in a Post-Truth Era.” His one-hour talk drew a substantial crowd to the Prospector Gold Room, where he offered insight on the subject of deception from a variety of perspectives. Knapp touched on such topics as deception as a means of survival and reproduction, attributions of deception and everyday behavioral cues to help detect deception. In order to increase deception detection accuracy, he encouraged listeners to be “judiciously skeptical” and weigh sources carefully. Knapp, the Jesse H. Jones Centennial Professor Emeritus of Communication, is a specialist in nonverbal communication, close relationships and lying and deception. He is the author of 11 books, the most recent being Lying and Deception in Human Interaction 2nd edition, which was released in 2016.
UNIVERSITY SPEAKING CENTER HAS AN EXCEPTIONAL 2ND YEAR

The University Speaking Center (USC), a campus pilot initiative co-sponsored by the Communication Across the Curriculum program and the Department of Communication Studies, had an outstanding year of growth in 2016-2017. Under the direction of USC Faculty Coordinator Debbie Baker, the Center provided over 100 individual peer consultations and reached close to 300 students through workshops and classroom presentations. The USC also provides excellent training opportunity for Communication Studies students. Undergraduates Tiera Gibson, Sabrina Williams and graduate student Miranda Rouse worked as peer consultants and workshop developers and presenters.

STUDENT COMMUNICATION CONSULTANTS HELP FELLOW STUDENTS SHINE

The Department of Communication Studies places a strong emphasis on excellence in its undergraduate curriculum. This year the department participated in several curriculum development opportunities offered by the Communication Across the Curriculum program. As part of that program, the department hired three undergraduate peer Communication Consultants to help students develop their communication competencies. McKenna Jahns, Elouise Miny and Jamie Smith held over 40 individual peer review consultations with undergraduate students enrolled in COMM 3100, Communication Research Methods. Lecturers Sayde Brais and Brandy Stamper served as their faculty mentors.
A submission from Debbie Kilby Baker and two Communication Studies students was selected for inclusion in the 2017 National Association of Communication Centers conference. The topic is “Elevator Going Up? Uplifting Lessons Learned from Redesigning the Marketing of Elevator Speech Events.” The presenters are (left to right) Baker, graduate student Miranda Rouse and undergraduate Tiera Gibson.

**Tiffany Bryant** is the Department of Communication Studies Administrative Support Associate. She not only serves as the face of the department, but she also works behind the scenes to streamline students’ academic experiences as they make decisions about their own passions and interests. She is a UNC Charlotte alumna, earning a bachelor’s of science degree in Psychology and a minor in Women and Gender Studies in 2015. She is currently pursuing a second bachelor’s of science degree in Biology. Off the clock and out of the classroom, some of her favorite activities are volunteering, traveling, cooking, swimming and spending time with her dog, Samantha.

**Kayla Modlin** previously the Administrative Assistant for the Communication Studies Department, was promoted to Office Manager in November, 2015. After graduating in 2012 from UNC Charlotte with a bachelor’s degree in English and a minor in Art, Kayla joined the department staff in September, 2013. Her current responsibilities include managing department budgets, event scheduling and other administrative functions for the department. In her spare time, she enjoys music and photography, playing ukulele in frequent jam sessions with her friends and updating her photography website, kaylablakephoto.wix.com/photography. She also loves to read, and hopes one day to travel to the countries on her “wish list,” filling out her portfolio with foreign landscapes and other conceptual artwork.
Debbie Kilby Baker

Debbie Kilby Baker, Senior Lecturer, has taught undergraduate courses in business communication, small group, interpersonal communication contexts, and public speaking – including Freshman Learning Community sections – since January 2001. Having earned licensure in education with graduate work in communication theory and teaching effectiveness, Baker specializes in creating diverse, engaging learning opportunities to help students be inspired, challenged and successful learners. “Walk by my classroom and you might hear laughter flowing freely, the ‘Olympics Fanfare’ medley resonating when teams proudly accept their medals or complete silence as students work intently on an exercise,” she says. “I proudly hang in my office a 2011 student-designed faculty award which states ‘Most Eccentric’ for my teaching style and personality because it acknowledges the effective pedagogical and andragogical research for which I value.” Outside of the classroom, mentoring has been integral part of Baker’s professional engagement. She has designed and presented numerous workshops and training sessions on campus for faculty and students at the Diversity Summer Institute, Center of Graduate Life, University Center of Academic Excellence, Office of Adult Students and Evening Services, Prospect Preceptors, SAFE and Communication Across the Curriculum’s Lunch and Learn series and Designated Communication Consultants, in addition to a myriad of departmental and community instruction. She continues to serve as Communication Studies Scholarship Chair, COMM 1101 Adjunct Faculty Liaison and Communication Studies Student Association Faculty Advisor and has been recently appointed to develop and consult for the campus Speaking Resource Center.

Erin D. Basinger

Dr. Erin D. Basinger is an Assistant Professor in Health Communication and teaches classes about interpersonal health communication at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She earned her bachelor’s degree at Samford University, her master’s degree at the University of Georgia, and her doctorate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her research focuses on interpersonal processes, including social support and coping, and as they occur in health contexts such as illness, grief and loss, and mental health. Her recent work examines communal coping, a process by which people manage stress in their relationships, in the context of chronic illness, especially type 2 diabetes. Dr. Basinger’s work has been published in Health Communication, Journal of Family Communication, Communication Research, and Qualitative Health Research, in addition to a variety of edited books. Her teaching focuses on intersections between theory and practice, offering students a vocabulary for what they already see and do in their relationships, believing that this vocabulary extends students’ understanding of their own experiences. Outside of her professional life, Erin enjoys yoga and spending time with her dog, Sophie.

Jason Edward Black

Dr. Jason Edward Black is professor and chair of the Department of Communication Studies at the UNC Charlotte. His research program is located at the juncture of rhetorical studies and social change, with an emphasis on American Indian resistance, LGBTQ community discourses, and Black liberation. His work in these areas has appeared in the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Rhetoric & Public Affairs, Southern Communication Journal, Western Journal of Communication, American Indian Quarterly, and American Indian Culture and Research Journal, among others. Black is the author of American Indians and the Rhetoric of Removal and Allotment (University Press of Mississippi) and is co-editor of An Archive of Hope: Harvey Milk’s Speeches and Writings (University of California Press, 2013) and Arguments about Animal Ethics (Lexington Books, 2010). He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in African American Rhetoric, Rhetorical Theory, Rhetoric & Social Change, and Rhetoric, Race & the Law.
Jaime E. Bochantin
Dr. Jaime E. Bochantin is an Assistant Professor in Organizational Communication. She examines the social issues, member behavior and cultural landscape of an organization in order to provide managers and HR practitioners with strategies for the implementation of policies, practices and procedures to better the organization and the relationships/communication between employees and managers. Her current research examines work-life/family, stress and well-being, organizational conflict and negotiation, workplace mistreatment including incivility, bullying and violence, and generational differences in the workplace. Her research has appeared in high quality journals including Communication Monographs, Communication Studies, International Journal of Business Communication, Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, Women and Language, and Negotiations and Conflict Management Research. Dr. Bochantin is also a certified mediator, trained in the art of conflict resolution. Research suggests, and personal experiences support, the notion that students and teachers have an interdependent relationship. As such, both teachers and students play a role in each other’s successes and failures,” she says. “Because of this, I do my absolute best to establish rapport early with my students and develop a supportive culture within the classroom where students feel safe.” When she is not working she enjoys traveling, reading and competitive running. In fact, she has completed three full marathons and dozens of half-marathons. She currently lives with her spouse and two dogs—Fendi, the Puggle and Gabbana, the Bugg!

Sayde J. Brais
Lecturer, Sayde J. Brais, received both her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Communication Studies from UNC Charlotte. She has taught for the department as a graduate teaching assistant and adjunct instructor, and was hired as a full-time faculty member in 2013. Brais teaches undergraduate classes which include: Research Methods, Business Communication, and Public Speaking. Drawing from her experiences as a former student within the department, Brais’ teaching philosophy revolves around the notion that “the great teacher continues to be a student”. She believes that each class provides a unique opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, for both the student and the instructor. In her spare time, Brais enjoys playing with her dog, Minnie, cooking, traveling, and spending time with friends and family.

Jon Crane
Dr. Jon Crane received his bachelor’s and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Illinois, and studied for his doctorate at The Institute of Communications Research, specializing in cultural studies. Currently he teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in communication theory, mass media and film studies. “Teaching is an activity akin to chatting with a friend over coffee, swapping lies with mates at a bar and revisiting family legends around the dinner table,” he says. “It is one of the ways we best apprehend our shared world and when it goes well there are few better ways of fashioning common sense.” Crane’s areas of interest include media, film, and popular culture, and his research projects deal extensively with film and the role genre plays in the interpretation of cinematic violence. He is an author of Terror and Everyday Life: Singular Moments in the History of the Horror Film (Sage, 1994), and has also written extensively on the complex interplay between individual directors and their chosen generic niche. A devoted Chicago baseball fan, Crane has this to say: “The unfounded rumors that have circulated for decades maintaining that there are two professional baseball franchises in Chicago are patently untrue. There is only one professional baseball team in the Windy City and they play ball on the Southside.”

Christine Davis
Dr. Christine Davis is Professor of Communication Studies. She received her BA degree in 1979 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; her MA in 1999 from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro; and her Ph.D. in 2005 from the University of South Florida, all in the field of Communication Studies. She teaches courses related to Health Communication and Communication Research Methods, and focuses her research and teaching on the areas of children’s health, disability, aging, and end-of-life communication in the contexts of family, patient-provider, healthcare teams, and culture. She has a strong interest in Communication Research Methods, especially in the areas of narrative, ethnography, and autoethnography. Her current research includes several projects related to end-of-life communication in material culture and communication in children’s treatment teams. Dr. Davis says that she “strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students, the university, and the community—both locally and nationally” through her research and teaching. About her teaching philosophy, she says: “I think that part of my role as instructor is to develop in students a love of learning. I am very intentional about fostering a culture of openness and high expectations.” In her spare time, Dr. Davis loves to sail, hike, and jog.

Melody Dixon-Brown
Melody Dixon-Brown, Senior Lecturer, emphasizes the business elements of communications. With almost 20 years of corporate experience that included BBDO Advertising and DuPont, Dixon-Brown believes that “students must build on their strengths of creativity and oral and written communication; however, they must learn managing, budgeting, and professional ‘best practices’ as well.” She has taught business communication, event planning, interpersonal communication and small group communication. She has a dual degree in marketing and communications management from Syracuse University and an MBA from The University of Delaware. When not teaching, you’ll find her enjoying a good book.

Alan Freitag
Professor Dr. Alan Freitag earned his B.S. from the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh in 1973, his M.A. from Webster University in 1977,
and before completing his Ph.D from Ohio University in 1999, he began teaching here in August 1998. He teaches undergraduate courses within his areas of interest, including Fundamentals of Public Relations, Public Relations Writing, International Public Relations, Research Methods, Event Planning and News Writing. He also teaches graduate courses in Communication Campaign Management, Internationals Public Relations, and Media Relations. He also advises the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). In the classroom, Freitag says, “I have striven to maintain sharp focus on preparing students for entry into the demanding profession of public relations and rapid ascent to its higher levels.” Dr. Freitag has had works published in Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Journal of Public Relations Research, Journal of Communication Management, Public Relations Quarterly, Newspaper Research Journal, Airman, and Asia-Pacific Defense Forum. He has also earned formal, professional accreditation in public relations practice through the Public Relations Society of America. In the past, Freitag performed in several dozen amateur theatrical productions and appeared in a motion picture, “The Last Days of Patton,” with George C. Scott has a dual degree in marketing and communications management from Syracuse University and an MBA from The University of Delaware.

**Tiffany Gallicano**

Dr. Tiffany Gallicano is an assistant professor who teaches undergraduate and graduate public relations classes. She received her master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Maryland and worked at the University of Oregon for nine years as an assistant professor and then as an associate professor, where she won an award for her teaching. She has professional public relations experience in nonprofit organizations, political campaigns and public relations agencies. She is a past head of the PR Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. She enjoys integrating students’ interests and course-related content requests in her classes. One of her favorite teaching quotes is “The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be ignited” by Plutarch. She seeks to inspire her students in the classroom. Her writing classes are focused on bringing students up to professional standards. In terms of her research, she has authored and served as a co-author of 20 refereed journal articles in the areas of relationship management, social media, ethics and pedagogy. She has won six awards for her scholarship. She is thrilled to be a member of an interdisciplinary team that is analyzing social media as a part of UNCC’s Project Mosaic. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Todd, and her daughter, Valentina.

**Daniel Grano**

Dr. Daniel Grano is a graduate and undergraduate professor of Rhetorical Theory, Criticism, Ethics and Cultural Studies. He received his Bachelor’s degree from the University of Memphis in 1995 and his Master’s and Doctorate degrees in Rhetoric and Public Address from Louisiana State University in 1997 and 2003, respectively. His research focuses on how power shapes moral judgment, especially in popular cultural contexts like mediated sport, and he has published in various journals, including “Critical Studies in Media Communication”, “Rhetoric & Public Affairs”, “Rhetoric Society Quarterly”, and “The Southern Communication Journal.” His latest article in “The Quarterly Journal of Speech” is on the race and class politics of the New Orleans Superdome reopening. As a teacher he says his philosophy is grounded in a basic assumption from the liberal arts tradition. “Our job is to prepare students for critical and ethical participation in civic life,” Grano says. “For me teaching is exciting because there is always something new to take up with students based on research developments or everyday events, so semester to semester our exchanges are always changing shape.” When not teaching he enjoys being the proud father of his baby boy, Anthony.

**Loril Gossett**

Dr. Loril Gossett is an associate professor in Introduction to Organizational Communication and Control and Motivation in Organizational Settings. She has interests in areas of Organizational Communication, Nonstandard Labor Arrangements and
Identification, Participation and Control in Organizational Settings. From the University of Colorado, Boulder she earned her Bachelor’s degree in 1993 and her Doctorate degree in 2001. In her research she examines how alternative work relationships, such as out-sourced employees, volunteers, and geographically dispersed workers, impact our understanding of what it means to be or communicate as an organizational member. Gossett says she loves the topics she teaches and showing students how these concepts can impact their daily lives. “I consider teaching to be a highly interactive process. I work to create a classroom environment that encourages students to freely contribute their ideas. In order to make the course material come alive, I use case studies, video clips, and discussion questions. I also design research and writing activities that encourage students to apply course concepts to their daily lives.” Outside teaching, Gossett enjoys film and has attended several film festivals, including South by Southwest and Charlotte Film Festival. She is a long-distance runner and has completed three marathons, with plans to participate in more.

Sandy Hanson
Sandy Hanson received her Bachelor of Science at Louisiana State University and her Master of Science at Florida State University. She has been a full-time Lecturer since 2000, teaching undergraduate courses in Health Communication, Organizational Communication, Small Group Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Public Speaking, and Communication and Conflict. In 2010, she was promoted to Senior Lecturer. Hanson has published a chapter in an introductory textbook on conflict and communication has presented numerous papers at professional organizational conferences. The first edition of her text/workbook, Applied Small Group Communication: Learning Through Experience, was published in the fall of 2016. In addition to her teaching duties, she serves as a guest lecturer with the UNC Charlotte Office of Extended Academic Programs working on team building with firefighters and EMS employees from a tri-state area, and the Office of International Educational Experiences program running annual, month-long leadership programs for Australian students, and presents bi-annually for the Human Resources department of the university. She was recently appointed Director of SUCCESS, a new freshman Learning Community for students in all majors of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.”Teaching, well, is challenging!” she says. “I work hard to enliven classroom discussions with humor, student participation, and anecdotes to bring theory to life. Also, I believe in an experiential learning model so I use Problem-Based Learning in my classes. This allows my students the opportunity to refine their analytical skills through participant-observation and reflection.” She manages to make time to teach 9-10 classes of water aerobics a week (she has over 20 years of teaching experience in the water) and is an avid hiker happily trodding along on 15-20 mile hikes in the beautiful North Carolina mountains with her new best friend, Luke, a bluetick coonhound rescue.

Tim Horne
Director of Forensics Tim Horne has been an instructor with the department since 2006. The Forensics Team is a competitive speech and debate program that gives students the opportunity to develop their argumentation and communicative skills against other teams at colleges and universities throughout the nation. During his tenure with the team, the forensics team has received over 300 awards through competition. Horne also teaches a number of courses for the Communications Studies department, including Advanced Public Speaking, Media Ethics, Persuasion, Mass Media, and Argumentation and Debate. “Professional, to the point, with a little bit of humor,” remarked a student. “Okay, a lot of humor, but it breaks up the monotony and adds some personality to the course. Informative, yet witty. Good combination.” Horne was honored with a B.E.S.T. Outstanding Teaching Excellence award for this work at UNCC and in 2014, was promoted to Senior Lecturer. He encourages students to take the skills and information gained from his courses and apply them in a macro sense within their discipline and future careers. A graduate of both the undergraduate and graduate program at UNCC, Horne refused to leave until given gainful employment. His areas of interest include interactive media, film, popular culture and practical argumentation. When not teaching he enjoys relaxing with his wife, Nhia and their Ratapooie (part Rat Terrier, part Poodle) dog Sebastian.

Min Jiang
After working in news and film industries in China and receiving her Ph.D. degree in Communication from Purdue University, Dr. Min Jiang now teach classes in new media & technology, global media, and research methods at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. She also conducts research on Chinese Internet technologies, politics, and policies. Various research institutions have invited her to present her work or funded her research, including the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations (NCUSCR), Fairbank Center at Harvard University, Programme in Comparative Media Law & Policy at the University of Oxford, the International Reporting Project (IRP), the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, Center for the Study of Contemporary Quentin Tarantino’s assistant while a graduate student in Beijing and has always admired great art and artists. China of University of Pennsylvania, the French Institute of International Relations (Ifri), University of Hong Kong, Institute of Network Cultures at Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Dr. Jiang’s work is highly interdisciplinary, blending new media studies, political communication, international communication, legal studies, and information science. Her work has appeared in New Media & Society, Policy & Internet, Social Computer Science Review, Electronic Journal of Communication, SAIS Review of International Affairs, China Information, Information Visualization, Sage Handbook of Conflict Communication among others. More specifically, she has written about Internet sovereignty, authoritarian deliberation, regime legitimacy, Internet events, state capitalism, and search engines (Google, Baidu, and Jike in China). Currently, she conducts research in digital technologies (search engines and microblogging) in global contexts, Chinese Internet policies, media activism (helping set research agenda for the Asian region), and digital diplomacy (Chinese microblogging public’s responses to DNC and U.S. presidential election). Outside work, Dr. Jiang enjoys running, tennis, yoga and piano practice. She is an avid fan of “Downton Abbey” and “Breaking Bad”. Fun fact: Dr. Jiang worked as film director Quentint
Tarantino’s assistant while a graduate student in Beijing and has always admired great art and artists.

**Dean Kruckeberg**

Dr. Dean Kruckeberg, APR, Fellow PRSA, has a B.A. in English with a minor in journalism from Wartburg College; an M.A. in journalism (PR) from Northern Illinois University; and a Ph.D. in Mass Communications from the University of Iowa. His co-authored books include Public Relations and Community: A Reconstructed Theory (which won the NCA PRIDE Award in 1989); This Is PR: The Realities of Public Relations; and Transparency, Public Relations and the Mass Media: Combating Media Bribery Worldwide. In 2010, 2011 and 2014, he taught UNCC’s London International PR Seminar. His awards include the NCA Public Relations Division’s “PRIDE Award for Outstanding Contribution/Achievement in Public Relations Education,” PRSA’s “Outstanding Educator” and its “Atlas Award for Lifetime Achievement in International Public Relations” and Wartburg’s College Alumni Citation as one of the nation’s leading public relations educators. He was inducted into Rowan University’s PR Hall of Fame. Dr. Kruckeberg was a visiting professor at the Russian Federation’s National Research University in fall 2016 and at Erfurt University (Germany) in summer 2016 and was a keynote speaker at Russia’s Higher School of Economics in summer 2015. He has lectured worldwide. Dr. Kruckeberg said: “Those in higher education are responsible for preparing tomorrow’s leaders of global society, which is an awesome responsibility, but a most rewarding task.”

**Staci Kuntzman**

Staci Kuntzman was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2014 and has been the Internship Director for the Department of Communication Studies since August 2005. As a senior lecturer, Kuntzman – who teaches Interpersonal Communication and Introductory and Advanced Public Speaking – makes regular use of the moodle learning management system to offer power point presentations, weekly quizzes, a calendar of events, and other important class information. Special speakers and hands on learning exercises are utilized in all courses when appropriate. As the Internship Director, Kuntzman is responsible for directing and supervising all activities related to the department’s internship program. This includes all recruitment and promotion efforts, communicating with companies/organizations about the internship program, prescreening all potential interns to determine eligibility, maintaining all student files and documentation, assessing current interns’ progress through an early and final evaluation, and maintaining website content for the internship webpages and online orientation. Additional service at the university level includes the Liberal Arts and Sciences Employment Readiness (LASER) taskforce, the University Professional Internship Program (UPIP) Faculty Advisory Committee, the Washington Center Scholarship Committee, among other departmental committees. Kuntzman is the proud Mom of three kids and two dogs.

**Carol Leeman**

Undergraduate Coordinator and Senior Lecturer Carol Leeman has been teaching at UNC Charlotte since 1988. Leeman became a full time faculty member in 1997 after receiving her Bachelor’s degree from UNC Charlotte in 1985 and her Master’s degree from Wake Forest University in 1993. Courses she has taught include Small Group Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Communication and Conflict, Freshman Seminar, the Sophomore Seminar for the Arts and Sciences Freshman Learning Community, and Persuasion. She says what she loves the most about teaching Communication courses is the often direct application of communication theories to everyday life. “My goal is to convey the theories and principles of the course in such a way that the students see the connection between the material and how it can enrich their lives.” Previously, she served as Coordinator of the College of Arts and Sciences Freshman Learning Community. She has conducted workshops in managing conflict, communicating assertively and creating supportive climates for a variety of campus and community organizations. Her other accomplishments include membership on the CHAMPS/Life Skills Coalition Advisory Committee and Greek Matrix Committee. She is active in the Carolinas Communication Association, where she has served as President. In her free time, Leeman says she likes to venture outside the Queen City: “I love to travel, and to see new things and learn about different places.”

**Richard Leeman**

Dr. Richard Leeman joined the Communication Studies Department faculty in 1989. He became the Department's second chairperson in 2001 and served until 2010. He teaches undergraduate courses within his areas of interest, including Rhetoric, Public Address, Political Communication and African American Orator. He also teaches courses on the graduate level in Textual Analysis. His teaching philosophy comes from his drive to challenge his students’ ways of thinking about the world. “My job is not so much to tell them what to think, but I do hope to help them decide what to think about.”

Stephanie Norander
Stephanie Norander earned her Ph.D. in Communication Studies from Ohio University. She joined UNC Charlotte in 2015 as the Executive Director of the Communication Across the Curriculum (CxC) program in University College and as an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies. Her work with CxC focuses on enhancing college curriculum and student learning through emphasis on communication (writing and speaking). In this role, she consults with faculty to create, implement, and assess innovative curricular changes that are integrated within the broader goals unique to each discipline. Her research focuses on organizational communication broadly and specifically on identities, gender, and difference, dialogic communication, and alternative organizing. She has published in the Journal of Applied Communication Research, Management Communication Quarterly, Health Communication, and Communication Studies in addition to numerous book chapters. Recently, she completed in-depth qualitative research with a National Writing Project site on professional identity development. A skilled facilitator, Dr. Norander has conducted numerous applied research and strategic planning projects with both local and international organizations.

Craig Paddock
Lecturer, J. “Craig Paddock received his Bachelor’s in Print Journalism from Bob Jones University and his Master’s in Mass Communications from the University of South Carolina. He teaches undergraduate journalism courses in editing, media ethics, and Introduction to Journalism for the Department. He has taught communication studies at various area colleges, including Wingate, Gardner-Webb and CPCC since 2005 and has worked as a copy editor and page designer at newspapers such as The State newspaper in Columbia, S.C. and the Charlotte Observer for 20 years. His teaching philosophy is simple: “I like to think I bring a journalist’s mindset into the classroom -- a curiosity about the world, a love for asking questions and a real interest in people.” In addition to his teaching and newspaper responsibilities, Paddock, once a pipe organ player, has taken to raising chickens ... he assures the two are not related.

Rachel Plotnick
Dr. Rachel Plotnick received her PhD in Media, Technology and Society from the School of Communication at Northwestern University. Prior to attending Northwestern, she completed an MA in Communication, Culture and Technology at Georgetown University and received a BA in English and Journalism from Indiana University - Bloomington. Her research and teaching at UNCC for graduate and undergraduate students focus on information, communication and media technologies from historical and contemporary perspectives. Of teaching, Plotnick says, “It’s a great joy helping students to think critically and analytically about the media and technology that they consume every day.” Her research is similarly focused on these practices of daily life, with a specific emphasis on interfaces like buttons, dials, and touch screens that help (and sometimes hinder!) communication. Plotnick’s work is published in a number of academic journals that include Media, Culture and Society, Technology and Culture, and Critical Studies in Media Communication. She has also received awards from major organizations in her field that include The Bernard S. Finn IEEE History Prize (Society for the History of Technology) and a Best Paper Award, History (American Society for Information Science and Technology). Outside of acaDeMin, Plotnick worked for the National Sleep Foundation as Director of Internet and Publications and for Discovery Communications as an interactive producer of digital media content. When not researching, writing, or teaching, she loves playing with her young son and enjoying the outdoors with her husband and two beagles.

Margaret Quinlan
Dr. Margaret M. Quinlan is an Associate Professor of Communication and a Core Faculty Member of the Interdisciplinary Health Psychology Ph.D. Program. She joined the Department in 2009 and was awarded the Bonnie Cone Early-Career Professorship in Teaching in 2015. Her scholarly work explores the organizing of health care resources and work opportunities for people with lived differences. Also, her research explores how the individual and
collective experience of health is shaped by and assumes meaning within and through diverse bodies. She has published in Text & Performance Quarterly, Health Communication, Management Communication Quarterly, and Women's Reproductive Health. She earned her Bachelors of Science from Marist College, her Master of Science from Illinois State University, and her Doctor of Philosophy from Ohio University in 2009. She teaches Communication Theory, Health and Media, and Gendered Health Communication. “My goal for the courses I teach is to create an environment where we are co-learners,” she says. “In doing so, I hope to create a safe and effective environment for learning and discussing the topics that are necessary for a person to be able to become a better student and a more effective communicator ... Ultimately, I believe that the quality of each student’s education is largely dependent on her or his own efforts, attitudes, and behaviors.” Dr. Quinlan has three documentaries in the award-winning Courage of Creativity series: Beautiful Remedy, Creative Abundance and The Acoustics of Care. Outside the world of academin and film making, she is the proud mother of Sweeney Quinlan Carbone.

Robin Rothberg
Senior lecturer Robin Rothberg earned her Bachelor's of Science in Communication and English (double major) from Florida State University in 1999 and her Master of Arts in Journalism with a certificate in business and economics reporting from New York University in 2000. She teaches undergraduate courses in public relations. In the classroom, she says, “My goal is to help my students understand the material, of course, but also themselves and their responsibilities as communicators. A little-known fact about Robin Rothberg: she’s a full-fledged lacto-vegetarian. “I haven’t eaten meat since I was in college as a student and forget about anything dairy,” she says. “But I’ll make meaty or cheesy foods for my husband and kids -- and they love it all.”

Clifton Scott
Dr. Cliff Scott is Associate Professor of Organizational Science and Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, where he also serves as a consultant for public, nonprofit and corporate organizations through its Organizational Science Consulting and Research Unit. Appearing in MIT Sloan Management Review, Management Communication Quarterly, Human Resource Management, Journal of Applied Communication Research, Communication Theory, and Communication Monographs, his research primarily concerns the relationships among occupational safety and health, high reliability organizing and organizational communication. He has a secondary research interest in organizational socialization. Prior to his current position, he completed his Ph.D. in organizational communication at Arizona State University (2005), an M.A. in organizational communication at Northern Illinois University (2001), and a B.S. in speech communication and political science at Bradley University (1997). Before joining the academy, he worked as a field sales manager, supervising a team of geographically dispersed employees and overseeing large corporate accounts.

Cheryl Spainhour
Cheryl Spainhour is a full-time Lecturer in the Communication Studies Department who is passionate about the journalism courses she has been teaching here since 1998. She currently teaches undergraduate courses in the Journalism minor, including Advanced News Reporting and Writing, Feature Writing, and Introduction to Journalism. She also teaches Public Speaking. She earned a Master’s degree in Speech Communications and Theatre Arts from Wake Forest University and a Bachelor’s degree in Journalism from the University of Georgia. She is a 2010 recipient of B.E.S.T. Teaching Award (Building Educational Strengths and Talents) for excellence in teaching and assisting undergraduate students at UNC Charlotte. She is honored to be a founding member of the new (2010) Charlotte chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. She was promoted to Senior
Lecturer in 2012. In the classroom, she aims at getting her students caught up in the world of journalism (and the current technology revolution) and encourages them to read and commit outstanding journalism. Outside of work, she happily revels in life in the country with her family, always outnumbered by a menagerie (of both wild and domestic types).

**Brandy Stamper**
Lecturer, Brandy Stamper received both her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from UNC Charlotte. She has been teaching at UNC Charlotte since 2009, and became a full-time member of the faculty in July 2015. She currently teaches undergraduate courses in public speaking, business communication, research methods, and small group communication. Previously, she worked as a full time instructor at South Piedmont Community College and as a research associate/360 coordinator helping businesses and organizations maximize their investment in human resources through research, training and consulting. Her teaching philosophy is rooted in a belief that teaching is a student-centered environment with students being equal partners in the learning process, and she is committed to working with students and investigating new strategies for learning. She is the recipient of the William L. Woodword Partner in Service Program for her work with the Mount Pleasant Lions Youth Club Football organization. Mrs. Stamper enjoys volunteering in her community, traveling, and spending time with her family, especially with her young son, Dane.

**Ashli Quesinberry Stokes**
Dr. Ashli Quesinberry Stokes is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies and the Director of the Center for the Study of the New South at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Dr. Stokes teaches a variety of public relations courses at the undergraduate and graduate level and directs the Department’s Honors Program. Her courses include principles of public relations, public relations strategy & campaigns, issues management, and health communication campaigns. Her award-winning research specializes in using rhetorical approaches to analyze public relations and public communication controversies, often concerning activism and corporate advocacy. Along with co-authoring Consuming Identity: The Role of Food in Redefining the South (with Wendy Atkins-Sayre) and Global Public Relations: Spanning Borders, Spanning Cultures (with Alan R. Freitag) Stokes has published numerous articles and chapters, including ones in the Journal of Public Relations Research, Public Relations Review, and the Southern Communication Journal. Upon the completion of her master’s degree at Wake Forest University, she worked in public relations, returning to academin to complete her doctorate at the University of Georgia. Dr. Stokes sums up her philosophy about teaching this way: She feels lucky to get to share what she loves with her students and loves watching them develop their own careers and apply the knowledge gained in our program. Outside of work, Stokes enjoys adventures around Charlotte and the world with her family: husband Jeff, 7-year-old Kate and 3-year-old Charlie, Super Golden Retriever Brody, and Coconut the Crazy Rescue Cat. Her floors aren’t always clean and quiet may be in short supply, but her house is full of life that inspires her.

**Henrique Viana**
Henrique Viana has been a Lecturer at the Communication Studies Department since Fall, 2013 and taught as an adjunct for the three previous years. A native of Brazil, Henrique acquired his bachelor’s degree in Public Relations with a concentration in International PR and Global Understanding from East Carolina University. As an undergraduate, he was a student-athlete, captain of the tennis team and vice-president of the student-athlete advisory council. He received his master’s degree in Communication Studies with a focus in International PR from UNC Charlotte, where he did a semester abroad studying Culture, Communication and Globalization at Aalborg University in Denmark. For the past four and a half years, he has taught Business Communication, Public Speaking and Applications in Organizational Communication and will add other classes, including Small Group Communication and Persuasion. His approach to teaching includes trying to make theory
more relatable and applicable to students and helping them see how it can be used outside of class. He strives to make his classes “engaging and open.” He is an advisor to more than 20 students along with serving as a member of the department’s Scholarship Committee and Department Diversity Liaison for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Outside of the university, he is an avid traveler always looking for somewhere new to explore (and often going back to his favorite places) trying foods from around the world and tasting good Italian or Chilean wine. “My goal is to one day have visited 100 countries. There are a lot more to go, but I’m halfway there and know life will be a lot more fun when there’s something like that to look forward to.”

**Internships**

**COMM 4410**

**Professional Internship**

Visit the UNC Charlotte Communication Studies Department Internship website for more information.

[http://communications.uncc.edu](http://communications.uncc.edu)
Nilufer Ozcan, a Communication Studies major, spoke at her graduation ceremony in December, 2016. Photograph by Wade Bruton