

# COMMUNIQUE

Spring, 2014

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## Recognition Dinner Honors Students

Students, alumni, faculty members and staff gathered together on May 1, 2014 at Cason's Cove for the first annual Student Recognition Dinner. Student members of Lambda Pi Eta, Communication Ambassadors, and the International Association of Business Communicators, graduate students, and department award winners enjoyed an evening of recognition and conversation.

Two new departmental awards for outstanding undergraduate research were given. Chelsea Martin won the first annual Undergraduate Research Award—Case Study for a paper developed in Helen Sterk's



Marshall Covert & Chelsea Martin

- Cont'd on page 2

## Kari Warberg Block—Executive in Residence



Sam Ford & Kari Warberg Block

Ford is the director of audience engagement for Peppercomm, a communications firm that works with Block's company Earth-Kind. (Photo by Bryan Lemon/Featured in the Bowling Green Daily News on February 13, 2014)

On February 12-13, the WKU Department of Communication kicked off its first annual "Executive in Residence" program with entrepreneur Kari Warberg Block. Ms. Warberg Block is a prominent business professional who highly values communication's role in building strong business-

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## Student Recognition ... cont'd



Students holding keys after dinner

Gender and Communication class. Marshall Covert won the first annual Undergraduate Research Award—Data-Based Study for a paper written for Blair Thompson’s class.

Doris Moody, President of the Communication Advisory Board, accepted the department’s Alumna of the Year award with a gracious speech

on the value of her Communication education.

Each student received a red or white key with an attached motto as a memento of the value of their service and contributions to the de-



Bethany Hughes, Paige Freeman, Dr. Helen Sterk, Chelsea Martin, and Marshall Covert

partment.

Special thanks go to Jennifer Mize Smith for her organization of this event. The venue, the food, and the decorations all made the evening memorable.



## Kari Warberg Block ... cont'd

es. See the press release here: [news.wordpress.com/2014/01/28/communication-earthkind](http://news.wordpress.com/2014/01/28/communication-earthkind).

An entrepreneur who started an \$8 million company from a 99 cent package of seeds, Ms. Warberg Block invented a product called Fresh Cab that repels rodents through natural means—a sachet made from ground up corn cobs that gives off the odor of balsam fir. Turns out mice and rats hate the smell and run away from it, making removal of little dead bodies unnecessary.

In developing capacity for mass production, marketing and distrib-

uting this ingenious product, Ms. Warberg Block learned to lead, to delegate, to motivate, and to activate employees and community partners.

Interest in Ms. Warberg Block spanned three colleges—she spoke to a Farm Management class in Agriculture; to an Entrepreneurship class in Business; and to Small Group Communication, the Senior Capstone, and Advanced Organizational Communication classes in Communication. Plus, Ms. Warberg Block met with Deans and representatives from the three colleges to bring home the importance of communication in building a farm-related business.

Ms. Warberg Block shared her expertise with the community in an evening question and answer session with alumnus Sam Ford. See the *Bowling Green Daily News* story here: [http://www.bgdailynews.com/news/entrepreneur-invents-natural-rodent-repellent/article\\_cc339588-e91c-55a5-8b04-1f53fead344a.html](http://www.bgdailynews.com/news/entrepreneur-invents-natural-rodent-repellent/article_cc339588-e91c-55a5-8b04-1f53fead344a.html).

Engaging and filled with good humor, as well as good sense, Ms. Warberg Block proved herself the perfect person to launch the “Executive in Residence” program.

## Message from Helen Sterk, Department Head



Dr. Helen Sterk

The spring semester of 2014 saw two momentous events in the department. We hosted our first ever Executive in Residence, Kari Warberg Block, and we held a Student Recog-

nition Dinner to honor our Lambda Pi Eta, Communication Ambassadors, and International Association of Business Communicators members, as well as our outstanding research award winners, graduate teaching assistants, and outstanding alumna of the year (see these full stories elsewhere in the newsletter). Both the Executive in Residence and the recognition dinner will become yearly standards within the department.

Events such as these build the culture of the department. Over the past several years, we have developed the theme that 'Communication is key to a better self, better life, and better future.' Two years ago, alumnus John Rowley, political campaign consultant and partner at Fletcher/Rowley in Nashville, led two savvy grad students, Ryan Dearbone and Ian Brandon, and me through a brainstorming process that led us to our

focus on keys as our department's 'condensation symbols.' A condensation symbol crystallizes meanings. For us, 'key' has provided a visual and metaphoric point of focus for what we in the department do, why we do it and how it works.

So, when we choose events, we look for those which support the idea of keying into the future through learning how communication theories and skills open the locks of jobs and the whole range of challenges our students will encounter. In the fall, we bring in a disciplinary superstar researcher and teacher and in the spring, a charismatic and successful professional person. Together, they show students how learning unlocks achievement. And then, we will gather together to celebrate our students' successes and service. That's a great way to end the year!



## Graduate Student Bids Farewell

In the Fall of 2008 I started my undergraduate career here at WKU in which I took Stacey Gish's COMM 161 class as a frightened, nervous, and awkward freshman. On the first day of class, she handed us this pencil telling us, "This item is only known as a pencil because someone in the past has named it a 'pencil' and everyone else followed suit. For the purposes of this class though, we will now refer to it as a 'cow'. Items can have similar func-

tions but it is up to our [class] culture to give them a name." Obviously, this isn't verbatim, but it was something to that effect.

I reflected on myself that entire semester and decided how I wanted this new culture, WKU, that I was a part of, to define me. Did I want to stay the same as high-school-Felix: quiet, unconfident, and nervous? Or did I want to redefine myself, much like we redefined the pencil?

That class forced me to talk in

front of people which I hated; that class forced me to work in groups which I hated. I did not want to be in that class, at all. But more than that, I did not want to be known as the same as I was in the past. I wanted to be more, I wanted people to notice me, I wanted to be heard. I made a deal with myself that once a week I had to strike up a conversation with some random passer-by to become that new person and escape from my

- Cont'd on page 4

## Graduate Student ... *cont'd*

shell. I didn't want to be the "pencil" as everyone else saw me before, I wanted to be the "cow" as WKU would come to see me.

Twelve semesters later, I will be walking in the graduate commencement ceremony Friday with only my thesis standing in the way of finishing my Masters degree. As I was packing up my house this morning to make the move to Columbus, Ohio I came across this "cow" in the bottom of my pencil bag from undergrad and realized everything is coming full circle. It was because of this analogical "cow", this department, and this university that I was able to be redefined. I was finally known as something different to those who now knew me. My thanks are endless, my heart is full, and my brain is fried (only kidding...maybe). I will miss WKU and everyone in the department, but I will also take with me all the lessons I



**Katie Holmes, Felix Perrone, Heidi Sisler, & Daniela Fuentes**

learned, both academic and social, to help drive my future in the direction that allows me to be happiest.

Thanks everyone!

*~ Felix Perrone,  
Graduate Assistant*

## Visiting Minority Scholar: Mittie Carey



**Drs. Angela Jerome, Mittie Carey & Helen Sterk**

Dr. Mittie K. Carey, the WKU Department of Communication Visiting Minority Scholar, leaves a legacy of care, insight, and inclusion as she finishes her two year term on our faculty. The department celebrated Dr. Carey with a farewell luncheon on May 7, 2014.

Dr. Carey earned her Ph.D. in Communication at the University of Memphis in the spring of 2012. Her dissertation, "The Freedom Faith Speeches of Prathia Hall: Uncovering a Hybrid Rhetoric of Protest," formed the basis of special topics classes at WKU.

Dr. Carey focused departmental attention on civil rights, women, and rhetoric through the graduate and undergraduate courses she taught. Field trips to Memphis' Civil Rights Museum, world café conversations on race, and a course on Interracial Communication found expres-

*- Cont'd on page 5*

## Mittie Carey ... cont'd

sion here because of Dr. Carey. Further, Dr. Carey served on a university level committee devoted to diversity and inclusion across the campus.

Dr. Carey returns to Memphis at the end of her appointment to rejoin her husband and family. We wish her

well in all she does, knowing her talent will take her far.

~ Dr. Helen Sterk,  
Department Head

## Visiting Minority Scholar: Tammy Jeffries



Dr. Tammy Jeffries

national distinctions and differences, or intercultural, rather than as related to racial and ethnic relations within the United States, or cross-cultural. Dr. Jeffries plans to teach Interracial Communication, continuing Dr. Carey's legacy in the department.

Dr. Jeffries comes from Michigan, where she has been teaching for the past year. We are looking forward to having Dr. Jeffries as part of our program faculty.


~ Dr. Helen Sterk,  
Department Head

Dr. Tammy Jeffries joins the WKU Department of Communication in the fall of 2014 as a Visiting Minority Scholar. Dr. Jeffries brings with her a passion for teaching, a record of scholarly achievement, and interest in continuing conversations on race in the department, college and university.

Dr. Jeffries visited the department early in the spring semester to interview and teach a class, and on February 20, 2014, presented a lecture to students and faculty on an "Autoethnographical Exploration of Racial 'I'dentity."

Dr. Jeffries earned her Ph.D. from the University of South Florida in August, 2013. Her dissertation analyzed interpersonal communication textbooks to uncover the assumptions of diversity education they contain. She discovered they presented diversity as an issue of


# Autoethnographical Exploration of Racial 'I'dentity




**Thursday,**  
**February 20, 2014**

**7:00 p.m.**

**FAC 198**



**Tammy Jeffries, Ph.D.**



## Halfway Around the World... Just Down the Hill: Internships in the Department of Communication—COMM 489

Since 1984 and the launch of the Corporate and Organizational Communication major, the internship program has become a vital part of the Department's academic and professional obligations to its majors. COMM 489, our internship class, is a requirement for Corporate and Organizational majors and an option for the Communication Studies major.



Emma Collins at The Junction in Northern Ireland

In the summer session of 2014, three interns are working internationally. One student is assigned to the U.S. Army in Seoul, South Korea. Another, Tingting Zhao interns at New Field International in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, coordinating college entrance initiatives for American universities with five are high schools' Chinese students. Emma Collins interns with The Junction, a nonprofit, peacebuilding organization in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Ms. Collins' internship calls on her to help influence citizens of Derry/Londonderry toward safety and non-violence. See news article at <http://www.bgdailynews.com/news/student-on-peace-mission-to->

northern-ireland/.

Other worksites for summer internships include the American Cancer Society, the WKU Sisterhood, Congressman Brett Guthrie's office, and others in Bowling Green; Dell Computers and McNeeley, Piggot and Fox (PR) in Nashville; and others in Louisville and Boston.

From 1984 down to now, the faculty of the Department of Communication and the Directors of the Internship program, have focused their classroom and advisory work with the majors in the Department to develop a job/career path for our majors that can be connected to an appropriate internship. Over the

years, the success of COMM 489 for our majors has been an alignment of a student's dreams and goals with an "entrance" internship.

In the past ten years – 2004-2014, approximately 100 for-profit, non-profit, educational, and foreign business organizations have served as work sites for interns in the Department. In nearly every case, student interns have had full access to their organizations corporate culture, their employee communication, and customer service and sales – a significant learning advantage for our majors and for the department.

The success or failure of COMM 489 depends on students' goal-oriented movement toward a career



Tingting Zhao in Vancouver, B.C., Canada

that will maximize their Communication degrees. When students know what path they want to take, when they have the encouragement and full support of their faculty, more times than not, students and the Director of Internships can find worksites that meet the needs.

To be sure, at the conclusion of their major, many students don't know what they want to do in life. For them, an internship is a "fishing expedition." However, in today's business world, an internship is the way to learn to "swim with the sharks." Many organizations won't even interview someone who hasn't completed an internship.

At the end of the day, the business community is increasingly demanding of an internship on a resume to set a person apart from others looking for the same job. The COMM 489 Internship program in the Department of Communication can be a ticket to an exciting career.

~ Carl L. Kell, Professor,  
Director of Internships

## 2014 John Lyne Speech Contest

Close to thirty competitors met on May 9, 2104, presenting persuasive speeches prepared in COMM 145 and 161. A first rate set of judges, including coaches from the world and national champion WKU Forensic team, evaluated and ranked the first and second round of speeches. Celebrity judges John Lyne (Professor and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, department alumnus and award donor), Larry Winn (Emeritus Professor of the WKU Department of Communication), Dean David Lee (Dean of Potter College of Arts and Letters), Blair Thompson (Co-director of COMM 145 and 161) and Helen Sterk (Head of the Department of Communication) chose the top winners.



**Back Row: Brittany Murphy, Elvis Meskovic, Tabitha Heller, Sydney Moad**  
**Front Row: McKinze Vowels, Erica Plummer**

Representing the best speeches in COMM 145 were

- ◆ First place: Tabitha Heller. Instructor: Patricia Witcher. Glasgow campus.
- ◆ Second place: Brittany Murphy. Instructor: Donna Schiess. Main campus.
- ◆ Third place: Sydney Moad. Instructor: Gina Lyon. Dual credit student.

Representing the best speeches in COMM 161 were

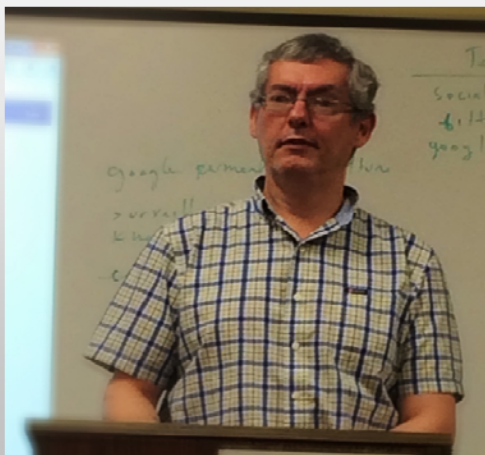
- ◆ First place: Erica Plummer. Instructor: Jessica McClanahan. Main campus.
- ◆ Second place: Elvis Meskovic. Instructor: Gayle Allison. Main campus.
- ◆ Third place: McKinze Vowels. Instructor: Stacey Gish. Main campus.

Congratulations are due to everyone who competed. Being nominated as the best speaker from a class is an honor. Competing creates new skills.

And it is an honor to win. Congratulations go to all of the students who took first, second or third place.

*~ Dr. Helen Sterk,  
 Department Head*

## Special Topics: Cyber Culture



**Dr. Riverson Rios**

This semester, we welcomed a new course in the Department of Communication, offered to students in the spring 2014 semester only. Dr. Riverson Rios, a visiting professor from Universidade Federal de Ceara in Brazil, taught the course. With a Ph.D. in Computer Science, Dr. Rios was delighted to teach students about cyber culture and help them to understand how the digital world is changing the way we communicate. Dr. Rios

has abundant experience through his research and teaching this course at universities in Canada and Brazil. Through his years of experience, he has acquired a variety of literature to share with students.

The special topics course allowed the students to focus on several pieces of literature centering around a variety of topics related to the World Wide Web. Each student created his or her own blogs. They were encour-

## Special Topics... *cont'd*

aged to post their own ideas and thoughts about specific topics that can be accessed by anyone. Since technology has become a necessity in our personal and professional lives, Dr. Rios, encourages students to study topics that can be applied to all careers. Students also had the opportunity to create a presentation and write a research paper on any topic they chose.

Dr. Rios hoped students would further their knowledge about a spe-

cific aspect of the cyber culture, be able to apply that to their fields of interest and create new knowledge about it. The students were very enthusiastic about their one-time opportunity to take this course because of its relevance.

Elyse Madigan, a student enrolled in the course pointed out, "This course has really opened my eyes about the underlying aspects of the internet and how our communication is connected." Dr. Rios stated,

"Technology is a part of everyone's life. That's why it is important to know more about what is going on, how the web is changing our lives, our culture, our society, our educational system, our government, our relationships with people, our brains." Dr. Rios brought a unique perspective of the cyber world to our university, and we have welcomed this idea of technology in the Department of Communication.

~ Peej Packer, Student

## Communication Students Study Abroad Down Under

Studying abroad is an important and constantly evolving component of a WKU education. In fact, it has become such an anticipated part of students' college experiences that individual departments have begun creating specialized Study Abroad programs so their students can study abroad within their major.

Dr. Donna Schiess led the most recent Department of Communication study abroad trip to Australia, particularly Melbourne, Warrnambool, and Fiji Island. Sites visited on the trip included the Twelve Apostles, London Bridge, Lady Bay Beach, and the Wildlife Park exhibit, where students were given the opportunity to interact with wild kangaroos, wallabies, and koala bears. This trip was Dr. Schiess' first opportunity to teach abroad, and she said, "I really enjoyed it." When asked what she felt was the biggest benefit for Communication students of the trip, she stated, "I feel the interactions with some of the Australian students and teachers were great for them because they were able to see the differences in educational practices in communication. Not everything can be learned out of a book, so it was a lot more experiential for them in regards to learning and observing intercultural com-



Students tour Melbourne, Australia

munication practices."

Paige Freeman, a senior from Louisville, Kentucky, enjoyed her time on the trip, describing it as "life-changing, peaceful, and fun." She said her favorite part of the trip was "interacting with the Fijians and observing their style of communication and love for celebration through music" because she felt that part of her communication background was also a "reflection of music." Further, she described the most challenging part of her trip was also an interaction with the Fijians as she tried to learn parts of their language and found that

"it was very different and consisted of different forms of communication but shared the same meaning." While abroad, Freeman completed courses in Intercultural Communication and Special Topics in Communication. She suggested other potential courses that could benefit from being taught abroad would include Leadership Communication and Small Group Communication.

All students and faculty, both from WKU and Australia's Deakin University, benefitted greatly from



## Study Abroad Down Under... *cont'd*



Paige Freeman (left) and Dr. Donna Schiess on the Winter 2014 Department of Communication Australia Study Abroad trip.

the cultural interactions inspired by this Study Abroad trip. To see future study abroad opportunities at WKU and in the Department of Communi-

cation, visit <https://www.wku.edu/studyabroad/>.

~ Olivia Sharp, Student



Students from the Winter 2014 Department of Communication Australia Study Abroad trip while having a day at the beach.

## Study Abroad Trip to U.K. Falls Through, Professor Unfazed

Dr. Cecile Garmon planned to visit the United Kingdom this May with Department of Communication students, yet her study abroad program has since been canceled. The aforementioned trip would have run from May 18<sup>th</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup>. The trip promised to be valuable as students would have had the opportunity to choose specific areas in politics, art, social structure, religion, and history in an effort to examine the aspects of British leadership communication reflected in those fields. "We had some unique experiences planned," Dr. Garmon explained, "such as a private tour of Parliament with an interview with a sitting member of Parliament." The cancellation comes as a disappointment to Dr. Garmon who is no stranger to study abroad programs. "I have taken students to study abroad for nearly 40 years," she said, recalling trips to Spain, Mexico, England, France and Scotland.

Though the trip offered a short-

er stay compared to Study Abroad programs like Harlaxton and Semester at Sea, Dr. Garmon recognizes the value of shorter trips overseas. "The shorter visits are easier to schedule. Students and faculty are all very busy and a shorter trip can provide a great variety of experiences." Dr. Garmon also admits that shorter stays allow less time to become acclimated to the culture, which creates a need for strong programs. Though shorter trips abroad are cheaper, she does speculate that financial bur-



Dr. Cecile Garmon

dens led to the lack of participation in the program. On a positive note, Dr. Garmon thinks that in the spirit of becoming a university with international reach, the array of Study Abroad programs that WKU offers has increased competition between the programs themselves as they seek to recruit students.

Dr. Garmon has not relented on stressing the importance of study abroad programs, despite the cancellation. She believes that Communication majors specifically have more room to send their talents abroad than other disciplines and while the lessons they learn in the U.S. are valuable, actual cross cultural adventures abroad are vital. Dr. Garmon commented, "We can talk about it extensively in class, but there is no substitute for the actual experience." The setback has not put any damper on Dr. Garmon's yearning to travel, and while there are no Study Abroad programs on her agenda in the near future, she plans to go overseas very soon.

~ Jacob Franck, Student

## Communication Alumni Advisory Council



Doris Moody

For the past two years, the Communication Advisory Council has contributed significant insight and advice to the WKU Department of Communication. Thanks to the Council, classes have benefited from members' visits, the graduate program has been re-framed, and the "Executive in Residence" program has begun.

Led by President Doris Moody, the Council held its spring meeting on May 9, 2014. Topics included events held in

the department this spring, possible new members, and new graduate program certificates. The major discussion focused on a grant proposal coming out of the department. There will be more news on that topic as it develops.

The Council's next meeting will be on November 7, 2014.

~ Dr. Helen Sterk,  
Department Head

## Graduate Student Spotlight: Heidi Sisler

Heidi Sisler is a 26-year-old graduate student in the Department of Communication at WKU. Her whole family still resides in Des Moines, Iowa where she grew up.

Sisler graduated from the University of Iowa with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies as well as International Studies.

For Sisler, the main three reasons she chose WKU for her graduate studies were intriguing. First, the program was very affordable, especially since she has undergraduate loans to pay back. Second, she also was informed by many acquaintances about how excellent the program at WKU was. Lastly, she has family who are alumni of WKU.

Now in her second year, Sisler is a graduate teaching assistant and teaches two sections of Comm. 145, Public Speaking. When asked what she liked most about teaching, she had two reasons. First, she loves the interaction with students and instructors and getting to see the uniqueness of each person's character. Second, she works with mostly freshmen and sophomores in her introductory class, and she loves seeing them shape their own personal views on college. She also tries to positively

influence each and every student to the best of her ability. Sisler plans to get a Doctorate in Communication and would love to teach for the rest of her life.

For Sisler, balancing teaching with taking her own graduate classes is very difficult to do. It is not much



Heidi Sisler

the work load, but because it is fun for her to work with students and she finds herself in the mood to teach more than be a student herself. For her she has to plan when she is

going to do her teaching work and when she is going to complete her graduate work, and stick to it like glue.

Sisler's research interests center around the topic of gender communication, as well as anything to do with crisis communication. In the gender area, she wants to look at how gender affects everything, specifically the idea of gender portrayals, as well as how masculinity and femininity shapes the understanding of us and others in society. On the other hand, with crisis communication, she is interested in how ambiguity can be used to respond to crisis and how it can compound a crisis situation.

For anyone interested in the Communication graduate program, Sisler advises them to reach out to the department and talk to the professors already here. She says all Department of Communication instructors are warm and welcoming. Coming into this program, she says make sure that you are ready to do work, but if up for the challenge, then no program, especially on our campus, could match or give you more than the Department of Communication.

~ Jesse Arney, Student

# Undergraduate Profiles

## Paige Drazga: Small Town Girl with Big Time Success



**Drazga at the Conference USA Swimming Championship.**

*Photo taken by Andrea VanderMey*

The Department of Communication is proud to recognize the notable achievements of our student, Paige Drazga. Drazga is a twenty-year-old junior from South Lyon, Michigan. She is a Communication Studies major and also a proud three-year member of WKU's Division I Swimming and Diving team.

Drazga has had many accomplishments on The Hill so far and is hoping that in the future, experience in athletics and a Communication degree will help fulfill her professional goals. She is minoring in Marketing with an emphasis in Event Coordinating, and hopes to use her Communication degree in coordination with her minor to pursue a career in event management with a large company. Drazga has already noted the advantages she has experienced

through her studies in Communication, stating, "Studying Communication has already allowed me to communicate better with my teammates

**"I am able to more easily present and expose new ideas, and I am more comfortable and efficient when communicating with others."**

because I am able to more easily present and expose new ideas to my teammates and coaches, I have become a better public speaker, and I am more comfortable and efficient when communicating with others."

Drazga has been very successful in her first three seasons at WKU, and there are high expectations for her senior year. Associate Head Coach Brian Thomas said, "Paige played a major role in our victory at the Sunbelt Conference Championships last year. She is and has been a huge asset to our relays, and this season she beat all of her previous personal best times." Other notable accomplishments were breaking 23 seconds in the 50 freestyle event touching the wall at 22.9 seconds, qualifying for the NCAA National Invitational Tournament this year, being a member of WKU's Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), having top 5 times in Western Kentucky's Swimming all-time history, and being a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finisher in the 50 freestyle at the Conference Championships for the past two years.

Drazga is highly competitive and driven as both a student and an athlete. She acknowledges that being a student-athlete is very rewarding but also very challenging saying that "being a student-athlete teaches you to balance priorities and develop great time management skills. It has prepared me for the real world because I face challenges regularly that non-athletes do not ever experience. Also, I have met so many different people through swimming which has helped me prepare for a diverse workplace because I have experienced diversity and how to deal with people with different opinions, values, viewpoints and goals in a professional manner."

*~ Elyse Madigan, Student*

## Minh Dao: A Multicultural Muse on a Mission

For senior Minh Dao, the phrase, “A Leading American University with International Reach,” is more than just WKU’s mission statement; for her, it’s a way of life.

Coming from Danang, Vietnam in August 2011, Dao had her sights set on majoring in Communication Studies long before she made the travel abroad. “When I applied to study abroad at WKU, Gary Gunderson, former director of ESLI, told me that WKU has a very good Communication program and encouraged me to choose Communication as a major,” states Dao. From then on, the rest is history, and she now enjoys all of the simple luxuries of the department, such as the, “Great courses, nice faculty, wonderful student community, and excellent Study Abroad opportunities.”

Involved in the WKU Honors College, Golden Key Honors Society, Phi Kappa Phi, and Lambda Pi Eta, Dao stays occupied while on the road to graduating with a baccalaureate in Communication Studies, with a minor in Sociology. Most notable is her ability to tackle her scholastic endeavors and still make time to walk her furry companion Lucky around the dog park.

With plans to pursue a graduate degree in Organizational Communication, Organizational Behavior, or Human Resource Management, Dao seeks to become involved in a multinational organization, in a way mirroring her own journey through her college career. “Our cultural and life experiences have a significant influence on the way we communicate,” she says.

Dao’s journey here in the Department of Communication accentuates the holistic importance of communication in all aspects of life and also cultivates her desire to broaden her multicultural perspective. She truly epitomizes what it means to take the WKU experience beyond The Hill and out into the world. “I have been able to apply



Minh Dao

what I have studied in some personal and professional contexts. This is what I love about being a communication major -- you’ve got to practice what you learn every day!”

~ Angela Conway, Student

**“This is what I love about being a communication major—you’ve got to practice what you learn every day!”**



# LAMBDA PI ETA (ΛΠΗ)



**Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith—  
Faculty Advisor**

Lambda Pi Eta, the Department of Communication’s honors society, invites high achieving Communication scholars (3.25 or higher GPA) with a dedication to the Communication field to act as academic and professional leaders to the Department of Communication while also fostering working relationships with Communication faculty and students. This spring, Lambda Pi Eta inducted five new members at their annual Lambda Pi Eta induction ceremony. The new members include Diana Vela, Haley Miller, LeighAnn Rush, Michaela Ash, and Minh Dao. Also this spring, Lambda Pi Eta participated in several departmental events including a collaboration of efforts with Communication Ambassadors for a departmental bonfire and luncheon with visiting Communication scholars. Lambda Pi Eta is also proud to announce that after completing the application and interview process we will be awarded fund-

ing from the Student Government Association because of our contributions to the Department of Communication, WKU’s campus, the professional Bowling Green community, and Communication discipline.

This spring Lambda Pi Eta also bids farewell to nine outstanding scholars: Christina Abney, Elizabeth Dulaney, Emily Foust, Haley Henderson, Bethany Hughes, Chelsea Martin, Leigh Ann Rush and Rachel Sheldon. In keeping with the legacy of Lambda Pi Eta, these graduates have big plans for their futures.

Emily Foust graduated from the Honors program with a B.A. in Corporate and Organizational Communication. She plans to pursue a career in Public Relations.



**Front Row: Minh Dao, Natalie Gilliam, Haley Henderson, Bethany Hughes  
Back Row: Haley Miller, Emily Foust, Michaela Ash, Bruce Crawley, Diana Vela, Rachel Sheldon, Chelsea Martin, Mattie Russell**

Haley Henderson graduated with a B.A. in Corporate and Organizational Communication and a minor in Legal Studies. She will be attending law school at the University of Kentucky in the fall.

Chelsea Martin graduated with a B.S. in Chemistry, a B.A. in Communication Studies, and a minor in Meeting, Convention and Exposition



(Event) Planning. She will be attending the University of Alabama Graduate School, pursuing a M.A. in Communi-

cation Studies while working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant under Dr. Alexa Chilcutt. Upon her graduation from the program, she plans to start her career in academic advising and possibly teaching at a University, potentially considering administrative work.

Mattie Russell graduated with a B.A. in Corporate and Organizational Communication with minors in Mass Communication and Legal Studies. She will continue her time at Western Kentucky in the fall as a Graduate Assistant in the

department of Communication as she pursues her M.A. in Organizational Communication.

Rachel Sheldon graduated with a B.A. in Communication Studies with a minor in Psychology. She will be work-

ing as a photographer while finishing her certification in American Sign Language. She plans to attend graduate school in hopes of becoming a counselor.

Best wishes to all the graduating members of Lambda Pi Eta as they move forward in their educational and professional pursuits.

*~ Mattie Russell & Emily Foust,  
Students & LPH Officers*

## It Takes Two (Majors!)

As college students, we are all told to choose a major that will help us achieve our goals and/or career choices in life. We are told that there is a major out there for us; we just need to find it. However, what they sometimes do not say, is that often times, there can be more than one major that can get us to where we want to go.

WKU senior, Chelsea Martin, from Evansville, Indiana, is the perfect example. She will graduate in May with a double major in Chemistry and Communication Studies, and a minor in Meeting, Convention and Exposition Planning. When Martin began her college career in fall 2010, she had her eyes set on Medical School with a Bio-Chemistry major. After taking the Business and Professional Speaking course in her second semester, Martin quickly changed her choice of majors. Even though Communication Studies was not her first choice, she quickly realized how beneficial it could be. Martin says, "I saw the benefits of having two majors, one in the sciences and one in the arts, and just how supplemental it could be and has been!"

The information gained through Communication Studies courses can complement almost any degree on the WKU campus. In the modern day workforce, it is no longer about who has the highest GPA or the most ap-

pealing résumé. While those things are very important, Martin says, "being able to sit down in an interview and know how to connect with the person across the table, and talk about yourself in a persuasive and compelling nature, is what sets you apart from all the other candidates."

Making the decision to have a double major comes with obvious pros and cons, but with the help of great advisors and supportive faculty members, the transition can be made



Chelsea Martin

**"By excellent planning and keeping up with that plan, completing a double major isn't as terrifying as one may imagine."**

with ease. A double major including Communication may produce benefits beyond just a better job, promotion, etc. Martin explained that adding the second major of Communication Studies improved her ability to balance her course work, organize her schedule, and develop/

strengthen her critical and analytical skills.

No matter the area of study in which a college student finds themselves, there

are always more options available than may be on their radar. Advice from Martin would be to do your research! "There will always be that list of pros and cons, but by excellent planning and keeping up with that plan, completing a double major isn't as terrifying as one may imagine."

~ Stephanie Beauchamp, Student



# Alumni Focus

## Alumni Focus: Jessica Paulsen Hellams



Jessica Paulsen Hellams

“I thought I would be in the corporate world after school” is what WKU department of Communication alumni Jessica Paulsen Hellams envisioned. Hellams, originally from Calhoun, KY, finished her undergrad studies in 2011 with a major in Corporate and Organizational Communication and a master’s in Communication in 2013. The graduate program is where she got her “feet wet” with teaching. “I decided to do Teach for America after teaching during my graduate assistantship in the Department of Communication,” she explained. Hellams found out about Teach for America through an online job search and became interested in the program because of her passion to help underprivileged kids who did not have a quality education. Teach for America is Hellams’ first full time

build relationships with them in hopes of making an impact on their lives.

Hellams explained that teaching is more than an 8-4 job; she is always grading papers, lesson planning, and thinking of better ways to reach her kids, after school hours. Hellams explains that her work /life balance had to be prioritized because at the beginning her passion had her spending every free moment working on school because there is always something to do. Teach for America places teachers in low-income areas which correlate with not so good home lives for her students. The drawback she has experienced is trying to keep emotions from coming home with her after hours. For example, Hellams feared that some of her kids may

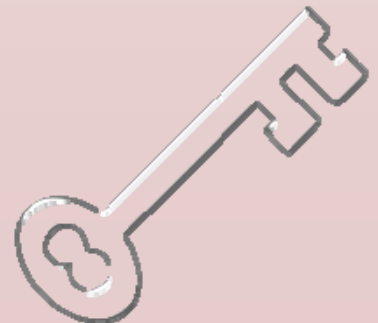
job post college, and she now resides in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. She enjoys working with her kids and says that every day is different. Her kids are so positive and have big personalities, which makes it great to

not have heat for the winter or dinner when they got home from school.

Hellams has learned a lot about herself since becoming a teacher; persevering and determination are just a few attributes that she has added to her professional career and life. She has gained appreciation for the hard work it takes to raise children and also believes that this experience will help shape the way she raises her kids. Hellams teaches math but her Communication major plays a major role in her class room. “I have to be able to communicate clearly how to solve problems,” she explained. She has also determined how to present new material using effective communication in her classes. “Math concepts were virtually foreign to me before this year, so I use my degree everyday to teach my kids effectively,” she said.

Hellams has dedicated two years to the Teach for America Program but plans on entering the corporate sector after her time is complete. Whether she is in a classroom or a board room, Hellams will undoubtedly put her Communication training to good use.

~ Kyle Talavera, Student



## Rachel Walston Teaches Online Classes



Rachel Walston and Big Red

Rachel Walston, is an instructor at Western Kentucky University and currently teaches online Communication 145, also known as Public Speaking, as a dual credit course. Since she took online classes in her graduate program, she believes her online experience has provided great insight for her own online teaching.

Ms. Walston sees benefits for students who are considering or taking online Communication 145, including lower anxiety about presenting a speech in front of their peers online instead of in the classroom. For example, students record themselves presenting their speeches and upload them on to Black Board allowing their classmates to watch and provide feedback. Also, an online class provides students flexibility with their other classes and allows them enough time to complete their work. Unfortunately, there is one disadvantage Ms. Walston admits, "Communication is

lost through email." She explained that email is the only student-teacher communication, and it is not very effective because she finds

**"Being a great communicator is key to being successful when participating in an online class."**

it difficult to respond back to everyone in a reasonable time.

As far as seeing improvement in tests and homework scores, Ms. Walston confirms that her online class scored higher on their exams than her face-to-face class and that the participation on the discussion

boards was very high and extremely insightful. She surmises that students in face-to-face classes wouldn't read the required material because they thought she would guide the class through the reading or one of the student's peers would take control of the discussion. She believed by teaching Communication 145 online, it forced the students to read and keep up with their own course material.

In conclusion, when Ms. Walston was asked about what qualities would allow a student to be successful in an online class, she stated, "The first would be self-motivation because it is easier to procrastinate when taking an online class. Secondly, being able to think creatively and critically. Thirdly, having the students being able to apply what they learned to their lives. Lastly, being a great communicator is key to being successful when participating in an online class." The advice she provided will not only have an impact on students who want to take online classes, but for students who want to make the most out of their college career.

~ Taylor Graham, Student





# Staff Profile: Laura Wagoner

Ms. Laura Wagoner is currently a resident in Russellville, Kentucky. Ms. Wagoner has been working for Western Kentucky University for nine years as an office associate. She divides her time between the Department of Communication and the Department of English. Ms. Wagoner stated, "My favorite part of working here is the students; I love to get to know them all. I like that I have the opportunity to get to know the students individually." Ms. Wagoner is currently finishing her degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, with only three classes remaining. When discussing classes she said, "My favorite class thus far was Floral Design. It challenged my creativity."

In the office, Ms. Wagoner is in charge of the Department of Communication's webpage ([www.wku.edu/communication](http://www.wku.edu/communication)) and manages university events in which the Department of Communication participates, such as: homecoming, the annual bonfire, visiting scholars, dinners, and faculty picnics. Ms. Wagoner also manages, along with student worker Callie Allison, the Pinterest and Facebook accounts (WKU Department of Communication), the blog for the Department of Communication ([www.wkucommdept.wordpress.com](http://www.wkucommdept.wordpress.com)), which is also connected to twitter and the YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/wkudeptofcommunication](http://www.youtube.com/wkudeptofcommunication)).

Ms. Wagoner takes charge of all WKU Department of Communication's design work. This includes the posters and fliers for events. Department Head, Dr. Helen Sterk exclaims that, "Ms. Wagoner has grown in her skills as a visual designer. I love how

enthusiastic she is when she has the opportunity to try new things visually within the department. I believe her marketing skills are very important to us."

When Ms. Wagoner is not in the office, she enjoys reading, making jewelry and crocheting as well as attending yard sales and strolling through flea markets with her husband. Before Ms. Wagoner came to



Laura Wagoner

Sportswear, Sales, and Children's Marketing. When asked if there was anything that she could change, Ms. Wagoner responded with, "I believe everything works out like it is supposed to, and it is just a matter of

keeping a positive attitude no matter what. Therefore, make the most of any situation that comes along, and be happy in what you do and the people you come into contact with."

**"Make the most of any situation that comes along, and be happy in what you do and the people you come into contact with."**

WKU, she worked at Emerson Electric in the Quality Assurance Department, where she learned how to update web page information. Before that, she worked at Fruit of the Loom in several departments: Human Resources, Wilson

Ms. Wagoner is truly a gem to have in Western Kentucky University's Department of Communication.

~ Katelyn McDonald, Student

# Events

## Executive in Residence: Kari Warberg Block



February 10, 2014

Below: John Lyne presenting certificates to winners

Right: Judging final round—Drs. Helen Sterk, Blair Thompson, Larry Winn, David Lee, & John Lyne



## 2014 John Lyne Speech Contest

May 10, 2014

## Student Recognition Dinner



May 1, 2014

# Alumni Updates

**Jenny Corum Billman, M.A. Communication, 2007**—Jenny is currently an English Instructor at Southeastern Illinois College in Evansville, Indiana.

**Jordan Boggs, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2013**—Jordan is the Community Outreach Coordinator at Lost River Cave in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

**Jared Bolton, BA. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2005**—Jared works at MKD International, Inc. as a Marketing and Research and Development Coordinator in the Nashville, Tennessee area.

**Kathryn “Katie” Breiwa, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2005** - Katie is now the executive director of AmeriGOP (Americans for Growth, Opportunity and Prosperity), a northern Kentucky-based super PAC. She has previously served as Mitt Romney’s deputy director of external relations and as a regional field director for the Republican Party of Kentucky.

**Stefanie Lutz, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2013**—Stefanie is working as a part-time Sports Agent for Olympic athletes. She has been serving on the

Olympic Committee, and helps negotiate and administer marketing and endorsement contracts, set strategy for career and post-career goals.

**Katherine Meredith, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2013**—Katherine is currently an Admissions Officer at Sullivan University in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Allie McClure, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2009**—Allie currently works in accounts receivables, collections and administration at Fayette Heating & Air.

**Mary Phoenix McCubbin, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2007**—Mary is on the Junior Achievement Board of Directors, as well as an event planner in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

**Lauren Nelson, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2010**—Lauren is working as the Communication Manager at New Home Star in Chicago, Illinois.

**Emily Oestringer, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2013**—Emily is currently a territory consultant at Jefferson National in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Lindsey O’Neil, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2012**—Lindsey is currently a Professional Recruiter at Tech USA in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Wes Orange, B.P. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2011**—Wes is working as a territorial sales representative for Key Oil Company.

**Michelle Passi, B.A. Corporation & Organizational Communication, 2013**—Michelle is working as an event manager for the Lexington Convention Center / Rupp Arena in Lexington, Kentucky. She also serves as the liaison between the different departments at the convention center and the clients.

**Madalyn Wilbanks, B.A. Communication Studies, 2014**—Madalyn is currently the Partnership Program Director at Songs Against Slavery.

**Dustin Wood, B.A. Communication Studies, 2007**—Dustin recently graduated from Texas A&M with a doctorate degree in Communication. He has accepted a position as Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Let us know what you are doing.  
We would love to hear from you, too!

Send news to Laura Wagoner at [laura.wagoner@wku.edu](mailto:laura.wagoner@wku.edu)



Callie Allison



Michaela Ash



Rachel Cato

# Spring 2014 Student Workers



Meredith  
Coomes



Katelyn Lockett



Cody Whitlock



# Thank you!

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Department of  
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We're on the Web!  
[www.wku.edu/communication](http://www.wku.edu/communication)



For information on giving to the  
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[wku.edu/campaign/how.html](http://wku.edu/campaign/how.html)



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