NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

[Image of a person in an office setting]
Dear Communication Studies family,

Welcome to the UNC Charlotte Communication Studies Ezine, our retrospective on the year just concluding and our prospective on the year ahead. It seems as if this year that Janus-faced perspective is even more apt. I could tell you that this year has been an eventful one—but you can see that in all the stories included here. Our students, faculty and staff have been busier than ever. Just a sampling gives you an inkling: Maggie Quinlan received the University’s Bonnie Cone Early Career Teaching Award; Alan Freitag served as a Fulbright Teaching Scholar in Poznan, Poland; we are graduating our second department honors student, Tynaiza Whitaker; public relations students are working with motorsports engineering students on an entry for the SAE Formula One Collegiate competition; in January we became the largest major in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and the list goes on. I could also tell you that next year promises to be even more eventful, as we welcome our new chair Dr. Jason Edwards Black from the University of Alabama, our first Fulbright student in the M.A. program from Togo (Desiree Bataba), two new faculty members in Health Communication (Dr. Erin Basinger) and Public Relations (Dr. Tiffany Gallicano), our first Prospect for Success class (taught by Drs. Jon Crane and Cris Davis), and our third Freshman Learning Community.

I think, however, that I would most like to take the opportunity to say a word about the importance of what we do here; all of us: students, faculty, and staff. At a time when the uncivil seems to have taken center stage, those of us who seek to improve our communication and the communication of those around us have a tremendously vital role to play. The word "communication" comes from the Latin communicare, "to make known," and shares the same Latin root (communis) as the Latin word communitas, meaning kinship, fellowship, participation, partnership, or community. Peoples of all cultures have long understood that communication is the mortar of community. We cannot hold together without it. But we know from our studies—and from watching the world’s events unfold around us—that it is simplistic to say "communication is the answer." We do not need more communication; we need better communication. We need discourse that contributes to community, rather than the cyber bullying, sensationalism, trolling, or the various kinds of divisive communication now so ever present that demeans and belittles those around us. That kind of communication does not build community; it erodes it.

As many of you know, I am fond of quoting Rabbi Abraham Heschel, who famously remarked that “Speech has power, and few men realize that words do not fade. What starts out as a sound, ends as a deed.” We have much work to do. We need words that will build bridges, lift others, and create community. Communication students such as ourselves are uniquely qualified to help our community find those words. Awards, projects, studies, papers—all the wonderful accomplishments that we celebrate in the pages of this Ezine—are the building blocks for helping us communicate in a fashion that fosters communitas, and I sincerely wish all of us well in that endeavor.

I cannot conclude without thanking the faculty, staff and students in our department for making this a wonderful year for me as interim chair. It has been an honor to work with all of you. And one last word in pursuit of the ideal of community: please like us on Facebook at UNCC Comm Studies, so that you can follow our community’s “doings.” And send us your pictures and news to post. Stay in touch!

Richard W. Leeman
Interim Department Chair
Nicole Heschong, a M.A. student in the Communication Studies Department, received the award of top paper at the National Communication Association Conference in Las Vegas, in November (2015). Nicole’s paper “Bearing Witness: Pet Obituaries as Spiritual Communication” was selected as top paper after being presented alongside competitively selected papers in a panel titled “Spirituality Permeates in Various Contexts”. “I am so proud of Nicole for winning the top student paper at NCA this past November,” Dr. Christine Davis said. “This is quite an honor for a graduate student, and one that is greatly deserved. Nicole wrote this paper in my ‘End of Life’ class, so I am well aware of the depth of intelligent thought and quality of writing that went into the paper. She is a very good writer and intellectual scholar, as well as being a nice, warm and compassionate person.”
The annual 2015 Carolinas Communication Association Conference was hit hard by Hurricane Joaquin in Charleston, S.C., but that did not deter UNC Charlotte’s Communication Studies Department from making headlines. Before the city was shut down because of flooding, faculty members Dr. Richard Leeman and Dr. Dan Grano presented papers on the panel titled “The Rhetoric of the Charleston Shootings”. Dr. Leeman also presented on the panel titled “G.I.F.T.S.: Great Ideas for Teaching Speech”. Senior Lecturer and Undergraduate Coordinator Carol Leeman was also awarded the esteemed Betty Jo Welch Award for her continuing and outstanding service to the CCA organization.

Communication Studies MA student Alex Kello was featured as a finalist for the Jarrard Graduate Paper Award for his paper “Violence, the Evil Other, and Mediated Terror: Waging War Rhetorically,” but was unable to present his paper due to the hurricane. “Alex Kello continues the tradition of Communication Studies graduate students making a strong showing at CCA,” said Interim Graduate Program Director Dr. Jon Crane. “Earning recognition as a Jarrard Graduate Paper finalist is no easy feat. Submissions are competitive and Alex is to be congratulated for doing fine scholarly work early in his career. Thanks to the performance of students like Alex at regional and national conferences, our peers routinely recognize the caliber our graduate students and the quality of education provided by our Graduate faculty.”

UNC Charlotte MA students were well-represented at the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender Conference (OSCLG) in October (2015). Jade Myers presented her paper “Intersectionality Matters: Rhetorical Strategies of inclusivity in the #BlackLivesMatter Movement”. Jade also presented her co-authored paper with first-year MA student Emma Butterworth “The Whiteness of It All: Blurring the Lines of Color and Gender in Popular Press”. Emma said “OSCLG was a great and worthwhile experience. It was small enough that making connections was easy while still incorporating scholars from all over the country interested in gender studies.” UNC Charlotte faculty members Dr. Margaret M. Quinlan and Bethany Johnson also presented papers at the conference.

HURRICANE JOAQUIN HITS SOUTH CAROLINA COAST AND CCA CONFERENCE

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NEW CHAIR JOINS THE DEPARTMENT IN AUGUST

Jason Edward Black is a Professor of Communication Studies, who will be joining us August 1 as our new Chair of the department. Jason is a highly regarded rhetorical scholar whose work focuses on the discourse of marginalized populations. He has authored or co-authored three books: American Indians and the Rhetoric of Removal & Allotment (University Press of Mississippi, 2015); An Archive of Hope: Harvey Milk’s Selected Speeches and Writings (University of California Press, 2013, with Charles E. Morris III); and Arguments about Animal Ethics (Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, with Greg Goodale). He has received numerous awards for his scholarship and teaching, including the 2015 Gender Studies Scholar of the Year Award from the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA), the Janice Hocker Rushing Early Career Scholarship Award from SSCA, the Inspire Integrity Award, and the Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Award from the University of Alabama Alumni Association. At Alabama he also served as the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Student Services in the College of Communication & Information Sciences. Jason is a longtime member of the Carolinas Communication Association, an avid NASCAR fan, and has published a rhetorical analysis of the Drive-By Truckers.

Dr. Rich Leeman, Interim Department Chair

I caught up with Dr. Black after he accepted the Chair position and asked him a few questions. Here is an edited version.

Cheryl Spainhour, EZine Editor

What drew you to our Department?
I’ve been a fan of the department for a number of years. When I was a masters student at Wake Forest University I was fortunate enough to fall into step with folks at UNCC by way of the Carolinas Communication Association (CCA) and I’ve watched the Department grow over the years. As I went on to the University of Maryland for my doctorate and then onto my first job at the University of Alabama, I never really left CCA and, in fact, I became their journal editor and then the association’s conference planner and president over the last decade – even from a distance!

My time in the CCA (and beyond to our other communication associations) was made incredibly meaningful by the people I met from UNCC – the fulsomeess of their scholarship, the innovation of their teaching methods, and most vitally the communitarian spirit and kindness of the faculty and graduate students with whom I interacted. The community fabric at UNCC is made up of multiple threads of folks with different interests, varying methodological and topical perspectives, discrete experiences, unique cultural backgrounds, and of course individual narratives. But, what I’ve found over the years is that those threads at UNCC comprise a strong community of faculty and graduate students who care about their work, and vitally, who care about each other. The academic traditions and programs [also] drew me to UNCC. The Department is known in communication circles, both regionally and nationally, as a...
comprehensive one, housing a faculty that studies in a number of areas from public communication, health communication, and organizational communication to public relations, ethnographic work, intercultural communication, and mass communication. This type of multi-dimensional department is on the cutting edge of our field – it’s what other programs are trying to be … I’m happy to be joining a department with such an inclusive faculty and curriculum. Moreover, the ways that I’ve heard about UNCC growing in responsible directions was a definite draw. Not only are we housed in one of the top-three growing cities in the nation, but also from what I understand, we’re at the fastest growing university in the UNC system. Some places become frantic with such change; people fret; people worry. But from what I’ve seen and heard, the campus is adjusting quickly and smartly to its role as the system’s urban university– thereby taking full advantage of collaborations with Charlotte and building community-based partnerships outside the bounds of campus … But, the notion that innovation is at the core of this growth means that the administration is willing to consider all the ways that campus can be strengthened in terms of academics, infrastructure, student affairs/services, research culture, grant work, etc.

What do you plan to do first as the new Department Chair?
The initial thing I plan to do is sit down with every faculty member, staff member, and as many graduate and undergraduate students as I can to get a sense for two main things. First, I want to know what folks see as the biggest challenges, both in the past and as we move into the future, facing the Department … Second, to gain a better understanding of folks’ goals – what they want to see accomplished in the Department and at UNCC largely, how they might attend to the challenges they discuss, what they see as their own individual goals, as well … because a community is comprised of its people, I want to ensure that individual voices are heard. Agency REALLY matters to me. I think this type of community conversation can be the generative spark of organizing a strategic plan – nothing mechanistically wonky or administratively obnoxious, but rather a road map that provides us an optimal, philosophical compass to imagine who we could be and then an operational blueprint to get us there.

What are some of the things you’d like to accomplish during your term as Chair?
My term is a five-year stint, so I imagine that this answer will change quite a bit over the ensuing years! But, what I would like to do is help make the Department as strong as it can be and as our community members want it to be. The brainpower is here, the reputation is here, the motivation is here, the programmatic nuts-and-bolts are here, and the resources are here. I might be speaking ahistorically and decontextually – not having stepped foot on campus yet – but as I survey the Department and its place in the College, at UNCC, and in the larger field of Communication, I only see progress and possibility … I don’t have my specifics lined-up just yet, but I aim to work with our community of scholars, teachers, practitioners, staff, administrators, and students to accentuate and build upon our collective and individual strengths.

We understand you’re a big NASCAR fan … how excited are you to work just six miles from Charlotte Motor Speedway?
Ah, so you found out my secret! Ha! No, it’s a very open ‘thing’ and I’m proud of my (very) extreme NASCAR fandom. NASCAR, for me, signifies familial and cultural meaning, having grown up in a very working class family of – coincidentally – mechanics. I am the least mechanically-inclined person you’ll meet, but my love of a rough-and-tumble sport born of rebellion (I do study social change and resistance, after all) and drama continues to resonate for me. NASCAR, for me, is an experience and fandom is a performance that allows me to step outside of my life’s two major roles: being a parent and being a professor. Living in Charlotte, of course, comes with the additional benefit of being in the world-center of the NASCAR universe. I’m a card-carrying inaugural fan-member of the NASCAR Hall of Fame. Living a few miles from Charlotte Motor Speedway and other non-NASCAR tracks tucked away hither and thither is surreal to me.

Anything you’d like to add?
Although I was born in Miami and raised in West Palm Beach, my parents moved to Winston-Salem as I started my undergraduate work at Florida State. And, I ended up doing my MA work at Wake Forest, and as I noted above, I never left the Carolinas Communication Association. My oldest daughter was actually born in North Carolina while my partner and I were at an academic conference in Chapel Hill (Anabelle was over a month early!). In these ways, my ‘heart’ has been in North Carolina for well over 20 years. Joining the UNC Charlotte family is like coming home in so many forms and fashions, some of which I can express easily and others of which are just so heartfelt and special that they seem to defy words. Asheville native son, Thomas Wolfe, one of the great Southern romantics, once quipped in a bildungsroman novel that one could not go home again. I must respectfully disagree with Mr. Wolfe. I think one can and one should … it’s a joy, a relief, and a trove of riches to be home again!
The Communication Studies Department is the largest major within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Divided into five major concentrations, the Department also offers minors in Communication Studies and Journalism. The Journalism minor, one of the largest CLAS minors, offers classes in 21st century reporting, writing and broadcasting. The opportunity to learn these skills from experienced educators draws a variety of students from different majors. “The Journalism minor complements the Department’s concentrations,” says Senior Lecturer Cheryl Spainhour. “About two thirds of our journalism minors are Communication Studies majors from the Mass Media and Public Relations concentrations. The other third of our journalism minors are from other majors -- English, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science -- even an occasional Business and Computer Science major.”

For students passionate about working in the news media industry, the Journalism minor offers classes on subjects varying from developing newswriting and feature writing skills to special topics courses, including “Journalism for the Web,” “Making a Magazine in the Digital Age,” and “Broadcast Writing.” “I really enjoyed teaching a class in collaboration with a film studies adjunct lecturer on ‘Covering Poverty in America.’ The website we created won a regional journalism award,” Spainhour said. “We also offer online courses now, including hybrids.”

Lecturer Craig Paddock notes that “even if you don’t go work in the news industry, the Journalism minor is great to have because you learn basic skills that will serve you well. You’ll learn how to write clear, readable communication that gets to the point fast. Writing that thinks of your reader first. You’ll develop your curiosity and an ability to think critically. You’ll learn how to ask questions that get to the heart of a matter. And you’ll learn dogged persistence.”

There are many successful alumni stories, with graduates working at national publications like Sporting News, U.S.A Today and U.S. News & World Report. Some alumni work in Charlotte, which offers many opportunities to work in the media, and some work in media capitals like Washington D.C. and New York City. There are also entrepreneurs – an emerging 21st century trend in journalism – one alum is a former broadcast news crime reporter that now runs her own documentary film company and another alum works as an independent environmental journalist shining a spotlight on coal ash. “We’re so proud our former students are out there making a splash in the field,” says Spainhour. For aspiring journalists, Paddock recommends students “get as much practical experience as you can while in college. Don’t wait until you have an official internship for credit. Consider every opportunity you can get -- freelance work, one-time assignments.” He says studying in the classroom is a start, but students must take initiative to make their way in the profession.

Spainhour advises students to “develop at least two skills in the field while you’re studying with us. It’s not just enough to be a good reporter when you graduate – you need to develop your video or photography skills. Learn basic web design or business models for being successful online.”

Alyssa Fronk
(May ’16),
Major in Communication Studies
Mass Media concentration
Minors: Journalism and English
Q: What made you choose Journalism as your minor concentration?
A: I've always been a news buff. I love to read, stay in the know and communicate with people. By nature, I'm very curious, so I always want to learn about others and hear their stories. Studying journalism was a no brainer for me.

Q: What is the most important thing you've learned so far?
A: I've learned that writing and reporting should always be an evolving process if you want to produce quality work. As a journalist, you have to push yourself to not only seek out stories of relevance but be able to find its depth. In some ways, I feel like I could always rework or improve my writings, if it weren't for deadlines. Another thing that I already knew but has now been continually stressed to me as a student is to read multiple sources and expose yourself to different viewpoints (of merit) whenever possible. The last thing I want to do is become super-biased or close-minded.

Q: What do you hope to do after graduation?
A: SO MANY THINGS! I'll probably stay in Charlotte for the next one-to-three years and establish myself in the creative community here. I've never envisioned myself having one straight and narrow career path. Instead, I've set a few goals for myself that I hope to accomplish: Have my work published in at least five top, influential publications (The New York Times is one!), live and work in NYC for a few years during my prime, start and run a successful blog, land a spot on the media team of either “The Tonight Show” or “Saturday Night Live,” travel as much as possible. As long as I’m learning new things, meeting people and exercising my creative skills, I’ll be very happy with wherever I end up.
Brittany Pailthorpe ('15) attended the University of Rhode Island, where she studied writing, rhetoric and English. After earning a bachelor’s degree with honors, she headed South for graduate work in communication studies at UNC Charlotte. Here, she explored issues of public memory, authenticity, hyper mediation and technology through media via her preferred method: rhetorical criticism. Her thesis, titled “Reality Collapses, Real or Not Real? The Theoretical Consequences of Compromised Authenticity in Suzanne Collins’ Mockingjay,” is a portrait of how complex the world is for younger generations. She examined the intricate web of identity, memory and morality in “Mockingjay,” the final installment of the “Hunger Games,” series, and what those three broad subjects communicate about authenticity.

Graduate student Emily Crawford recently interviewed Brittany about what drew her to UNC Charlotte’s graduate program, what she learned from it and how it has influenced her success at Brown University following graduation.

Q. Why did you choose UNC Charlotte for your MA program?
All the time people ask me at home in Rhode Island ‘Why Charlotte?’ Three very specific reasons. The first, it is a generalist program which would allow me to study what my heart told me to. Secondly, it was the only program that offered me both a teaching and research assistantship. And lastly, it was love at first sight.

Q. In general, what about our MA program was most notable for you?
A. The relationships and support I received from my cohort, my professors, my students, my friends, my family and my boyfriend. What is most notable is different for everyone, but it always gets named at your hooding. That was a special night.

Q. Can you describe your career path following after graduation from UNC Charlotte?
A. Right after graduating last May, I had a summer internship working on the communications team for the mayor of Providence, R.I. Jorge Elorza. More than a great opportunity, it was a chance for me to breathe, learn, and look for a job that I knew I would enjoy. I began working for Brown University in September, as an Administrative Coordinator for the Center for Statistical Sciences. Today my main jobs include administrative support for the senior faculty, event planning and communications work. I could not have asked for a more supportive work environment with people that truly want me to apply and grow my skills.

Q. How did the MA program at UNC Charlotte prepare you for your current position?
A. The program taught me to be ambitious and constantly think about why skills like research, teaching and just having a degree in our field prepares you for almost any career. Everything I did as a graduate student applies to life, but UNC Charlotte taught me that your career is a living and breathing thing. Like our generalist program, to an extent, I have the freedom to shape how I perform at my job and how I take criticism. It is incredibly stressful when people ask ‘what are you going to do after graduation?’ and our program taught me that not knowing is ok as long as you work hard.

Q. Do you have any tips for current graduate students?
A. My first tip is undoubtedly, to take care of yourself when you’re completing your program. Eat well, sleep, be active and carve out time to stop thinking about your complex and brilliant arguments, and just watch a little Netflix. My second is to remember that you’re learning. Sometimes you’ll want to scream, feeling the fire beneath your feet, and when that happens, talk to your professors and ask for help. Talk to your cohort, or council your students, and you’ll know you aren’t alone.

Q. What about advice for prospective students?
A. Deciding you want to go to graduate school, the admissions process and figuring out how you are going to pay for it is a challenge. It doesn’t have to be too specific, but have a solid idea of what you wish to study and why you want to study it. Do your research, you’ll be doing a lot of it, and find those whose work inspires you. The great thing about UNC Charlotte is that your focus may very well change as you move through the program, and as a Niner you have a rare freedom to follow your curiosities and study topics that never leave you bored.

“SURVEILLANCE, TECHNOLOGY, WAR, CONTROL, TRUST, LOVE, AND FORGIVENESS - THERE IS NO TOPIC THAT IS NOT IN [‘MOCKINGJAY’]. EVERYTHING I STUDIED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM MADE IT INTO THAT WORK; IT IS AS MUCH OF AN AMALGAM OF MY JOURNEY AS A GRADUATE STUDENT AS IT IS THE ISSUE OF AUTHENTICITY.”
Q. What initially drew you to the Organizational Communication concentration?
A. I started out in pre-law with Political Science. I then transitioned to taking Criminal Justice classes. In addition to CJ, I began communication courses with a focus in International Public Relations. I took French, Spanish and Russian as well as a few PR courses and decided it was too rigid for my liking. From there, I met with my advisor and she sent me home with a packet to review all the Communication Studies majors. At that point Organizational Communication stuck out to me. Ultimately, I knew I was in the right place once I passed Communication Theory and started my organizational communication classes.

Q. What is Digital Marketing Therapy?
A. Digital Marketing Therapy is a term I have coined to help people navigate the digital jungle. This ‘therapy’ means helping people figure out a plan, the resources to execute that plan and how to work with organizations from the start of the self-assessment process to strategy, processes and execution. Ultimately, I want to inspire curious minds about the World Wide Web and empower people to be successful online.

Q. What is the All Things Online Micro-Coaching Online Training?
A. ATOM Online Training is a passion project I’m working on that seems to be evolving. In its current state, ATOM hand-selects learning tracks (courses) set on improving your digital skills so you increase your online presence, become more efficient and grow your business or online brand. At its core, we are providing online digital skills training for professional development customized, convenient and action-oriented.

Q. What inspired you to offer these services, and to get involved with Levo League (“networking for millennials in the workplace”)?
A. Getting involved with marketing services didn’t happen overnight. I started out working for Red Robin when I was 16. At 19, I found an opportunity as a marketing liaison role that was underutilized at the time and got to work. Post-college, I found myself trying all sorts of job opportunities out and questioning why they weren’t a good fit. I ended up working at a startup marketing agency wearing all sorts of hats. At that point I knew it was the right industry for me. Learning about various companies struggling with decisions to make, fair pricing, tactics to focus on, overall strategy, building a network, etc. drove me to want to help not only perform the marketing services but help people determine what to do from the beginning. This is where I got involved with consulting and furthered my training education using HubSpot. HubSpot is what truly pushed me over the edge to flourish on my own. Working with the software, their team and with the community has beyond inspired my love of teaching Inbound Marketing.

Q. Was there a class during your undergraduate studies that stood out to you?
A. My Advanced Organizational Communication course stands out to me the most, primarily because it incorporated lots of case studies, organizational communication classes, Sellers created her own skills she honed from her organizational communication classes.

Q. What class or classes at UNC Charlotte do you feel best prepared you for your endeavors, presently and in the future?
A. I honestly can’t pinpoint one or two classes that prepared me the most. The overall experience - time management, networking, diligence, persistence, finding champions, building relationships, getting involved, focus, surrounding myself with like-minded people, personal growth opportunities, learning about subjects I was passionate about and sucking it up by doing what I needed to in order to make it to the next step.

Q. What are your plans for the future?
A. I would love to pay off my student loans, go to grad school and become an adjunct professor teaching digital marketing - more specifically inbound marketing. It’s wonderful to be lean and flexible at this point in my life!

Q. What advice would you give to current undergraduates who are preparing for graduation?
A. Just start. Don’t give up. Try your best. If you’re in a pinch, be resourceful ... you don’t have to know everything to get the job well done.
**SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS**

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<tr>
<td>Brycie Baber Scholarship</td>
<td>Sharoyal Brown, Gordon Culletto &amp; Austin Phillips</td>
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<td>Cy N. Bahakel Scholarship</td>
<td>Margaret “Maggie” Gray</td>
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<td>Joe S. Epley Scholarship</td>
<td>SheVan Alston</td>
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<td>Rebecca and Walter Roberts Scholarship</td>
<td>Somgolie Ozodigwe &amp; Amariis Graham</td>
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**2016-2017**

The annual deadline to apply for a scholarship is March 17. To peruse our Departments scholarships, click on the following link:

https://communication.uncc.edu/scholarshipsinternships/scholarships

The Communication Studies Student Association creates a productive, enriching environment for its members as the 2015-2016 scholastic year comes to a close. This year, CSSA members attended an internship panel, toured WBTV’s studio and facilities, and benefited from veteran radio host Keith Larson’s expertise during a Q&A session, among other social and educational events.

CSSA chapter president Tynaiza Whitaker says that the organization’s goals are “to bridge the gap between the ambiguity of the communication field and real world experiences. We want members to be able to know exactly what it is they want to do when they graduate. We hope to make them more aware of the various possibilities by bringing in guest speakers and taking studio tours.”

**2015-16 CSSA officers:**

- **President**
  Tynaiza Whitaker

- **Vice President**
  Nicholas Parker

- **Treasurer**
  Sydney Wright

**SPRING 2016**

- SheVan Alston
- Allison Armstrong
- Brian Best
- Joshua Bost
- Ashley Brandon
- Mackenzie Brown
- Amanda Cella
- Kristen Cella
- Slater Erwin
- Alyssa Chapuis
- Katherine Fletcher
- Amariis Graham
- Paula Ilonze
- Amber Jones
- Scott Mullich
- Ezinne Keke
- Jasmin Rivers
- Ashley Williams

**Nu Lambda Chapter inductees**

**Advisor:** Melody Dixon-Brown

**LAMBDA PI ETA HONOR SOCIETY**

**2016-2017**
The UNC Charlotte chapter of the Public Relations Studies Student Association (PRSSA) hosted a variety of events and activities for its members during this academic year. "We've grown leaps and bounds from the last year," said Jasmin Rivers, the student chapter’s president. PRSSA students created monthly themes for member events, such as “Sports Madness” and “Let’s Get Ethical,” where PRSSA members participated in a program studying PR cases with ethical dilemmas, analyzing the situations and working together to create possible solutions.

PRSSA also provides members a chance to interact with people working in the public relations field. "Every month we attend our parent chapter of PRSA’s (Public Relations Society of America) luncheons at Byron’s on South End which is a way for us to network with professionals and hear new tips from guest speakers," Rivers said. Students also toured several PR agencies, getting a glimpse of the real working world, and attended panels with various guest speakers who specialized in media relations, public relations, marketing and journalism.

The PRSSA’s national conference in Atlanta highlighted the chapter’s year. "We've fundraised like crazy to help get our members to national & regional conferences," she said. "We've helped with philanthropy events, like teaming up with Zeta Tau Alpha sorority in a canned food drive for Niner Food Pantry, and our members volunteered at Relay for Life.”

Rivers said that “Ultimately we want to provide our members with opportunities like internships, jobs, networking events, agency tours and conferences that you cannot normally find in the classroom alone.”

2015-2016 PRSSA officers:

- President
  Jasmin Rivers

- Vice President
  Meagan Speck

- Secretary
  Simone McDougal

- Treasurer
  Kaliyah Jackson

- PR Director
  Gralicia Jones

- Historian
  Kristen Cella

- Executive Coordinator
  Amanda Cella
Students were inducted at the annual Awards Program on April 21. Pictured Above - BACK ROW (left to right): Brian Best, Joshua Bost, Ashley Brandon, Allysa Chapuis, Amber Jones, Ezinne Keke, Scott Mullich, Jasmin Rivers, Ashley Williams  FRONT ROW: SheVan Alston, Allison Armstrong, Amariis Graham, Mackenzie Brown, Amanda Cella, Kristen Cella Not pictured: Slater Erwin, Katherine Fletcher, and Paula Ilonze

Recipients of the 2016-17 Communication Studies Department’s Scholarships were honored at the annual Awards Program on April 21. Pictured on the right page: Sharoyal Brown, Gordon Culletto, Austin Phillips Margaret “Maggie” Gray, Amariis Graham, and Somgolie Ozodigwe
Recipients of the 2016-17 Communication Studies Department's Scholarships were honored at the annual Awards Program on April 21. Pictured on the right page: Sharoyal Brown, Gordon Culletto, Austin Phillips, Margaret "Maggie" Gray, Amariis Graham, and Somgolie Ozodigwe.

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- Vice President: Meagan Speck
- Secretary: Simone McDougal
- Treasurer: Kaliyah Jackson
- PR Director: Gralicia Jones
- Historian: Kristen Cella
- Executive Coordinator: Amanda Cella

COMMUNICATION STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Madeline Lemieux was awarded the Undergraduate Research Paper Award by Undergraduate Coordinator Carol Leeman at the Department's annual Awards program on April 21.
Graduate students in the Communication Studies program showcased their research at a poster session and research fair on April 19. The session was open to all students, faculty and community members to view the projects and speak with the graduate students about their topics. Emily Crawford, Beth Booker, Myasia Burns, Alicia Emmons, Jade Myers, Emma Butterworth, Alex Richardson, Corey Kelly, Brittany Wilson and Lizzie Ballard all presented their work and represented the department well.
The UNC Charlotte Communication Studies Department was well-represented at the 2016 Southern States Communication Association Conference in Austin, Texas. Graduate student Beth Booker successfully presented a portion of her thesis project on the relationship between the NFL and the “No More” campaign following the release of the Ray Rice domestic violence videos. Nicole Heschong presented her paper titled “Matthew Arnold: Father of Zombies,” and Emily Crawford presented two papers, an analysis of the media coverage of the Boston Marathon bombings and a coauthored paper with former Communication Studies faculty member Dr. Jillian Tullis titled “Selfies at Funerals: Complicated Performance of Grief.” Faculty members were also well-represented as Dr. Dan Grano, Dr. Rich Leeman, Dr. Ashli Stokes, Dr. Christine Davis, and Dr. Jon Crane all successfully participated on panels. The SSCA conference was a rousing success and our department was a vital part of that accomplishment.

The Graduate School hosted the 16th annual Graduate Research Symposium featuring some of the top graduate papers across UNC Charlotte. Communication Studies M.A. students represented the department well. Emily Crawford presented her paper “‘Glamourizing Terror’: The Selfie as Image Vernacular on the cover of Rolling Stone,” Myasia Burns presented a portion of her thesis analyzing HBO’s Oz and televised violence and Beth Booker presented a poster on her paper titled “Unnecessary Roughness: How Viral Video Circulation Functioned as Proof Within the Ray Rice Case.” Jade Myers was also slated to present her paper “(Re)Claiming Black Lives: An Analysis of #BlackLives Matter.” The Department’s graduate students received impressive feedback from students and faculty across disciplines.
GRANO KICKSTARTS BECHTLER MUSEUM SPEAKER SERIES

Dr. Dan Grano of the Communication Studies Department offered a timely presentation as the inaugural lecturer for a new speaker series at Charlotte’s uptown Bechtler Museum of Modern Art on Feb. 5, just two days before the Carolina Panthers played the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl 50. Dr. Grano’s talk, “Almost Perfect? The Panthers 2015 Season and the Cultural Landscape of the NFL” tackled topics surrounding the Panthers nearly flawless season, including the NFL’s inclination to retell its history in mythic terms, the history of “the dab” and the potential for quarterbacks Cam Newton and Russell Wilson to become the “new prototype” for a championship rivalry arguably held now by Tom Brady and Peyton Manning. “We had a full room and everyone was really receptive,” he said after his talk.

Dr. Grano has published several book chapters and journal articles on the NFL and communication and sport. He’s wrapping up a forthcoming book on the topic of sports, religion and politics. “Most sport culture studies treat ‘religion’ as a source of ideological comfort, but my book is a little different as I see religious ideals as sources of conflict and potential social change in sport.” His book has a tentative release date of this fall with Temple University Press.
Sandy Hanson, Senior Lecturer in the Communication Studies department, took a month-long trip to Xiamen, China, in the summer (’15) to teach and travel. She spent a week teaching a course “Small Group and Team Communication: Working Well with Others,” including a campus-wide presentation, at Xiamen University and spent the rest of the month exploring some of the country. “The Terra Cotta Warriors in Xian were phenomenal,” she said. “I hired a translator who stayed with me the entire day to interpret and tell stories about the underground army. “The Chinese come out at dusk to dance on the huge sidewalks,” she recalled. “One night, two elderly women took me by each arm and included me in their dance. It was their way of sharing a celebration of the day.” In addition to an unforgettable adventure, the trip refreshed Hanson’s appreciation for home. “I was reminded of how lucky I am to live in the United States, to be grateful for what I am offered, and to never stop exploring.”

Dr. Richard Leeman, Dr. Shawn Long and Dr. Jon Crane have also taught classes at Xiamen University in past summers.
The Communication Studies graduate faculty and students made an impressive showing at the 2015 Southern States Associate Professor Min Jiang also traveled to China over UNC Charlotte’s winter break to attend the 2nd Cross-Strait Conference on Speech Communication hosted by Guangxi Arts Institute. “As a partner, our department was invited to attend,” said Dr. Jiang. “I was asked by Dr. Leeman to explore potential collaborative opportunities through the conference.”

She delivered a keynote address about Chinese social media, which addressed the day-long conference’s theme, “Oral Communications in the WeChat and Microblog Era.” The event brought together scholars and students from countries including the United States, China and Taiwan to discuss the changing landscape of Chinese micro media. “I was very impressed by the quality of work by Guangxi Arts Institute's students,” Jiang said. “The conference was largely run by their undergraduate students, many of whom won top awards in nation-wide student competitions in advertising, broadcast, acting and filmmaking.”

She plans to return to China soon. “I have another conference in Shanghai this summer – [the] Chinese Internet Research Conference... hosted by Fudan University's Journalism School, on the theme ‘Mediatization: Digital Revolution and the Chinese Setting.’” The event is set to take place in Shanghai. “I’ve been to Shanghai many times before,” she said, “but I’m very excited to be back this time for CIRC, the second time this conference takes place in Mainland China in its 14-year history.”
In February, the Communication Studies Department began offering a new service for students wanting help with honing their public speaking skills. “The Speaking Resource Center provides graduate and undergraduate students with public speaking consultation support,” says Senior Lecturer Deborah Baker. “We provide guidance and feedback in public speaking preparation, delivery and speech anxiety management to help speakers develop their own oral communication competencies and confidence.”

Baker’s advocacy helped bring about the formation of the center. She saw the need for a place where ESL (English as a Second Language) students can go to receive assistance in light of class restrictions. Sponsored by Communication Across the Curriculum (CxC) and in partnership with the Center for Graduate Life, the Speaking Resource Center operates in Atkins Library Room G33, where tutoring sessions are offered twice a week.

The center also provides peer tutoring opportunities. Students helping students enriches both tutor and pupil and encourages further education and effort to improve public speaking and speech formation.
In the fall semester of 2016, Drs. Jonathan Crane and Christine Davis, associate professors in the Communication Studies department, will begin teaching a new Liberal Studies course, “An Exploration of Life, Death, and Cinematic Fiction,” offered exclusively to freshmen. They plan to take students enrolled in the large lecture class “on a shared exploration of the relationship between real life and fiction, in the context of end-of-life,” they write in their class description of LBST 1102.

The veteran faculty members form a unique partnership. “Dr. Davis has long been researching ‘end of life’ communication and one of my research interests has been the reception and history of the horror film,” Dr. Crane said. “Given these two complementary areas of research, we decided to work together on the relationship between how we make sense of death in our shared experience and in relation to popular representations of the end. There is no bigger question than what comes next.”

Adds Dr. Davis, “The juxtaposition will provide a thoughtful, evocative, philosophical, and enjoyable exploration of life and death and all those two states imply.”

The course, Dr. Crane said, “offers students new to the university the opportunity to take a course with professors who typically teach upper level courses.” He and Dr. Davis hope that through this course, new students will forge strong connections with faculty early on in their college careers. “It troubles me greatly that too many undergraduate students abandon their degrees and leave campus with nothing more than a mountain of high-interest debt and regret,” Dr. Crane said.

Since this class is the first of its kind offered by the Communication Studies Department, there are no guarantees, but Dr. Crane sees opportunity in the unexplored. “You never know what you will learn on any given day in the classroom, but if you are open to hearing from voices other than your own, you will find the classroom is a crucible for continual surprise. Honestly, what is better than an everyday parade of unexpected insight?”
Four Organizational Communication Studies alumni visited campus Jan. 28 and spoke to current students about their lives during and after their graduation from UNC Charlotte. Caitlin Sellers ('11) owns her own digital marketing business and is the digital marketing manager for a local company and a co-runner of a career development website. Mike Destefano ('12) currently works as a national account manager for Continental Tires. Cassie Hutaff ('13) works as a marketing copywriter for a local financial company. Allison Walton, who received her degree just last year, works as the HR director for the Charlotte branch of Chick-Fil-A.

The panelists discussed their experiences as interns while earning their undergraduate degrees, giving a detailed look into how their classes, internships and jobs interacted and complimented each other. All four alumni adamantly endorsed a proactive approach to learning, searching for internships and self-marketing directed at potential future employers. Since they had all graduated within the last five years, the present-day perspective which framed their advice resonated well with the audience of undergraduate students.

Throughout the session, the panel fielded questions and comments from the audience. Students asked challenging questions, eager to take advantage of the panel’s working knowledge of their professional fields. After the official Q&A concluded, many students chose to stay and speak further with Mike, Allison, Cassie, and Caitlin one-on-one, listening to parting pieces of advice and gathering contact cards before leaving.

For more information on CSSA and CSSA related events, visit their webpage, http://communication.uncc.edu/student-organizations/cssa
DR. QUINLAN RECEIVES BONNIE E. CONE AWARD

In 2015, Associate Professor Margaret Quinlan was awarded the distinguished “Bonnie E. Cone Early-Career Professorship in Teaching,” a prestigious award given every three years to a single faculty member who has gained tenure. She will hold the award for a three-year period.

Dr. Richard Leeman, Communication Studies chair, shared his thoughts about the honored professor. “Perhaps the most apt descriptor of Dr. Quinlan’s teaching is ‘enthusiasm.’ Dr. Quinlan cares about her students and she cares about her subject, and students find her enthusiasm for learning and her commitment to their success to be contagious. Like all the best teachers, Dr. Quinlan helps her students find the best in themselves.” She is the first Communication Studies faculty member to hold the award since Dr. Alan Freitag, who received it in 2006.

“It was and still is such an honor,” Quinlan said about the award. “I consider myself a teacher-scholar—it feels very gratifying to receive special recognition for the hard work teachers do.” For her, teaching is more about the everyday rewards as the occasional awards. “My favorite moments are when I run into students who have graduated from UNCC and they tell me how I impacted them by something that I said or did while they were in my class,” she said. Although this award is a highlight in her career, she strives to continuously improve professionally. “My own development as a communication scholar with narrative and dialogic sensibilities will continue to inform the way I structure courses and assignments and how I connect with students.”

According to the Office of the Provost, recipients are eligible for special benefits such as “the inscription of the Professor’s name on a permanent plaque, a position of honor at the first Commencement of the Professor’s term, and the award of University resources above that normally given to faculty.”

PRESTIGIOUS COMMUNICATION STUDIES SCHOLARS ATTEND FALL COLLOQUIUM

The Communication Studies Graduate Student Association (CSGSA) invited prestigious scholars Dr. Carole Blair and Dr. William Balthrop from UNC Chapel Hill to speak on their research and scholarly experiences with the Communication Studies MA students. Myasia Burns, president of CSGSA and graduate student, played an essential role in coordinating the colloquium. “I was really pleased with the Fall Colloquium,” she said. “With Dr. Grano’s help, the event went off without a hitch and Drs. Blair & Balthrop were so knowledgeable about all things rhetoric. I’m glad they came and shared their valuable experience with our department.”

MA student Joseph Lamia worked as an intern with the United Service Organizations (USO) in Charlotte over the summer of 2015. In his campus presentation in September, he described the internship as a “valuable experience.” Joe serves in the U.S. military and in February, he and his wife welcomed a baby boy.
UNC Charlotte’s Formula Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) racing team is gearing up to compete in this year’s SAE Collegiate Design Series, Formula SAE, an event that “brings up to 120 international teams together, where they will have to compete in multiple dynamic and static events that test the design and performance of the car,” according to its webpage. A dedicated group of engineering students, under the direction of project team leader Kyle Tetro, have been working together this spring to design and build a car by May, then head to Michigan International Speedway for the May 11-14 competition. Meanwhile, another team made up of students from the communication studies and marketing majors focused on getting the word out.

For this year’s team, the motivation to succeed stems from last year’s forgettable performance. “[Their score] was 79th in competition overall,” says Public Relations manager and marketing team director Camille Jones, one of the Communication Studies undergraduate student volunteers. “They had issues with the cost of the car, the weight of the car, the sound … it was a difficult competition.” Engineering issues weren’t the team’s only problems; they needed help in improving their business presentation. That’s where Jones and her team have made an impact this year. Business major Brad Davis volunteers as the Business Manager and oversees all business and financial aspects of the team. Communication studies students – Tiffany Kukuruda, Melissa Rustemov, and Nicole Hetrick – have all contributed to the creative design process of the team’s competition presentation.

John Moloney, an engineer from Penske Technology that donated his time to head up this year’s competition, split the team into two branches: the engineering branch and the marketing branch. The intent was for the engineering students to focus on design and construction, leaving the public image and business presentation to marketing and communication studies students. “Our group is part of the team, but we focus on something totally different,” Jones said. The marketing team has created a monthly newsletter, updating the team’s progress. They are also working with Scarykind, a multimedia production company founded by communication studies student Mark Borja and Matt Trask, that have become team sponsors come on board to produce the presentation video for competition.

Jones, who is graduating this spring (16), says her initial role was public relations manager in January of 2015.

“Never did I ever imagine we’d expand to have a team of communications, marketing and business students helping me grow this program,” she said. “My main initiative in taking on a team of students was to reconnect the engineering side of campus with other aspects of our diverse academic community. I feel as though we have accomplished that through the Formula SAE program. The students who have come on board have been willing to learn an entirely new sport to them, contribute to a presentation that will be seen by teams from all over the world, and never shot down any ideas that may seem outside the realm of possibility. The Formula SAE team is leaps and bounds greater than what it was as they approached competition last season, and I fully believe the creative contributions of those in the communications and marketing team have propelled them to be greater than ever before.”

For more information on UNC Charlotte SAE and to find out how they fare in the national competition, visit their webpage at sae.uncc.edu/formula-sae, or follow them on social media, on Twitter @49ersRacing.
Brad Davis and Camille Jones

UNC Charlotte’s Formula Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) racing team
Congratulations to our graduate students, graduate faculty and support staff for another great year. Our graduate students made multiple presentations at highly selective national and regional conferences over the past year. In so doing, they earned top paper awards and the recognition of notable scholars across the discipline. Time and again, when our Masters students present in public forums they make a powerful, positive impression. Our Masters students also do invaluable service in the classroom and as research assistants and research colleagues. One of the reasons we have such a strong undergraduate program is because we share the classroom with a dedicated cadre of graduate students. The faculty are deeply grateful for their collective efforts and impressed by their passion and talent. Having completed a raft of theses, directed projects and comprehensive exams, we celebrate the achievements of this year’s graduates as they pursue doctoral degrees and stellar opportunities in industry and the non-profit sector. Next year looks to just as exciting as we welcome a new cohort of top flight entering graduate students, including our first Fulbright Scholar, Desiree Bataba from Togo.

Dr. Jon Crane, Interim Director, Communication Studies Graduate Program
Debra Basalik: Debra Basalik earned her MA in Communication Studies while concurrently working on her Ph.D. in Health Psychology. Debra's research interests are in mental health literacy, health disparities, and caregiving of a child with autism. Debra has been TA-extraordinaire for Sayde Brais’s Research Methods course. She will shortly complete her dissertation for the Health Psychology doctorate program, entitled “Social construction of meaning and identity among parents of children with emotional and behavioral disorders.”.

Beth Booker: Beth’s thesis examines viral videos and how their circulation patterns produce meaning. In particular, Beth’s work focuses on the Ray Rice videos from the 2014-2015 NFL season. Alongside completing her Master’s degree, Beth and her husband recently welcomed their first son, Calvin, to the world. Beth has presented her work at numerous conferences and scholarly forum including SSCA and the Graduate Research Symposium. She hopes to work at a Charlotte PR firm upon graduation.

Myasia Burns: Myasia’s thesis examines representations of violence in the serial television drama Oz. As president of the Communication Studies Graduate Student Association, Myasia has coordinated fall and spring colloquia featuring prominent scholars in Communication Studies. Alongside her duties in the Communication Department, Myasia serves as a Graduate Life Fellow where she offers guidance and promotes engagements through peer mentorship and events for graduate students across the disciplines. Myasia has been a TA for Business Communication and Intro to Media. Upon graduation, Myasia aims to work as a digital media specialist in industry.

Emily Crawford: Emily’s thesis examines the rhetoric of visual imagery and how it has shaped the meaning of the Boston Marathon bombing. Emily is singlehandedly responsible for most of our undergraduates earning their BA as a TA for Communication Theory and Research Methods alongside her other duties as the administrative factotum for the graduate program. Emily has presented her work at SSCA and the Graduate Research Symposium.

Alicia Emmons: Alicia’s strength is her ability to analyze an issue from all sides. She applies these characteristics to her primary interests in public relations and media. She is completing a fascinating master’s project on cross cultural gun mores from America to the UK. Her research has been undertaken to provide recommendations to the US embassy in London on how to best manage communication on this vital, hot-button issue. She has provided invaluable research assistance to Dr. Dean Kruckeberg during her tenure at UNC.

Nicole Heschong: Nicole was recognized with an Outstanding Student paper award at NCA and has also presented her work at SSCA. Nicole has also has been a featured poster presenter at the 2014 International Communication Association Conference and a finalist for the 2013 Jarrard Graduate Paper Award at the Carolinas Communication Association Conference. Nicole is currently a Senior HR Communication Consultant at Carolinas Healthcare System.

Joe Lamia: Captain Joe Lamia is our first active duty officer to have enrolled in our M.A. program. He currently serves in the Army Tank Corps, and is applying to work in the Public Affairs office. As part of his program, he was a summer intern with the President and COO of the North Carolina USO, helping to promote support services for active duty personnel and their families. Captain Lamia and his wife also welcomed their first child, Joey, into their family this February. Upon graduation, Joe will be returning to active duty in Korea.

Jade Myers: Jade’s primary research goal is to explore and critique power structures that affect the health of marginal communities. In this pursuit, she has worked with Professor Bethany Johnson and Dr. Margaret Quinlan on the history of Twilight Sleep and women’s infertility. She has also worked with Dr. Quinlan on the regional Emmy winning series, Courage of Creativity. Jade is preparing to move across the country for a PhD program at the University of New Mexico with a fully funded teaching assistantship. She is one of 5 students accepted to this highly competitive and prestigious program.

Brittany Wilson: According to her advisor Dr. Asli Stokes, Brittany has been an amazingly responsive and dedicated student. Brittany’s directed project on the national cancer awareness and charity organization, Twenty Four Hours of Booty, was so persuasive, that the organization rewrote their mission statement in keeping with Brittany’s findings. Brittany will now be working with Twenty Four Hours of Booty in Baltimore, Maryland. Not content to build a nation-wide fund raising organization, Brittany also plans to pursue a part-time teaching position as well.
Dr. Ashli Stokes, appointed July 1, 2015, as the director of the UNC Charlotte’s Center for the Study of the New South, has been busy planning quality academic events that she hopes will stir community interest.

This year’s theme is “about race and the New South, and we’re focusing on specifically the Latino and Hispanic community,” she says.

To that end, events held in October included: “La Vida Latina: 21st Century Life in Charlotte,” which explored the state of Charlotte’s Latino/a population and “Two Communities at a Crossroads: Latinos and African Americans in Charlotte, a closer look into race relations between the two minorities in the Charlotte area. In March, the Center sponsored two more key events: The annual Levine Lecture, this year featuring Tom Negri, social activist and founder of Nashville for All of Us, and “Nexos: The 2016 Presidential Election and the Latino/a Vote,” all about Latino voters.

Dr. Stokes relies on faculty, student and community input to help shape the theme and the events that culminate from it. The Center’s mission provides the context for a theme, but interest always fluctuates, so Dr. Stokes keeps an ear to the ground, tracking the changes.

In the center’s history, she’s the third to take on the duty as director. “My job is to figure out what the community wants to talk about regarding the New South, what professors do we have that can speak to that issue, and who can I bring in from across the country that can help us really have a really good conversation?”

The preliminary planning stages began months ago, and to Dr. Stokes, every day counts. “The reason that I have to plan at least a year out is that there are certain grants that you can get to help fund some of these programs.” Aside from all the work organizing such a variety of events, the biggest issue, she says, is how to pay for them.

According to its webpage, newsouth.uncc.edu, UNC Charlotte’s Center is part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and “… promotes discourse and dialogue on a rich and diverse constellation of topics and ideas relating to the New South. Known as the period of regional history from the end of the Civil War to the modern era, the New South offers a bold tapestry of history, culture, social movements, and political issues ripe for reflection and study.”
for the Study of the New South

UAL LEVINE LECTURE

Migrant Integration and Inclusiveness

Negri
“CREATIVE ABUNDANCE” SCREENING DRAWS BIG TURNOUT

About 250 people attended the UNC Charlotte screening of “Creative Abundance,” a documentary film that’s part of a regional Emmy-award winning series. Co-producer Dr. Margaret Quinlan said the film is intended to “inspire myself and others to think about ways of fostering artful encounters to serve and empower people with episodic or chronic health conditions.”

Following the screening, Dr. Jon Crane said, “We had a great in-class discussion about the Frankfurt School on culture after the screening of ‘Creative Abundance.’ The film also gave me some perfect examples for thinking about popular culture in terms of experience, agency and community.”

Kristen Okamoto, a 2013 graduate of the Communication Studies Department’s graduate program and is now a doctoral candidate at Ohio University, is an associate producer on film and attended the screening.
PULITZER PANEL FEATURED ON UNC CHARLOTTE CAMPUS TO MARK 100TH ANNIVERSARY

UNC Charlotte marked the 100th Pulitzer Prize anniversary with a panel of journalists addressing topics ranging from evolving methods of newsgathering, newswriting, and monetizing news to staying relevant in a digital world and the significant role of the reader in directing investigative journalism. “The Future of the News” panel held on April 21, was fifth in a series called “Pulitzer Charlotte: Power and Accountability.” Speakers included: Tim Grieve, head of news strategies for Washington-based McClatchy; former Charlotte Observer’s executive editor Rick Thames and editorial page editor Ed Williams; Joe O’Connor, president and general manager of WFAE radio; and Julie Szulczewski, news director of WSOC-TV and WAXN-TV. The panel was sponsored by the North Carolina Humanities Council and the UNC Charlotte Department of Communication Studies. Lecturer J. Craig Paddock coordinated the event.

DEPARTMENT-SPONSORED COLLOQUIUM ADDRESSES “DEATH, DYING AND BEYOND”

The “Death, Dying and Beyond: Ourselves at the End” colloquium, held April 22 at UNC Charlotte Center City, featured a panel of scholars from biology, psychology, sociology, religious studies, cultural studies, and communication. The multidisciplinary panel of scholars from UNC Charlotte, Coastal Carolina University, Levine Children’s Hospital, and Hospice and Palliative Care of Cabarrus County and of Greater Charlotte explored what it means to be mortal, and, perhaps, immortal, to look at death from the cellular to the social. The discussions spanned from the recent death of music icon Prince to the Martin Luther King Memorial. While drawing on their own unique experiences and perspectives, presenters ultimately cultivated an appreciation for the meaning, symbolism and significance of sharing in end of life discussions. Dr. Diane Zablotsky’s discussion on grief covered the necessity of family conversations about the potentially unsettling topic of end of life plans. The colloquium was organized by Drs. Christine S. Davis and Jonathan Crane presented “Vertigo and Death as an Unknown”. Davis organized the colloquium.

- Elizabeth Ballard, Graduate student in Communication Studies

[Editor’s Note: Drs. Davis and Crane also presented together at the “Promises of Monsters” conference at the end of April at the University of Stavanger, Norway.]

FACULTY HONORED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

J. Craig Paddock - 5 years
Tim Horne - 10 years
Ashli Stokes - 10 years
Staci Kuntzman - 15 years

J. CRAIG PADDOCK, TIM HORNE, ASHLI STOKES, AND STACI KUNTZMAN, WERE HONORED FOR THEIR SERVICE AT THE DEPARTMENT’S ANNUAL AWARDS ON APRIL 21.
Dr. Tiffany Gallicano will join the Department this fall as an Assistant Professor of Public Relations. She will teach a PR Strategy class and a special topics class entitled “Personal and Professional Social Media in Public Relations,” as well as some general communication courses. Currently, she is co-authoring a project “involving the relationship between Ethiopian activists and the humanitarian organizations with whom they work,” she said. “This falls into the area of relationship management, which is the study of relationships between organizations and their publics.” She also plans to delve into projects involving social media and pedagogy, her other two areas of research inquiry. Gallicano earned her masters and doctorate degrees in Communication at the University of Maryland. In 2007, she accepted an assistant professorship at the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon (Eugene) and in 2014 became an Associate Professor in Public Relations. She has received three teaching awards at UO and six awards for research from various international conferences and PRSA’s public relations journal. In her spare time, Gallicano enjoys taking dance classes and spending time with her daughter, Valentina. Her husband, Todd, is a writer who just signed a two-book deal with Random House for a book series designed for middle-grade readers. Her family looks forward to moving to North Carolina.

Erin Basinger will join the faculty this fall as an Assistant Professor of Health Communication. She will teach a Seminar in Health Communication, with a focus on “Coping and Health Communication,” as well as another undergraduate or graduate class. Her primary research areas include “health-related stressors in the context of their social relationships,” as well as “how people cope with the death of a parent or sibling.” This spring, she is completing her doctorate degree at the University of Illinois. Her dissertation addresses “how families manage Type 2 diabetes together or separately, and how their management of the disease affects both their relationships with one another and the illness itself.” Basinger earned her masters degree in Communication Studies at the University of Georgia (Athens), and currently teaches at the University of Illinois. She has won several awards for teaching from both faculty and students over the years, and most recently, a research award for a co-authored article with University of Illinois colleagues in 2015. Apart from her love of all-things academia, said Basinger, is “my dog Sophie, with whom I am obsessed.”
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.

Adrienne D. Barnette, MA, NCC, LPC received Bachelor of Art degrees in Organizational Communication and Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2004. In 2007 she received a Master of Art degree in School Counseling from UNC Charlotte. She is a National Certified Counselor and Licensed Professional Counselor. Upon graduation from UNC Charlotte Counseling program, she was ranked in the top 1% of Counseling Professionals chosen to serve as ambassadors in the International Scholar Laureate Program. While attending UNC Charlotte, she was a student athlete on the UNC Charlotte Track and Field team and still holds the Outdoor and Indoor Track and Field High Jump School Record. Prior to joining UNC Charlotte Communication Studies Department as the Academic Advisor in 2013, she worked with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools from 2008-2013 as a School Counselor, Academic Facilitator, and Counseling Department Chair and has worked with students in a range of academic settings. Barnette is the re-cipient of the 2013 UNC Charlotte Outstanding Young Alumni Award, the UNC Charlotte Outstanding Counseling Alumni Award, the 2012 UNC Charlotte Excellence in Education Award, and the UNC Charlotte Citizenship Award. In 2012 she was the Keynote Speaker for the UNC Charlotte Chancellor Diversity grant on her project ROUTE 1961, which was a character education journey of retracing the 1961 Freedom Riders route on motorcycle from Washington, D.C. to New Orleans, to protest segregation, to teach her K-12 students with severe emotional disabilities a tale of positive character. In the summer of 2013, she embarked on her latest counseling character education endeavor, “Pedal for Peace,” in which she retraced 800 miles of the the Underground Railroad on bicycle from Ohio to Canada.

Tiffany Bryant is the Communication Studies Department’s gregarious new Administrative Assistant. In December, 2015, she graduated from UNC Charlotte with a bachelor’s degree in Psychology, and a minor in Women’s and Gender Studies. While a student, she worked for three years in the Financial Aid office and for one year with UNC Charlotte’s Call Center. She joined the staff in February after Kayla Modlin was promoted to Office Manager. Tiffany intends to pursue a master’s degree here, but is taking a break from academics to decide on her area of studies. As administrative assistant, 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. Off the clock, Tiffany enjoys working out, taking care of her dog, Samantha, a Maltese-Shih tzu mix. She loves to read all kinds of books – favorites include Tony Morrison’s “Beloved” by Toni Morrison, “The Kite Runner” and “A Thousand Splendid Suns” by Khaled Hosseini. Tiffany also loves to cook. “I am a pescatarian (I only eat fish),” she said, “so some of my favorite dishes to prepare are eggplant parmesan, baked macaroni and cheese and homemade sweet potato waffles.”
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.

Dr. 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 began teaching for the department as a graduate teaching assistant in 2010, and was hired as a full-time faculty member in 2013. Brais teaches undergraduate classes which include: Research Methods, Public Speaking, and Business Communication. Drawing from her experience as a recent student, Brais’ teaching philosophy revolves around the notion that “the great teacher continues to be a student”. She believes that every class taught provides a unique opportunity to exchange ideas and knowledge, for the student and the instructor. In her spare time, Brais enjoys playing with her dog, Minnie, and spending time with friends and family.

Dr. 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.
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 and the preliminary edition of her textbook on Small Group Communication was published in January of this year. In addition to her teaching duties, she serves as a guest lecturer with the English Language Training Institute, Extended Academic Programs, and the Office of International Programs, writes textbook reviews for various publishing companies, and presents papers at professional organizational conferences.
“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’s just shy of 20 years of teaching experience in the water) and is an avid hiker happily trekking along on 15-20 mile hikes in the beautiful North Carolina mountains.

**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 humour,” 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, Nhung and their Ratapooie (part Rat Terrier, part Poodle) dog Sebastian.

**Mia 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 ComputerScience 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 Quentin 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, is a professor in the Department of Communication Studies. He has a Bachelor’s in English with a minor in journalism from Warburg College (1969); an M.A. in journalism (PR) from Northern Illinois University (1974); and a Ph.D. in Mass Communications from the University of Iowa (1985). Dr. Kruckeberg has co-authored several publications, including “Public Relations and Community: A Reconstructed Theory” and “This Is PR: The Realities of Public Relations.” In spring 2010, 2011 and 2014, he taught UNCC’s London International Public Relations Seminar at Regent’s University. He has earned prestigious awards, including the “Atlas Award for Lifetime Achievement in International Public Relations and the “Outstanding Educator” Award from the Public Relations Society of America and the Wartburg College Alumni Citation that recognized his accomplishments as one of the nation’s leading public relations educators. He was inducted into Rowan University’s Public Relations Hall of Fame in 2014. Dr. Kruckeberg stresses the value of achievement in his teaching philosophy: “I try always to remember the importance of what we do as educators and the good that we can do when we perform our jobs well. 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 points 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.” Leeman received his B.S. from Shippensburg State University in 1977 and his Master’s and Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, in 1982 and 1990 respectively. Leeman has participated in writing, co-writing, or editing seven books: “The Will of a People: A Critical Anthology of Great Speeches by African Americans” (with Bernard Duffy, Southern Illinois University Press); “The Teleological Discourse of Barack Obama” (Lexington Press); “The Rhetoric of Terrorism and Counterterrorism”; “Do- Everything Reform: “The Oratory of Frances E. Willard, African-American Oratory: A BioCritical Sourcebook”; “American Voices: Encyclopedia of Contemporary Oratory” (with Bernard K. Duffy); and “The Art and Practice of Argumentation and Debate” (with Dr. Bill Hill). Aside from his teaching and publishing achievements, Leeman divulges a little known fact about himself: “[I am] distantly related to Irene Ryan, who played Granny on the Beverly Hillbillies. Helps explain the good looks.”

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 academia, 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 Health Psychology Ph.D. Program. She joined the Department in 2009. Her scholarly work explores the organizing of health care resources and work opportunities for people with lived differences. She has published in Text & Performance Quarterly, Health Communication, Management Communication Quarterly, Communication Teacher, Communication Research Reports, Journal of Research in Special Education Needs, The Braille Monitor, and Review of Communication. 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, Interpersonal Health Communication, Gender Health Communication, and Narratives of Health and Illness. “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.” She is associate producer of “A Beautiful Remedy,” a 2014 award-winning documentary. Outside the world of academia and film making, Maggie is the proud new mother of Sweeney Quinlan Carbine.

**Robin Rothberg**

Lecturer Robin Rothberg earned her Bachelor’s of Science in Communications 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 and Journalism/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 any meat since I was in college as a student,” she says. “My husband, meanwhile, never met a steak he didn’t like!”

**Clifton Scott**

University in 1997, 2001 and 2005, respectively, Dr. Cliff Scott joined UNC Charlotte as an assistant professor, teaching classes in organizational communication, research methods, communication theory and organizational science. As a teacher, Scott says he views learning as a shared responsibility between students and instructors. “I see our time together in the classroom as an opportunity to extend and deepen what students have already learned outside the classroom through their reading and via their personal experiences,” Scott says, adding that “if you don’t like to read, don’t enjoy thinking
critically and abstractly about your own everyday experiences, and prefer spoon feeding, you probably won’t enjoy my classes.” Outside of teaching, Scott’s research on organizational communication concerns occupational safety and health, organizational socialization, high reliability organizing and work meetings. His research has been published in outlets as diverse as Management Communication Quarterly, Human Resource Management, MIT Sloan Management Review, Journal of Applied Communication Research, Communication Theory and Communication Monographs. He also serves as a consultant for local organizations through UNC Charlotte’s Organizational Science Consulting and Research Unit. In his free time, Scott says he enjoys spending time with his wife, their dog, and his growing collection of used cars. After earning his Bachelor’s degree from Bradley University, his Master’s degree from Northern Illinois University and his Doctorate from Arizona State University.

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 Stokes

Dr. Ashli Q. Stokes is an associate professor in the Communication Studies Department, teaching graduate and undergraduate classes in public relations and health communication campaigns. She received her bachelor’s degree at Virginia Tech University, her master’s at Wake Forest University, and worked in public relations before she began studying for her doctorate at the University of Georgia. The majority of her research focuses on public relations and public communication, specializing in rhetorical approaches to analyzing public relations controversies. She has published in numerous journals and has authored several book chapters. She is also co-author with colleague Dr. Alan Freitag of the book “Global Public Relations: Spanning Borders, Spanning Cultures.” She was appointed Director of the Center for the Study of the New South in 2015. 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, 6-year-old Kate and 1-year-old Charlie, and Super Golden Retriever Brody. 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

faculty