



COMMUNIQUE

Spring, 2015

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Department Hammers Out the 2020 Action Plan

In January, all full-time faculty members and office staff attended a two-day strategic planning session with Dr. Larry Long, Dean Emeritus of the School of Communication, Illinois State University. During this time, focused discussion occurred on four topics: academic excellence, diversity, community engagement, and infrastructure. Department of Communication professionals split into four groups discussing many



different topics. These were generally things the department felt they should be

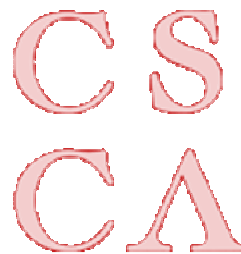
working on and developing.

Department of Communication, Dr. Helen Sterk states that after the massive brainstorm, “the topics were winnowed down from many to just a few.” Under each of the four goals, there are now action steps as the strategic plan begin to take on life. Clearly defined directives accomplish the goal of each particular mean. Successfully ac-

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Department of Communication Faculty and Student Success at CSCA

The Department of Communication is known for accomplishments such as the successful students it produces, the passionate faculty members and the many honors those within the department receive. Students and faculty within the Department of Communication are involved in many extracurricular activities and organizations, as well as playing significant roles within these.



For example, there are several professors and students within the department who are members of the Central States Communication Association (CSCA). CSCA is a professional and academic association dedicated to promoting the disci-

pline of Communication in education, scholarly and professional endeavors. Members of CSCA consist of students, primary and secondary teachers, professors and Communication professionals.

During this year’s CSCA conference, Dr. Blair Thompson officially became the Second Vice President, which will make him responsible for organizing the preconference for 2016. He will go on to organize the whole CSCA conference the following year, which will be in Minneapolis. He has been attending the CSCA conference for eight years, and considers it one of his favorite conventions.

- Cont'd on page 2



2020 Action Plan ... *cont'd*

completed means produce the success of the strategic action.

The strategic plan was prompted by our department's Advisory council. As the newly developed plan was presented to the council, they praised the plan as professional and focused. Dr. Sterk thinks the plan will make a solid difference in the department.

The following summarizes the strategic actions to be taken.

Strategic Action 1: Foster Academic Excellence

This includes the means of improving the balance of skill and theory, offering more collaborative learning opportunities, as well as improving Honors Curriculum.

Strategic Action 2: Promote a dynamic & diverse university community

The Department will reach out to Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion to aid in better understanding and crafting a definition of a dynamic and diverse university community. Once the definition is set, a plan will be laid in place.

Strategic Action 3: Improve quality of life for our communities

This particular action refers to the increased understanding of community needs, then meeting needs that can be set as realistic goals through researching many different sources in our local area.

Strategic Action 4: Support the core mission with a robust campus infrastructure

This action focuses on generating sources of revenue from external, University, PCAL and Department sources.

WKU's Department of Communication is a highly respected and accomplished powerhouse, with faculty earning prestig-



ious awards for top papers and research efforts. Have no doubt, once our department implements and executes the structured action plan, the results will demand attention within academia.

Specifics of the plan can be obtained through the Department of Communication Office located in the Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center, Room 130.

~Jeremy Cowles, Student

Faculty and Student Success ... *cont'd*



Dr. Blair Thompson selected as the Second Vice-President of CSCA

Dr. Thompson also submitted a paper that he and Joseph Mazer, Clemson University, collaborated on and called 'The changing nature of parent-teacher communication: Mode selection in the smartphone era.' This paper won the honor of Top Paper in the Communication Education Interest Group. Although Dr. Thompson has won various Top Paper Panels, this was his first year winning Top Paper.

Dr. Jerome is also a member of CSCA and attended the conference this year as well. Her paper 'Employing charges of absurdity and ridicule to compel change: The case of the NCAA's losing hand' won the Karlyn Kohrs Campbell Top Paper Award for the Rhetorical Theory and Criticism Interest Group. She also served as the

Chair of Public Relations of the interest group.

Dr. Jerome and Dr. Thompson also participated in other panels throughout the weekend conference.

Dr. Kong with Ms. Minh Dao, (who is a recent graduate in the Department of Communication), were chosen for Top Paper Panel for Intercultural Communication Interest Group. Top Paper Panel means they placed in the top four for the interest group. Ms. Minh Dao and Dr. Kong's paper 'Assessing student convergence with internationalization: The case of Western Kentucky University' researched and analyzed

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Faculty and Student Success ... *cont'd*

the university's approach to integrating internationalization efforts and its success with international students.

Winning Top Paper and Top Paper Panel are achievements on

their own, but they also included a monetary award as well as the opportunity to discuss their key findings and research at specific panels during the conference.

It is wonderful to see the successes that come from within the department. Congratulations to Dr. Thompson, Dr. Jerome, Dr. Kong & Minh Dao!

~Ashley Henderson, Student

Message from Helen Sterk, Department Head



Dr. Helen Sterk

As you can see from the newsletter, we've been at work this year refining our sense of identity and purpose as a department. In January, before the second semester began, all of the full-time faculty and office staff members worked for two days with Dr. Larry Long, former Dean of the School of Communication at Illinois State University, developing our strategic plan for the future.

Recognizing organizational context as crucial to success, the department's plan lines up with Western Kentucky University's 'Challenging the Spirit' plan's four major strategic goals: to foster academic excellence, to promote a dynamic and diverse university community, to improve the quality of life for our communities

and to support the core mission with a robust campus infrastructure.

So what does that mean for the department? The short form answers are:

First: We will increase our academic excellence by developing course assignments that craft an ongoing balance of theory and practice, so student skills are grounded in understanding. The 'how' of communication always needs to be built on the 'why.'

Further, we will develop learning that crosses courses, so that what is begun in one is picked up in another. And we will support our honors students through regular honors offerings, enthusiastic mentoring of theses, and encouraging JUMP (Joint Undergraduate Master's Program) enrollments.

Second: We will promote a dynamic and diverse university community by putting key department people in connection with university resource persons on diversity to determine opportunities. We will gather information on how well we have been doing in keeping diversity alive and well in our programs. And we will develop an action plan for the department that shows we value all human beings.

Third: We will improve the quality of life for our communities. In order to improve the quality of life for our part of the world, we need to know what is needed and what we have to offer to fulfill those needs. So, first, we'll research both for-profit and non-profit organizations in our communities, and then, we'll tailor and market more strategically our program internships, certificates, online offerings, and faculty consultant expertise.

Fourth: We will support the core mission of our department and university with a robust infrastructure. In order to supplement the course work offered through the department, we will develop attractive classrooms, a well-staffed Communication Success Center, and faculty offices conducive to meeting with students and conducting collegial conversations. In order to supplement the work of the university, we will develop a QEP-based proposal for an argument and evidence oral communication lab and a Social Media Analytics Command Center.

Stay tuned for reports on how we do on each of these goals. Some will be completed this year and some may take up to five years, but all will be on our agenda.



Communication Ambassadors — Liaisons and “Rock Stars”

“As Communication Ambassadors, we pledge to always represent the department with dignity and grace; to diligently promote its efforts and accomplishments; and recruit qualified students to both the Corporate and Organizational Communication and Communication Studies majors.” This Mission Statement exemplifies the Communication Ambassadors (CA) program at Western Kentucky University (WKU) very well. The Communication Ambassadors program began in 2003 by Dr. Carl Kell and Dr. Sally Ray. The program was started because these faculty members wanted to develop a student organization where members serve as spokespersons for the Department of Communication. Communication Ambassadors are essentially the ‘face’ of the department for potential, new, and current students.

Communication Ambassadors meet on a monthly basis and use the meetings as times to update themselves on the events going on throughout the department. A typical meeting for the Communication Ambassadors consists of signing up for events and discussing new ways that the Ambassadors can help recruit more students for the Department of Communication. The Ambassadors attend recruitment events throughout the state to speak on behalf of the Department and to recruit potential students.

Dr. Helen Sterk, Head of the Department of Communication, describes the Communication Ambassadors as “dynamic.” Dr. Sterk states,

“I love the Ambassadors' commitment to the Department of Communication. They build the department's culture through recruiting and hosting potential students, informally advising current students, holding the annual bonfire, and sponsoring ReVerb events. As a department, we know we can rely on the Communication Ambassadors.” The Communication Ambassadors truly know how to give back to the Department of Communication.

Ms. Karen Powell, a current Com-

the word “community” to describe the program. Chelsea joined the program during her sophomore year at WKU and says that the CA Program taught her how to network, and to “always be looking for ways to connect with more people.”

Ms. Charlotte Elder is the faculty advisor for the Communication Ambassadors. She describes the Ambassadors as “her rock stars.” In order for a student to be a Communication Ambassador, a professor must nominate



Michaela Ash, Sarah Beach, Abby Boyd, Olivia Sharp, Emily Gerard, Diana Vela, Maggie Shelton, Karen Powell, Ashley Vahrenhold

munication Ambassador, describes the group as “passionate.” Karen’s favorite part about the program is “the relationships I have been able to build. I have met some of the most unique, inspirational people through this program, who have turned into some of my best friends. I feel I am pushed to be better because I know how important it is to represent such a fantastic department and these fantastic people well.” Ms. Chelsea Martin, Communication Ambassador alumna, uses

and recommend them. Once a faculty member nominates a student, the department evaluates the student's involvement, grades, etc. and extends offers to 20 students per year. If a student is interested in serving as an Ambassador, they are encouraged to speak with a Communication faculty member and ask him or her to recommend them to Ms. Elder by email at: Charlotte.Elder@WKU.edu.

~ Diana Vela, Student

Forensic Team Owns the Competition

Western Kentucky University prides itself in its longstanding traditions. One of the longest traditions is Forensics, which is a form of competitive speech and debate. The Forensics Team, formed in 1919, is the oldest and most successful student run organization on campus. The competitive atmosphere of Forensics gives students the opportunity to gain confidence and effective communication skills. With these skills in tow, they have won more national forensics titles in the last ten years than any other team in the United States.

In 2013-14, they won the “American Forensic Association” national title, “NFA debate” national title, and the “International Forensic Association” title all in the same year. Most recently, the Forensics Team won their final national tournament, the National Forensic Association National Speech and Debate Tournament, on April 16-20, 2015 at Ohio

University in Athens, Ohio. Additionally, the WKU Forensics Team won its ninth AFA (American Foren-



Photographed (left to right): Justin Rodriguez, Elle Pratt
Photograph by: Sur La Lune Photography
Description: Western Kentucky University’s Annual Forensic Showcase

sics Association) National Individual Events Tournament, hosted by Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon on April 3-6, 2015.

Ms. Emma Collins, a forensic student and Corporate & Organizational Communication major, who recently competed at the National level, got involved with the Department of Communication when her Forensics’ coach encouraged her to read a communication textbook *A first look at*

communication theory written by Em Griffin, 2011, which simultaneously helped her with impromptu speaking and sparked her love for Communication theories. Ms. Collins goes on to say Forensics teaches students to do research, write, and deliver vital messages. Additionally, students stay updated on current events; and they are constantly being exposed to a wide array of both fiction and non-fiction literature. One of Ms. Collins

favorite Communication courses is Interpersonal Communication. She jokingly says this is her favorite because “being a part of a team of 45 you have to deal with a lot of interpersonal relationships.” Ms. Collins hopes for the Department of Communication is to get students and faculty to their yearly showcase: offer extra credit, tell students to attend in order to make it a memorable event.

~ Krystal Onyekwulije , Student

Get a “JUMP” on Your Master’s Degree in Organizational Communication

Hilltopper Nation! Are you interested in completing your Master’s Degree? If so, what if you could currently complete your bachelor’s and master’s degrees in just five years? Got your attention yet? Good! The Department of Communica-

tion offers a Joint Undergraduate-Master’s Degree Program in Organizational Communication, better known as the JUMP program. Students who are enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies or Corporate and Organizational

Communication program, having completed of at least 60 hours and no more than 96 hours, and having a cumulative GPA of 3.50, are eligible for this program. If you’re a Hilltopper who meets these criteria, you will be

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Get a "JUMP"... *cont'd*

notified by an advisor or professor that you are eligible to get a JUMP on your master's degree

After being notified that you are eligible for participating in the JUMP program the next step is to meet with Dr. Angie Jerome

(Director of the Communication Master's program) to develop a specific program of study that best fits you. You will also sign a Statement of Intent with the Department of Communication.

Once enrolled the JUMP program students must maintain a 3.0 GPA in all graduate coursework. Additionally, students must maintain a 3.25 GPA in their undergraduate Communication coursework to remain in good standing.

Students may apply the following courses to both their undergraduate and graduate degrees with no more than 12 hours counting toward both:

- ◆ COMM 523 Health Communication
- ◆ COMM 526 Family Communication
- ◆ COMM 544 Persuasive Communication
- ◆ COMM 546 Processes of

Group Communication

- ◆ COMM 547 Organizational Communication Theory
- ◆ COMM 571 Organizational Communication in the Digital Age
- ◆ COMM 578 Seminar in Interpersonal Communication

- ◆ COMM 587 Communication in Intercultural Negotiation and Mediation

Even though the JUMP program is new to WKU campus, the good news is spreading quickly. The first two students to enroll in the Communication JUMP program were Michaela Ash and Maggie Shelton. One of JUMP's students, Maggie Shelton, states, "I love the JUMP program

because it gives me the opportunity to begin to pursue my career while I am still in college. Not only is it financially

She also mentioned that by enrolling in classes through the JUMP Program you are in smaller classes which allow more discussions and interactions with fellow classmates and a personal relationship with professors.



Maggie Shelton



Michaela Ash



Dr. Angela Jerome

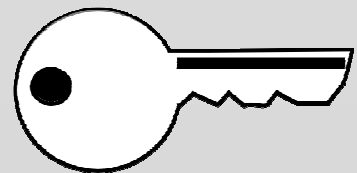


Mr. Bruce Crawley

If you are interested in graduating with your master's degree in Organizational Communication through a five year plan, the JUMP program is perfect for you. For further information contact Mr. Bruce Crawley or Dr. Angela Jerome to have your questions answered or to express your interest in joining the JUMP program.

~Meredith Chinn, Student

beneficial, but it keeps me on track to complete a Master's degree by May of 2017. In addition, it has given me the opportunity to interact with grad students who have had work experience."



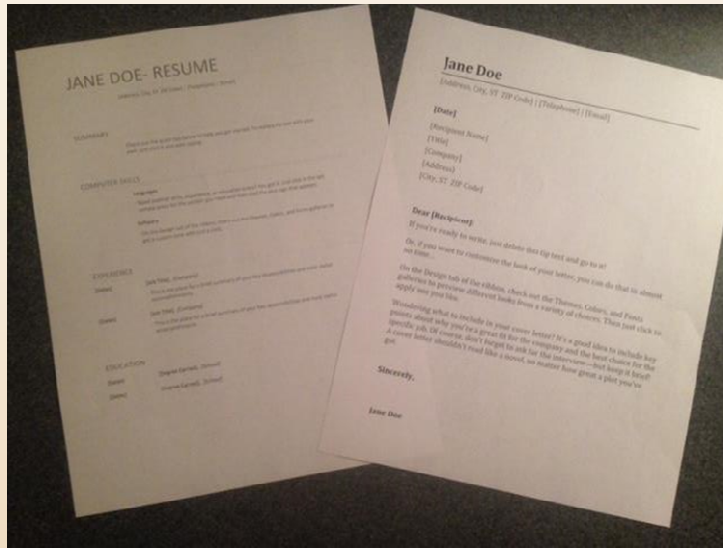
Cool Internships

Corporate & Organizational Communication majors are required to do an internship in order to graduate. This article will guide you toward a cool internship.

Organizations sometimes don't list whether they have openings for internships, so don't be afraid to get in contact with someone in charge. When I started to look for my internship for summer year, I had to email, call, and check with all the organizations I applied to. I will be giving you some organizations to take a look at that are offering internships. Here are some great opportunities for students who are still looking for an internship:

The first one is the Evansville Museum, in Evansville, Indiana, for either Marketing or Communication majors. Current juniors or seniors, graduate students and recent graduates can be considered. Primarily, the Marketing and Communication Intern will assist in publicity and marketing efforts for exhibitions, public events, education initiatives and general Museum news. From media research and outreach to creating press materials and overseeing their distribution, as an intern you will learn how the department functions within a not-for-profit arts organization, and how press stories are handled from the idea stage to publication. Another key component will be working with digital media and the museum's own online face – web site, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. You will work closely with the Director of Membership & Marketing and will

leave the museum with an understanding not only of the PR and Marketing field, but also insight into the mechanics of a museum. For more information on this opportunity, visit <http://www.emuseum.org/internships>.



If interested, send or drop off your resume at the museum: 411 SE Riverside Dr., Evansville, IN 47713.

The second opportunity is with the American Heart Association, located in Louisville, Kentucky, as a special events Intern for their Heart Ball. The American Heart Association is seeking an intern to assist with fund raising and special events. You must be a college student currently enrolled in classes (preferably on a full-time basis) who is organized and detail-oriented. The intern should have an academic major in writing, English, communication or public relations, previous fund raising experience, with a desire to work in a non-profit setting with a specific focus on event implementation. Interns are considered an integral part of the team and, as such, his or her ideas and input will be welcomed. The anticipated time frame is for summer 2015 or 2016. You will be work 10-20 hours per week. The

job requirements are to have a professional demeanor, strong writing skills, strong telephone skills/etiquette; the ability to manage multiple projects and meet tight deadlines; proficient in

Microsoft Office programs; the ability to work independently with little direction, comfortable working with a variety of people including volunteers, vendors, and donors; willingness to provide a background check and driving record. Your job duties will consist of reporting to the Louisville Heart Ball Director and Administrative Associate; assisting with writing, editing and proofreading; assisting with mailings through

management of database, printing labels, assembling packets, etc.; making calls to solicit donations or items needed; and assisting with event logistics and planning. You can locate this internship at https://www.internmatch.com/internships/american-heart-association--29/special-events-intern-heart-ball?show_location=302412.

These are both great opportunities for Communication majors. Internships are hard to find if you are not willing to search for what you really want. See internship director, Dr. Mize Smith, or the WKU Center for Career & Professional Development. Both are very helpful with finding you an internship and looking over your resume and cover letter. Don't be afraid to travel and move around in order to find the internship you really want.

~ Katie Robison, Student

Tips for soon-to-be Graduates



Ms. Chelsea Martin

Are you a soon-to-be graduate? Do you have any questions you would like to ask a recent graduate?

Ms. Chelsea Martin, a recent graduate from the Department of Communication in Western Kentucky University (WKU), gave some advice for those soon-to-be graduates have about the "real world" that is ahead of them.

Ms. Martin graduated from Western Kentucky University with double majors in May of 2014: a Bachelors of Arts in Communication Studies and a Bachelors of Science in Chemistry. She currently is pursuing her Master's in Communication Studies at the University of Alabama. As a graduate teaching assistant she instructs 2-3 labs per semester of COM123 (Public Speaking) per semester. In the lab, she is able to work closely with students, who go to a weekly mass lecture twice a week.

Ms. Martin exclaims proudly, "It has been an incredibly rewarding experience!"

Ms. Martin was able to take a look back in the past and give some very useful advice to the soon-to-be graduates. She originally did not know how to manage her time very well. But after being involved in multiple student organizations such as Sigma Kappa and the Ogden Ambassador program, she was able to learn how to manage her time wisely. Being able to manage her time well, is very beneficial with the crazy graduate school schedule.

Ms. Martin's biggest piece of advice for those soon-to-be graduates is to take advantage of your sleep! Although you may feel like an old man/woman, going to bed early is a lifesaver. If you do not set a particular sleep schedule right after graduation, then you are going to suffer when you have to wake up early. Also, she stressed that showing up for work is very important! You are only allotted so many sick/personal days in a "real world" job like a graduate assistant. She explains, "Being tired and unmotivated does not quite send the right message to your superiors/supervisors and skipping class isn't acceptable for instructor."

Ms. Martin even gave us an outside source with some advice. *The New York Times* reported on February of 2008, on the "impostor syndrome." This is considered the feeling of "inadequacy"/"inability" and "self-doubt" to do the new tasks set in front of you. It is very hard to overcome but, her advice is this: "If you're hired for a job or accepted for a graduate program, chances are, you're there for a reason

and they WANT you to be there. You just have to trust that and believe in your skill set as well as your abilities. It'll pass, and finding people in the same situation with you (being the "new" person) can help tremendously!"

Finally, Ms. Martin leaves us undergraduate students with these words of wisdom. "Apply for something if you think it is interesting. You may be the only one and be a shoo-in, or you may get rejected. Don't be afraid of someone telling you that others are more qualified than you are."

~ Ashley Vabrenbold, Student



Diana Vela Leads at WKU



Ms. Diana Vela

Graduating senior Diana Vela majored in Corporate and Organizational minored in Exposition Planning. But that only scratches the surface of Ms. Vela's accomplishments.

Ms. Vela is a Communication Ambassador, a member of Lambda Pi Eta, and the Employer Relation's Intern at the Center for Career and Professional Development. She has completed Phase One and Two of the Dynamic Leadership Institute and has held several positions within her sorority, Sigma Kappa. She has also served in several other intern positions both in Bowling Green and her hometown, Louisville. Ms. Vela stated "I think its important for students to get involved in internships while attending WKU because life after graduation depends on the networking you did while in college. A lot of successful people received their first job because of an internship that they had or an organization that they were a part of. Being involved also allows students to apply the skills that they learn inside the classroom to real-life, professional, situations."

Ms. Vela has also been active in the community through volunteer work. This includes participating in the Alzheimer's Walk every year while at WKU, as well as being involved with other activities such as Up 'Til 'Dawn. Up 'Til' Dawn is an event held annually at WKU that raises money for St. Jude Children's Hospital. At this event students stay up all night and participate in fun activities such as dance offs and friendly competitions.

~ Sarah Powers, Student

Student Athlete Spotlight

WKU senior Ms. Paige Drazga is finishing a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies and minors in Marketing as well as Media & Convention Management. She is not a typical student. She has been swimming for WKU since August of 2011. She competes in the 50 freestyle, 100 freestyle, and 100 butterfly; but her favorite is the 50 freestyle because it is the shortest.

Born and raised in South Lyon, Michigan, Ms. Drazga has one brother. She started swimming competitively when she was only 7 years old. Ms. Drazga continued swimming during middle school and high school, and continued to excel in and outside of the pool.

Like many, when it was time to declare a major Ms. Drazga wasn't quite sure about her career plans. So



Ms. Paige Drazga

she decided she would major in Communication Studies because she would enjoy interacting with people.

In addition, this major pairs well with minors in Marketing and Media & Convention Management. When I asked Paige if she felt her major in the Department of Communication affected her as a swimmer she was quick to say yes. She continued, "I feel it impacts my everyday life, because what I learn helps me to understand how and why people communicate with each other, and with me."

Ms. Drazga's plan, after graduation, is to become an event planner for either a corporation like Speedo, Under Armor or Nike; or a specific event planning company; her dream company would be Total Event Productions in Atlanta, GA.

~ Kimberly Hampton, Student

Christina Abney Puts Skill to Work



Ms. Christina Abney

The Department of Communication gives graduates the power to succeed and prosper while working any career. Ms. Christina Abney is an alumnus of Western Kentucky University who graduated in May 2014. She double majored in Corporate and Organizational Communication and Spanish. Currently she is working as the Account Development Manager for Pretty Incredible Communications in Jeffersonville, Indiana. She absolutely loves every minute of it.

Maintaining and growing assigned accounts through customer service and project coordination encourages the fulfillment of tasks. Christina has been trained at her job and has accomplished so much in just a few short months, and she repeatedly says how the Department of Communication has helped her excel to where she currently is in her career and in her life.

Ms. Abney believes every individual should master communication skills in the interpersonal, group, organizational, and public settings, which is exactly what her professors in the Department of Communication taught her. She communicates efficiently and effectively in a team-based setting in order to work hands on in any situation, while also forming great personal and professional relationships along the way. By working closely with her manager, she grows sales of existing accounts, while her manager pursues new accounts for the future. This provides her with the guidance to excel, while also developing re-

spectful relationships built on trust, teamwork, and leadership. Ms. Abney is a wonderful advocate for the Department of Communication who strongly believes communication positively enhances and develops every individual.

Ms. Abney believes communication is the foundation for any job. She has to be able to sell both her company and herself in order to succeed when interacting with all assigned accounts. She uses her knowledge of all forms of communication through face-to-face, email, and phone conversations with clients. Learning how to communicate in multiple ways and with various types of individuals while in college has shaped her into the strong, independent communicator she is now. Christina believes she is an integral part in the ongoing development at Pretty Incredible Communications, which makes her feel that she is making a difference.

~Shelby Nitzken, Student

Dr. Mize Smith's Fall 2014 Sabbatical

Dr. Mize Smith, Associate Professor in the Department of Communication, took a sabbatical in the fall semester to work on research. With lots of extra time to work, Mize Smith completed a variety of tasks. Dr. Mize Smith appreciated the sabbatical for uninterrupted time to collect data and will finish writing the projects while teaching classes in a regular and during the summer.

First on the to-do list for Dr. Mize Smith was finishing writing, compiling and editing a book with co-editor Dr. Michael Kramer at the University of Oklahoma. The book, *Case Studies of Nonprofit Organizations and Volunteers*, is being published by Peter Lang Publishing and will likely be published in

time for Fall 2015 classes.

Dr. Mize Smith's next project was to collect new data for upcoming research projects. Although she initially had a different plan for research, last February when the sinkhole emerged at the Corvette Museum, she realized this chance occurrence offered an amazing opportunity for study. Dr. Mize Smith will use the data to explore into non-profit organizations, leadership, and crisis communication. She spent the summer and fall attending events and conducting interviews at the Corvette Museum. Dr. Mize Smith hopes to use this new data to publish two or three different research papers.



Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith

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Sabbatical ... *cont'd*

Dr. Mize Smith's final sabbatical project was finishing a variety of research she had in the works. She submitted five manuscripts to journals that are now under review for publication. Though she missed seeing faculty and students in the Department of

Communication every day, she loved the experience of focusing more on the research aspect of her job. Further, her sabbatical work was also beneficial to students and the department as a whole. Two of the projects Dr. Mize Smith finished

were with former students. Her published work not only features Dr. Mize Smith's name, but the university she represents.

~ Emma Collins, Student

Transitional Retirement: The Dr. B Story

What does the "Key to Success" mean to you? For many of us in the Department of Communication, the answer is simple: communication. Communication is key, hence the symbol of a key for the Department of Communication. While a degree in Communication is our key to success, it would be unattainable without the help of such a phenomenal teaching staff. I cannot think of a more exemplary professor than Dr. Ellen W. Bonaguro.

If you have ever taken one of Dr. Bonaguro (or Dr. B's) classes, then you know just how passionate and enthusiastic she is about communication. However, before getting her Ph. D. in Communication, Dr. B. earned her undergraduate degree in Biology from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, and a Master's degree in School and Community Health Education from the University of Oregon in Eugene. She then went on to attend Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, and earned her Ph. D. in Interpersonal Communication with an emphasis in health care.

In an interview, Dr. B. said "I became interested in communication as I was witnessing so many issues with patients communicating with health care providers." It is for this reason that Dr. Bonaguro has a true passion for Health Communication. Dr. B also feels that Health Communication will continue to grow as an area of study in the Communication discipline.

Dr. Bonaguro has been teaching for thirty-two years, and continues to love every single minute of it. Starting in January of 2015, Dr. B



Dr. Ellen Bonaguro

went into transitional retirement. Although she is not fully retiring, she is not fully teaching either. Dr. B's transitional retirement allows her to have the best of both. She now enjoys having more time to spend with friends and family. She is also an avid gardener and walker, and she loves to travel. In addition to enjoying her free time, Dr. B also finds that she has more time to spend on her students. She told me that she is "able to provide even more feed-

back to improve their understanding of the subject matter and their writing." Teaching is something that she will never stop loving.

For the next five years, Dr. Bonaguro will continue to teach two online courses per semester for the Department of Communication, with the hopes that one of them will always be Health Communication. When you find something you are passionate about, it is really hard to stop. More than her love for teaching communication is Dr. B's love for her students. When asked what is most satisfying about teaching, her response was "The students." She went on to say, "It is rewarding to see students grasp concepts and apply them to their own personal life and work. I also enjoy preparing for classes and engaging with students." After taking one of Dr. B's classes, or even if you just talk to her, you know that she is more than just a professor. Dr. B goes the extra mile for all of her students both inside and outside the classroom. She has years of insightful experience that she shares with her students. She is always there to provide helpful advice about what to do and how to do it, in order to help all of us obtain the keys to success. Dr. B is more than just a professor in the Department of Communication, because she is a leader, a role model, a mentor, and above all, Dr. B is a friend.

~John Lynn, Student

Dr. Carl L. Kell Retires After 43 Years of Service

Dr. Carl Kell started his career in the Department of Communication at WKU in 1972. Within Dr. Kell's 43 years on the Hill he has done the extraordinary with his area of research, which focuses on rhetorical/historical and critical issues in the Southern Baptist Church. From his research he has published five books: *The Exiled Generation*, *Against the Wind*, *In the Name of the Father*, *Exiled*, and one novel, *On Sacred Ground*. For his publications, Dr. Kell received the Religious Communication of the Year Award from the Religious Communication Association. He was also rewarded for excellence in research and the Southern Communication Association chose him as the national winner of its 75th anniversary design award. Kell has published two communication books *Let's Talk about Business: Improving Communication Skills*, and *Fundamentals of Improving Group Communication Skills*.

Dr. Kell has founded the WKU Spirit Masters group in 1980 and has served as its advisor for 22 years. Spirit Masters is a group of select students who represent WKU at public events. In 2007, President Ransdell presented him the President's Spirit of Western Award. Dr. Kell has been honored by three

Greek groups and in 2003 and he received the Potter College Award for Public Service. In 2015, Spirit Masters named their room in DSU



Dr. Carl L. Kell

after Dr. Kell. Dr. Larry Snyder, Associate Dean of Potter College and Letters said, "Spirit Masters has certainly become an important and unique feature of the WKU experience for dozens of students. Dr. Kell has helped to make this a very special place for students to study and colleagues to work."

Dr. Carl Kell graduated with Ph.D. in Speech Communication from Kansas University in 1971. From the early stages of his college life, he knew he wanted to be a college professor and from his above achievements he made an excellent choice. Dr. Carl Kell has not only been successful in his own life, but has also helped students succeed in their lives through his courses. One of his main courses that have helped prepare students for success after graduation is COMM 489 which is an internship course. The first question he ask his students when helping them find an internship is, "What is something fun you would like to do and get paid for"? He strives to help the student find an internship matching their responses. Dr. Carl Kell will be greatly missed by everyone in the Department of Communication.

Some wisdom Dr. Kell wanted to leave behind is this, "The last line in My Fair Lady was there is a difference between a lady and a flower girl; it is not who she is, but how she is treated. People will remember how you treat them."

~ Cecily Kidd, Student



Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Dale Wicklander

Dale Wicklander is the paragon of constancy. A few years ago, comments were gathered from students. Praise from his students this semester sounds exactly like that from students of decades past.

Past student, Terry Climer, a senior sportswriter from the *Tennessean* had a comment. He said, "I have been meaning to contact you for days to thank you for your contributions to the gathering last month. Nothing you said surprised me. I knew quite well how keenly you enjoyed your career. I was enjoying your toying with each question and setting up your wry comedy timing while your face revealed your joy at being revered by your associates. Doctor, it can never be said enough. I treasure the times I spent in your company. Please know that I am not alone in that regard."

Comments from students during the spring 2015 semester were as follows:

- ◆ "This was the most fun I have ever had in a lecture class. Because of that, I learned."
- ◆ "I think other teachers should copy some of his traits."
- ◆ "Other teachers could take lessons from him."
- ◆ "Dr. Wicklander should be the standard here at WKU. I always praise you. You're nice and positive."
- ◆ I think he is a great teacher who cares about his students and their success. I took this class

because I knew he was going to retire."

- ◆ "Dr. Wicklander is GREAT. He shouldn't ever leave."
- ◆ A student that is an Army Captain said, "You're pretty good for a civilian."



Dr. Dale Wicklander

No wonder Dale is the only member of the department's 45 years to have won the Potter College Teaching award!

Each year, the comments of Dale's students join the echo of those from former years creating a crescendo of voices all singing the same tune.

In like manner, the perceptions of colleagues remain consistent across time. He gives life around here a comfortable stability. Every day you come to work,

- ◆ you know he's going to get off 10 quips,
- ◆ you know he's going to spill his coffee,
- ◆ you know he's going to come out of the classroom in a cloud of chalk dust – all of which quickly

settles on his suit.

In a more profound sense Dale realizes, as Coleridge put it, that "constancy lives in realms above."

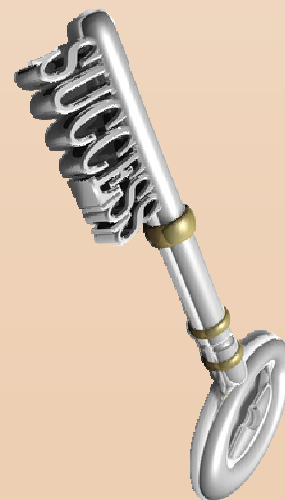
Dale has an unshakable faith in God

- ◆ as the source of knowledge and virtue,
- ◆ as the Alpha and Omega and all points between.

According to Dr. Larry Winn, "One of Western's decisions that I'm most thankful was the departmental merger that brought Dale our way. Since he joined the department, I drive a little faster when I come to work; because, the job has more attraction, the conversations have more verve, and even the coffee has more kick."

Winn continues, "Will the circle be unbroken?" is a quotation from a song. Will the coffee circle – which has always included Dale Wicklander, Carl Kell, and me – be unbroken? A resounding 'Yes' to that question. I look forward to coffee with Dale and Carl next semester."

~ Dr. Larry Winn,
former Department Head



The Department of Communication Alumni of the Year: Kay Coomes, M.A.

In recognition of her career achievements and service on the Communication Advisory Council, Ms. Kay Coomes, M.A., has been awarded the 2015 Alumnus of the Year on behalf of the Department of Communication at Western Kentucky University (WKU). An accounting graduate of Kentucky Wesleyan College, Ms. Coomes received a job at Atmos Energy in 1986 as a marketing analyst where she crunched data and numbers for two years. Needing a change, she went back to WKU to work towards a Masters in Communication. After receiving her Masters degree, she began managing the Public Affairs Department of Atmos Energy in Owensboro, KY.

Ms. Coomes credits the Department of Communication for helping her professional career, "My communication experience prepared in every way, from how to prepare for presentations to how to handle a corporate crisis or dealing with public officials." Ms. Coomes claims that the most important advice she received in her professional career was to be flexible for anything. "In this world, things change so quickly and you must be nimble enough to move in that direction and learn quickly. It is a constant challenge."

Like many members of the Department of Communication, Kay is active in her community. Ms. Coomes is very involved in children activities and community work with United Way in the Ohio Valley region. Also she gives her time to the American Cancer Society and the American Heart



Dr. Helen Sterk and Ms. Kay Coomes

Association. Currently she serves the American Red Cross, Owensboro Community Technical College and Owensboro Health as a member of their foundation boards. She is also a graduate of the Leadership Ken-

Atmos, spoke to the media about how a rooftop-heating unit was to blame for an hour-long evacuation at Wal-Mart on February 27, 2015. She addressed the reason for the incident as faulty equipment.

When asked the best professional advice you can give to a recent college graduate, she came up with this: "Never stop learning and be as ready as much as you can for anything, as it has served me well. On behalf of the Department of Communication, we would

like to congratulate Ms. Kay Coomes, M.A., as the 2015 Alumni of the Year!

~ Will Porter, Student



tucky Program.

Most recently Ms. Coomes, as the Public Affairs representative for

Events



March 31, 2015
COMM 463 - Intercultural

Two events for World Café



InterCULTURAL Club
Continuing the Discussion on Race

Mrs. Harriet Downing
How Student Life Has Changed at WKU
April 1, 2015



Student Recognition Dinner - April 21, 2015



Alumni Updates

Haley Baseheart—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2014—Haley is working as a Space Planning Analyst at Dollar General Corporation in Nashville, Tennessee.

Ian Brandon—M.A. Organizational Communication, 2014—Ian is working as a Partner Services Coordinator at WKU Hilltopper Sports.

Dana Cosby, Ph.D.—M.A. Organizational Communication, 1994—Dana is currently working as an Executive-in-Residence providing instruction for WKU Gordon Ford College of Business. She also serves as program director for PEAK (Professional Education & Knowledge) career readiness.

Jacob Crowley—B.A. Communication Studies, 2012—Jacob is currently teaching public speaking and English courses at Daymar College.

Katie Dawson—B.A. Communication Studies, 2006—Katie is Coordinator of Online Programs at the University of Louisiana in Monroe, Louisiana.

Ryan Dearbone—M.A. Organizational Communication, 2014—Ryan is working as the Assistant Director at Community Education in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Drue Eberhardt—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2012—Drue is the Operations Manager at Holiday Inn Express in

Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Jessica Paulsen Hellams—M.A. Organizational Communication, 2013 - Jessica is working as an Executive Coordinator at Ascential Care Partners.

Michael Kaelin—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2008 - Michael is working as an Account Executive, Direct Mail & Database Marketing at Republic Media in Phoenix, Arizona.

Lesley Greenwell Lodmell—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2011—Leslie received an M.A. in Public Affairs in 2014 from Indiana University Bloomington. She is currently working as an extension educator for 4-H & Youth Development at Purdue University.

Chase Malone—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2007—Chase is a Sales Representative for Applied Medical in the Louisville, Kentucky area.

Chris Nation—M.A. Organizational Communication, 2009—Chris is the Director of Client Services at Quantum in Louisville, Kentucky.

Felix Perrone—M.A. Organizational Communication, 20__ - Felix is working as an Information Systems Computer Operator at Methodist Hospital of Henderson, Kentucky.

Meredith Schultz—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2009—Meredith is a Marketing Director at White, Greer, and Maggard Orthodontics in Lexington, Kentucky.

Even Sharp—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2011—Evan is currently a Sales Account Executive, Maui with Jim & Zeal optics.

Lynn Steller Smith—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2007—Lynn is a Donor Recruitment Supervisor at the American Red Cross in Nashville, Tennessee.

Ellee Stewart—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2011—Ellee is a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative with Quintiles/Takeda Pharmaceuticals in Franklin, Tennessee.

Angelia Whitlock—B.A. Communication Studies, 2015—Angelia worked as an intern for Senator Mitch McConnell during the spring semester, and was hired by the Postmaster General as a Confidential Assistant at U.S. Postal Regulatory Commission in Washington, DC prior to graduation.

Randa Sawyers Young—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2013—Randa is working as an Office Assistant for the WKU Doctor of Physical Therapy Program.

**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

Spring 2015 Student Workers



Rachel Cato, Meredith Coomes, Cody Whitlock, Callie Allison, Michaela Ash



Thank you!

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WKU



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Or visit:

wku.edu/campaign/how.html



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