STUDENTNEWS

Students Put Theory Into Action Via Community Engagement

A new initiative in the Department of Communication is breathing life into theory through community engagement.

In autumn 2007, more than 150 students enrolled in 18 communication courses explored the practical connection of communication theory and helping the community. Students participated in projects such as tutoring at Taft Elementary School as a part of the Interpersonal Communication course and serving as advocates for The Freedom Center, speaking on its behalf at public forums in connection with the Persuasive Speaking course. Students enrolled in some sections of Public Speaking explored how they could serve as mentors with homeless children in collaboration with Project Connect and the Cincinnati Zoo. Others enrolled in Professional Speaking learned how to be of assistance to marginalized communities through work with Public Allies.

Over spring break, 12 university honor students traveled to the Appalachian region of Kentucky for Appalachian Culture and Intercultural Communication, a course taught by Assistant Professor M.J. Woeste. They worked with the Christian Appalachian Project (CAP) to build and rehabilitate houses, putting into practice intercultural communication techniques learned in class.

What did students have to say about the initiative? The vast majority, 95 percent, felt their involvement with the community was greatly beneficial to their learning experience. Students reported they believed service learning enhanced their comprehension of communication theory and made a difference in the lives of community members.

The initiative continues. During winter 2008, more than 180 students were enrolled in 22 civically engaged communication courses involved with 12 agencies serving the Greater Cincinnati community.

TOP: *Professor M.J. Woeste (top, center) with students in the Appalachian region of Kentucky.*

BOTTOM: *Student Mare Warner with an Appalachian family whose house she helped to rehab.*

Forensics Team Tests Speech Skills at Contests Nationwide

The University of Cincinnati Forensics Team is a nationally competitive speech and debate program whose members participate in a variety of speech events at tournaments throughout the season. The team has traveled to schools including the University of Wisconsin at Eau Clair, Berry College in Georgia, Indiana University/Purdue University and Butler University in Indiana, Berea College in Kentucky, and, in Ohio, The Ohio State University, Kent State University, The University of Akron and Bowling Green State University. Travel and expenses are covered by the team budget and all students can compete with no out-of-pocket expenses.

According to Wendy Larcher, communication faculty advisor, "Students who join a forensics team will develop speech and debate skills, including communication, persuasion, organization, style and delivery and will develop leadership skills and competitiveness in the business/work environment."

Curriculum Reflects Prepping For Life in a Diverse World

Communication students are being prepared for the global world in which they will work. Many communication courses focus on diversity as it is broadly defined. Students wanting to develop their global cultural competence can select from business communication, gender communication, intercultural communication, organizational diversity, communication and health politics and rhetorical dimensions of terrorism.

Communication Professor Cynthia Berryman-Fink, who chairs the University Diversity Council, explains: "The curriculum across the university will increasingly include diversity understanding, appreciation and competence as integral to a relevant, quality, 21st-century education."

CommCeleb
10th Anniversary Celebration
May 21, 2008 4:00 p.m.
Mick and Mack's Contemporary Cafe
Tangeman University Center

Alumni *Weekend*

May 16, 2008

Please join us for **Back to College Day** and reunite with your former McMicken College classmates!

RSVP at www.artsci.uc.edu/alumniweekend or at 513.556.0912 by Friday, May 9

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Department of Communication
University of Cincinnati
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Mentoring Matters: Giving Back Where It Counts

By: Amy Elizabeth Averett

One evening this past summer, I was sitting at home working on my upcoming autobiography. The chapter I was writing took me back to my late teens, when I was finishing Purcell Marian High School and about to embark on my college career.

Those memories have been amplified through my experiences with the Cincinnati Sophomore Initiative, giving back to the UC community through mentoring.

Throughout high school, I was a B and C student who received very little encouragement from my teachers to pursue higher education. During my senior year, I expressed an interest in studying journalism at Syracuse University in upstate New York. My guidance counselor shook his head and informed me that the best I could possibly achieve would be a two-year degree. In February 1986, however, I received full acceptance at the University of Cincinnati's McMicken College of Arts and Sciences.

I have so many fond memories of my time at UC, rushing from one class to the next, having lunch in Tangeman University Center and, of course, the late-night study sessions. My parents continually stressed the importance of getting an education, and my life revolved exclusively around going to school and coming home to study. Working part-time, dating or participating in extracurricular activities was strictly prohibited. In June 1990, I was awarded a bachelor's degree with honors in communication arts. Two years later, I earned a master's degree in the same field. At the time, I was a bright, ambitious 23-year-old determined to land a position in public relations.

For years I worked several low-paying, dead-end clerical jobs that did not require a college education due to lack of relevant work experience. Through it all, I vowed to one day return to UC as a successful professional and help students develop the "competitive edge" they so greatly need in today's ever-changing job market. As I reached my 30s, I took a few more risks and knocked on a few more doors despite advice from family members to "just do something else." In April 1998, persistence landed me my first communication job, conducting telephone surveys for radio stations nationwide.

On a Tuesday morning in July 2007, I received a letter at The Enquirer's Cincinnati.Com, where I have been employed in advertising telephone sales for a little more than four years. The letter came from the Office of the Dean at the UC College of Arts and Sciences. Enclosed was correspondence from the interim dean – my former communication professor, Cynthia Berryman-Fink – requesting that I serve as a mentor for the Cincinnati Sophomore Initiative (CSI). Given my life experiences, I was deeply touched and honored to take on this very important role.

Amy Elizabeth Averett is a mentor for the Cincinnati Sophomore Initiative.

This groundbreaking program has enabled me to give back to the UC community in more ways than one. Overall, my journey through CSI thus far has been most enjoyable. I have been working closely with communication major Jamie White, a 28-year-old non-traditional student, and psychology/criminal justice major Sonya Hickson. The three of us talk through e-mail on a monthly basis. During our conversations, I stress not only the importance of working hard, but in believing in oneself and taking initiative both inside and outside the classroom. I also impart the value of networking with competent professionals and building a resume long before graduation. More important, I promised both Jamie and Sonya that I would do everything I can to ensure that they have a fun and rewarding college experience, and not have to endure the many struggles I encountered in terms of finding suitable employment.

UNIVERSITY OF Cincinnati

From the **Head**

Cynthia Berryman-Fink

Dear Alumni,

The University of Cincinnati campus has changed dramatically during the last few years and we now boast of a spectacular physical facility. Likewise, in the Department of Communication, we take great pride in the excellence of our students, faculty and programs. A contemporary curriculum, taught by world-class faculty, prepares our graduates for life and work in the 21st century. We hope you will enjoy reading about our growing and highly regarded public relations program, the new intercollegiate speech and debate team, students applying communication principles through community service, the role of cultural diversity in communication and highlights of faculty research and expertise in children's media, presidential campaigning and leadership communication.

We also are pleased to introduce our two newest tenure-track faculty members, Suzanne Boys and John Lynch.

Interest in a communication degree continues to be strong with 602 majors in the undergraduate program. Our master's program enrolls about 20 students in a two-year program to prepare graduates for a range of careers as communication professionals and for doctoral programs across the nation.

We would love to hear from you and to have you come to campus for a visit. Please be sure to complete the news online and consider attending the CommCeleb event on May 21, 2008.

Cynthia Berryman-Fink

Cynthia Berryman-Fink
Professor and Interim Head

DEPARTMENTNEWS

Welcome, Communicators!

Back row, L to R: *William Jennings, M.J. Woeste, John Lynch , James Crocker-Lakness, Stephen Depoe, Evan Griffin, Kristina Tabor Galyen, LisaMarie Luccioni*
Front row, L to R: *Stephen Haas, Molly Mayer, Teresa Sabourin, Cynthia Berryman-Fink*
Not pictured: *Suzanne Boys, Richard Casey, Amber Erickson, Gail Fairhurst, Steven Fuller, Nancy Jennings, Wendy Larcher, Maribeth Metzler, Pama Mitchell, Kurt Neuwirth, Lisa Newman, Heather Zoller*

Jennings Goes 'Between the Lions' With Latest Grant

Nancy Jennings with her children

Mick and Mack are not the only lions who stir educational aspirations. Faculty member Nancy Jennings and her research team discovered that a family of lions on a PBS Ready To Learn TV program called "Between the Lions" can foster learning for future UC alums.

Jennings received a $50,000 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting via the University of Pennsylvania to examine the impact of educational television on children's early literacy. Between April and June 2007, approximately 150 preschoolers and kindergartners and 150 first- and second-grade children participated in this study. Analyses are still pending, but preliminary results suggest that kindergartners and preschoolers who watched 10 minutes of "Between the Lions" a day for four weeks showed improved early literacy skills. Remarks from participating teachers indicated that the program reinforced class lessons and targeted trouble-literacy areas. Teachers reported that the children requested viewing the program and engaged with the content and characters.

Jennings has received additional funding to continue research in this area. Currently, she is examining the educational claims and strategies of preschool media content and will launch new research projects to observe how preschoolers with disabilities respond to educational television. She will track kindergartners over the academic year to identify the optimal conditions for use of educational media as children begin to learn to read.

Faculty Awards and Accolades

LisaMarie Luccioni

Faculty member LisaMarie Luccioni served as speaker at a convocation welcoming the largest-ever incoming freshman class (a projected record of 4,000-plus) on Sept. 16, 2007. She talked with those gathered at Fifth Third Arena about the importance of business etiquette and professional image, tying the theme to UC's Just Community Initiative message of demonstrating civility, decency and respect within personal and professional lives.

Luccioni was also named the 2008 Woman of the Year by the Cincinnati Women in Excellence and Spirit Together, CWEST. CWEST recognizes those women who have made a significant contribution to the University of Cincinnati through their leadership, scholarship, sincerity and spirit. Each year the women of CWEST search for a UC staff or faculty member who best embodies these characteristics, has impacted students and has achieved personal success.

Gail Fairhurst

Professor Gail Fairhurst received the 2007 National Communication Association Organizational Communication Division's Book of the Year award for her book, *Discursive Leadership: In Conversation with Leadership Psychology*. Fairhurst is traveling to Sydney, Australia, to lecture on the book, with lectures also slated at Purdue University and the University of Lund, Sweden. She has previously lectured in Oslo, Norway, and Aspen, Colo.

Lisa Newman

Field Service Professor Lisa Newman received the 2008 Carl Mills Memorial Award. The honor is given annually to a faculty member in the McMicken College of Arts & Sciences who over the years has constantly stimulated and participated in student relations. This includes a willingness to be involved with students in and out of class, a genuine concern about students' current and long-range development, a willingness to be involved with a student group and activities, creative approaches to teaching and respect for diversity of opinions and experiences of students. The selection is made by the executive committee of the College Tribunal.

Newman also received the first annual Student Choice Woman of the Year Award, the only totally student-driven honor on campus. Criteria include the promotion of student leadership and the demonstration of the importance of scholarship, service and commitment to diversity

Trent Explores the '08 Political Trail

Judith Trent

Professor Judith Trent collected data in New Hampshire during the week before the January presidential primary, and saw a more electric atmosphere than at any of the five previous presidential primaries she had witnessed up close in New Hampshire since 1988.

Trent was barnstorming to rallies across the state as part of her ongoing research project into what voters see as ideal traits in a presidential candidate.

"This is the first time in a long time that things have been this open," says Trent. "There is no incumbent president or vice president in this race on either side. Both parties have so many candidates in contention, and those candidates seem so inspired. This year is truly a phenomenon."

As an expert who studies political communication on the campaign trail, she came away impressed, too.

"It's more interesting rhetorically than ever before, and there really are more skilled communicators in this field than ever before," Trent says. "It seems they each are going for a different cut of the pie in their approach."

Meet Our Newest Faculty Members

Suzanne E. Boys

Suzanne E. Boys, assistant professor, received a BA in speech-language pathology from the University of Cincinnati in 1996. She earned her MA in communication from UC in 2002, writing a thesis on the discursive construction of the teacher role by international graduate students, and a PhD in communication from Texas A&M University in 2007. Boys' dissertation research on the Roman Catholic clergy sex abuse crisis developed a dialogical model for understanding crisis communication. Her research interests include public relations, crisis communication, nonprofit organizing, dialogue and the functions of silence in organizational communication. Her courses include Communication in Organizations; Organizational Image, Identity, and Issues; Public Relations Case Studies; Crisis Communication; and Organizational Cultures.

John A. Lynch

John A. Lynch, assistant professor, teaches in the rhetoric and public communication area. He received his BA from the University of Dayton in 1998, his MA from the University of Pittsburgh in 2000, and his PhD from the University of Georgia in 2005. Lynch's teaching and research interests focus on the rhetoric of science and medicine, especially on how the public understands science. During his doctoral work, he was a member of the University of Georgia's Health & Heritage Project that examined lay attitudes toward the intersection of genetics, race and medicine. His current research project expands on his dissertation and examines the scientific and political debates about embryonic stem cell research.

Growing Public Relations Program Ranked Nationally

The Public Relations program in the Department of Communication is growing in both size and national recognition. In October 2007, the program earned national certification, becoming one of only 20 such programs in the nation. The Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) designation from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSSA) recognizes programs that provide not only an outstanding curriculum, but also academic resources, experiential opportunities, extracurricular activities and strong faculty. Two external reviewers described UC's PR program strengths as a well-respected and collegial faculty, impressive students who are passionate and professional and a very active chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America.

Coursework includes Introduction to PR; Case Studies in PR; Communication in Organizations; PR Campaigns; Organizational Identity, Image, and Issues Management; Introduction to Mass Communication; PR Writing; and PR Research. In the Campaign course, students work for actual clients, who have included Project Connect of the Cincinnati Public Schools, the Urban Appalachian Council, the Fifth Third Foundation, Dohn Community High School and the UC Cancer Center.

Students in PRSSA are also in the second year of a statewide campaign competition called PRojectU, sponsored through Northlich, a PR and marketing agency in Cincinnati. The student team has researched and designed and is currently implementing an anti-smoking campaign on UC's campus. This year's budget is $8,000, which the students manage themselves. Last year's team made a strong showing, especially for the newest PR program in the competition. This year's team goal is to win the competition.

Recent graduates of the PR program are employed by companies and groups including Proctor & Gamble, Boys and Girls Clubs of Cincinnati, Matrix Health Group and the national office of the Big East Conference.

Members of the PRSSA include: (L to R) Kim Brown, Raya Mafazy, Nichole Thorsky, Rene Brunelle, Kelly Gade and Jessica Laxton.

Meet and Greet Old, New Friends at Tenth-Annual 'CommCeleb'

Communication students, faculty, alumni, intern supervisors, professionals and friends are invited to come together at the 10th-annual Communication Celebration. The party runs from 4 to 6 p.m. May 21 in Mick & Mack's Contemporary Café in the Tangeman University Center. The 2008 awards ceremony starts at 5 p.m.

Lisa Newman, director of undergraduate studies and the communication internship program, says proudly: "CommCeleb is the biggest academic department celebration at UC, for the greatest major."

Participants will view more than 100 intern posters and see research projects completed by honors and MA students, along with PR certificate program highlights and accomplishments from student organizations, including PRSSA, the forensics team and ETHOS.

The 2008 Outstanding Alumni award will be presented to 1998 graduate Eric Winegardner, vice president of client adoption for Monster Worldwide. Winegardner epitomizes the true communication success story, turning classroom lessons and internship experience into an amazing human resources career.

If alumni wish to attend the celebration, they may RSVP to Lisa.Newman@uc.edu. To become part of the slide show, they may send a digital photo along with their name, graduation year, current title and news to Lisa.Newman@uc.edu.

What's New With You?

Please help us update our alumni files and let your friends know what you have been up to at the same time. Visit ***www.artsci.uc.edu/alumni*** to share your "news" online. The information you provide will be used in future publications. You may also make an address change, nominate a distinguished alum or make a gift to the college.