



COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNICATION

Annual Report **2015-2016**



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STATE OF THE COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINE

Communication research and education experienced rapid growth and institutional consolidation as an academic discipline in the second half of the twentieth century. The field is informed by the intellectual traditions of the humanities and social sciences, building on the ancient Greek arts of rhetoric, dialectic, aesthetics and poetics as well as psychology, anthropology, sociology and political science. Our theoretical foundation is built on the seven primary traditions of communication: rhetoric, semiotics, cybernetics, phenomenology, social psychology, sociocultural theory, and critical theory.

The discipline ranges in scope from the micro-analysis of individual behavior (e.g. information processing) to macro-analysis of communication at the institutional or societal level (e.g. organizational communication, international communication). Research in the discipline also utilizes various methods of inquiry including quantitative social science (e.g. media effects), critical and cultural studies (e.g. gender studies, media criticism), interpretive social science (e.g. social interaction), humanities (e.g. rhetorical studies), applied (e.g. journalism).

Because of the diversity of the discipline, it is difficult to identify emerging issues and trends that cut across all areas, but most scholars agree that the discipline will continue to have a distinctly applied focus with significant opportunities for funding research in the areas internationalization and global communication, media, **health communication**, ethics, and mediation and conflict resolution. We also anticipate ongoing discussion about the role of communication in the public sphere. As with all disciplines, the role of technology in shaping and changing the way we communicate is likely to remain an important topic.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION: OUR MISSION, VISION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Our Mission

The Department of Communication creates and shares knowledge of communication and relational processes, including ethical and critical decision-making, with the goal of encouraging the development of engaged citizens preparing for leadership in their professions, community, and world.

Our Vision

The Department of Communication at the College of Charleston is the nation's premier integrated communication program for undergraduate and master's-level education. The department's graduates are communication experts who write beautifully, speak eloquently,



In 2016, Dr. Beth Sundstrom (at right) was named one of Charlie Magazine's 50 Most Progressive individuals in Charleston for breaking new ground.

think critically, and research effectively. With the advantages of an outstanding liberal arts education and personalized instruction, the department's graduates bring extraordinary proficiency to audience analysis, message reception, message design, and communication campaigns. These graduates are marked by their leadership in their workplaces and communities and by their ability to adapt to rapid changes in the communication practices and technologies of the twenty-first century. The department is recognized nationally and internationally for its outstanding faculty and its integration of the full range of communication interests in an innovative, challenging curriculum, which requires study of messages and audiences in communication contexts ranging from face-to-face settings to the latest developments in emerging media. The department has special research and teaching expertise in corporate communication and public relations, health communication, and political communication.

Program Goals & College Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Provide students a highly personalized education based on a liberal arts and sciences core and enhanced by opportunities for experiential learning.

Faculty in the department felt that our new curriculum made us uniquely suited to provide a highly personalized educational experience for our majors. With two, year-long courses and a curriculum based on core competencies rather than specific content, students have the opportunity to develop strong relationships with individual faculty and the opportunity to their program to meet their personal and professional objectives. Additionally, faculty cited our emphasis on problem-based and service-learning, our **study abroad** program, and our robust independent study and internship programs as central to our ability to help the College achieve this goal.

Goal 3: Provide students the global and interdisciplinary perspectives necessary to address the social, economic, environmental, ethical, scientific and political issues of the 21st century.

Faculty also perceived the department to be ideally placed to facilitate the attainment of this goal through our work with the Study Abroad office (we have the largest number of students to study abroad in HSS), our service learning and civic engagement activities, internship program, and interdisciplinary offerings. Additionally, one of the primary objectives of our advisory council is to bring contemporary issues in the political and economic realm to life through their student forums and class visits.

Goal 4: Establish and promote a vibrant campus-life atmosphere dedicated to education of the whole person through integration of curricular and co-curricular or extracurricular activities.



Jasmine Campbell took 2 study abroad advanced skills courses in communication and traveled to Prague, Budapest, and Bratislava in summer 2016.

As one of the departments most committed to co-curricular activities, we are happy to support this objective through continuing to strengthen our **Bully Pulpit Series on Presidential Communication**, Mentor-Protégé Program, Distinguished Communicator Award, Executive Communicator Series, and spring break trips and outreach activities. We also intend to continue our work with student groups including the Public Relations Student Society of America, Lambda Pi Eta, and Cougar Media Network. We anticipate continued engagement in the REACH, FYE, and Honors programs.

Strategies and Tactics

While all of the strategies and tactics identified in the strategic plan are important to the long-term success of the College, we would place strengthening the academic core (1), support for a highly-qualified, diverse and stable base of faculty and staff (3), and the development of appropriate facilities and infrastructure to support academic and extra-curricular programs (7) at the top of the priority list. We expect, however, that in order to achieve these objectives we will have to develop and enhance our non-state resources (9) and create strong brand recognition both nationally and internationally (10).



In February 2016, then-communication senior Becca Starkes participated in CNN's largest-ever focus group. This was one of two times the Bully Pulpit Series brought CNN to the College during the presidential campaign season.

Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate from the College of Charleston with a degree in Communication will be able to 1) write beautifully; 2) think critically; 3) speak eloquently; 4) research effectively; and 5) understand communication as a liberal art.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN TEACHING

Unique Curricular Offerings

Our curriculum is unique from beginning to end. Students take a year-long introductory sequence focused on speaking and writing, along with their introductory semester-long courses, Media in the Digital Age and Communication, Identity, and Community. In addition to a required course in Communication Research Methods, students select from a variety of topically-based courses at the 300 and 400 levels, before finishing the major with a year-long capstone sequence.

As an integrated communication program, we offer courses in multiple areas of the discipline. Some of the more unique offerings of 2015-2016 were:

- Ethical Communication: Ethics of Popular Culture
- Ethical Communication: Freedom of Expression
- Ethical Communication: Ethics and Civic Engagement

- Addressing Problems in Context: Communication, Public Opinion, and 2016 Presidential Election
- Addressing Problems in Context: Self-Help in the Makeover Nation
- Addressing Problems in Context: Health Communication
- Addressing Problems in Context: Sport and Society
- Addressing Problems in Context: Social Communication
- Addressing Problems in Context: Strategic Communication Management
- Analysis of Communication Practice: Social Media Marketing
- Analysis of Communication Practice: Television Criticism
- Analysis of Communication Practice: Public Deliberation; Debating Social Change
- Analysis of Communication Practice: Health, Science and the Media

This year, we taught eight sections of our year-long capstone course with tremendous success. We highlighted the research conducted by these students at our **Spotlight on Scholarship** in April. This spring, with minor adjustments to our application, we continued our highly competitive capstone selection process. Seven capstone sections were scheduled for Fall 2015 and descriptions were circulated to all qualified students. These students were then invited to apply and rank their most preferred capstone sections. Faculty teaching the courses reviewed applications and rank ordered students for their course. Faculty then met and “drafted” students into their course based on both student and faculty member preference. Students were evaluated based on their experience and background with the subject matter of the course, internships, related work experience, volunteer work, and academic performance. This competitive process (while difficult for some students) was well received by most, with our most accomplished students acknowledging it motivated them to participate in the type of curricular and co-curricular work that would enable them to stand out in the application process. Students who are not satisfied with the capstone in which they were placed were allowed to put themselves on a wait list in case a spot opens in the class they prefer. Capstone topics for Fall 2015 included the Bully Pulpit Experience, Training and Development, Organizational Influence and Advocacy, Experimenting with Nonverbal Communication and the ever-popular Wired and Inspired course. This year, we also offered our first study abroad capstone option, in which students spent the spring semester learning and preparing on campus, and a summer semester traveling and learning in Turkey, Spain, and Morocco.



Six communication seniors participated in the April Spotlight on Scholarship where they presented their interesting and dynamic research projects. Community members, Advisory Council members, faculty, and students judged the research talks on content, design, and overall presentation. Jillian Rosone (center) received the most votes for her presentation “Adjustment to Life Post-Graduation: An Interpretive Thematic Analysis of Wired & Inspired Capstone Alumni”

Contributions to Other Units

While we have the second highest number of majors in the Humanities and Social Sciences and one of the top five at the College, the Department of Communication continues to play a significant role in supporting our liberal arts mission by contributing to general education offerings for our students and in special curricular initiatives.

- **Honors:** We contributed more than 30 credit hours to the honors program this academic year through courses, Bachelor's Essays and Independent Studies.
- **First Year Experience and Learning Communities:** Communication faculty members contributed 20 credit hours in courses for the First Year Experience and Learning Community program this year, generating more than 360 student credit hours. We anticipate continued contributions in this area as several faculty are already assigned to FYE/LC courses for fall and spring of AY 2016-2017.
- **REACH:** Our faculty members were active participants in the REACH program this year, teaching REACH students in four different courses.

Distance Education

Departmental faculty taught 36 hours of Communication courses online during the 2015-2016 academic year, as well as 15 hours of Applied Communication concentration for the Bachelor of Professional Studies program.

Contributions to Unique Curricular Initiatives

The Department of Communication offers a wide variety of options for students to participate in interdisciplinarity, internationalization/globalization, personalized education and high impact student experiences. Examples include internships, study abroad, a departmental spring break trip, and our involvement in the Public Health curriculum.

Internships

Students are not required to complete internships to complete the Communication major, however they are strongly encouraged by advisors and faculty members to have at least one internship experience, if not more, before they graduate. A total of 43 students completed internships for COMM credit, the majority of whom (88%) worked for companies within South Carolina. Two students interned in New York, one in Washington DC, one in Philadelphia, and one in England. Some of the companies offering for-credit internships included: Charleston Magazine, Charleston Music Hall, Congressman Quigley, Enough Pie, Kuszmaul Design & PR, Litton Entertainment, Obviouslee Marketing, The Citadel, The Odyssey, The Reynolds Group, Office of Senator Tim Scott, Charleston Wine + Food, CofC Athletics, Division of Marketing and Communications @ CofC, Kiawah Island Golf Resort, MUSC News Center, The Becket Agency, The College Today, and US Club Soccer, among others.

In addition to for-credit internships, many students completed not-for-credit internships with companies in South Carolina and across the nation. A departmental poll sent to all students in senior-level courses yielded responses from 51 students who reported internship experiences. Most indicated they had completed just one internship, but several had done two or three prior to their senior year.

Study Abroad

The department offered three different study abroad trips this year. Drs. Celeste Lacroix and Robert Westerfelhaus took 12 undergraduate students to Prague, Slovakia, and Hungary. Dr. Merissa Ferrara took 14 undergraduate students to India, Morocco, and Spain. Finally, Dr. Merissa Ferrara and Mrs. Valarie Wright, MA, took 14 undergraduate students to Florence, Cinque Terra, Rome, Athens, Mykonos, and Budapest.

The Prague, Bratislava, Budapest trip

During the 2016 extended summer session, Drs. Celeste Lacroix and Robert Westerfelhaus took 12 undergraduate students to **Prague** (Czech Republic), Bratislava (Slovakia), and Budapest (Hungary). Two classes were offered as part of the study abroad program: COMM 336: Addressing Problems in Context – Cross-Cultural Communication, taught by Dr. Lacroix; and, COMM 315: Ethical Communication in a Multicultural Context, taught by Dr. Westerfelhaus.

The classes incorporated communication, cultural, historical, linguistic, philosophical, and psychological material specifically related to the three cities where the students lived and studied.

Extra-curricular highlights of the program included:

- private walking tours of Prague's Castle District, Old Town, and Jewish Quarter;
- a private guided tour of the Terezin Concentration Camp (in the Czech Republic);
- a private guided tour of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp (in Austria); a private walking tour of Bratislava's Old Town, the Danube River, the Chatam Sofer Memorial, and others sites tied to the town's Communist, Austro-Hungarian, Jewish, and Slovak history;
- an excursion to the famous spa town of Marienbad (now known as Mariánské Lázně, Czech Republic); and
- two river cruises, one on the Vltava (Prague) and the other on the Danube (Budapest).
- Students also visited:
 - the Staronová (Prague) and the Dohány Street (Budapest) synagogues (the former is the oldest continuously used synagogue in Europe, the latter the largest);
 - the Catholic cathedrals and other churches in the three capital cities;
 - the famous Bone Chapel in Kutná Hora (Czech Republic); and



Communication student Ashlynn Weagraff at the Astronomical Clock in Prague, summer 2016.

- miscellaneous basilicas, castles, graveyards, monasteries, museums, parks and other sites of cultural and historical interest.

These extracurricular excursions enriched students' understanding of material covered in course textbooks and in-class discussions and lectures. In addition, they helped expand students' site-specific intercultural knowledge in other ways as well. Whenever possible, the professors invited locals to share their indigenous experience and knowledge with the students.

In addition to group activities, the instructors alone or in tandem, accompanied individuals and small groups to places of particular interest to the students. For example, Dr. Lacroix invited students to attend a concert with her; and on another occasion, she took several students on a river cruise to see Devin Castle, just outside of Bratislava. Dr. Westerfelhaus took two students at their request to visit the Kafka Museum in Prague. Both professors accompanied students to Bratislava's castle and to the modern art museum housed in the former Trade Fair Palace (Prague). Due to the deliberate design of the study abroad program, students also had multiple opportunities for informal discussions with professors at meals, over coffee, and while traveling via plane, train, tram, or bus. These conversations covered a wide range of topics.

The India, Morocco, Spain trip

During the 2016 Maymester summer session, Dr. Merissa Ferrara took 14 undergraduate students to Delhi and Jaipur, India; Marrakech, Morocco; Barcelona, Spain. One class was offered as part of the study abroad program: COMM 481: Communication Capstone. The classes incorporated interpersonal/group communication, inter-cultural, gender, social construction, and psychological material specifically related to the cities where the students lived and studied.

Highlights of the program included:

- private walking tours of the Delhi slums, Jaipur city, Amber Fort, Berber village, olive oil processing farm, and the Lotus Temple
- a private biking tour of Delhi;
- guest lectures on gender equality in Delhi;
- a trip and private tour of the Taj Mahal;
- a visit to an **elephant** preserve;
- cultural tours in Marrakech;
- excursions to the famous Gaudi Park Guell and Sagrada Familia in Barcelona;
- team building and group communication activities in the **Atlas mountains**



Students in Dr. Merissa Ferrara's COMM 481 capstone class on their study abroad trip.

- miscellaneous temples, museums, parks and other sites of cultural and historical interest.

These excursions enriched students' understanding of material covered in course textbooks and in-class discussions and lectures. In addition, they helped polish students' site-specific communication in other ways as well. Whenever possible, the professors invited locals to share their indigenous experience and knowledge with the students.

In addition to group activities, Dr. Ferrara accompanied individuals and small groups to places of particular interest to the students. For example, Dr. Ferrara invited students to navigate food markets, complete a sunrise hike, participate in bread, yoga, and pottery classes, try tapas, tour Ben Youssef, attend concerts, etc. Dr. Ferrara created a program that was student centered. To maximize time in each city, she taught and met with students individually and in groups while waiting in airports, on buses, in coffee shops, during breakfast, over dessert, on city walks, etc.

The multi-city European trip

During the 2016 extended summer session, Dr. Merissa Ferrara and Mrs. Valarie Wright, MA took 14 undergraduate students to the following European cities: Florence, Cinque Terra, Rome, Athens, Mykonos, and Budapest. Two classes were offered as part of the study abroad program:

COMM 336: Addressing Problems in Context – Health Communication, taught by Dr. Ferrara; and COMM 315: Ethical Communication in a Healthcare, taught by Mrs. Wright.

The classes incorporated communication, health, cultural, historical, linguistic, philosophical, and psychological material specifically related to the cities where the students lived and studied.

Highlights of the program included:

- private walking tours of Budapest and Athens;
- a private biking tour of Rome;
- guest lectures on public health, locally sourced food, and nutrition in Florence, Rome, and Athens;
- a trip to the Acropolis;
- cultural and health tours in Florence and Budapest;
- an excursion to the famous public thermal spas and the WWII Hospital in the rock of Budapest;
- two service learning experiences, one with the Salvation Army helping distribute supplies to Syrian Refugees (Athens) and volunteering with a home for children with disabilities (Budapest); and
- miscellaneous basilicas, castles, monasteries, museums, parks and other sites of cultural and historical interest.

These excursions enriched students' understanding of material covered in course textbooks and in-class discussions and lectures. In addition, they helped expand students' site-specific intercultural and public health knowledge in other ways as well. Whenever possible, the professors invited locals to share their indigenous experience and knowledge with the students. Students read local newspaper coverage of issues of regional and global health relevance.

In addition to group activities, the instructors alone or in tandem, accompanied individuals and small groups to places of particular interest to the students. For example, Dr. Ferrara invited students to attend a food festival, navigate food markets, and to watch the soccer matches with her. Ms. Wright took students on an evening walk and hop on hop off bus trip. Dr. Ferrara and Mrs. Wright created a program that was student centered. To maximize time in each city, the faculty taught and met with student groups on trains, boats, waiting in airports, in coffee shops, during breakfast, over dessert, etc. In addition to traditional means of measuring knowledge and understanding, the professors used innovative media via vlogs and digital storytelling through photography to allow students to present their understanding of the courses and the world.

Spring Break Trip

Our Spring Break Trip to New York and DC.

This weeklong experience is designed to enhance student understanding of the communication profession by offering a series of tours, presentations and networking events in the Washington, DC and New York markets. Thanks to members of our Advisory Council and our alumni, this year's trip included a visit to FleishmanHillard, CNN Washington Bureau, Purple Strategies, a meeting with **Senator Tim Scott (R-SC)**, Ketchum, a visit with Mike McCurry and Greg Schneiders (former Press Secretary to President Bill Clinton and President Jimmy Carter, respectively), Thomson Reuters, **Edelman**, ADP, Google, Peppercomm, Heyman and Associates, New York Life and Time, Inc.

Public Health Program

The Department of Communication plays an integral role in the Public Health program. Our Health Communication course is required for all public health majors, and we offered seven sections of this cross-listed course during the 2015-2016 academic year. Dr. Deborah Socha McGee served as the



(Top photo) After a meeting at Edelman PR, students enjoyed the view of the Freedom Tower from Edelman's office. (Bottom photo) Students sat down with Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) at his Capitol Hill office to talk internship opportunities.

Director of the BA in Public Health.

Dr. Beth Sundstrom (Communication) and Dr. Andrea DeMaria (Public Health) founded the Women's Health Research Team to introduce students to the research process. Dr. Merissa Ferrara also joined the team this year, and this collaborative effort has resulted in multiple interdisciplinary publications for both faculty and students.

Changes in Enrollment and Workload

The number of students majoring in Communication decreased slightly from 547 (Spring 2015) to 522 (Spring 2016). Additionally, we increased the number of minors to 78 (from 71 in 2015 and 45 in 2014) and graduated 133 undergraduate students and 4 graduate students. The average class size is 22.2 with 67.8% of student credit hours offered by roster faculty, 26% offered by highly qualified adjuncts and 6.2% offered by teaching assistants supervised by roster faculty. The only courses in the department taught by graduate teaching assistants are one-hour discussion sections for COMM 214. These labs are highly structured with a pre-designed curriculum and significant supervision by roster faculty teaching the course.

Although the department did experience a slight decrease in number of majors in 2015-2016, signs point toward this number increasing in 2016-2017. In Fall 2015, we offered only five sections of our introductory writing and speaking course, COMM 280, but demand for this course has increased substantially, and in Fall 2016, seven sections will be offered, all of which will be filled to the course cap of 21 students. This course does not fulfill a general education requirement, so students who take this course either have declared or are planning to declare a major in Communication. This increase course demand suggests that the number of majors also should increase in the next few years.

Assessment

This year the Assessment and Basic Course Committee collected assessment materials from COMM 310-Message, Design and Influence. Additionally, faculty teaching COMM 214-Media in the Digital Age were asked to begin submitting data from common test questions and student surveys so that data can be analyzed next year. COMM 281-Introduction to Communication Messages will also be assessed, and data will be collected from the spring 2016 and fall 2016 semesters.

The assessment data collected and analyzed for COMM 310 focused on learning objectives related to the students' ability to identify a target audience and then develop an effective message for that audience. The data collected included papers from a signature assignment and student surveys. The signature assignment required students to identify a target audience to whom they were writing and to write an article appropriate for that target audience.

Learning outcomes for the papers were that students would be able to identify a target audience, design an appropriate and specific message for the target audience, and describe the target audience. The four dimensions designed to assess these learning outcomes focused on the students' ability to identify a specific audience, to tailor a message to the audience, to have

a clear thesis statement, and to use adequate evidence/examples and/or logical reasoning in their article.

Assessment Committee members reviewed every third paper from five sections of COMM 310 for a total of 31 papers. The assessment plan called for at least 70% of students to score a 3 (meets expectations) or 4 (exceeds expectations) on the rubric. The actual scores for each of the four dimensions were slightly lower than the 70% mark. For the first dimension - ability to identify a target audience - a total of 20 of 31 (65%) of the students scored a 3 or 4. For the second dimension – tailoring the message to the audience - a total of 19 of 31 (61%) of the students scored a 3 or 4. For the third dimension – clear thesis statement - 25 of 31 (80%) of the students scored a 3 or 4. And for the fourth dimension –adequate use of evidence/examples and/or reasoning - a total of 22 of 31 (71%) of the students scored a 3 or 4.

In the fall 2015 semester all students in the sections of COMM 310 were given a survey to determine their confidence in their ability to identify a target audience, design an appropriate and specific message for an audience and their ability to describe the target audience for a message. A total of 42 surveys were collected from three sections of COMM 310. The assessment plan called for at least 90% of the students surveyed to indicate they agreed or strongly agreed to the three questions they were asked. 100% of the students indicated that they believe they are prepared to identify a target audience for a message, that they are prepared to design an appropriate and specific message for an audience and that they are prepared to describe the target audience for a specific message.

Conclusions and Actions

Students in COMM 310 are leaving the course confident in their ability to identify a target audience, describe the target audience, and design an appropriate message for the target audience. Assessment of actual student writing shows that they are doing a fairly credible job meeting these three learning outcomes. After reading the sample assignments, ABC Committee members agreed that instructions for the signature assignment may not have been consistently clear, which may explain why the assessment of the writing was not as uniformly strong as the student surveys. In the future, faculty teaching COMM 310 should be encouraged to construct a more uniform signature assignment so that writing across sections will be more uniform. Overall, the committee members agreed that faculty teaching COMM 310 are doing a good job and that no significant changes need to be suggested for the teaching of the course.

Faculty Teaching Awards

We are fortunate to have many gifted teachers in our department. This year, **Dr. Merissa Ferrara** was recognized by our undergraduate students as the ***Distinguished Faculty Member of the Year***, and she also received the ***College's Distinguished***



Dr. Merissa Ferrara received the College's Distinguished Teaching Award.

Teaching Award. Dr. Amanda Ruth-McSwain was recognized by the graduate students as the **Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year** for 2015-2016. Additionally, Dr. Laurie Lattimore-Volkman was recognized by the Department as the **Outstanding Adjunct of the Year** for her accomplishments in teaching and service to the department. Dr. Beth Sundstrom was named the recipient of the 2016 ExCEL Awards **Outstanding Faculty of the Year in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.**

Diversity

The Department of Communication currently has 22 tenured or tenure track faculty: twelve white females, nine white males and one non-resident male. An additional non-resident male has been hired to begin teaching in Fall 2016. We continue to make every effort to increase diversity in our applicant pools for our searches to create a stronger, more diverse department including but not limited to advertising in the Chronicle and with graduate programs with typically more diverse populations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental faculty published one scholarly book, seven new articles in peer reviewed journals, and five additional book chapters, invited publications or reviews. Thirty one presentations were made by Communication faculty members at regional, national, and international conferences. Additionally, multiple faculty members serve as reviewers for peer reviewed journal publications and conferences and are active in the discipline (see FAS report and appendix for summary data).

SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Communication faculty are involved in service at all levels at the College, as well as within our discipline. A selection of our activity follows:

Service to the College

- Dr. Vince Benigni: Appointed by the President as Faculty Athletics Representative and liaison with the Colonial Athletic Association
- Dr. Vince Benigni: Chaired the College of Charleston Distinguished Service Award Committee
- Dr. Julie Davis: Speaking Lab Director
- Dr. Doug Ferguson: Faculty Coordinator for eLearning and Distance Education.
- Dr. Tom Heeney: Faculty Hearing Committee
- Dr. Jenifer Kopfman: Chaired the College's Nominations and Elections Committee
- Dr. Celeste Lacroix: Member of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the President,
- Dr. Namjin Lee: Faculty Research & Development Committee Member
- Dr. Deb McGee: Member of the Post-Tenure Review Committee
- Dr. Deb McGee: Co-chair of the Public Health Steering Committee
- Dr. Ryan Milner: Faculty Senator
- Dr. Amanda Ruth-McSwain: Member of the Cistern Yard Media Advisory Board
- Dr. Amanda Ruth-McSwain: Director of the Bully Pulpit Series
- Dr. Beth Sundstrom: Member of the College of Charleston Institutional Review Board

- Dr. Robert Westerfelhaus: Chair of the Committee of the Library

Service to the Community (Professional in Nature)

- Dr. Deb McGee: St. Benedict's Catholic Church, Lector
- Dr. Elena Strauman: Speak Up For Horses, Communication Consultant
- Dr. Beth Sundstrom: South Carolina Cervical Cancer Awareness Initiative, Advisory Board Member
- Dr. Robert G. Westerfelhaus: Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church: St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival, Judge

Service to the Profession

- Dr. Vince L. Benigni: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Conference Reviewer
- Dr. Douglas A. Ferguson: Broadcast Education Association (BEA) Identity Committee Member,
- Dr. Celeste C. Lacroix: Voices of Diversity Division, Eastern Communication Association, Conference Reviewer
- Beth L. Sundstrom: South Carolina Coalition for Healthy Families, Board Member
- Dr. Robert G. Westerfelhaus: President of the Carolinas Communication Association

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF STUDENTS AND NEW ALUMNI

Some of our recent student and graduate accomplishments include:

- Haley Clarke presented her competitively selected paper (originally written in COMM 410) to the James McCroskey Undergraduate Honors Conference at the Eastern Communication Association conference held in April in Baltimore,
- Laura Johnson presented her competitively selected papers (originally written in COMM 410) to SEWSA (Southeast Women's Studies Association) and the Southern States Communication Association conferences. SEWSA was held in March at Winthrop University and SSCA was held in Austin, TX in April.
- Rachael Avery, Shannon Baucus, Amanda Clark, Katie Kindwall, Abbey Marshall, and Laura Johnson presented their competitively selected papers (originally written for their capstone COMM 480 class) to the Theodore Clevenger Undergraduate Honors Conference at the Southern States Communication Association conference held in Austin, TX in April.
- Erin Dempsey (COMM 410 course, Fall 2015) submitted a paper to the Mass Communication Division of the National Communication Association for possible presentation at the annual conference to be held in November in Philadelphia, PA. Traditionally a division with a high rejection rate, Erin's competitive paper was accepted for presentation by the division. *Note: She did not submit to the Undergraduate Student section, thus her paper competed with all regular faculty submissions.*
- In April @collegeofcharleston selected COMM junior Davy Kesey (@davykesey) to "take over" CofC's Instagram account for 3 days to capture in photos what he feels it's like to be a CofC student. Davy's perspective was unique as he highlighted his morning bike

commute to the College; a sunset view of the Ravenel bridge; and taking time to climb trees with his friends after his last day of class for the spring semester. This summer Davy Kesey (@davykesey) traveled to Greece to take photos and record the stories of Syrian refugees. According to a COMM professor, “He’s very talented and conscientious, so I’m sure his photography and stories while there will be intelligent and fantastic.”

Recent Graduate Employment and Post-Graduate Study Information

- Following her graduation in May 2016, **Wesli Jones, recipient of the Theodore S. Stern Cup Award** this spring, has been hired by CNN to work as a Digital Video Production Assistant, writing and editing news content at CNN’s headquarters in Atlanta, GA.
- Laura Johnson and Jayson Blankenship (both 2016 graduates of the department), were selected as interns with Purple Strategies in Alexandria, Virginia. This opportunity is a direct outcome of the Department of Communication’s Washington, DC/New York City Spring Break trip.
- Caroline Kenny (2015) is a digital producer for CNN Politics. She works out of the Washington, D.C. bureau of CNN. In this role, she contributes to the social media pages for CNN and CNN Politics, designs the pages and news stories for the web and writes up breaking news stories about the 2016 presidential election. Additionally, this August Caroline will graduate with her master’s degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.
- Erica Arbetter (2014) is the digital director of the Committee on Ways and Means for the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC.
- In June 2016, Chris Piedmont (2014), an account executive at Peppercomm, wrote in Fortune Magazine about his experience working at Peppercomm, named one of the “50 Best Workplaces for New College Grads.” Chris also came back to campus and delivered a keynote address and participated in an alumni advice panel for current students in April 2016 as part of the Department’s bi-annual Advisory Council Conference. Chris received a promotion in July and is now a senior account executive.
- Molly Moore (2013) is vice president of marketing at Ridge Media, LLC, based in Greenville, SC.



- Ryan Sedmak (2013) is featured in this spring's issue of College of Charleston Magazine. Sedmak is a trending producer for *NowThis*, a New York-based network created by one of the founders of Huffington Post. Sedmak credits his professional success to the internships he pursued while he was an undergraduate: "My professors really stressed the importance of internships and hands-on experience. Early on, I knew that I wanted to intern at a network like NBC, and I worked with my adviser, communication professor Jenifer Kopfman, to do this. We came up with a strategy that allowed me to spend my last semester in New York working at The Today Show and Nightly News with Brian Williams and still graduate on time." Read more about Sedmak's post-College success as well as his best advice for current students looking to pursue work in TV in the "I Want Your Job: Associate Film and TV Producer" series.
- Lucy Remitz (2012) is a strategic planner for Epsilon, a marketing and advertising firm, based in Dublin, Ireland <http://today.cofc.edu/2015/01/28/want-job-strategic-planner-dublin-advertising-agency/>

CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

Departmental faculty identified a weakness in our major such that many graduates of the program tend to find jobs in public relations and other areas of strategic communication, but none of our courses specifically address that area of the field. To address this need, the faculty voted to add an introductory level course to our curriculum, thus increasing hours needed to complete Communication major from 36 to 39 hours. The preliminary title for the new course will be COMM 216: Principles and Practices in Strategic Communication. The first section of this new course will be offered in Spring 2017, and paperwork will be submitted to require this course for all majors effective with the Fall 2017 catalog. The foundational knowledge students will gain in the introductory course will allow faculty to focus on advanced strategic communication principles in existing upper level courses. No new resources will be required to implement this change.