

CATCH-UP TIME ON CAMPUS

There is a marked reduction in activity around Pearson Hall these days – especially in the corridors and offices that I frequent. Among the faculty and staff, I see a relaxed and reflective demeanor after the high-energy final days of the semester and the commencement and convocation ceremonies just completed. It's summertime. And it's time to review evaluation feedback from our students and revise our course materials and focus on our research projects. Ah, time to think again and to explore new teaching and research methods ... catch-up time.

But for some of us on campus, it's also time to return to the classroom for summer course offerings. These offerings might be experimental courses that we can consider for adding to our regular semester curriculum.

For example, Phil Wescott, faculty leader of our Advertising and Public Relations concentration, will offer a new Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) course that might appeal to mid-career practitioners working in the nearby geography. Professor Lance Holbert shares Phil's interest in developing our IMC course content to meet the needs, wants and expectations of employers and graduate schools – as well as of our students who study persuasive communications. Lance and Phil will bring me some specific recommendations about how to evolve our IMC offerings, but I want to hear from you as our alumni stakeholders as well. Certainly you have valuable viewpoints about how we can modify or augment our course content to deliver greater value in today's work world and marketplace.

Perhaps we don't tell you often that we need and value your comments and opinions about how we are doing in our educational Mission. But I am very interested in hearing your perspectives and suggestions. Strengthening the link between our Department and our alumni is a priority activity for me...and you can phone me at (302) 831-8041 or email me at eperse@udel.edu. Frankly, it would be a joy for me to just "catch up" with you, during the summertime or anytime. Thank you for your ongoing support !

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Perse, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Communication



Elizabeth Perse, Ph.D.

YOUNG TALENT LAUNCHED, READY TO SUCCEED



At Convocation ceremonies on Saturday, May 28th, the Department awarded 106 Baccalaureate degrees and eight Master's degrees to a talented group of young communicators.

"We're proud of these young men and women ... and of their many accomplishments during their time with us here at Delaware," observed Department of Communication chair Betsy Perse. "Our relatively small faculty enables us to get to know these undergraduates well during their years as Communication Majors, and to work closely with our small group of graduate students. It's a clear advantage compared with much larger communication departments elsewhere."

Special honors were awarded to a handful of the members of the class of 2005. Leah Geib was honored with the Department's Faculty Award, as well as by the NCAA for her student-athlete leadership. Leah plans to return to us in the Fall to begin graduate study in Communication.

Bethany Lichtenberg, president of the Lambda Pi Eta National Communication Association Honor Society – Rho Alpha Chapter, was awarded the Ray E. Keesey Award, and Elizabeth Shaheen-Dumke, president of the Delaware Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) received the Hal Kierce Award as the outstanding Public Relations student. She was hired in Public Affairs at AstraZeneca, a leading multi-national pharmaceutical firm with US headquarters in Delaware.

Kelley Pastic was honored with the Eugene and Catherine Melk Award in Communication, recognizing the student with the highest Grade Point Average (GPA). Kelley also delivered remarks on behalf of the entire undergraduate class to the parents and other friends and family assembled at the Carpenter Sports Building for the event.

Jacqueline Turner was honored with the Edmund Glenn Memorial Award, recognizing Jackie's comprehensive excellence in all aspects of communication study and her general academic performance. She returns to her hometown of Baltimore as Marketing Director for a sports magazine.

Many of the graduates have accepted entry-level jobs with leading communication agencies and other employers of communication talent. Often, these jobs resulted from previous student-intern experience with the hiring organization, and the Internship Program has become an important, integrated component of the Delaware undergraduate experience.



CLASS OF 2005 FINDS IMPROVED JOB MARKET

Article by Martin Mbugua

May 28, 2005--University graduates this year will find a stronger job market than it has been for several years, George Sharpley Jr., a senior economist at the Delaware Department of Labor, said.

"It's mostly a function of the overall U.S. economy improving in the last year," Sharpley said. "We are expecting a decent economy for at least another couple of years. There's a lot of uncertainty out there, but we are fairly confident."

"There is a definite improvement in the job market this year.

All of our job fairs have seen significant increases in employer attendance," Jack Townsend, director of UD's MBNA Career Services Center, said.

The center's Spring Career Fair on April 21 drew 105 employers, up from 81 the previous year, while other more specialized fairs for health science, engineering and technology and agriculture, saw improved participation levels, too, Townsend said.

"National statistics indicate that chemical engineers (with an average starting salary of \$54,256) and electrical/computer engineers (\$52,009) are the highest paid bachelor's degree graduates," Townsend said. "The UD experience is similar to those statistics. We have found that our nursing graduates are also getting offers in the low \$50,000s and accounting majors are in the mid to upper \$40,000 range."

Townsend said UD graduates have been doing very well in the market, and their access to potential employers through the career center has greatly increased their opportunities. "As we begin to get feedback from graduates, it is clear that this will be a strong year," he said.

Most UD graduates have the advantage of having taken internships and career-related summer jobs that enhance their resumes when looking for full-time employment. The MBNA Career Services Center emphasizes the need to start the job search early and provides a full range of programs and services to help students present themselves effectively, Townsend said.



SOME TID-BITS YOU CAN PASS ALONG

There are plenty of reasons for you to be proud that you are a Blue Hen alum, but we've selected a few indicators of our academic excellence, excellent value, and other "tid-bits" that you can pass along to friends and family members. There are more of these on the www.udel.edu Web site, of course ...

• *UD students are a select group*

UD is a hot school. UD has just experienced the largest applicant pool in its history. There were more than 23,000 applicants for the Class of 2009. That number included more out-of-state applications than those received by any other public university in America. The average applicant in comfortably in the top quarter of his or her graduating class. Bottom line: UD's popularity enables us to be selective and choose from the best.

• *Commitment to diversity*

The University of Delaware is ranked fourth in the nation among "flagship state institutions" in the graduation rate of African-American students, according to a report in a recent issue of *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*. UD's rate of 64 percent is nearly twice the national average. In fall 2003, the University established a council of faculty, administrators and students to lead and oversee campus wide efforts to enhance student diversity and success. This new Council on Student Diversity and Success will coordinate and extend programs that support the recruitment and success of a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body. The entering class for the fall of 2009 is the most diverse class in the University's history.

• *Students have a world view*

UD is ranked sixth in the nation among study-abroad programs at research institutions, and one in four UD students takes advantage of a study-abroad experience during his or her college career. In 2003, UD added the seventh and final continent—Antarctica—to the list of locations where our students experience educational adventures.

• *Rhodes Scholars*

Since 1990, UD has had four Rhodes Scholarship winners: Leonard P. Stark, Class of 1991; Douglas Mauro de Lorenzo, Class of 1998; Thomas M. Pellathy, Class of 2000; and David A. Kovara, Class of 2002. In all, UD has had 11 Rhodes Scholars since the prestigious program began in 1904.

• *Commitment to public service*

UD has been recognized by as a Truman Foundation Honor Institution, one of only three selected in 2003,

based on the University's active encouragement of outstanding young people to pursue careers in public service and its sustained success in helping student win prestigious Truman Scholarships. In all, only 49 institutions have been awarded this honor in the foundation's 30-year history. Other recipients include Columbia, Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Princeton and Yale universities. UD has had 13 Truman Scholars.

• *Invigorating curriculum*

In May 2004, the University's Faculty Senate approved several curriculum changes that mirror the types of activities mentioned prominently in recent news reports as goals that a Harvard University committee considers important as it begins to work on reinvigorating its own undergraduate curriculum. Few public or private institutions meet the current standards of quality now in place at UD in terms of programs, facilities, faculty and students. Items that enrich the Delaware undergraduate experience include a program on the transition from high school to the University; nationally regarded discovery-based learning opportunities; an undergraduate research program that is a national model; a capstone experience that enables students to reflect upon and apply what they have learned; and a commitment to international education and study abroad.

• *One of the best computer networks in the nation*

UD has one of the best computer network systems in the nation and, in April 2000, was ranked second among universities in "America's 100 Most Wired Colleges," a survey of college and university use of information technologies conducted by the now-defunct Yahoo! Internet Life Magazine.

• *Going wireless*

Wireless access to the University's computing network is expanding quickly as more students, faculty and staff are turning to portable computers. Currently, buildings supported by the wireless network include the Morris Library, Memorial Hall, Alfred Lerner Hall, Clayton Hall and several areas in the Pencader Residence Hall Complex, as well as Arshat Hall on the Wilmington Campus. Today, all residence hall lounges and areas in the Perkins and Trabant University centers will be wired for wireless.

RESEARCH CAPSULES: WHAT'S THE RELEVANCE OF OUR RESEARCH ANYWAY?

The University of Delaware is the center of much research by faculty and graduate students, and occasionally by undergraduate students as well. This is as true in the Department of Communication as it is in other academic departments. Often, alumni and parents of our Communication students ask about the kind of research being done here, and about its relevance to our society or our individual lives within the larger society. Future issues of our COMM-entator newsletter will briefly describe some of our research initiatives, and we invite your comments and suggestions about these endeavors.

Professors Lance Holbert & Steve Mortenson

Lance Holbert published a series of articles this past year in the area of political communication. Several of these works provide insight into the ways in which different types of media use (e.g., television news viewing, political talk radio use, reading a newspaper) are related to one another, and how these relationships produce a broad range of political media effects. Some of the outcomes being studied by Professor Holbert include basic political knowledge gain, citizens' attitudes toward various political actors, as well as actual voting behavior.

In addition to Professor Holbert's political campaign scholarship, he has published works focusing on the varied roles played by entertainment media in politics. Various pieces of scholarship produced in the last year center on analyses of *The West Wing*, *Comedy Central's The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, and Michael Moore's controversial documentary film, *Fahrenheit 9-11*. The consumption of these non-traditional sources of political information is being studied relative to the use of more traditional forms of public affairs discourse (e.g., political debates, TV news).

Most recently, Professor Holbert will have an article published in the *American Behavioral Scientist* that provides a nine-part typology for the study of entertainment television and politics. This work not

only summarizes Professor Holbert's research efforts, but also provides an organizational structure that allows the work of dozens of communication scholars to be viewed as a more coherent whole.

Finally, Professor Holbert has continued his efforts to improve communication research's employment of advanced analytical tools. He is currently putting together a book project with Dr. Michael Stephenson at Texas A & M University on this topic and has been asked to contribute several works that touch upon his analytical expertise.

Steve Mortenson's research explores cultural differences in emotional intelligence. Specifically, Dr. Mortenson's work examines the way that people from Mainland China and the U.S. experience, cope with, and communicate about distressing emotions like sadness and anxiety.

Dr. Mortenson's research also examines cultural preferences regarding effective methods for comforting other people in emotional distress. His research suggests both similarities and differences in what Chinese and Americans consider emotionally intelligent behavior. For example, across both cultures people prefer comforting attempts that address their feelings and help them solve troubling situations. However, Americans prefer emotion-based support while Chinese prefer support that helps manage problems.

Dr. Mortenson sees his work closely tied to research on emotional health and interpersonal relationships. "The ability to comfort a troubled friend is seen as one of the most important and valued skills in friendship. Receiving emotional support in times of trouble is an important part of mental health. Because of the global nature of our society, it is likely that we will have work colleagues and neighbors from other nations. Understanding how culture influences what is considered emotionally intelligent behavior can help us maintain deep friendships as well reduce unhealthy stress in times of trouble," Dr. Mortenson concludes.



IT'S ABOUT BRANDING

In the Marketing age, everybody wants a distinctive brand. Our Communication Department is no exception. Thus, a new logotype, reproduced above.

In addition to the familiar blue-and-yellow University of Delaware logotype, and the somewhat less well-known College of Arts and Sciences logotype, our Department decided some months ago to develop a logotype that can be used selectively with our stakeholders.

It retains the University's familiar color scheme, but the principal art element is an alphabet character – actually an oversize serif capital "C" encircling the globe. "This symbolizes how today's UD Communication programs and students do, in fact, circle the globe," points out Department Chair Betsy Perse. "So many of our students participate in the Study Abroad program on several continents, and so much of our course content is global in scope that this design device made sense to us."

Of course, we welcome your comments too about the Department's new logo ... send your thoughts to REESER@udel.edu.

Alumni Profile

JASON TOKARSKI, BA, 1998

Article by Jacqueline Riva, BA, 2004

Reflecting on his unfolding communications career, Jason Tokarski would not have guessed that he would blaze a trail in Web-based communications for a group of traditional radio stations. But he has.

Jason is *Internet Development Coordinator* for Delmarva Broadcasting Company, based in Wilmington. Having had no formal training in Website design and development, Jason taught himself the basics by developing his own Website as a UD undergraduate.

What began as a casual and personal interest has transitioned into a more-than-full-time career for Jason. His responsibilities have expanded over the past handful of years since leaving campus. Jason oversees ten radio station Websites and three non-radio-based Internet projects. He designs and develops the sites, updates the content and format, and contributes ideas to the stations' promotion staff members.



"The Internet provides radio stations and their listeners with something they never had before – visuals," Jason notes. The convergence of media technology is where this Blue Hen graduate lives and prospers.

Besides creating Websites, Tokarski pulls on-air shifts for vacationing co-workers – a throwback to his WVUD-FM announcing days on campus – and even returns to campus periodically to talk with Communication students about these emerging career paths.

"WVUD was a big help to me ... if I had not been there, I would not have gotten interested in radio in the first place. I highly encourage internships for communication majors. I began working at WSTW as an intern in 1997 and did my best to stay in everybody's line-of-sight ... the internship wasn't just a great learning tool; it also got my foot in the door."

THANK YOU FOR TALKING WITH US ...

After the Winter 2005 Department Newsletter was mailed out, several dozen of you emailed or faxed us your updated personal information or your thoughts about Communication education today

... frankly, we were delighted to hear from you!

Here is a sample of some alumni updates and observations:

- **Nancy Wingate**, M.A. 1984, is Senior Manager of Corporate Communications at Access Group, a nonprofit organization that makes student loans that has been named a Best Place to Work... Nancy also wrote a regular "Backyard Gardener" column for a daily newspaper for five years.
- **Barbara Schlesinger Amdurer**, is a 1979 alumna and membership services coordinator for a synagogue; she also freelances as a newsletter editor.
- **Johnny Reid**, a 1981 alumnus, is pioneering High Definition Television and producing concert DVDs for the band PHISH from the New York headquarters of his firm, JRN Y (Journey) Entertainment. He has two teen daughters and a successful screenplay that is being turned into a major motion picture soon.
- **Grace Leong**, class of 1988, heads up a very successful Manhattan-based Public Relations agency, Hunter Public Relations. They serve major national and international clients and sometimes employ our UD Communication undergraduates as interns in their exciting workplace world. Grace also co-chaired the 2004 Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) International Conference last October and thinks that staying in touch with Communication alumni is a swell idea, both in hard copy and electronic formats.
- **Dana Bertotti**, class of 1998, is Events Manager at BIZBash, a New York-based resource for Event Planners. She absolutely loves her job and says that she sees "the amazing opportunities that a communication degree can lead to."
- **Sherry Palese**, a 1978 alumna, works as a para-professional in Special Education where she uses amazing communications technology to help autistic and other special needs people gain greater functionality in daily life.
- **Jill Seibert Burk**, a graduate from 2000, recently completed her M.A. degree in Corporate Communication at Pittsburgh's Duquesne University. She works at Duquesne as a Teaching Assistant.
- **Lindsay James**, a Winter 2002 graduate, is Program Director at a wilderness camp (Colvig Silver Camps) in Durango, CO. She supervises 50 college-age staff members each summer, calling on her UD Conflict Management skillset, she points out.
- **Carrie Weinberg Bachman**, 1992 graduate, is Director of Publicity for Cookbooks at Harper Collins publishing in New York. Her firm is always looking for Assistant Publicists and for Editorial Assistants, Carrie notes, so resumes can be faxed directly to her at (212) 207-7921.

This is just a sample of the alumni Fax-Back responses we have received in recent weeks ... we STILL need to hear from you about what you are doing and about how we can enrich today's communication students' potential for success in jobs like yours. Just Fax your ideas and comments to Phil Wescott at (302) 832-1892 or email to pwescott@udel.edu.

SENIOR CLASS RAISES \$47,000 FOR GIFT TO UD

May 28, 2005--At the University of Delaware's 156th Commencement May 28, representatives of the senior class announced that they have collected \$47,000 to improve the area behind the Perkins Student Center that is known as the "Beach."

The Class of 2005 exceeded its original goal of \$30,000 by 57 percent. To date, the senior class has received commitments from more than 1,220 students, parents and friends.

"This is, by far, the most money raised by a graduating class, and 50 percent more than the Class of 2004, or \$22,000," UD President David P. Roselle announced. "This accomplishment truly displays a great sense of pride in the University of Delaware and a commitment to sustaining its level of excellence. I want to thank the Senior Class."

Brian Budd and Dhiren Ponnambalam, co-chairs of the senior class gift committee, presented Roselle with the gift on behalf of the Class of 2005.



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