

# COMMUNIQUE

Spring, 2016

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## Tribute to Dr. Tammy Jeffries

The Department of Communication suffered a great loss at the beginning of this year. Dr. Tammy Jeffries passed away on Friday, January 17th of natural causes. Dr. Jeffries was only with the department for a short time, but during that time, she was able to influence the lives of so many of her students. Her time in the Department of Communication was spent as an Assistant Professor and Minority Post-doctoral Fellow. She was able to bring a new style and light into the courses she taught for the department. The passing of Dr.

Jeffries has influenced the department and students but her time in the department was valued greatly by all.

When the Department of Communication announced that Dr. Jeffries had passed, students immediately took to the department's Facebook page to post their condolences and share how much they would miss

Dr. Jeffries. Emily Green shared, "When I think of Dr. Jeffries I remember the way that she was able to light up a room with a simple, casual conversation. She had a gift that she could make an entire class of different backgrounds feel comfortable discussing any topic, which isn't always the easiest to do." Talking about Dr. Jeffries with other students



Dr. Tammy Jeffries

was truly one of the lucky students who had the opportunity to take one of her classes. From the first day of class, it was clear she was unique. On day one, she made the effort to learn about every student and make sure the entire class felt comfortable. As the semester continued, she made the same effort day after day to connect to her students



and hearing stories about her made me realize that I

## Dr. Tammy Jeffries ... *cont'd*

and create an open dialogue with the entire class. I can personally say her class was one of my favorite classes because it was so different and full of the optimism Dr. Jeffries brought to everything she did.

The impact Dr. Jeffries made on her students was clearly enormous, but she also was able to benefit the university as a whole by founding the interCULTURAL Club. The interCULTURAL club was created to promote equality among races, religions, ages and

abilities. This concept of a club including individuals from a variety of cultures was new to WKU. Dr. Jeffries always believed in true equality and believed that communication was the key to resolving many of those issues.

Dr. Jeffries was more to her students than just a professor, she was more to her colleagues than just a member of the department, and she was more to the university than just another employee; she was a friend, a special individual, and a light to everyone's day. The people she was able to connect with while

at WKU for such a short time will remember her impact for a long time to come. The faculty and students that knew her will miss her presence and unique spirit being part of our Department of Communication. The department is setting up an award for excellence in Inter-racial Communication in her name.

~ Sydney Bickett, Student

## Jeffries Award for Excellence in Diversity-Enhancing Communication

In Dr. Jeffries' honor, as a department, we are inaugurating an award, the Jeffries Award for Excellence in Diversity-Enhancing Communication. It is open to any graduate or undergraduate students who are champions of diversity-enhancing communication, promoting understanding across cultural divides, fostering dialogue to promote equality and care for others, whether on campus or the

broader community. It will be awarded the first time in December, 2016.

If you would like to donate toward this award, please go to <https://securelb.imodules.com/s/808/form/index.aspx?sid=808&gid=1&pgid=1282&cid=2534&bledit=1&dids=37> and in the "please provide any additional information regarding your gift," indicate your intention.

## Dr. Larry Snyder Named Dean of Potter College of Arts and Letters



Dr. Larry Snyder

After an intensive national search and review of 50 highly qualified applicants, Dr. Larry Snyder

has been named Dean of Potter College of Arts and Letters (PCAL). Snyder is not a new face to Potter College as he has served in many roles including associate dean and associate professor of Religion. Along the way, he served as the interim head for the Department of Communication, so he is familiar with the needs and goals of the department. According to Dean Snyder, Communication is one of the core programs within Potter College. It gives students the ability to mix and match with many other majors and minors that the university has to offer."

In his new role, Dean Snyder aims to create a new five-year strategic plan,

create a diversity task force to "improve recruitment and retention and to identify the needs of our diverse student population," and create an Alumni Advisory board.

Snyder believes that Potter College of Arts and Letter has some of the most "devoted alumni." He wants an Alumni Advisory board to focus on a more coherent outreach plan for Alumni to get involved. Snyder also plans to reach out to businesses and nonprofit organizations to help with internships for students and sponsorships for the college.

The faculty within the Department of Communication are looking forward to his perspective and excited to be a part of new initiatives under his leadership.

~ Brandy Neelly, Student

## Message from Helen Sterk, Department Head



**Dr. Helen Sterk**

Every year, good things happen in the Department of Communication. This past year, Dr. Laura Brown joined the department, increasing our reach in research methods and health communication. Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith began her term as the University's Institutional Review Board Chair. Dr. Holly Payne edited and published the *Kentucky Communication Journal*. We featured Dr. Blair Thompson's research this spring through a well-attended campus presentation. We sent many faculty members and students to regional and national conferences where they presented top-ranked papers. And last fall, with the able support of office associate Laura Wagoner and our student workers, we hosted the annual national conference of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender. We also experienced losses and look forward to good new initiatives.

This school year, we marked the

passing of two very important people, Dr. Regis O'Connor, long-time professor and also head of the Department of Communication, and Dr. Tammy Jeffries, our Minority Post-Doctoral Fellow. Dr. O'Connor passed away on August 21, 2015 and Dr. Jeffries on January 15, 2016. Both mattered to us.

Dr. O'Connor's 29 year career at WKU featured many accomplishments, including "Debate Coach, Professor of Speech, supervisor of student teachers, as a member of the Graduate Studies

Faculty, Department Head of Communication and Theatre (consisting of speech, speech pathology, broadcasting, theatre and dance) and Staff Assistant to the Dean of Potter College" (<http://www.jckirbyandson.com/obituary/Dr.-John-Regis-O-Connor/Bowling-Green-KY/1538479>). Please read the obituary for some of the many other things he did, including parliamentarian for the WKU Academic Council from 1976 to 1996 and founding member of Bowling Green's Habitat for Humanity. Drs. Kell, Winn and Sterk represented the department at his funeral and celebrated his life together. Dr. O'Connor helped to make the department what it is today. The wide range of his life interests befits the kind of broad engagement with life that Communication engenders.

Dr. Tammy Jeffries joined the Department in the fall of 2014. Even though she was with us for but a

short time, three semesters, she left her mark. We held a Quaker style memorial service on January 26, honored to remember her in the presence of her mother and sister. At the service, attended by about 60 people—on a day that school was disrupted by a snowstorm—students, faculty, administrators and staff—testified to the impact she made on their lives. Here's a link to a great story written by Communication major, Andrew Henderson, on Dr. Jeffries: [http://wkuherald.com/life/enter-in-peace-family-students-colleagues-remember-life-of-professor/article\\_3f8cbc66-c3cf-11e5-9c5d-db5ab66fa970.html?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_campaign=user-share](http://wkuherald.com/life/enter-in-peace-family-students-colleagues-remember-life-of-professor/article_3f8cbc66-c3cf-11e5-9c5d-db5ab66fa970.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=user-share). Dr. Jeffries opened us all to significant conversations on race, gender, and class, particularly race.

Next year, we will begin the year with significant infrastructure improvements, thanks to successful proposals to the dean and provost and to monies earned through course fees and by faculty through online, summer and winter teaching credits channeled to the department by the Division for Extended Learning and Outreach (DELO).

The most noticeable improvement will be the addition of digital signage (aka a very large screen TV) located just outside the department's office. On it, we'll promote the department, our people, and events. Other improvements include new computers in every classroom, the Communication Success Center, and our conference room, plus new computers for our office staff. And we'll have new projectors in several classrooms. Finally, three more faculty members will get new desks.

So, good things are going on in the department. We're working hard to make our programs the best in the state!



## Dr. Mize Smith Appointed to IRB Chair



**Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith**

The Department of Communication congratulates Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith on her appointment as 2015-16 Co-Chair of the Internal Review Board (IRB) and as Chair in 2016-17. The IRB is responsible for approving all research conducted with human

subjects at Western Kentucky University. Those interested in performing research (student or faculty) must submit their research materials for approval before they begin gathering information. According to Dr. Mize Smith, most research requests are evaluated by herself and Co-Chair Dr. Scott Lasley (Political Science). “We will review over 500 research applications this academic year.” In the event there is a research proposal that poses moderate risk, or involves a protected group like minors, the full Board led by Dr. Mize Smith decides the validity of the research request. “I especially like to see the student applications and the ways in which they are learning to conduct research to better understand the problems and phenomena of interest

to them.”

Given her background in Organizational Communication research and nearly six years of experience with the Internal Review Board, Dr. Mize Smith is well positioned for this new role. In her classes, students learn that she has a thorough and deliberate approach to teaching and research, qualities that will enhance her work on the committee. For her small group communication course students must obtain IRB approval for the major project. In leading students through the process she does not trivialize the necessity of protection for human subjects, but instead emphasizes why it is vital. She is genuinely enthusiastic about making sure her student’s research submissions are of the highest quality.

Dr. Mize Smith is a great example of how the Department of Communication is actively involved in the research process. For more information on the protection of human subjects and the internal review board visit the website for the Office of Research Integrity at <https://www.wku.edu/compliance/>.

*~ Josh Starnes, Student*

## Something to JUMP About

The Department of Communication is pleased to announce the first graduate of the Joint Undergraduate and Graduate Program (JUMP). Michaela Ash is finishing up her program and will graduate this summer. The JUMP program allows students to finish their bachelor’s and master’s degrees simultaneously.

Michaela will complete a Master of Arts in Organizational Communication and Bachelor’s degrees in Communication Studies and Agri-

culture in August, 2016. As an undergraduate she was involved with Lambda Pi Eta, the Communication Honors Society and Block and Bridle through the Agriculture Department. Her interest in Communication was first piqued in Ms. Stacy Gish’s COMM 145, the introductory communication course required for all students. Ms. Gish encouraged her to join the communication field because of the talent she dis-



**Michaela Ash**

## Something to JUMP About... *cont'd*



**Dr. Angela Jerome,  
Graduate Advisor**

played in the class. She joined the JUMP program to set herself apart from others in the workforce, and she appreciated the opportunity to finish both of her degrees within five years. After graduation, Michaela plans to work in public relations and marketing.

Dr. Angela Jerome, Associate Professor and the Graduate Program Coordinator has worked closely with Michaela co-authoring papers and recently presented at the International Conference for

Crisis and Risk Communication in Orlando, Florida. According to Dr. Jerome, "Michaela is a prime example of the quality students we have in our undergraduate and graduate programs." Michaela's advice for students is simply, "Don't second guess yourself."

Students who are interested in the JUMP program should contact Dr. Jerome or Mr. Crawley. We are pleased to have new students joining the program each semester!

~ Nicholas Jacobs, Student

## Department of Communication's Award Winners!

This spring, the Department of Communication recognized four individuals as our top undergraduate and graduate students. Tyler Rife, Karen Powell, Emily Gerard, and Paige Settles are among the students being recognized for their outstanding work within the Department of Communication over the past year. These students have gone above and beyond to excel as successful communicators.

Graduate assistant, Tyler Rife, was presented with the Outstanding Graduate Student award. He delegated his time between teaching a section of COMM 145, assisting in research for the department, working on the *Kentucky Journal of Communica-*



**Tyler Rife  
Outstanding Graduate Student**

*tion*, and coaching for the Forensics Team. Tyler also has authored conference papers including, "Public Reason and Perceptions of Terrorism." His research was accepted at the National Communication Association conference in Las Vegas, NV, and received Top Student Paper recognition in the Peace and Conflict Division. Tyler also wrote a paper with Dr. Ishii entitled "Facilitating Communication with Power: Text Messaging Grati-fications among College Students in the U.S. and Japan" which was accepted to the International Communication Association conference in Fukuoka, Japan.



**Karen Powell  
Outstanding Corporate & Organizational  
Communication Student**

Outstanding Corporate and Organizational Communication Major Award recipient, Karen Powell, credits her award to "my performance in my Corporate & Organi-

- Cont'd on page 6



## Award Winners! ... *cont'd*

zational Communication classes, involvement in departmental organizations, and my involvement/ leadership on campus.” Karen’s paper, “Relationships Later In Life and Online Dating” written for Dr. Thompson’s Interpersonal Communication course helped her gain this award. Karen is also active in the

experience here at WKU to the support of Department of Communication faculty and staff. They are truly the greatest and I have loved being a part of our department family for the past four years!”

Emily Gerard was recognized as the Outstanding Communication Studies Major. Emily’s academic suc-

Communication class entitled, “Reaching, But Not Far Enough: Internationalization at Western Kentucky University.” Paige describes her paper as “a case study that examined internationalization efforts at WKU through the lens of academic literature on the topic of internationalization in higher education. It was a



**Emily Gerard**  
Outstanding Communication Studies Student



**Paige Settles**  
Outstanding Research Award

department and across campus. She is a member of the Communication Ambassadors, President of Lambda Pi Eta Communication Honor Society, an active member of the Kappa Delta Sorority, founder and co-chair of the Dance Big Red, and was the 2015 Homecoming Queen. Karen says “I credit my excellent collegiate

cess, work as a researcher, grade point average, and departmental citizenship and service have earned her this award. Her presence in the department has stimulated the intellectual community.

Paige Settles received Department’s Research Award for her paper written for , Dr. Kong’s Intercultural

great experience, and I really enjoyed writing a paper that allowed me to apply the academic concepts to something that is incredibly relevant to students in both communication and the broader field of higher education.”

Congratulations to all of the award winners this year!

*~Austin Trumbo , Student*

**Communication is key to a better self,  
better life, and better future.**

## The Spotlight Settles on Paige

Paige Settles is a 22 year old senior at Western Kentucky University double majoring in Communication and Political Science. Ms. Settles has set a great example for every student on campus through the prestigious awards she has received, the effort that she has put into the Student Government Association (SGA), and her scholarship for the national award winning forensics team.

Last year Ms. Settles received the Outstanding Undergraduate Student award from the Department of Communication, and this year she received the department's Undergraduate Research Award. While on the forensics team, she has been a part of four national championship teams, an international championship team, and has won one individual national championship in impromptu speaking at the 2015 National Forensics Association (NFA) national tournament.

"I love being on the forensics team because it gives me the opportunity to travel all over the country, meet new people from all over the country, and constantly be learning fascinating things." During her sophomore year on the team she had the opportunity to travel to Paris, France to compete in the International Forensics Association tournament where she was fortunate enough to win the international championship title. Ms. Settles said,

"The experience of traveling to Paris was even more amazing than the tournament. We visited historic sites, ate French food, and got to experience a beautiful culture." She has also had the honor of serving for the past two years as one of two student representatives on the National Forensics Association



**Paige Settles**

(NFA) national council. Ms. Settles explained by saying, "It has given me such a unique insight into how the organization works."

In addition to her awards, Paige Settles is an active member of the Student Government Association (SGA) where

she serves as Speaker of the Senate. "As Speaker of the Senate, I chair the Senate meetings each Tuesday, coordinate with each of the senate committees, and set the agenda for each Senate meeting."

When asked how she handles her busy load, she stressed her reliance on a well-planned calendar, "It's definitely a lot to juggle. It would be impossible if I didn't keep a calendar that planned out every minute of my day, but doing so much has taught me that you can pack a lot into a day if you plan and schedule it carefully." She also expressed enthusiasm for online classes, and that they are great because they give a lot of flexibility. "I love going to a university that has small class sizes, a vibrant honors college, and a focus on undergraduate research. I feel like I have had so many more opportunities here than I would have at another university."

The Department of Communication is proud of Paige and wish her the best of luck as she pursues graduate school. We're excited to see where life takes her next!

~ Chesli Spriggs, Student

## Above and Beyond: School Crisis Communication

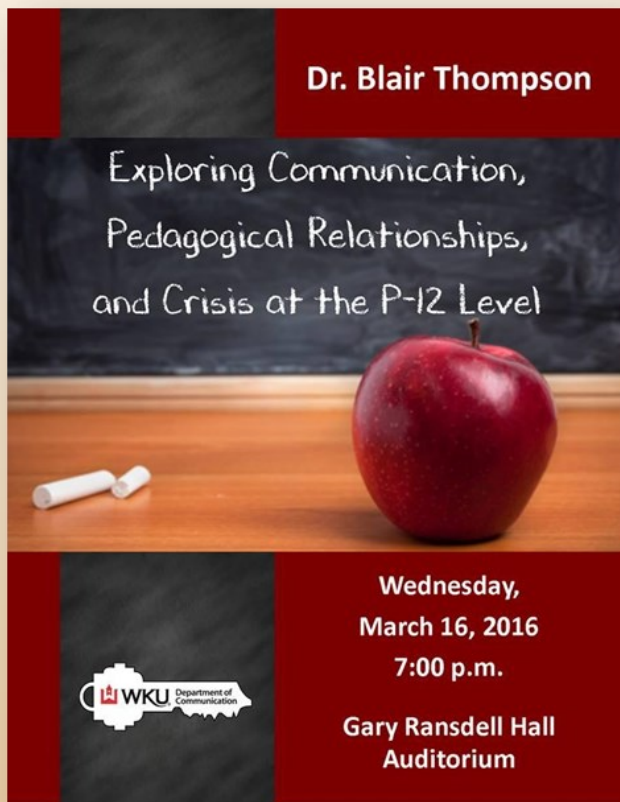
Wednesday, March 16, 2016 Dr. Blair Thompson spoke at Gary Ransdell Hall on “Exploring Communication, Pedagogical Relationships, and Crisis at the P-12 Level.” This lecture was a part of the ‘Above and Beyond’ speaker series, hosted by the Communication Department here at Western Kentucky University.

Dr. Thompson presented his ongoing research on analyzing school crisis

national reporters and struggle to manage the information that is being released to reporters.” Another issue that schools must deal with after crisis is the inaccurate information being reported by the media. “This can be very confusing and harmful to schools when trying to control a story and release only what is necessary in these highly tense scenarios.”

Social media can contribute to unwanted

Dr. Thompson is passionate about this field of study and provided important research for schools in the journal, *Computers and Human Behavior*. His most recent publication on school crisis communication and social media which he published with colleagues from WKU



Dr. Blair Thompson

communication, studying student and parental academic support, and examining how computer-mediated communication is transforming various pedagogical relationships (i.e. student-teacher, parent-teacher, and parent-child).

During his lecture, Dr. Thompson focused his attention on the main areas of struggle for schools, before and after a crisis, such as a school shooting or bomb threat. According to Dr. Thompson, “Most schools are not prepared to talk to

publicity regarding crisis management. Dr. Thompson described a scenario where a student sent out a picture of a young boy’s body before his parents were even aware of the situation. With the advances today in social media, it is likely that the public will receive information in a very raw form. Crisis management is put in place for schools so that students and faculty can be protected, information controlled, and situations such as school shootings can be effectively handled.

and Clemson University is accessible at the following link: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S074756321500480X>

~ Emily Hayden, Student



## Department of Communication Faculty and Students Participate in Regional Conferences

Western Kentucky University faculty and students participated in the Central States Communication Association (CSCA) in Grand Rapids, Michigan on April 13-17, 2016. Dr. Blair Thompson is serving as the second Vice President of the organization and is hosted the pre-conference which consists of two sessions centering on the conference theme for next year, "Create." This theme focuses on how identities, relationships, culture, and organizations are created through communication. Additionally, Dr. Angela Jerome, Dr. Jieyoung Kong, and Mr. Clint Haynes made presentations. The Department was pleased to support students presenting at the conference including: Jessica Cherry, Daniel Chick, Natalie Webb, Charlotte Briggs, Peter Vawyk, Adam Wilkins, and Olivia Scheper.

Students and faculty also participated in the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA) on April 6, 2016 in Austin, Texas. WKU's own Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith, Dr. Laura Brown, and Ms.

Heather Strode were in attendance this year. Dr. Mize Smith is the Marketing Director for SSCA. As marketing director she is responsi-

Breakfast and other events, and 4) recruiting Institutional members. During the conference, Dr. Mize Smith promotes social media initiatives and encourages attendees to post about the conference via Facebook and Twitter. She also has contests and prize drawings to raise awareness to get others interested in connecting SSCA online. Dr. Mize Smith said that "Securing the program advertising is perhaps my most important task because that revenue makes it possible for the association to print a nice conference program." Dr. Mize Smith is a great asset to the SSCA. In her five years' tenure, she has generated more than \$50,000 for the Association.

For more information on the regional communication associations, visit [www.csc-net.org](http://www.csc-net.org) and [www.scca.net](http://www.scca.net).



Dr. Blair Thompson, Jessica Cherry and Cathryn Ellis at CSCA



Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith, Dr. Laura Brown and Heather Strode at SSCA

ble for 1) securing advertising for the conference program, 2) recruiting exhibitors, such as journal and book publishers to participate in the conference, 3) recruiting sponsors for the Undergraduate Honors

tion. For more information on the regional communication associations, visit [www.csc-net.org](http://www.csc-net.org) and [www.scca.net](http://www.scca.net).

## Fifth Annual John Lyne Speech Contest Winners

On Saturday, May 7, 2016, twenty students competed in the fifth annual John Lyne Public Speaking Contest. Instructors in COMM 145 select competitors to represent the class in the competition based upon their presentation of the persuasive speech assignment. The competition is divided into two divisions, one from sections with a business and professional emphasis and the other from general sections. The top three students in each division, their instructors, and their topics are as follows:

### **COMM 145 'Business' Division**

1. Ben Carroll (Bruce Crawley), business proposal for "The Guitar Shop"
2. Brent Beard (Gayle Allison), "Military Suicide Prevention"
3. Jackson Bennett (Jessica McClanahan), sales pitch for "Tesla Model 3"

### **Regular COMM 145 Division**

1. Victoria Taylor (Donna Schiess), "From My Hear to Yours: Donate Blood"
2. Colby Clark (Tyler Rife), "Funding for the Arts"
3. Paul "Francis" Wilson (Donna Schiess), "A 'Year On'"

The top three contestants win cash awards of \$200, \$100 and \$50. The two preliminary rounds are judged by W.K.U. Department of Forensics coaches, including this year Ganer Newman (Director of Forensics), Scott Branton, Jessica Furgeson, Chad Meadows, Benjamin Pyle, and Ben Robin. The top three contestants based upon rankings and ratings are judged in the final round by WKU. "Celebrity" judges. This year, those included Dr. John Lyne (Professor at the University of Pittsburgh and benefactor of the contest), Dr. Barbara Burch (Provost Emeritus and Faculty Regent at WKU), Dr. Lawrence Synder (Dean of Potter College of Arts and Letters), Dr. Helen Sterk (Head of the Department of Communication), and Dr. Blair Thompson (Associate Professor and former Basic Course Director, Department of Communication). Dr. Gary K. Hughes (Instructor and Basic Course Director,

**COMM 145 'B'**



**Dr. John Lyne, Ben Carroll, Brent Beard, Jackson Bennett**

**COMM 145**



**Dr. John Lyne, Victoria Taylor, Colby Clark, Paul 'Francis' Wilson**

Department of Communication, W.K.U.) coordinated and ran this year's competition.

The Department of Communication expresses its appreciation to all the instructors, judges, staff, and students who made the competition possible, but a special thank you goes to Dr. John Lyne as benefactor. Dr. Lyne graduated with an Arts Bachelor degree from WKU in 1971 with a double major in Speech and Philosophy. As a student, he was a debater on the forensics team, President of the Student Government Association, and

a writer for the campus newspaper, the *College Heights Herald*. Since his days at WKU, he earned an M.A. at the University of Texas-Austin, a Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin, taught and served as the department chair at the University of Iowa, and teaches and serves as department chair and department director of graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Lyne also serves on the faculty of the Center for Bioethics and Health Law of the University of Pittsburgh.

~ Gary K. Hughes, Ph.D.  
& Laura Wagoner, B.I.S.



## Staying Connected -- #WKUCOMM

Social media is taking the world by storm, and the WKU Department of Communication is keeping you in the loop. Taking advantage of nearly every social media platform available, the Department of Communication can be found on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, WordPress, LinkedIn, Tumblr and YouTube. The variety of platforms allows for alumni, current students, and prospective students to stay connected with the department at their convenience.

The Twitter and Instagram pages are linked—meaning what is posted to Instagram is also shared on the department’s Twitter feed. This allows for users to follow the department on the social media platform of their preference, and not miss out on any information. Arguably, the two most intriguing social media accounts for the department are the YouTube and Pinterest pages. There you will see our students

in action, on and off campus, through various videos and photos. It is safe to say no matter which social media account you are following

for, Allan Moreno, praised the Department of Communication’s twitter stating “[it] offers the opportunity for the department to shine

light on special events, and most importantly helps myself and other students to feel a part of the community within the department.” Social media is not only a great tool for getting content to the alumni, students and staff whom are always on-the-go; but it also creates and maintains a community within the Department of Communication.

Be the first to know what’s happening in the Department of Communication by following along on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram @WKUDeptofComm. Follow, like, or hashtag #WKUComm to help spread the word about the great things going on in the Department of Communication!

~Victoria Hoagland, Student



(all of them, we hope!) you are able to experience all that the department has to offer, right at your fingertips.

WKU senior and Corporate and Organizational Communication ma-



## Supporting Students Outside of Class

Most of us are aware that public speaking ranks as a top fear for many people, even scarier than death. Given this, it no surprise that many incoming freshman experience some anxiety when signing up for the basic

geared toward specific areas in communication, such as preparing introductions, conclusions, citations, outlining, and research ideas. These workshops also offer assistance to students who are struggling with

Director recently conducted a workshop on “Introductions and Conclusions.” According to Dr. Hughes, “Students appreciate these workshops and seem enthusiastic to receive extra assistance.”

communication course. In order to assist students outside of the classroom, the Department of Communication offers workshops to assist any student interested in the basic course, COMM 145.

public speaking anxiety. Typically, these sessions last about an hour, and are open to any student struggling in these particular areas.

Plans are in the works for the Fall 2016 workshops. If any student is interested in this opportunity, or have any questions about these workshops please contact the Department of Communication.

These workshop sessions are

Workshops are conducted by full-time and adjunct faculty members. Dr. Gary Hughes, the Basic Course

~Kaitlin Talley, Student

## Success Connection

With final exams right around the corner, it's that time of year when students begin experiencing feelings of existential dread. Luckily, students in any Communication course can come to the Department of Communication Success Center where tutors are standing by to assist. This helpful place is in Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center in room 138. For those of you who find FAC hard to navigate, the Success Center is across the hall from the Department of Communication main office. The Success Center offers tutoring for students in need of editing, revising, GoReact, and APA formatting help. The Center contains multiple computers for student use and is the only open computer lab in Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center.



Gavin Kirkwood, a graduate assistant, leads the tutors in the center. They offer assistance with the basic communication course, but also in helping students with papers, projects, and presentations from any undergraduate or graduate-level course. The tutors take their time in giving targeted feedback to help students succeed. The center's hours are as follows: Monday-Wednesday 10:30a.m. - 4:30p.m., Thursday 11a.m. - 4:30p.m., and Friday 9a.m. - 12:00p.m. The Communication Success Center is just another valuable resource the Department of Communication offers students for getting ahead.

~Isabella Sachs, Student



## Cool Internships

The Department of Communication here at Western Kentucky University prides themselves on giving students the tools to be successful upon graduation, one of those tools being the internship program. Two students decided to share their internship experience to encourage students and alumni to get involved.

### Intern Spotlight

**Name:** Maggie Shelton

**Internship Site:** WKU Student Activities Office



**Maggie Shelton**

#### How has your internship shaped your career goals?

I coordinated many different leadership opportunities through the WKU Student Activities office. I am passionate about student development and making the college experience better for undergraduate students. Through my internship I was able to help coordinate IFC recruitment, the WKU Leadership Conference, Panhellenic recruitment and Greek Leadership Symposium. I was also able to

plan and implement WKU's week long leadership retreat for 60 of WKU's top leaders, LeaderShape and the weekend freshman retreat, Weekend in the Woods.

#### What did you gain?

This position provided me with a realistic preview of what a job in Student Affairs can offer. My internship experience has helped me to land another internship at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island during the summer of 2016. These experiences will help make me more marketable in the field of Higher Education.

#### What's next for Maggie?

Next year I will be working for Phi Mu Fraternity as a National Leadership Consultant; I will travel across the country visiting different Phi Mu chapters assisting with recruitment and retention efforts and leadership development.

### Intern Spotlight

**Name:** Sydney Bickett

**Internship Site:** WKU Human Resources Office



**Sydney Bickett**

#### What do you do as intern for WKU Human Resources?

I create and run the Top Life Wellness

program's social media sites i.e. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook. I have also assisted with the planning of WKU's Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day which is in April. Those are the two main projects I spent my time on, but I also do tasks like making new employee packets or formatting the employee exit interviews.

#### What are you liking so far about the internship?

The HR department has been an amazing location to do my internship. The staff are great and very welcoming; working here has really allowed me to put the communication skills I've spent years learning to the test. I also enjoy having the freedom determine the best way to complete projects. Also being on campus is a big perk. It has truly been a great experience.

#### Benefits to Offering an Internship Program

1. Find future employees
2. Test-drive the talent
3. Increase productivity
4. Increase employee-retention rate
5. Enhance perspective
6. Take advantage of low-cost labor
7. Find free-of-charge
8. Give back to the community
9. Support students
10. Benefit your organization

#### How can alumni get involved with the Department of Communication Internship program?

We are always looking for internship opportunities for our Communication majors. If you would like to work with us in placing students, please contact Dr. Mize-Smith, Department of Communication Internship Coordinator at Jennifer..mize.smith@wku.edu.

*~Allan Moreno, Student*

## Spotlight on Department Curriculum Changes



We have exciting new curriculum changes happening in the Department of Communication! This semester marks the first time that the Communication Studies Major allows COMM 489 Internship in Communication to substitute for COMM 494 Capstone in Communication. This change allows Communication students to gain more hands-on experience in preparation for their careers. Additionally, COMM 200 Communication Foundations is now allowed as a substitute for ENG 300 Writing in the Disciplines for general education requirements. But more exciting changes are coming in the future too! Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith, chair of the department's curriculum committee explains that the department is in the process of creating COMM 410 Study Abroad in Communication, a class that allows students to gain upper level communication credit through a variety of study abroad experiences.

While these curriculum changes are great for the department, the process behind them is a bit more complicated than many of us realize. Dr. Holly Payne, Undergraduate Curriculum Com-

mittee member, explains that proposals must first be reviewed by the committee in order to determine if they are feasible. For instance, the committee answers questions like "Do we have the faculty to teach this course?" and "How would this impact graduation requirements?"

Once the committee has gathered enough data and determined a change would be realistic to implement, the entire Communication faculty votes on the change. If they approve, the proposal then must be approved by the Potter College Curriculum Committee and the University Curriculum Committee before it finally requires approval from the University Senate. Given this stringent set of requirements, it is understandable that curriculum changes typically take months if not years to make it from the initial idea stage to being implemented.

In addition to formal changes to the department's curriculum, faculty members are also working diligently to improve assessment in their courses. Dr. Helen Sterk, Department Chair, explains that we as a department are working to align our program objec-

tives with the National Communication Association's learning outcomes. She explains, "We want to stay current as a department and we want to ensure we are teaching things that are fresh, new, and important." To accomplish this, the department's faculty are working to improve assessment of individual courses and the program as a whole.

Dr. Mize Smith explains that this assessment is both qualitative and quantitative, with professors meeting to discuss their courses informally and also employing written and verbal assessments across courses. This includes utilizing common assignments across course sections. She says, "We use this process to see where we fall short and determine where to beef up the curriculum—changing existing courses and possibly even creating new courses".

We in the Department of Communication applaud the work of our faculty members for working hard to ensure that changes can begin benefiting students for years to come. As the Department moves forward, we continue to seek ways to improve our degree programs. If you have questions or ideas for curriculum changes, please contact Dr. Helen Sterk, Department Chair, at [helen.sterk@wku.edu](mailto:helen.sterk@wku.edu).

~Paige Settles, Student





## Dr. Sterk Gets an Insider's Look at the 2016 Iowa Caucus

In February, Dr. Helen Sterk was given the opportunity to attend the historic Iowa Caucus with her good friend and highly regarded pollster, Dr. J. Ann Selzer. Dr. Selzer received national attention in 2008 when she accurately predicted that an increase in first-time caucus goers would drive President Barack Obama to a victory. After her accurate prediction, Bloomberg News hired her as their head pollster.

While attending the Iowa Caucus, Dr. Sterk experienced many behind the scenes moments with the media personalities who interviewed Selzer, including ones Fox News and MSNBC and well-known public figures. Dr. Sterk got a glimpse from behind the camera of shows like "On the Record" with Greta Van Susteren and "Morning Joe" with Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski. She was also able to come into close proximity with journalism celebrities Tom Brokaw and "Hardball" host, Chris Matthews.

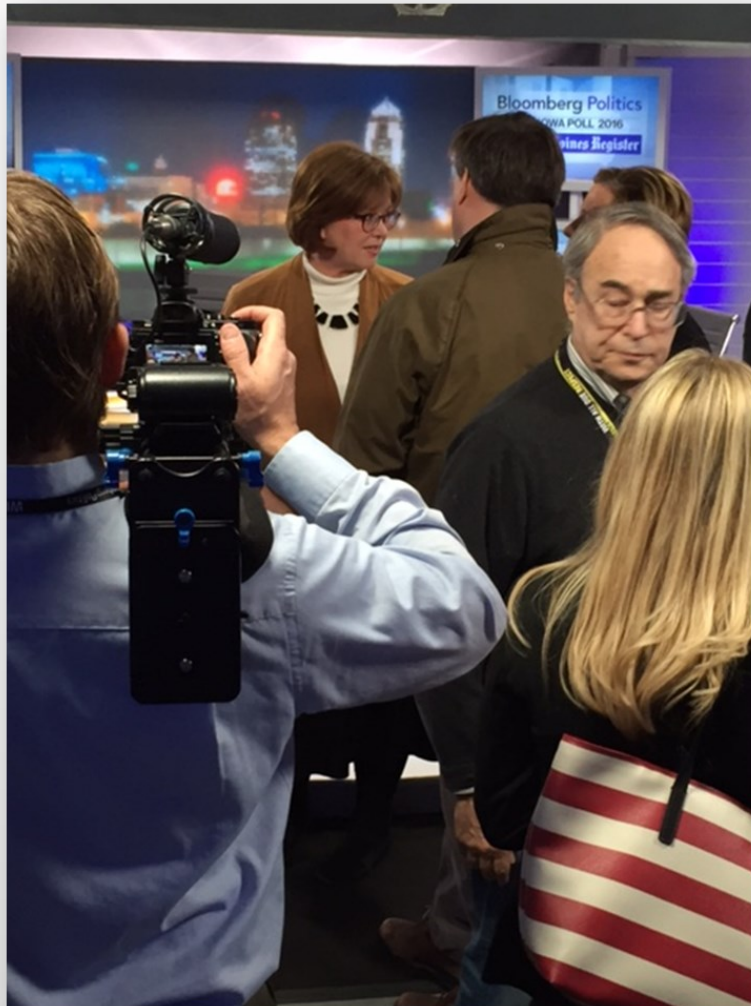
Bloomberg News set up a temporary news set in the Des Moines Marriott that could have been mistaken for their real set. Dr. Sterk went on to explain that, "to the media, Iowa Caucus is like the intense eye of a hurricane and then they all leave."

As for the caucus process, according to Dr. Selzer, Republicans are easy

because their votes are written on pieces of paper and counted. However, the Democratic Party has a bit of a more complex process. Voters will stand on certain sides of the room, which represent who they want to vote for. Then, the total number of people in each corner will be counted. These rooms can have up to 500 or more people at a time. Then, if a candidate has too few supporters, designated persuaders from each opposing party will go to the other corner and try to persuade them to join their favored candidate's corner.

Drs. Sterk and Selzer became friends while sharing an office in graduate school at the University of Iowa and they've held a life-long connection. Dr. Sterk emphasized that students and alumni should make the most of the relationships they form at WKU. Even though life pulls people in different directions, the foundational experiences and friendships live on.

~Rachel Byrd, Student



**Dr. J. Ann Selzer, surrounded by eager journalists**



**Temporary Bloomberg News set at the Des Moines Marriott**



## Lambda Pi Eta Spring Update

This past November, Lambda Pi Eta members Maggie Shelton and Taylor Hillard were able to accompany other WKU professors, graduate, and undergraduate students to the 101<sup>st</sup> Annual NCA Convention in Las Vegas. At this conference, they were able to learn about current research that is being done in the field of communication, as well as make connections to other students and professionals in the communication field.

Lambda Pi Eta, the Department of Communication's Honors Society, strives to recognize, foster and reward outstanding scholastic achievement in communication studies. Members of Lambda Pi Eta participate in and contribute to events within the Communication Department and the university, as well as events with the National Communication Association (NCA).

New members are invited to join each year. This spring, Lambda Pi Eta invitations were sent out to eligible students. To be eligible to join Lambda Pi Eta, students must have completed 60 hours of college credit, 12 of which must be in the communication discipline. These students must have a 3.0 GPA overall and a 3.25 GPA within in the Communication discipline. Thirteen students accepted the invitation to join Lambda Pi Eta, and these students were inducted into the honors society on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Congratulations to the following new members of Lambda Pi Eta: Hayley Armstrong, Sydney Bickett, Rachel Cato, Torrey Cazeault, Megan Cole, Cathryn Ellis, Haywood Hogan, Abigail O'Bryan, Emily Pride, Jessica Powell, Cody Pruitt, Courtney Tucker, and Rebecca Whaley.

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, several Lambda Pi Eta officers and members attended the Communication Department Student Recognition Dinner. Lambda Pi Eta presented new members with their pins and certificates and recog-



**Lambda Pi Eta students attend the Department of Communication Student Recognition Dinner**

nized senior members with Lambda Pi Eta graduation stoles. The officers also had the pleasure of honoring Ms. Laura Wagoner with the Outstanding Faculty Member Award for her contributions to the chapter and its activities here at WKU.

Lambda Pi Eta officer elections took place late this spring. The newly elected officers are Taylor Hillard, President; Rachel Cato, Vice President; Courtney Tucker, Treasurer; Hayley Armstrong, Secretary; Emily Pride, Scholarship Officer. These outstanding new officers are going to do great things for the Department of Communication over the next year!

*~Hannah Snyder, LPH Officer*



## Communication Organization for Graduate Students (COGS)

The Communication Organization for Graduate Students (COGS) is an organization that helps support graduate students through the course of their studies at WKU. We help Organizational Communication students

Last semester COGS made an active effort to raise money for the end the year shindig for stress relief. We raised \$150 and every bit went back to supporting our amazing graduate students. COGS

do like to have fun we also know how to get down to business and put out some great work.

Finally, COGS would like to offer a big congratulation to all graduate students graduating this



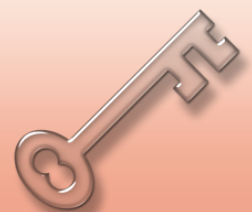
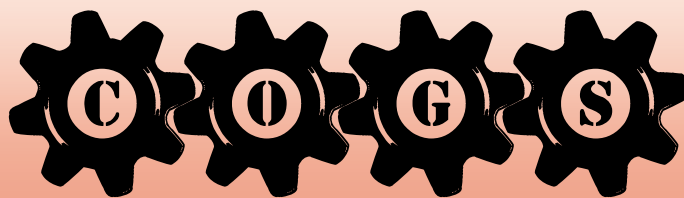
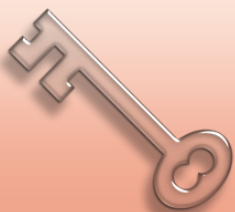
build relationships with their fellow classmates and hold fun events to celebrate our successes. At the end of every semester COGS hosts a small get together for all graduate students to do just that! The end of semester get together has been a great way for graduate students to de-stress and talk about the challenges and successes they've experienced over the course of the semester.

raised enough funds to celebrate the end of the semester with a trip to Mariah's!

COGS members are busy scholars, too! Daniel Chick and Jessica Cherry went to Central States Communication Association conference, presenting several papers on behalf of the Department of Communication, WKU, and themselves. While we, as a group,

spring! Congratulations to ChuChu Xie, Lindsey White, Giang Vo, Mattie Russell, Tyler Rife, Myeongok Lee, Zilai Jia, Derek Irvin, Daniel Chick, and Jessica Cherry! We made it! COGS would also like to congratulate Michaela Ash on her summer graduation!

*~Jessica Cherry & Daniel Chick,  
Graduate Students*



## Catching up with Communication Alumnus, Ryan Cummings



**Ryan Cummings**

The M.A. Program in Organizational Communication boasts an accomplished record of Alumni accomplishments, professionally and academically. We caught up recently with Ryan Cummings who is currently wrapping up his graduate school career at Purdue University and finishing up his dissertation focusing on interpersonal communication, specifically analyzing how smartphones play a role in today's face-to-face interactions. While at Purdue, Ryan has also taught various courses, researched with teams, and successfully completed coursework within the field.

Combined with the hard work on his end, Ryan gives credit for his success to the great faculty here on the hill! Ryan gives a lot of credit to Dr. Thompson in thoroughly prepping him for instructing Communication courses. "I found myself better prepared than most other graduate students because of this training," claimed Ryan. He also stated that Dr. Mize-Smith and Dr. Ishii helped tremendously by instilling solid theoretical and research related skills. And even to this day, Ryan said he "still cannot use 'to be' without cringing a little thanks to Dr. Garmon."

Looking back at his career here at WKU, Ryan did mention a few facets of our campus that he dearly misses. Most importantly, he misses the people, the size, and the overall atmosphere of life here at WKU. Due to the smaller population here on the hill, he pointed out how it was nice to have the opportunity to form closer connections with the faculty and students. In contrast, Ryan noted "Purdue is so much bigger than WKU that I go months without seeing certain faculty and graduate students, often making it difficult to establish relationships." And surprisingly enough, Ryan stated "Purdue is so flat that I often long for that tiresome walk up the hill at WKU!"

After this summer, Ryan will be ending his time at Purdue, and beginning work at a congregation in Louisville, Kentucky. Although this path is a change from what he saw himself doing after getting his PhD, Ryan knows it is the right path for him to take in life. This line of work is not as directly related to academia as some of the work he has done in past years, but will still allow a great opportunity to put the communication research into greater practice. Like Ryan has, we invite our alumni to get back in contact with us in the Department of Communication: send us an email, or simply stop by and come catch up!

*~Jake Tullis, Student*





# Events

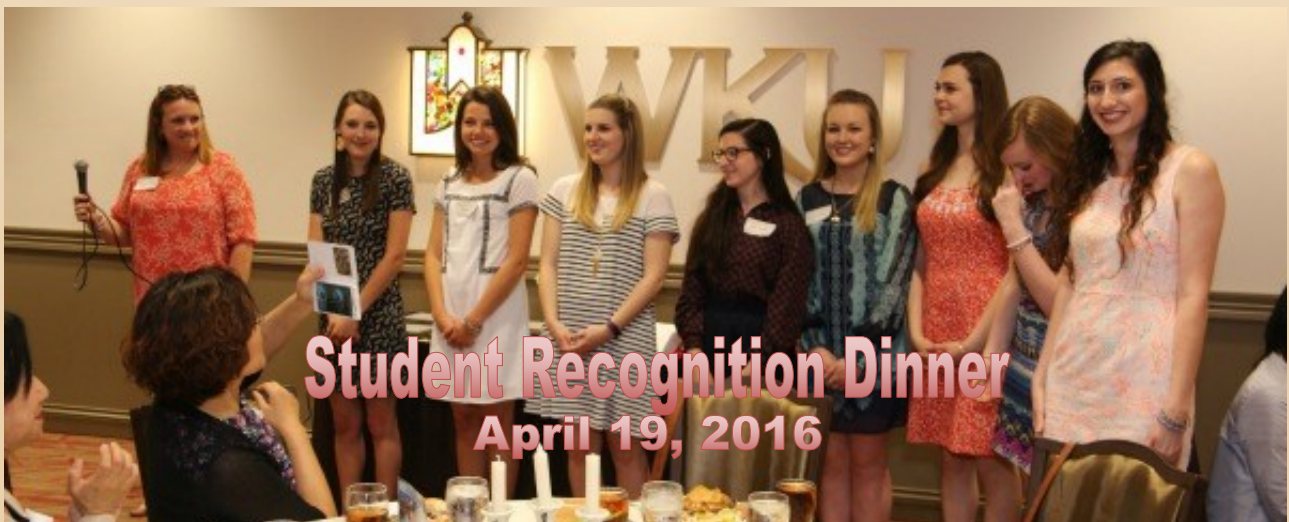


**Dr. Blair Thompson  
Faculty Lecture  
March 16, 2016**



**2016 John Lyne Speech Contest**

**May 7, 2016**



**Student Recognition Dinner  
April 19, 2016**

# Alumni Updates

**Amanda Belcher—M.A. Organizational Communication, 2013—** Amanda is working as the Sr. Human Resource Business Partner at the Sarah Cannon Cancer Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Kirsten Belt—B.A. Communication Studies, 2011 -** Kirsten is a Senior Account Executive at OwnerIQ in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Brandon Bowman—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2010—** Brandon is an Insurance Agent at Bowman Insurance in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Jessica Martin Carver—M.A. Organizational Communication, 20—** Jessica is now Vice President at the WKU College Heights Foundation.

**Stephanie Carter—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2011—** Stephanie is an Association Executive at Edmond Board of Realtors in Edmond, Oklahoma near Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

**Amanda Daniel—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2008—** Amanda is a Loan Administration Assistant at Monticello Banking Company in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky.

**Mackenzie Lee Farris—Communication Studies, 2016—** Mackenzie is a Marketing Assistant at

Bluegrass Cellular in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

**Tori Hardin Henninger—M.A. Organizational Communication, 2009—** Tori is the Executive Director of Barren River Area Safe Space in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

**Porsha Johnson, PHR—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2014—** Porsha is a Human Resources Consultant at Confidential Automotive in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Jasmine Langley—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2015—** Jasmine is a Financial Services Specialist at Tri-State Orthopaedic Surgeons in Evansville, Indiana.

**John Lynn—B.A. Communication Studies, 2015—** John is the Director of Admissions and Marketing at Signature Healthcare in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

**Alli McClure—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2009—** Alli is a Purchasing Analyst at All Star Association in Lexington, Kentucky.

**Erin Oestringer—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2013—** Erin is a Territory Manager at Jefferson National Financial Services in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Skylar Phaup, B.A. Communica-**

**tion Studies, 2014—** Skylar is working at Daymar College as an Assistant Director of Admissions.

**Sierra Rhodes—B.A. Communication Studies, 2012—** Sierra is a Special Events Coordinator for American Airlines in New York City, New York.

**Leigh Ann Rush—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2014—** Leigh Ann is currently at Junior Strategic Sales Executive at Comdata in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Evan Sharp—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2011—** Evan is working as a Sales Account Executive at Maui Jim & Zeal Optics in Knoxville, Tennessee.

**William Skaggs, \_\_\_\_\_, 2013 -** William is the Chief Development and Outreach Officer at SkyPAC of Bowling Green, Kentucky.

**Byron Turner—B.A. Communication Studies, 2013—** Byron is attending the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University and works as a student representative to provide customer support to students and faculty.

**Shannon White—B.A. Corporate & Organizational Communication, 2013—** Shannon is a Service Certified Banker at South Central Bank in Nashville, Tennessee.

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

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



# Spring 2016 Student Workers



Shelby Hughes, Trevor Hoffman, Katie Allison, Rachel Cato, Callie Allison, and Jordan Frodge  
Meredith Coomes (not shown)



# Thank you!

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Department of  
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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)



**WKU**



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



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