

# COMMUNIQUE

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## Department Adding Visiting Minority Scholar for the 2012-13 Academic Year

The Department is thrilled to welcome Professor Mittie Carey, a doctoral student at the University of Memphis, as its minority visiting scholar for the 2012-2013 academic year. During her term at WKU, Ms. Carey will be teaching an honors section of Public Speaking, Interracial Communication, and a few graduate courses.



Mittie Carey, Visiting Minority Scholar

Carey received her B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing from Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee in 1998. In 2004, she received her Master of Divinity from Memphis Theological Seminary; she is currently working on her doctoral

dissertation titled “The freedom faith speeches of Prathia Hall: Uncovering a hybrid rhetoric of protest.” In honor of Black History Month, the Department of Communication invited Professor Carey to present “Mission (Im)possible: Rhetorical situation and the

hybridized freedom faith discourse of Prathia L. Hall” on Monday, February 27, 2012. Carey’s lecture focused on Prathia Hall’s civil rights career of activism and her efforts in the South with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Carey used Lloyd F. Bitzer’s rhetorical situation formula and Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of hybridity to frame her study. Professor Carey is looking forward to her term at WKU, and we know that she will be a great addition to the Department of Communication.

~ Shannon White, Student

## WKU Faculty, Students Play a Key Role in SSCA

This year the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA) Convention was held in San Antonio, Texas, April

11-15, 2012. Representing WKU was Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith, who is also the Marketing Director for SSCA, and two graduate



students, Jessica Paulsen and Ashley Miller.

As Marketing Director of the organization, Dr. Mize Smith oversees the organization’s various marketing activities which

SSCA Social Media Table

- Cont'd on page 2



## WKU Faculty, Students Play a Key Role in SSCA—*cont'd*

encompass everything from member relations to branding. In this capacity, she enlisted the help of Ms. Paulsen in creating a strong social media presence for SSCA on Facebook, Twitter and Linked In. Ms. Paulsen also assisted with promoting the convention and organizing a social media table at the convention. Dr. Mize Smith explains that this table was a place “where members could join on the spot, post comments and pictures from the convention, and enter prize drawings.”

During the convention, Ashley Miller and Dr. Mize Smith presented research on WKU’s capital campaign, A New Century of Spirit. Their work won honors as the Top Paper in the Applied Communication Division. This research analyzed the campaign using organizational identification concepts. In addition, all three women used the SSCA experience to market for WKU’s Communication programs, hosting a complementary breakfast for undergraduate students.



Ashley Miller & Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith with awards for Top Paper in Applied Communication Division

~ Makenzie Briggs, Student

## Message from Helen Sterk, Department Head



What a great year we’ve had! We’ve got a strong group of people in the Communication programs at WKU, a group that has accomplished more in one year than many departments do in two.

Across the department, we’ve got one book, one dissertation,

one student and faculty publication, and ten journal articles coming out. We’ve presented thirteen conference papers, three of those authored by a student and faculty person team. Six of our graduate students presented their work at state, regional and national conferences. Three of those papers won “top paper” awards.

The university affirmed our value by placing our Fundamentals of Public Speaking and Communication class in the new general education curriculum, just passed by the

Faculty Senate. At some point, we will be teaching almost every single student who makes her or his way through WKU.

As a department, we created a new marketing plan, including a logo, motto, and a set of videos. We’ll be rolling out every piece of the plan in the fall. Look for it! Alumni, students, faculty and staff worked together to come up with ideas, refine them and decide on what to do. We settled on a key and a lock for our logo; our motto is “Communication is key to a better self, better life, and better future.” Kudos to graduate John Rowley (1992), graduate students Ryan Dearbone and Ian Brandon, and the senior capstone class for kick-starting this whole campaign.

One of our profs, Sabine Chai, whose area is intercultural communication, is transitioning to teaching exclusively online for us. We will miss her on campus, but are delighted that she remains part of us, even though she lives in Atlanta.

Next year, three new faculty members will join us, Jieyoung Kong, intercultural scholar, from Arizona State University, Mittie Carey, rhetorician and civil rights scholar, from the University of Memphis, and Rachel Walston, instructor and member of the Vette City Rollers.

I look forward to meeting a whole new crew of students in the fall. Who knows what next year brings?

# Conventions

## WKU Faculty and Students Rock the NCA Convention

WKU faculty and students led conversations, met leaders in the Communication field, and interacted with other Communication scholars at the November 2012 National Communication Association's annual convention in New Orleans.

Senior student, Felix Perrone, asserted, "The overall NCA experience actually convinced me to pursue my masters in communication. I got to see what these professors are doing with their lives and the research they're doing, and I wanted to be a part of that. NCA was an opportunity to see what progress is being made in our field, and to inspire new research and scholars alike."

Dr. Blair Thompson shared his research on "Student academic support: A validity test" and also responded to a panel on "Voices online: E-texts and distance learning in the basic course." Along with colleague and former WKU professor, Dr. Sally O. Hastings, Dr. Holly Payne presented "Constraining voices and 'Getting the ugly out of the way': The role of email in dissent expression." Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith's paper focused on "Learning to give: Faith and family as sources of philanthropic identity." She, too, responded to a panel, "Empirical studies of the

workplace." Department head Dr. Helen Sterk contributed her expertise to "Women's voices: Progress and obstacles." Dr. Payne and Ms. Stacey Gish attended a short course on research methods in an effort to help the department to advance its peda-

Felix Perrone, Ashleigh Miller, and Rebecca Schaefer, represented the department at the conference as well. Perrone noted being particularly intrigued with a presentation by New Orleans' city officials who discussed how they rebuilt New



**Felix Perrone, Ashleigh Miller, Dr. Helen Sterk, Rebecca Schaefer, and Dr. Angela Jerome**

gogy in that area, and Drs. Payne and Angie Jerome attended a short course on organizational communication to do the same.

Dr. Donna Renaud, along with students and Lambda Pi Eta officers

Orleans after Katrina, as well as a panel which discussed education within prison walls.

~ Robbie Collier, Student

## Faculty and Students Represent WKU at CSCA Convention

Four WKU Department of Communication faculty members and three graduate students represented WKU in a variety of capacities at the April, 2012 Central States Communication Association Convention in Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Blair Thompson presented a paper he co-authored with Dr. Joseph P. Mazer, Clemson University, titled "The validity of the student academic support scale: Associations with social support and relational closeness." As a long-time member of the association, he also served as the Vice Chair of both the Communication Education and Basic Course Interest Groups for the convention. He also served as a respondent for the Top Papers in Communication Education Panel and as the Chair of the Committee for the Cooper Award (given for excellence in teaching at the doctoral and masters levels).

Also a long-time member of the association, Dr. Angela Jerome was elected Secretary of the Public Relations Interest Group and will go on to serve as the interest group's Vice Chair and Chair in the coming years. Dr. Jerome presented a paper she co-authored with graduate student Lauren Oliver at the convention. Their paper was titled "The Ohio State University yardsale: The fall of coach Jim Tressel and the Buckeye football program." Dr. Jerome also chaired the panel "Connecting rhetoric and sports: Sports rhetoric in the public sphere" on which the paper was presented. Graduate student, Kristeen Owens, employed by the University's Department of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport as a Program Specialist, also presented a paper on this panel. Her paper was titled "A silver fox exposed: An analysis of Brett Farve and the NFL's responses to the 2010 sexting scandal."

Ms. Oliver's second paper, titled

"Critical analysis of NFL play 60 campaign" won two prestigious awards at the convention: Top Papers in the Public Relations Interest Group and Past Officers' Top Debut Papers.

Dr. Cecile Garmon and Mandhla Mgijima, former graduate student and adjunct instructor for the department, presented a paper titled "Communication: Ubuntu as perspective that intersects and unites."

Dr. Helen Sterk also represented the department at the convention. She did a great deal of networking on behalf of the department and was proud to watch her friend and former colleague, Lynn Turner, Marquette University, be inducted into the CSCA Hall of Fame.

~ Angela Jerome, Ph.D.,  
Associate Professor



# EVENTS

## The Significance of Computer Mediated Communication in Today's World

**Social Influence in Social Media: Implicit Persuasion in Facebook, YouTube, Amazon, and Elsewhere**

Dr. Joseph Walther



Monday, April 2, 2012—7:00 p.m.

FAC Russell Miller Theatre

Joe Walther is a Professor in the Department of Communication and the Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies & Media at Michigan State University. His teaching and research focus on the dynamics of computer-mediated communication and the Internet in interpersonal relationships, work groups, social support, and educational systems. He has previously held appointments in Information Technology, Psychology, and Education and Social Policy at universities in the US and England. He was chair of the Organizational Communication and Information Systems division of the Academy of Management, and the Communication and Technology division of the International Communication Association.



Sponsored by:  
Potter College of Arts & Letters  
Department of Communication  
Department of English

Dr. Joseph Walther, professor at the Michigan State University and renowned scholar of computer mediated communication, visited WKU on April 2 to share his research on the impact of computer-mediated communication on human interaction, group work, relationships, and human perceptions with the students in the Department of Communication.

While at WKU, Dr. Walther delivered three lectures that presented several aspects of his research findings. In each of his lectures, “(Mis) Attributions in virtual groups,” “Digging deeper in the social information processing theory of computer mediated commu-

nication,” and “Social influence in social media: Implicit persuasion in Facebook, YouTube, Amazon, and elsewhere,” Dr. Walther discussed the implications of his research, as well as ongoing studies being done to build on his current findings.

In “(Mis) Attributions in virtual groups,” Dr. Walther presented research about teams who interact online to reach goals and com-

plete projects, often without ever meeting face-to-face. Dr. Walther claimed that virtual groups are excellent test beds for theories of communication. “I think they’re a great laboratory,” he stated.

In his keynote presentation titled “Social influence in social media: Implicit persuasion in Facebook, YouTube, Amazon, and elsewhere,” Dr. Walther presented research on the “participatory web,” or what he called “Web 2.0.”

One of his studies considered multiple factors that contributed to a Facebook user’s perceived social attractiveness. Variables included num-

ber of friends on Facebook, attractiveness of friends, comments made by friends, and comments and status updates posted by the user. His research revealed that having too few or too many friends has a negative effect on a user’s social attractiveness. Dr. Walther went on to explain that the research also concluded that a user is perceived as better looking if he or she has attractive friends.

Users whose friends posted positive comments on their profile made the user more socially attractive than friends who posted negative comments. However, it is interesting to note that negative comments only affected the perceived social attractiveness of females. Male attractiveness was not impacted by negative comments made by the user’s friends.

Because of the overwhelming presence of social media in today’s society, Dr. Walther’s research is becoming more and more applicable to the everyday lives of people all over the world.

While at WKU, Dr. Walther also spent time interacting with students and faculty and participated in a special session in which he mentored graduate students.

~Haley Mefford, Student



# Lessons from a Long-Shot: J. Ann Selzer, Ph.D.

This February, the Department of Communication was delighted to have J. Ann Selzer, Ph.D. on campus, giving three insightful lectures on communicating in the “real world.” Dr. Selzer is an established and esteemed pollster for Bloomberg News and for *The Des Moines Register*. She has polled in five of the last six Iowa caucuses, gaining significant notoriety for being the only pollster to correctly predict that Barack Obama would win the caucus in 2008.

The topic of polling was addressed in her speech, “Inside the Iowa caucuses: A pollster’s view,” which was given February 2 in Russell Miller Theatre. She was able to share her experiences as a pollster, give a basic overview of how such a large poll is conducted, and discuss how using good communication skills can achieve undeniable results.

Dr. Selzer also discussed the benefits of having a degree in Communication in “Why a communication major matters in your career,” in a lecture given on February 2 at 4:00 p.m. in the Ivan

Wilson Fine Arts Center. She touched on all of the many ways communication is used in the workplace every day, and how useful it is to be able to master it.

At the Faculty House on February 3, she spoke on “Women in business: Give and take,” showing the roles of women in society.

It was a real honor to be able to hear from such an intelligent, tremendous woman. Dr. Selzer was able to apply the concepts being learned in the communication classrooms to events taking place every day. She was able to



Dr. J. Ann Selzer and Dr. Helen Sterk

show communication students how their degree is going to be relevant to everything they do, and show the professors how their classes are going to make an impact.

These events could not have come to WKU if it were not for the dedicated

groups that sponsored them. The Department of Communication, the Department of Political Science, Institute for Citizenship and Social Responsibility, the Department of Sociology, the School of Journalism and Broadcasting, the Gender and Women’s Studies Program, the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, and the Forensics Program were all involved in making these lectures possible.

## Inside the Iowa Caucuses: A Pollster’s View

J. Ann Selzer, Ph.D.

Thursday,  
February 2, 2012

7:00 p.m.

Russell Miller  
Theatre

Fine Arts Center



J. Ann Selzer, pollster for Bloomberg News and *The Des Moines Register* has polled in five of the last six cycles when Iowa is the epicenter of presidential politics. Join her as she shares her strategies and stories of what happens behind the scenes in the lead-up to the 2012 caucuses.

Sponsored by WKU departments of: Political Science, ICSR-Citizenship, Sociology, Journalism and Broadcasting, Gender and Women’s Studies, Communication, Gordon Ford School of Business, Math, & Forensics.



## Dr. Angela Jerome shares her research on NASCAR with the WKU Community

Associate Professor of the Department of Communication, Dr. Angela Jerome, was one of 11 faculty members invited to speak as part of the Potter College of Arts and Letters (PCAL) WTF?! Lecture series. The WTF?! (an acronym representing Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) lecture series featured presentations by WKU faculty members concerning interesting aspects of their experiences, performances, and research to students outside of the classroom. PCAL and WKU Housing and Residence Life (HRL) partnered to host these events. All presentations were held in McCormack Hall on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays throughout the Spring, 2012 semester.

Ms. Jennifer Markin, PCAL'S Coordinator of Student Services, helped develop, coordinate, and implement the new WTF?! series. "The purpose of WTF?! is for students to interact casually with their professors outside of the classroom." Markin added that the series is a two-way street. Not only is it enlightening for students to interact with professors outside of the classroom, but it is exciting for the professors to discuss their research outside of the typical classroom curriculum.

The Dean's Council of Students of Potter College suggested professors whose area of research would help start this first-year program off strong. Michelle Dille, a student studying Corporate and Organizational Communication, was one of the students on Dean's Council who recommended Dr. Jerome. She asserted, "Dr. Jerome's expertise in crisis communication is phenomenal. Listening to her stories and reading her research is strikingly

entertaining. She has inspired me to enroll in an independent study course next fall, and conduct research within the same field."

Dr. Jerome's WTF?! presentation, given on Thursday, February 16, 2012 was titled "From Moonshine to Millions: The Evolution of Stock Car Racing." She framed her discussion around the life and career of NASCAR driver/car owner, Junior Johnson. Johnson went to prison for moonshining in the midst of his NASCAR driving career and became one of NASCAR's most successful drivers/owners upon his release.

During the semester, Dr. Jerome also presented her manuscript titled "A death, a family feud, and a merger: The image repair of Teresa Earnhardt and Dale Earnhardt, Inc." on April 10, 2012 as part of the Popular Culture Lecture Series and traveled to University of Kentucky on April 12, 2012 to share her expertise on Communication in NASCAR with the students in Dr. Jeff VanCleave's Sports Communication course.

Dr. Jerome reveals she began this line of research after her dissertation advisor, Dr. Robert C. Rowland, from the University of Kansas, joked about how much research she could complete if she spent as much time writing as she did watching NASCAR. Upon realizing there was a lack of academic research on the subjects of NASCAR and image repair, Dr. Jerome took her advisor's humor to heart and began researching communication in NASCAR. Dr. Jerome published her

first academic article on the subject (based on the image repair campaign of NASCAR driver Tony Stewart) in the June 2008 Special Issue of *Public Relations Review* dedicated to Public Relations and Sport. The essay she presented at the Popular Culture Lecture Series will appear in Blaney, J.R., Lippert, L. R., and Smith, J.S. (in press). *Repairing the athlete's image*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books (Rowman & Littlefield).

Outside of NASCAR, Dr. Jerome has researched the image repair of athletes and sports organizations such as Reggie Bush/the NCAA, Michael Phelps, and Michael Vick/the NFL.

~ Lia Madias, Student

# First Annual John Lyne Speech Contest



**Final Round of Competition**

the Student Government Association, and a columnist for the *College Heights Herald*. He now teaches at the University of Pittsburgh, where he has served as chair and director of graduate studies in the Department of Communication and on the faculty of Bioethics and Health Law.

Dr. Blair Thompson, basic course director, helped to run the competition with assistance from the office staff. Dr. Helen Sterk, Dr. Carl Kell, Eldon Renaud, and

Dean Lee served as celebrity judges for the final round of the competition.

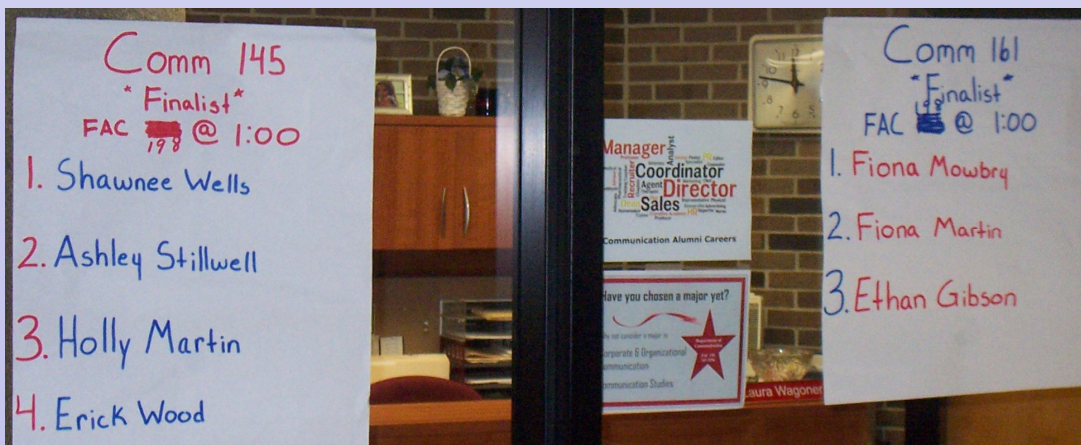
The competition winners included Shawnee Wells (Instructor - Ashley Miller) for COMM 145 and Fiona Mowbray (Instructor - Jessica McClanahan) for COMM 161.

~ Blair Thompson, Asst. Professor

At the end of the Spring, 2012 semester, the Department of Communication held the first ever John Lyne Speech Contest for students in the general education courses (COMM 145 and COMM 161) offered by the department. Each section of COMM 145 and 161 selected one student based on their persuasive speech to represent their class in this competition. The class representatives com-

peted on Saturday, May 5th. Nearly 40 participants competed, and the top three places for both COMM 145 and 161 received a monetary award (1st: \$250; 2nd: \$100; 3rd: \$50).

Dr. John Lyne contributed the prize money to the department. John Lyne graduated from WKU as a Speech and Philosophy major in 1971. While here, he was a debater, President of



**Finalists of the Department of Communication's 2012 John Lyne Speech Contest**



# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS



**Dr. Angela Jerome —  
Faculty Advisor**

student Evangelia Madias for organizing this event.

On March 26, the chapter hosted Ms. Jessica Thompson, Marketing and Communications Director for the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Thompson gave an informative presentation on “Being professional: The importance of communication in the workplace.” She also shared information about the breadth and depth of her position with the students and gave them tips on finding internships to fit their needs. The chapter would like to thank student Melissa Meige for organizing this event.

song, Communications Director for Williamson County Schools, and Ms. Elise Shelton, Communications Chief for Montgomery County Schools. The panelists shared valuable information about every stage of the crisis response process, information that will undoubtedly serve the students well as they build their careers.

*- Dr. Angela Jerome,  
Associate Professor*

## IABC Students Engage in the Field

The department’s student chapter of IABC hosted two on-campus events during the Spring, 2012 semester, bringing practitioners to campus in an effort to help students prepare for their job searches and careers.



**2011-12 IABC Officers—Christmas Party and Planning Meeting  
Cody Moore, Jordan Boggs, Dr. Angela Jerome, Lia Madias, Michelle Dille,  
Casey Sloan and Missy Meige**

On March 20, Autumn Drane and Todd Kizminiski from TEK Systems led a tutorial for chapter members and guests on LinkedIn, an online networking tool for business professionals. The chapter was excited to have communication alumna Kayla Nall, who is also employed by TEK Systems, skype-in to discuss a variety of career-related issues. The chapter thanks

Several chapter members also traveled to a luncheon hosted by IABC’s Nashville chapter in February 2012. A panel titled “When there’s a crisis: Be prepared” was presented during the luncheon. On the panel were Ms. Olivia Brown, Communications Director for Metro Nashville Schools, Ms. Carol Bird-



**IABC**

**Student Organizations**

# LAMBDA PI ETA (ΛΠΗ)



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

The spring semester was a busy one for Lambda Pi Eta's Rho Nu chapter here at WKU. The purpose of LPH is to recognize, foster and reward outstanding scholastic achievement in communication studies. This semester we recognized eighteen students who were eligible for LPH memberships at our annual induction ceremony. In order to become an official member of this national honors society, an undergraduate student

must have 60 hours of college courses completed, twelve hours of communication classes completed, have a Communication GPA of at least 3.25, a cumulative GPA of 3.0, be a current student in good standing, and display commitment to the field of communication.

At its annual induction ceremony, LPH honored Dr. Larry Winn as its Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year.

We provided LPH members an Internship Forum on February 22, in which Communication students who had already completed an internship could share their experiences and give advice to other students who had not done theirs yet. This was a

valuable opportunity to gather insight to the real trials and tribulations of the communication internship experience.

On February 29, LPH hosted an Internship Panel for all students. This was an event to connect local businesses to Communication students looking for internships, and vice versa. Nine local businesses attended to advertise their internship opportunities in the non-profit, political, corporate, and sport sectors. This gave students a wide variety of choices that may spark their interest. As of the end of the spring semester, at least five

students received internships because of this panel.

Toward the final month of the semester, LPH started a raffle fundraiser for a variety of gift baskets our Public Relations Chair, Katie Beth Harmon, put together. The members of

Lambda Pi Eta sold the tickets to raise money to go toward next year's organizational events.



The semester wrapped up with the annual LPH Etiquette Dinner at Mariah's. This event teaches members how to participate properly in a business dinner.

For more information about Lambda Pi Eta please contact the organizational advisor, Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith ([jennifer.mize.smith@wku.edu](mailto:jennifer.mize.smith@wku.edu)).

- Felix Perrone, LPH Officer

# COMMUNICATION ORGANIZATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS (COGS)



**Dr. Holly Payne—Faculty Advisor**

and a few all-nighters, graduate students have come together this semester for activities that enhanced our education, let us get to know one another better, and even give us a break from our studies!

This semester COGS placed an emphasis on research. In January, we met to discuss research opportunities for the semester. Students consulted one another about upcoming conferences and tips for research and encouraged one another through the process. New

The Communication Organization for Graduate Students (COGS) has had a busy semester! In between research projects, papers, course readings,

students were also informed about the program and had a chance to meet returning students. In February, we met to discuss how the semester was going and to remind one another of the soon-approaching deadlines and to talk to one another about registration for the fall.

March was a month of preparations. Our main event during the month was a fundraiser at Griffs Deli, which rendered us funds to use for future activities. In early April, we had the pleasure of spending an hour with

Dr. Joe Walther during his visit, discussing with him everything from research to doctoral programs to CMC. We also participated in a ReVerb event with Dr. Sterk after he left to discuss his visit. In late April, we had an alumni panel with four graduates of the program in which they offered us advice for future job hunts.

Overall, this semester has been great! We have not only learned a lot but also have helped one another through the semester. We look forward to the fall!

- Ryan Cummings, Student

## 2011-12 Outstanding Student Awards



Roger & Harriett Miller, parents of Ashley Miller—2011-12 Outstanding Graduate Student, Gail Churchman, Whitney Churchman—2011-12 Outstanding Communication Studies Student, John Schaefer, Rebecca Schaefer—2011-12 Outstanding Corporate & Organizational Student, Susan Schaefer, and Dr. Helen Sterk, Department Head

### Ashley Miller Named Outstanding Graduate Student



Ashley Miller, from Madison, Alabama, was the graduate faculty's choice for 2011-2012 Outstanding Graduate Student in the Department of Communication.

Miller reflected on her opportunity to attend WKU stating, "I chose WKU's Graduate Program for a number of reasons. My professors at the University of Northern Alabama recommended the program. I took a tour and I fell in love with the campus, and here I am as a graduate assistant!"

Miller received a B.A. in Public Communication from the University of Northern Alabama. "I remember trying to choose a degree path," she stated, "I was undeclared until the end of my sophomore year when I took an Interpersonal Communication course and loved it!" When asked about the applicability of her degree Miller said, "I think a degree in Communication is applicable to many facets of life, including my personality. I'm looking forward to

a career in Student Affairs, Admissions, or any type of student engagement position. I just love the college atmosphere!"

Miller's thesis, *Exploration of College Related Memorable Messages*, examined how influential recruitment messages are for high school students hoping to attend college. Miller believes that the information can expand research about memorable message by adding a different perspective. She asserts, "Since most memorable messages are centered in the socialization process, I'm hoping to find a different approach." Miller's thesis was chaired by Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith, and Drs. Blair Thompson and Holly Payne served as her committee members.

Miller also believes that the

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Congratulations to our Students

## Ashley Miller—cont'd

Communication graduate program at WKU is challenging and time consuming but extremely rewarding. "You get out what you put in," she stated, "It's a lot of work but you really learn how to think critically and analyze. The professors are amazing and go above

and beyond to answer questions. They really seem to love their profession and their students as well."

In her free time Miller enjoys taking her dog to the dog park, running, and spending time with her family. "I'm extremely family oriented and I be-

lieve everything happens for a reason," she stated, "I have never been nervous or anxious or a stranger in a new place until I came to Bowling Green. WKU allowed me to make it through the uncertainty, push forward, and feel at home."

~Michelle Dille, Student

## Rebecca Schaefer Named Outstanding Corporate & Organizational Communication Undergraduate Student



Rebecca Schaefer was named the Outstanding Corporate and Organizational Communication graduate for the 2011-2012 academic year. While at WKU, she was extremely active in Department of Communication.

During her time at WKU, she was invited to join Lambda Pi Eta, the Communication honors society, and served as its Public Relations Chair. Throughout her term in office, she designed the bulletin board in the Department of Communication as well as created and distributed all of the promotional materials for the group's events. Schaefer was responsible for writing articles for the department newsletter to keep readers up-to-date on the events taking place within the organization. She at-

tended the 2011 National Communication Association Convention as a representative of LPE.

Not only was Schaefer involved within the department, she had a passion for Student Affairs and served as a Residence Advisor for two years in Pearce Ford Tower. Being a RA opened doors for Schaefer to join the Resident Staff Association, Residence Hall Association, and the Kentucky Association of Residence Halls. She didn't stop there! If Schaefer wasn't in the Communication Department or PFT, she was volunteering at her internship with the WKU Alumni office. She put her communication skills to work as she helped organize events within the Student Alumni Association such as the prestigious event known as HODA, Hall of Distinguished Alumni, an event that took place this past fall.

When asked what college courses were most beneficial for her current career path, Schaefer noted that even though she hated her statistics class, it was beneficial when it came to writing her thesis at the end of the year. Her favorite course within the communication department was Voice and Diction. She claims that the material from that course will stick with her throughout both her

business and personal conversations.

As she transitions into a new chapter of her life, post graduation, Schaefer is now a travel consultant for GOGO Worldwide Vacations in Nashville, TN. She creates proposals for clients and group contracts if they choose to book a vacation. She's very eager to start traveling with her company and building relationships with new clients and co-workers.

The advice Schaefer wishes to leave for Corporate and Organizational majors to abide by while transitioning from the university setting to the business world is "to network, network, network- And start before graduation! Even though the job I ended up pursuing didn't come from any of my networking contacts, I received several interviews and connections that would never have sparked if I'd stuck to just searching for jobs online," Schaefer stated. If nothing else, Schaefer now has a professional network that takes a vested interest in her and her success. This all traces back to her internship and every successful businessperson she encountered during her education. She encourages everyone to take advantage of this time in college and seek an internship in the field because it has the potential to lead a desired career.

~Katherine Meredith, Student

## Whitney Churchman Named Outstanding Communication Studies Undergraduate Student



While a freshman in Dr. Blair Thompson's COMM 145 course, Whitney Churchman of Cecilia, Kentucky knew Communication Studies was the major for her. Four years of hard work later, Churchman graduated in May 2012 with a double major in Communication Studies and Agriculture with a minor in Sales. In addition to earning a degree, Churchman has earned the honor of Outstanding Communication Studies Undergraduate 2011-2012. Churchman admits to being surprised after having been awarded the title, "As a student within this department I have had the opportunity to interact with some of the best and brightest students WKU has to offer... I feel so privileged and so honored."

A 2009 graduate of Central Hardin High School, she competed with the school's forensic team and in FFA speaking competitions. "Through these

school and in college, Churchman has taken on numerous leadership positions while maintaining a high academic standard of excellence. She is a member of the WKU Honors College, Lambda Pi Eta, WKU Collegiate FFA, and a graduate of the Dynamic Leadership Institute. She has served as Vice President of Omega Phi Alpha National Service Sorority, as a WKU Agriculture Department Ambassador, and as treasurer of the WKU Residence Hall Authority in Minton Hall. Churchman was also named 2011 Homecoming Queen 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner Up.

Churchman has accomplished a lot in four years, and she is quick to attribute it to one thing: hard work. "My secret to success has definitely been my unwavering work ethic," she said. Churchman was raised on a farm outside Elizabethtown. Daugh-

activities I began to see I had a talent for expressing myself and began to cultivate my natural ability for public speaking," she explained. In high

ter of a farmer, she learned the importance of hard work helping out on her family's 65-acre farm. "My dad always says, 'You will rise and fall based on the quality of the decisions you make.'"

After graduation, Churchman will begin pursuing a Masters in Plant and Soil Science at the University of Kentucky. She will be pursuing a career that combines her two loves: Agriculture and Communication, potentially in Agriculture Marketing or Agricultural Sales. In addition to a successful career and family, Churchman hopes to one day give back, "Serving others is a big part of who I am...It is one of my deepest desires to truly make a positive impact on the lives of other people."

Churchman has definitely left a positive impact on both the Department of Communication and the entire campus of WKU. Her dedication, work ethic and passion make her an exemplary student and more than deserving of her recent honor. As she begins reflecting on her life post-graduation, Churchman leaves a piece of advice, "Find that one thing that sparks within you a fire of enthusiasm. Believe in yourself! So many people give up on themselves every day. Persistence and passion are a winning combination and any student, especially a Communication student, who possesses these characteristics, will go far."

~Mac Mullins, Student



## Felix Perrone Receives Departmental Leadership Award

Felix Perrone recently won the Departmental Leadership Award given by the Leadership Studies Program. Leadership, integrity, and dedication are just a few qualities to label Perrone who is president of the Communication Department's honors fraternity, Lambda Pi Eta, the WKU Dodge Ball Club, and the Sports Club Council.

Drs. Jennifer Mize Smith, Angela Jerome, and Helen Sterk nominated Perrone for this award because of his contributions to Lambda Pi Eta, his success in the classroom, and his participation in the National Communication Association Convention held in New Orleans in the Fall of 2011.

Receiving the award was a great and unexpected honor for Perrone. He said, "It's a great feeling knowing that the work I do with Lambda Pi Eta doesn't go unnoticed." Recognition is a big deal to Perrone because he wants his department to be known for its accomplishments. Perrone graduated in May, 2012 with a B.A. in Corporate and Organizational Communication. He will be a graduate assistant and a student in the department's M. A. program beginning in August, 2012.

*~ Jaye T. Darden, Student*



# Join us on Facebook, Twitter & YouTube



<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/31890129066/>  
(WKU Department of Communication—Students and Alumni)



WKUDeptofComm



<http://www.youtube.com/user/WKUCommDepartment?feature=watch>

# Faculty Profile: Blair Thompson, Ph.D.



**Dr. Blair Thompson**

Dr. Blair Thompson, Ph.D., began his journey to becoming a Communication professor and researcher by acquiring his B.A. from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, where he majored in English and minored in Communication. He went on to receive his M.A. at Minnesota State University in Speech Communication where he also served as a graduate teaching assistant. In 2007, Dr. Thompson obtained his doctorate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Communication Studies where he also served as a graduate teaching assistant. While at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Dr. Thompson received the University Graduate Teaching Assistant Award.

In 2007, Dr. Thompson moved to Kentucky to take the position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at WKU. Dr. Thompson has helped the Department of Communication move towards the mission of the department by leading the revision process for the undergraduate majors as well as transforming COMM 145 from public speaking to a hybrid course, covering both public speaking and information concerning the key realms of communication (e.g., interpersonal, intercultural, and group).

Dr. Thompson is active of the National Communication Association (NCA) and Central States Communication Association (CSCA). He has served as secretary for the Basic Course Division of NCA since 2010 and as a nominating committee member in the Instructional Development Division since 2009. In CSCA, he has served as Vice Chair for the Communication Education Interest Group, Cooper Award Committee Chair, and Vice Chair for Basic Course Interest Group. Dr. Thompson is also involved in the Basic Course Director Association and Kentucky Communication Association. Dr. Thompson claims that he reached higher education in his courses by challenging students thinking in the classroom as well as exposing them to the complexity of communication.

**“Understanding that people come from different backgrounds and experiences helps you to learn from and respect one another, which in turn helps everyone work together.”**

It may seem like Dr. Thompson has a lot on his plate, but being involved has not held him back from his passion for research. Thus far, Dr. Thompson has structured the development of the Student Academic Support Scale and the Parental Academic Support Scale. According to Dr. Thompson, “These scales have the potential to gain a broader understanding how students and parents communicate support to assist students from the elementary through collegiate levels.”

Dr. Thompson currently has twelve peer-reviewed publications. Dr. Thompson’s research primarily focuses on parent-teacher communication, student academic support, computer-mediated communication, pedagogical relationships, construction of power in the classroom. Dr. Thompson has plans that will exceed the expectations of students. His interest in computer-mediated communication has led his future research to developing a cellphone application that universities across the country can use to track student academic support, and increase student retention.

Dr. Thompson has spent five years in the Department of Communication working with the other professors, and will be applying for tenure in the fall. He works well with his colleagues because of his understanding of communication. Dr. Thompson states,

“Understanding that people come from different backgrounds and experiences helps you to learn from and respect one another, which in turn helps everyone work together.” The Department of Communication is very fortunate to have such a diligent, passionate, and determined professor that will help the Department of Communication succeed their mission.

~ Landon White, Student

# Faculty Profile: Jennifer Mize Smith, Ph.D.



**Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith**

After graduating from WKU with a B.A. in Corporate and Organizational Communication, Dr. Mize Smith went on to receive her M.P.A. in Public Administration from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a concentration in nonprofit management. She later earned her doctorate in Organizational Communication at Purdue University with a concentration in the Social Construction of Philanthropy.

Dr. Mize Smith's research agenda explores the social construction of philanthropy and philanthropic identity. She examines various contexts and discourses that might influence one's perceived self-image, including the need to volunteer, give, and generally support charitable causes.

Her most recent project is a book chapter entitled "Volunteer tourists: The identity and discourse of

travelers combining largesse and leisure," which was competitively selected for inclusion in the book, *Communication and the volunteer experience: Exploring the organizational dynamics of volunteering in multiple contexts*. Her research for the chapter is based on an ethnography she completed while participating in a week-long voluntourism trip to Colombia, South America. She worked alongside the volunteer tourists and explored how they talked about and made sense of their interactions and experiences.

Along with the research projects she is currently working on, Dr. Mize Smith teaches a number of courses at WKU: Small Group Communication, Organizational Communication, and Public Speaking at the undergraduate level, as well as Communication in the Nonprofit Sector, Organizational Identification, Employee Communication, and Qualitative Methods in the graduate

**Dr. Mize Smith received the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Kentucky Communication Association last fall.**

program. She will also be teaching a new Organizational Theory class for graduate students in the Fall of 2012. Her Small Group Communication course has garnered a great deal of university and community attention

as her students create semester-long philanthropic projects to aid non-profit organizations throughout the Bowling Green community. She received the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Kentucky Communication Association last fall.

Dr. Mize Smith serves the communication discipline as well. She is on the editorial board for *Management Communication Quarterly* journal and is actively involved in the National Communication Association. She currently serves as the Marketing Director for the Southern States Communication Association. In April, Dr. Mize Smith presented an essay at the Southern States Communication Association conference in San Antonio, Texas. The essay, co-authored with outstanding graduate student, Ashley Miller, earned the Top Paper in the Applied Communication Division Award.

This fall, Dr. Mize Smith will be applying for tenure. She says that since receiving her undergraduate degree from Western Kentucky, she has found it interesting to come back as a faculty member and be a colleague of some of her former professors. Her favorite memory was the first time she wore her commencement regalia and walked down the aisles of Diddle Arena, the same path she had once walked in her graduation gown to receive her first college diploma.



# Faculty News

## Cecile Garmon, Ph.D.

Cecile Garmon received the “Women of Achievement” college award given by Bowling Green Human Rights Commission.

## Holly Payne, Ph.D.

Holly Payne and co-author Sally Hastings’ (University of Central Florida) research project, “Expressions of dissent in email: Qualitative insights into uses and meanings of organizational dissent” has been accepted for publication by the *Journal of Business Communication*. Dr. Payne also

presented, “Interpersonal skills in advising” for the Master Advisor Certificate Program through WKU’s Academic Advising and Retention Center in March. Additionally, Dr. Payne has been approved for a research sabbatical for the Spring 2013 semester. She plans to continue her research in organizational dissent expression.

## Jennifer Mize Smith, Ph.D.

Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith was appointed to a second term on the WKU Institutional Review Board by Dr. Gordon Baylis. She has two new publication in press: “All good works are not created equal:

How employees make sense of corporate philanthropy” in the *Southern Communication Journal* and “Philanthropic identity at work: Employer influences on the charitable giving attitudes and behaviors of employees” in the *Journal of Business Communication*. In addition, she presented a paper “Inducing donor identification in a capital campaign: A case study in higher education fundraising” which was competitively selected by the Applied Communication Division and presented at the annual meeting of the Southern States Communication Association annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, where it was awarded Top Paper in Applied Communication.

## Faculty Achievement Highlights

Faculty from the Department of Communication had several achievements during the 2011-12 school year:

- ◆ Twelve research publications were published or in press.
- ◆ One faculty member, along with a student, had an article published.
- ◆ Thirteen papers were presented at conferences.
- ◆ Four faculty panel respondents and one panel chair.
- ◆ Ten faculty members held organizational offices.
- ◆ Five faculty members served on editorial boards and as journal reviewers.
- ◆ Fifteen faculty members gave speeches representing the Department of Communication at WKU events.
- ◆ Seven faculty members served on thirteen university level committees.
- ◆ Two faculty members were co-sponsors of the WKU Toastmasters Club.

# Alumni Updates

**Melissa McCubbin Barman, M.A. Communication, 1992**—Missy works as a Specialist, Community Information for the Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Scott Crutcher, B.A. Communication Studies, 1994**—Scott is working at Merck and Company as Lead Executive Representative.

**Sam Ford, B.A. — Communication Studies, 2005**—Sam received a M.A. from M.I.T., and is now Director of Digital Strategy with Peppercom Strategic Communications.

**Tiffanie Foster, B.A. Communication Studies, 2010**—Working as a Human Resource Specialist at Fort Knox in Radcliff, Kentucky.

**Jamie Froedge, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 1998**—Currently working at Emerson Hyperscale Solutions as Vice President & General Manager.

**Lauren Willoughby Gold, B.A.—Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2007**—Currently working as the Associate Director of Admissions at Sullivan University.

**Patti Grice, M.A. Communication, 2010**—Currently works for Humana, Inc. as a Social Media Community Manager.

**Michael Hardesty, B.A.—Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2006**—Works as a manager of a marketing research firm in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Lindsay Heinlein, B.A.—Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2003**—Currently the PENCIL Partnership Coordinator in Harlem, the Heights, and the South Bronx, New York.

**Erik Jenkins, M.A. Communication, 2002**—Erik is the Head Track & Field / Cross County Coach at WKU.

**John Rowley, B.A.—Corporate & Organizational Communication, 1996**—John is a partner at Fletcher/Rowley in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Ashcon Karbasi, B.A. Communication Studies, 2008**—Working as a Kentucky State Trooper.

**Jean-Marie Lawson, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 1999**—Jean-Marie is Vice President of Marketing for Hartland Equipment, and co-host of the “Jean-Marie and Joe Show” radio program. She has received the Continued Excellence Award from the Kentucky Women in Agriculture for her outstanding work and service to the community.

**Lindsey McClain, B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2003**—Currently working at Franklin Bank & Trust as their Marketing Director.

**Laura Cooley Rawlins, M.A. Communication, 2008**—She received a Ph.D. in December 2011 from BGSU, and is currently working as an Education Coordinator for the American Academy on Communication in Healthcare in Missouri.

**Peggy Kirby Sewell, M.A. Communication, 1980**—Works for the St. Lucie County Public Schools in Vero Beach, Florida as a District Behavior Analyst. She was also the Assistant Director of the ARC of Indian River County for many years.

**Ryan Smith, B.A.—Communication Studies, 2010**—Ryan is the Head Coach for the North Oldham High School Lacrosse team. He also works at Trilogy Health Care as their Activities & Communication Director.

**Andy Spears, Ph.D., M.A.—Communication, 1999**—Andy is president of Spears Strategy, a public affairs consulting firm based in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Teresa Miller Stokes, B.A.—Communication Studies, 1991**—Works at Valspar as a Research and Development Lab Technician.

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)



Laura Ringer



Chelsea McCay



Rachel Clark



Lia Madias

# Spring 2012

# Student Workers



Bethany Hughes



Missy Meige

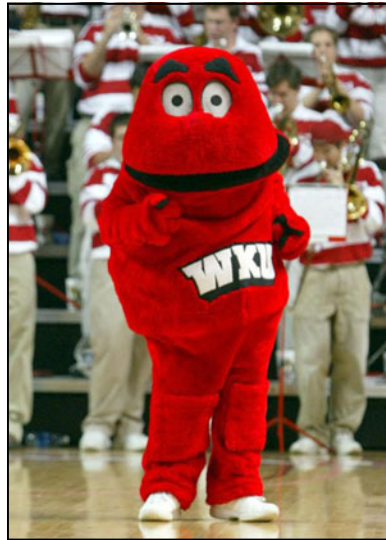


Mattie Russell

Western Kentucky  
University  
Department of  
Communication

130 Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center  
1906 College Heights Blvd. #21029  
Bowling Green, KY 42101  
Phone: 270-745-3296  
Fax: 270-745-3295

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



For information on giving to the  
Department of Communication contact:

### Leslie Watkins

Senior Director of Development for Potter  
College of Arts and Letters  
Institutional Advancement  
Western Kentucky University  
1906 College Heights Blvd.  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Phone: 270-745-3399

Fax: (270) 745-5300

E-Mail: [leslie.watkins@wku.edu](mailto:leslie.watkins@wku.edu)

Or visit:  
[wku.edu/campaign/how.html](http://wku.edu/campaign/how.html)

## CommuniQuotes

“Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.”

*William Butler Yeats*

“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.”

*Ralph Nichols*

“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”

*Anthony Robbins*

“Be sincere; be brief; be seated.”

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*