Graduating #MasonCOMM Seniors, Remember to Join the COMM Alumni Listserv:

We will miss our recent graduated students 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.

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LinkedIn: @MasonCOMM | Instagram: @MasonCOMM
Facebook: @MasonCOMMDep | Twitter: @MasonCOMMDep
Website: communication.gmu.edu
Dear Mason Communication Community,

Greetings friends and colleagues! Another year is gone, and a new year is well underway. We have learned a great deal about flexibility, resilience, and teamwork as we continually encounter a constantly changing “normal.” We now know that our hybrid workplace functions well, with some of us on campus and some of us working remotely. We know that our in-person courses go smoothly with masks and social distancing. We stand ready to be flexible and change modality in a heartbeat. We continue to prioritize the well-being and quality of learning for our students. Like everyone else, we hope that we will soon stabilize to a new, and hopefully post-COVID, normal!

And what is it that is getting us through it all so successfully? Communication. As always, we are presented with evidence, on a daily basis, that what we do and teach is centrally important to all of our professional and personal lives.

Congratulations to those who graduated in December 2021, and to those looking forward to graduating in May and August 2022! Welcome to our MasonCOMM alumni community! Please reach out to us if you want to remain involved after you graduate!

We love our new home in Horizon Hall. We love our new colleagues and students. There is much to be thankful for and to look forward to. Please like and follow us on social media to stay updated!

Sincerely,

Dr. Anne Nicotera
PASSION TO PASSION – SCHMEIDLER'S TEACHING PATH

Lance E. Schmeidler, #MasonCOMM Alum and Faculty, Looks Back on the Past 20 Years

Over the past two decades, #MasonCOMM alumnus and current faculty member, Lance E. Schmeidler, has seen a lot of change. Over his time, he has watched the campus grow and expand from a small commuter school to one of the largest residential schools in the state; yet, he says he has always appreciated how walking paths and nature are incorporated throughout campus. This week we’ll learn more about a faculty member who does so much for the department and university.

Unlike most faculty, Schmeidler has had the opportunity to not only see the University as a whole change, but as a MasonCOMM alumnus he has watched the department grow and change too. After graduating with a BA in COMM (2003), he started teaching the Basic Course (COMM 100 and COMM 101) as a graduate lecturer. After graduating with his MA in 2005, he became an adjunct and in 2011 was hired full-time.

Both of his degree paths focused on media production. Schmeidler said, “My background in media goes back to my childhood, when I created my own sound mixer and produced my own music, radio programs and commercials. Today we’d call these podcasts, but back then we were producing audio on cassettes and mailing them out to friends, family and radio stations.” When he arrived at Mason, he had plans to be an audio engineer. All that changed when “I took my first video production class and I realized that everything I did in audio could be done in video...and more. I was hooked!”

Schmeidler takes the passion he has for learning and passes it on to his students. He said, “Beyond teaching theory, application and skills, I bring over two decades of experience working in media to my classes. I’m motivated to teach my students to find work in the field.” He prepares them through classroom activities designed to help them improve the skills needed to work in the always-changing media business. “My production courses incorporate industry research, and include information and postings for internships, daily contract work and entry level positions. Last year alone, I helped four students get their first gigs after graduation and consulted with another who started his own YouTube channel.” An aspect of the job he enjoys most is getting to know the students on a personal level.

Communication students learn the sky’s the limit with Mason alum, meteorologist Brian van de Graaff

Does it take natural abilities to communicate to the public? That was one question George Mason University students posed to meteorologist and media personality Brian van de Graaff.

Van de Graaff, who graduated from Mason with a BA in speech communication in 1997, was recently invited to talk to students in Rodger Smith’s COMM 359 Media Management class in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. “Brian has great pride in his profession,” said Smith, a Professor and faculty advisor for WGMU, Mason’s online radio station. “He could express that to a set of students.

Read article in full: https://www.gmu.edu/news/2021-11/communication-students-learn-skys-limit-mason-alum-meteorologist-brian-van-de-graaff

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Communication Career Forum shows Mason students ‘the doors that they have open for them’

by: Madison Rudolf

George Mason University students assembled on the third floor of the Johnson Center on the Fairfax Campus on Oct. 26 to have their career questions answered by some of the nation’s leading communications professionals.

About 100 students attended the Fall 2021 Communication Career Forum hosted by Mason’s Department of Communication and its external advisory board, the Insight Committee. There they had the opportunity to interact in person with public affairs specialists, media producers, journalists, health communicators and marketers.

The goal of the event: empowering students to build connections with mentors in their industry to help launch their careers.

“Everyone has such different journeys,” said one of the mentors, Mason alum Kristen Dalton, BA Communication ’17, MA Science Communication ’20, a senior account manager at Digital Health Strategies. “I think there’s so much value in hearing how different people got to where they are, so people know the doors that they have open for them.”

The goal of the Career Forum is to empower students to build connections with mentors in their industry. Photo by Shelby Burgess/Strategic Communications

Because the mentors were in different rooms, it allowed for intimate, small-group conversations.

“Students can see what the different paths are, they can see what a day in the life is of different communications professionals, and most importantly, they can start building their network,” said Julie Murphy, president of Sage Communications and leader of the Insight subcommittee that planned this event.

Sydney Barlow, a junior communication major concentrating in journalism, said she appreciated the opportunity to network with experienced professionals as she looks forward to graduating in December 2022.

The forum began with a virtual keynote interview featuring Mason alumni Angie Goff, BA Communication ’01, and Marcela Robertson, BA Communication ’11. Goff, an anchor and co-host at Fox Broadcasting Company, and Robertson, a reporter at WUSA-TV, provided advice on how to be “the CEO of your career.”

“This event is so meaningful and is so important to have alumni that have been in your shoes, have sat where you sit, and have had your professors, and you can give them your insight and your pathway,” Dalton said.

Other mentors in attendance came from such organizations as NPR, Discovery Communications, the Council of State Governments, and PRofessional Solutions, LLC, a public relations temporary staffing agency.

One more thing the Career Forum provided: optimism.

“It’s really great to see people in the field and learn from them and see that they’re real people,” said Savannah Telfer, a senior communication major concentrating in journalism. “Sometimes it feels like things are unattainable,” she said.

But after speaking with the mentors, including Andrea Cambon, supervising editor of Morning Edition at NPR, Telfer said she felt like her career goals are achievable.
UPCOMING EVENTS

- COMM, Cocoa and Cookies student event
  - Monday, February 14th, 2022
  - Horizon Hall 5200 kitchen (in-person)
  - RSVP here: https://communication.gmu.edu/events/12940

- GMU Media, Arts, Design, and Communication Internship & Career Fair
  - Tuesday, March 29th
  - Center for the Arts Lobby (in-person)
  - Register here: TBA

- Undergrad and Grad Award Ceremonies
  - TBA

All COMM event info can be found on our website: communication.gmu.edu

The Department of Communication is In-Person AND Virtual!

If you are a COMM student and need to make a virtual advising appointment, please visit
https://app.acuityscheduling.com/schedule

If you have any questions regarding the COMM Undergrad program please email combadire@gmu.edu

If you have any questions about the COMM Grad program please email commgrade@gmu.edu

***PLEASE WEAR A MASK WHEN VISITING THE MAIN OFFICE***