

COMM CONNECTION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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THIS IS

MASON COMM

COLLABORATE. CREATE. COMMUNICATE

COOL. COMM. COLLECTED.

Department of Communication T-Shirt Design Contest

The Department of Communication hosted its first ever t-shirt design contest this past fall. Students were asked to create a fun design for the department to use for their new Mason COMM t-shirts to give out for free at the Find Your Future 2019 Communication Industry Forum. Student Emily Sexauer's electric "Cool COMM Collected" design won the competition and was officially made into the department's t-shirt for the 2019 forum.

Thank you to all who submitted designs and voted!



WELCOME TO SPRING 2020!

GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Mason Communication Community,

Please join us with hope and determination to meet the challenges our current world brings to communication professionals. In this issue, you can read about the Annual Fall Communication Industry Forum (hosted by the Insight Committee, our external advisory board) that each year brings together alumni, faculty, and industry professionals to mentor our students as they navigate communication career entry in this challenging era. If you would like to be involved in the Forum, please do not hesitate to contact us. We always need your involvement as panelists, speakers, or mentors.

Mason's Department of Communication continues to thrive, with exciting courses, active student organizations, and faculty who bring excellence in research and practice.

As always, we would like to have a closer relationship with you, our majors and alumni. Please keep us updated on your professional activities and personal milestones. We are working to build a more robust Department of Communication alumni network, with career mentoring events and social gatherings. Soon, we hope to recruit a slate of Communication Alumni Society officers to help with these plans.

Please let us know if you are interested.

You can use this link to join the Mason Communication Alumni Society, provide us with updates, and volunteer for participation in events: https://gmuchss.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8Dgqa2AikpTofAh.

Stay tuned for information on upcoming events and gatherings! Finally, please don't forget to:

Like our Communication Department Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/gmucommadvising?ref=hl>

Follow us on Twitter @MasonCommDept and our new Instagram page @masoncomm

Until next time, many best wishes to you and yours!

Sincerely,

Dr. Anne Nicotera



Congratulations to the Fall Class of 2019!

We will miss you and hope for only success in your future endeavors and careers. If you would like to keep in contact with the Department of Communication, share and receive emails about student & alumni news, departmental news, upcoming events etc. please join our COMM Alumni Society. All you need to do is to email the Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Megan Edmondson (medmond3@gmu.edu), to join.

SUPPORT YOUR DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

To contribute online, visit communication.gmu.edu and click on the word "Give" in the top right corner. You can also make check donations payable to "George Mason University Foundation, Inc."

You can indicate "Communication Department" in the memo line or the name of the fund you would like to support. If you have any questions about donating to the department, please contact Mark Hall, CHSS Assistant Director of Development, at mhall19@gmu.edu.



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DEPARTMENT RE-CAP

FALL 2019

Communication Career Forum Connects Students with Future Mentors

By: Hannah Harmison

More than 250 George Mason University students gathered in the Hub Ballroom on the Fairfax Campus on Oct. 22 for the "Find Your Future" annual Communication Career Forum hosted by Mason's Department of Communication and its external advisory board, The Insight Committee. The purpose: connecting students to mentors in their fields. "This is an excellent student turnout, which is very encouraging," said Anne Nicotera, professor and department chair. Students who attended the event, coordinated by Kate Sweeney, the department's journalism program coordinator, received career advice and made connections with some of the area's leading communication professionals.

The keynote speaker was Mason alumna Rana Novack, BA Communication '06, who is leading a global IBM team to leverage machine learning and cognitive computing to enable government agencies and humanitarian aid organizations to better manage refugee and migration crises. "The forum presents a unique opportunity for communication students to network and ask questions about the industry that they've been curious about," said senior communication major Caitlin Murray, a member of Mason's Honors College. "I think all comm students should go at least once, and take advantage of it every year if possible."

The professionals in attendance at this year's Communication Career Forum represented fields such as corporate communication, media production, journalism, marketing, and public relations. The professionals in attendance represented fields such as corporate communication, media production, journalism, marketing, and public relations. Mentors came from organizations such as Booz Allen Hamilton, Northrop Grumman, NBC News and the Washington Nationals, and included Washington, D.C., Government press secretary Susana Castillo, BA Communication '13.

Molly Hermann, a local documentary filmmaker and owner of The Biscuit Factory production company, said she attended the event as a mentor to pay forward her experiences to new members of her field. "I clearly remember being a college student and thinking of the outside world as this great unknown," Hermann said. "I'm happy to get a chance to share my experiences and demystify the process—because it is a process—of turning a degree into a career. I was very impressed with the turnout, the insightful questions, and enthusiasm of the students." "Attending this event was an opportunity for me to find mentorship and job opportunities," said senior communication major Emily Sexaur, winner of the event's T-shirt design contest. "I networked with amazing industry leaders, got business cards and learned what I can do to improve my career development." Sexaur said it is reassuring that the Department of Communication and its alumni are committed to helping others succeed.

"It gives me a sense of comfort that I am going to be able to find my future with the help of those around me," she said. Students at the event left with a T-shirt featuring Sexaur's design, which read, "Cool, COMM, and Collected," and encouragement from Novack. "People want to be inspired," Novack said. "They invest in things that they believe in. They'll invest time and thought and energy—not just money. You all have that ability to inspire. Communication is about inspiration. You can choose to make inspiration and communication a cornerstone in any career you choose." (<https://www2.gmu.edu/news/580781>).

To learn more about the Insight Committee and the annual Communication Industry Forum please visit our website: <https://communication.gmu.edu/>.



NCA 2019

The 105th National Communication Association (NCA) Annual Convention was held this past November in Baltimore, Maryland. The theme was "Communication for Survival". Mason COMM faculty and graduate students were very involved with the 2019 conference. Our very own Mason COMM faculty member, Dr. Star Muir served as the 2019 president. "Star Muir's Presidential Address considered the role of technology in producing a culture of distraction and encouraged us, among other things, to make the educational activity of debate a more prominent part of what we do as Communication teachers and professionals" (natcom.org). The Mason COMM Graduate Program also tabled at the conference this year and many of our graduate students presented their own research.



STUDENT NEWS

Josi Braithwaite: Finding her Passion in Speaking for Others

By: Anne Reynolds

Coming to Mason in search of a career where she could “work with people and solve problems,” Josi Braithwaite began her studies as a business major. However, her COMM 204: Introduction to Public Relations elective clicked with her skills and interests and she quickly dove into coursework she loved. Josi credits communication faculty member Suzanne Mims’s passion for public relations for guiding her into her area of study, and Wendy Grossman Kantor’s editorial eye for helping to hone her writing skills. Josi notes that her academic advisor, Catherine Wright, was instrumental in keeping her Mason career on track while she took part in a mission trip over three semesters, when she had access to a computer only once a week. Josi aspires to work with a public relations firm in the northern Virginia area, and her immediate plans included serving as the student speaker at Mason’s Winter Graduation. Asked about advice she would give to herself as a new college student, she mentioned confidence and persistence, but added, “I wouldn’t ... try to prevent any mistakes because I love my mistakes. The lessons I learned from my mistakes are priceless and I wouldn’t trade them for anything.”



MORE STUDENT NEWS

COMM Alumni Profiles

Interested in learning what the Mason COMM Alum are up to since graduating? Want to help inform current students about what career paths they can take once they graduate? Submit a Mason COMM Alumni Profile! Email the Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Megan Edmondson (medmond3@gmu.edu), for more information. We want to thank COMM Alum Kelli Dent for sharing what she’s up to since graduating!

MASON COMMUNICATION ALUMNI PROFILE

Kelli Dent

Year Graduated: 2008
Degree: Communication
Job: Director of Demand and Generation at Microstrategy



What do you like about it?

I love being able to manage, develop, and mentor a talented team of marketers, having a seat at the table with key executives, collaborate with cross departmental teams in order to deliver high quality, go-to-market programs for the company. Additionally, the job keeps me on my toes, as I am always challenged in an ever changing, fast paced environment.

How did your degree in college prepare you to do this work?

Mason’s core Communication degree requirements such as Business and Professional Communication where I learned how to effectively be an interviewer and/or an interviewee which helped prepare me 1 to get a job and 2 to hire an amazing team of people, PR Campaigns where I was taught how to create a campaign strategy and plan utilizing real-world use case campaigns and practice taking them to market, Oral Communication which allowed me to learn about the best ways to give a professional presentation to a large audience which has been helpful in my career as I often have to give presentations to leadership and the sales organization, and lastly, interpersonal communications which has prepared me for the real world working environment which on a daily basis you have to deal with colleagues communication styles, leadership challenges, strategic problem solving, on the fly decision making, and interpersonal conflict. Additionally, the requirement of having a lot of group projects really helped to instill in me early that being able to collaborate and work with people, understanding that everyone has a different work style/ethic prepared me for the working world.

What advice would you give current students about their careers?

Don’t be afraid to jump in with both feet and learn everything there is to know about your profession and seek out additional projects outside of your role to give you a well-rounded skill set. Once you figure out what you like doing best within the profession after being in the career a few years, then silo down your role/skill set and be looked at as a subject matter expert in your field of choice. Lastly, be sure to obtain an internship in your field prior to graduating, this will get you a step ahead of others within the recruiting process when it comes to applying for your first full time position.

2019 Communication

Student Welcome Back

The Department of Communication hosted its annual Student Welcome Back event this past fall during the first week of the fall 2019 semester. This past year, the department decided to host the student welcome back as an ice cream social thanks to Captain Cookie!



FACULTY NEWS

Gary Kreps Named 2019 Distinguished Scholar by the National Communication Association

By: Anne Reynolds



"Gary Kreps is a prolific scholar and a staunch advocate for inclusion and equity," said Anne Nicotera, chair, Department of Communication. "His work makes a significant impact on the communication discipline, while consistently serving the interests of George Mason University and most importantly, its students. We are honored to work with such an ardent advocate." The NCA created the Distinguished Scholar Award in 1991 to recognize its members for a lifetime of scholarly achievement in the study of communication. Considered the association's highest honor, the distinction recognizes excellence in the communication profession. In its recognition of Kreps, the NCA noted his status as one of the leading health communication scholars in the discipline, a trailblazer in the field who has created and provided service to several programs and institutes, maintaining an aggressive research agenda, and securing millions of dollars in federal grants to address real world issues through theory and applied communication scholarship. He has published over 400 peer-reviewed journal articles, nearly sixty books, monographs, and edited journals, has been the recipient of numerous awards, and has frequently served on advisory, editorial, and scientific review boards.

Read more here: <https://communication.gmu.edu/articles/13839>

Coming Together in the Age of Division: Social Media, Civic Engagement and the Future of American Participatory Democracy

Prior to the Find Your Future: 2019 Communication Career Forum on October 2, 2019, the Mason Department of Communication and its Insight Committee hosted a small forum called "Coming Together in the Age of Division: Social Media, Civic Engagement and the Future of American Participatory Democracy".

It was also co-sponsored by the Association for Civic Responsibility (ACR) as well as the Department of Communication and Insight Committee. The event was successfully planned by Communication faculty members, Professor Sergei Salmoilenko and Professor Kate Sweeney. To read more about the event, please click here featured on the Fourth Estate.



RETIRING FACULTY

Dr. Katherine Rowan

After 20+ years teaching for the Department of Communication at George Mason University, Dr. Katherine (Kathy) Rowan is officially retiring in 2020.

Katherine Rowan's research concerns the public relations challenges of earning trust and explaining complexities in risk and crisis communication contexts. She teaches public relations, science communication, and crisis communication. She received her bachelor's degree from George Mason's English Department in 1975 and was a member of its inter-collegiate competitive public speaking team, the forensics team. After graduation, she worked for the Smithsonian Institution's Office of Public Affairs. Her master's degree was earned in communication and journalism from the University of Illinois, and her doctorate in the teaching of rhetoric and composition from Purdue's English Department.

She joined Purdue's Communication Department in 1985, earning tenure in 1991 and full professor status in 1996. She joined Mason's faculty in 2000. Professor Rowan is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and chair-elect of its section on General Interest in Science and Engineering. She has authored or edited over 70 scholarly and governmental publications concerning effective methods for earning trust and explaining complex science. Her research has been funded by Virginia Sea Grant and the National Science Foundation. She has given lectures on risk communication, science communication, and crisis communication for organizations such as the National Library of Medicine, the National Institutes of Health's Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the National Academy of Sciences, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Emory and Henry College.



The Department of Communication would like to formally thank Dr. Kathy Rowan for all of her years of service and support! We will miss her dearly!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 12, 2020: **Arts, Communication, and Design Internship and Career Fair**, Center for the Arts Concert Hall
- March 27 & 28, 2020: **Virginia Association of Communication Arts and Sciences (VACAS) Conference, "Communication & Identity"**, George Mason University, Johnson Center
- April 1-5, 2020: **Eastern Communication Association Conference**
- April 18, 2020: **COMM Undergraduate Award Ceremony**
- May 15, 2020: **COMM Graduate Award Ceremony**
- May 15, **GMU Graduation**

Links and Information:

Faculty Directory:

https://communication.gmu.edu/people/full_time_faculty

COMM Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/gmucommadvising?ref=hl>

COMM Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/MasonCommDept>

COMM Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/masoncomm/>

Donate Button "Give button" on our main website:

<https://communication.gmu.edu/>

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Virginia Association of Communication Arts and Sciences

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COMMUNICATION AND IDENTITY

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