

THE SPEAK EASY

SUMMER 2021

CHANGES FOR THE DEPARTMENT

By Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway, Program Director

Oh my, who knew that when I wrote my column for last year's Speak Easy, we would still be in the midst of a pandemic?! This year has certainly taken a toll on all of us in different ways. First, on behalf of the department, I wish to extend my deep condolences to those of you who have lost loved ones, lost homes, lost jobs. . . so much loss over the past 18 months. Our hearts go out to you. Second, I personally want to give kudos to our faculty and graduate teaching assistants for an outstanding academic year of student engagement and support. Most of our courses were taught virtually this past year, including our many CMST 101 sections. We adapted to new (for some of us) technologies, found ways to bring students into the digital classroom community, and overall maintained the pedagogical integrity our program has long been known for. We did this by working together, and I'm so proud!

Many of our virtual meetings this past year involved discussions of reorganization. You may have heard about the grand university reorganization plans that have been going on for nearly four years now. In the Fall of 2017, then chancellor Carlo Montemagno, only having been in the role of chancellor for six weeks, unveiled a reorganization plan that eliminated departments in service



of creating schools, and moved programs around in mergers all across campus. While this was meant to be a “working” vision, intended to undergo revision as conversations ensued, the plan none the less gave current units a taste of what was to come. The original placement of Communication Studies was in a proposed *School* of Media and Performing Arts, in a proposed *College* of Liberal and Performing Arts. At the behest of university administration, the campus community began a series of conversations, as we were told that reorganization was not optional. Our faculty entertained the idea of joining with units in what was the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts, which wasn't unfamiliar to us, as we had been

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PERFORMING GRAPHIC NOVELS

By Dr. Jonny Gray

In the revised curriculum for Performance Studies, CMST 471 is the course number for adapting texts for performance. In the past, this course might include adaptation of poetry or novels. The new curriculum adds opportunities for the adaptation of other kinds of texts, literary and otherwise. Dr. Jonathan “Jonny” Gray offered the first course under this new course description, taking on the challenges of adapting comics and graphic novels for performance.

The course included examinations of professional adaptations. For example, students read Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* and then watched portions of its adaptation to a hit Broadway musical. Students also read portions of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* and then listened to an Audible Studios adaptation of it. Students were also required to do their

own adaptation and performance work of a comic or graphic novel of their choosing. These performances were complicated by the need to be mediated presentations for an online course, but the students leaned into these additional challenges and used the technology available to them to make exceptional presentations

Dr. Gray's interests in comics and graphic novels in performance stem from his scholarship and teaching in visual communication as well as his experience publishing his own comics. As noted in the course, our contemporary (particularly on-line) communication relies heavily on the sequential combination of words and images. Comics are an important medium to study and understand, nuancing the interplay of images and words.

CHANGES FOR THE DEPARTMENT (CONT.)

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part of that configuration in the past. Eventually, we thought it best to stay within our current college (Liberal Arts), and upon Chancellor Montemagno's passing in 2018, reorganization scuttlebutt quieted.

Then, in November of 2019, university administration once again took up the issue of reorganization, asking those who hadn't yet "reorganized" to submit informal proposals. After much thought, we pursued a merger with the Africana Studies Department. When both of us realized that this wasn't the best course of action for either of our programs, Communication Studies once again sought placement in what is now the College of Arts and Media, and our colleagues there welcomed us. But we still hadn't merged with any other program, which was the intention of the administration. Our position was that we were a strong unit on our own, and our interdisciplinary nature made it difficult for us to merge with any other unit and still maintain that interdisciplinary strength. For ease of transition, we were content to remain in our current College of Liberal Arts, though we were not content to merge with any other program. Over these past 3 ½ years, the conversations we have had as a faculty have been difficult, insightful, and ultimately, gave us a clear vision. Thankfully, university administration now shares that vision. And so, on July 1, 2021, the Department of Communication Studies was officially eliminated, and in its place is the **School of Communication Studies**, housed in the **College of Social Sciences and Humanities**.

Functionally, nothing changes. Our students are still in

Communication Studies; their degrees will still say Communication Studies; we are not losing any faculty or staff members; we still have autonomy over our curricular offerings, tenure and promotion criteria, and financial activities.

What excites us is that, through all of this, we realized we have the knowledge, faculty, coursework, and disciplinary history to build an interdisciplinary leadership program on campus. Over the next several years, we will work to develop an undergraduate minor and graduate certificate in Leadership, with the goal to eventually build undergraduate and graduate degrees in Leadership. If that happens (and it is well down the road), we will be two separate degree programs in the School of Communication Studies: the Communication Studies program, and the Leadership program.

Of course, we have a while to go before we get there. But the conversation has begun, and we want to build in opportunities for our alumni to be part of that conversation. We have come a long way from the original Speech Department, formed in 1938. While our name may only be slightly different, we have weathered many storms, still enjoy our status as one of the first four Ph.D. granting programs on campus, welcomed many faculty and students to our classrooms, and have an established network of alumni world wide. We have much to be proud of, and I am very thankful that I get to be part of this next chapter in our history.

REMEMBERING JEFF METZ

By Dr. Todd Graham



Jeff was the first person to greet me after taking the job as Director of Debate at SIU in the fall of 2000. It was his senior year, and he'd lost his partner to graduation. Jeff was an extraordinarily talented debater, and we were unable to find a suitable partner for him in his final year. So Jeff graciously agreed to travel with me as I began the process of rebuilding the debate program.

It was usually just the two of us, traveling across the country, attending high school debate tournaments. He was a wonderful traveling companion, a sharp mind, fun to be around, and he understood the importance of the debate program's history. I remember my first year at SIU fondly, and almost all of those memories were from my time spent with Jeff. We hustled through airports, were the first to arrive at every high school debate tournament, and Jeff used every contact he knew so we would be the first to watch and talk to potential recruits.

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REMEMBERING JEFF METZ (CONT.)

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We scouted, evaluated, and watched hundreds of high school seniors that year.

Jeff's judgment was excellent. And it's in no small part that our incoming class the next year consisted of eight outstanding freshman who were the foundation of the program that went on to win five national championships.

Without Jeff, the debate team might have floundered in obscurity. He was instrumental in the continued success of the program.

I'll miss our time together talking about everything under the sun and even the arguments we had (he was a fierce defender when he knew he was right). I, along with the SIU debate program, will forever be in his debt.

SPEAKER'S CENTER UPDATE

By Madeline Wiles, Speaker's Center Director

The Speaker's Center had an invigorating year despite the challenges of the pandemic. The Center chose to operate entirely online for the academic year and found great success assisting our students with their public speaking needs. Last fall, the Center had students from all different backgrounds seek help from our online website. With the help of our amazing volunteers who gave their time each week to help these students, the Speaker's Center focused on publishing articles designed to be a resource for the public speaking courses. We are very proud of the progress and hard work we implemented for future years to come. When I took on this role as director, I wanted to make the Center accessible for both our students and instructors, creating another opportunity to collaborate with our fellow graduate assistants and faculty members. I have had an unforgettable time working with the students who come with beautiful ideas and leave our session feeling more confident and prouder of what they have worked so hard on. These experiences are why the Speaker's Center is so vital to our department because it builds up our students and instructors to be the best version of themselves they can be.

I look forward to seeing how the Center can further evolve and continue to assist our students in their public speaking needs.

PRSSA UPDATE

By Kiki Hartmann, PRSSA President

As Spring 2021 comes to a wrap, PRSSA hopes to be back on campus in the fall. Over the last academic year, PRSSA has still made strides as an RSO. With President Kiara "Kiki" Hartmann leading the pack with advisor Justin Young, they still helped students exceed in Public Relations. In the Fall PRSSA's Communication Studies account produced the Graduate Student Promo video. The account headed by the organization's PR director, and Account executive, Haley Spiewak, shot their own footage and compiled it into a video for the department. You can find the video here: https://youtu.be/Hi_Uy0XpqHg.

This spring the organization welcomed guest speakers from the entertainment industry such as Broadway musical *Hamilton's* Chief Marketing Officer Laura Matalon. They worked with 4 clients and helped to produce Day of Giving promotional materials for the Communication

Studies Department. They have also held an in-person social event, worked on social media management for the International Student Council here on Campus, and social media content for the Kleniau Theatre. They have produced above quality work for not only their accounts, but also for the PRSSA website. They have written dozens of articles on PR trends, topics, and skills. Check out the PRSSA website at SIUPRSSA.com, or on any of our social media accounts to keep up to date on all that the chapter is working on.

As the chapter comes to the end of the semester and academic year, they are losing two of the executive board members amongst other amazing seniors. With this they are preparing to instate their new executive board in the coming weeks. I can't wait to see all that the organization continues to do in the coming year.

COMMUNICATION CAREER COUNCIL (C3) UPDATE

By Randi Burns, C3 President

C3 is an RSO turned instructional class that embodies the real-world aspect of putting your talents to work. This past year, C3 has cultivated its students to reach out, engage, host, connect, and promote many career all-stars that range from companies like Tesla, Pinterest, Microsoft, and YouTube.

The skills that we have flexed during our speaking events aren't the only resume building aspects of C3, which are valuable to have during a pandemic. We have become a think-tank of ideas, design, and information that will show our future employers that we are essential

I started with C3 in the Spring of 2020, just before the lockdown happened. We hosted BrandU; a free one-day event that featured a slew of industry professionals that are

experts in their field. Planning this event allowed me to gain skills in event planning and promotion. It was an exciting day with many students joining in online.

While we often lead the majority of the classwork, our teacher, Craig Engstrom, always kept us on the right path. Many RSOs offer similar instruction; however, what sets us apart from the others is the mentorship and career coaching from Dr. Engstrom. It's not a coincidence that our current group of students has stellar LinkedIn profiles, resumes, portfolios, and interviewing insight into the current job market. Dr. Engstrom has made sure that we graduate with an arsenal of knowledge and confidence to offer any employer an employee that always goes above and beyond.

C3 CONTINUES DEVELOPING STUDENT'S CAPABILITIES

By Dr. Craig Engstrom, C3 Faculty Adviser

The Communication Career Council, otherwise known as C3, had its most productive year since it launched in 2017. During the 2020-21 year, undergraduate students Randi Burns, Tadzia Lee, Monika Fudala, and Magdalena Granados, under the advisement of Dr. Craig Engstrom, delivered programming and content that provided impactful career development information and experiences to thousands of SIU students and friends of the Department of Communication Studies. Undergraduate students Alyssa Metelak and Jami Allen also assisted with these events.

Here are just a few of the highlights:

- On October 30, 2020, the first all-digital BrandU event featured 12 speakers throughout the day, including 8x New York Times Bestselling author Scott Berkun. There were over 1000 attendees throughout the session. The sessions are available to watch via the department's YouTube channel.
- Several blog posts were published, including the heavily trafficked www.siuicmst.org/blog. The step-by-step resume writing series has been cited by students as helpful to them getting internships and jobs.
- C3 members wrote Individual Development Plans and worked toward achieving their personal and professional



Above: C3 members Magdalena Granados, Monika Fudala, and Tadzia Lee

goals, including completing several Social Media Marketing and Human Resources Management certifications through HubSpot Academy and LinkedIn Learning.

- The team planned three events around interviewing for jobs; these Q&A sessions featured Lisa Caravelli, who interviewed for a top position at Pinterest, Jeremy Sneed, who landed a PR Director position with a Major League Baseball team franchise, and Pawel Fudala, who landed a job with Tesla.

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C3 (CONT.)

- C3 Saluki Randi Burns, with the support of CSMT graduate student Madeline Wiles, continued to run social media strategy for the department. Their efforts generated over 350K impressions across platforms over the past three months.
- C3's mission is to improve the hireability of CMST students and alumni through career workshops and

training, networking opportunities, job search support, and relevant informational resources. As you can see, we're doing just that.

If you'd like to support our efforts, please make a financial contribution to the Communication Studies Activities Fund: cola.siu.edu/communicationstudies/giving

CMST DEPARTMENT CHAIR RECEIVES AWARDS

Communication Studies department chair Sandy Pensoneau-Conway was honored this year with two awards for her outstanding leadership and mentorship. First, in early March, Sandy was named the recipient of the Warren Mentorship Award from the Central States Communication Association. This award is meant to recognize outstanding mentorship, and is named after department alumnus and beloved faculty member, Dr. John T. Warren. Then in April, Sandy received the SIU Emerging Leader University Excellence Award, the newest Excellence Award offered by the university. The purpose of this award is to recognize someone on campus who shows commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence through demonstrated leadership, vision, or actions for those they serve on campus and in the southern Illinois community. In her letters of support for these awards, Sandy's nominators mentioned her caring and compassionate approach to mentoring, her work on campus with the Network Empowering Women, her leadership of the department, and her long-time

involvement with Rainbow Café LGBTQ Center. Sandy said, "These awards are incredibly humbling. I love what I do, and it's only made possible by the people I work with. They make everything I do a labor of love." Congratulations!



HAMILTON'S CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER GIVES TALK FOR PRSSA

By Haley Spiewak

When PRSSA was forced to go online, they discussed ways to make the class more engaging due to the unfortunate circumstances. Guest speakers were one of the answers. After a DM on Instagram and a few brief exchanges over email, Haley Spiewak secured Laura Matalon, the Chief Marketing Officer of *Hamilton the Musical*, as a PRSSA guest speaker. Laura spoke in-depth about her career in PR, such as skills needed to be successful in public relations and the struggles that live theater has faced throughout COVID-19.

Public relations can often feel like a 24/7 commitment. To combat this, Laura makes sure that she sets daily goals to create a more balanced life, such as exercising in the morning and reading a physical newspaper. For her final piece of advice, Laura told the students that writing, being proficient in digital and social media, and networking were the three most important things a graduate could do to begin a career in PR. Thank you to Laura for joining PRSSA and sharing your expertise and passion for your field with us.

GRADUATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE NUMBERS

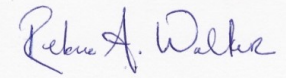
This past academic year was difficult for everyone, but especially you. You had to learn how to teach online, hybrid, hyflex, asynchronous, and synchronous courses, and how to work with entirely new teaching delivery platforms. This was difficult for everyone, but you rose to challenge. At the same time, nine of you took and passed your prelims, nine of you defended prospectuses, two of you wrote and defended MA research reports, and two of you finished and defended your dissertations – all over Zoom – and continued working toward your academic goals.

You also published, attended conferences virtually to present your work, created performances, and served. So much service. This last academic year, our graduate students published a total of four publications, created fifteen original performances and shared them online, gave multiple invited lectures, presented over twenty-one individual pieces of scholarship at academic conferences, chaired or co-chaired at least six academic divisions for those conferences, reviewed work for multiple conferences, and served in over 40 different academic capacities as members, organizers, and executive council leaders of academic committees. You created and shared a virtual Speaker's Forum and a virtual Kleinau Theatre season. And on top of all that, you also found time to volunteer and organize in the local Southern Illinois and Carbondale community with things like COVID-19 testing, food distribution, and the Rainbow Café LGBTQ center.

I and the rest of the faculty are truly proud of all you've done in this most difficult of years, and all you continue to do to bring your talents, skills, and intelligence to our academic and local communities. Thank you for your perseverance and work this past year, and may we all look forward to a brighter, safer, and in-person future!

With much love and respect,

Rebecca



Graduate Student Accomplishments by the Numbers

- 4 Publications
- 15 Performances
- 4 invited lectures
- 21 conference presentations
- 6 conference chair roles
- 39 academic service roles (committee members, officers, etc.)
- 8 non-academic service roles

THE KLEINAU: YEAR IN REVIEW

By Shelby Swafford, Publicity Director, Kleinau Theatre

The 2020-2021 academic year posed new challenges and uncertainties for the performing arts as we continued to navigate the ongoing pandemic. While necessary safety precautions put live performance on hold, the Marion Kleinau Theatre adapted this year's season for a virtual audience, offering Kleinau lovers near and far a chance to experience three original shows, a guest artist workshop, and an end-of-season virtual spotlight hour.

We opened our season in October 2020 with *The Muses Are Calling*, directed by PhD student Shelby Swafford with assistant director and fellow PhD student Alex Lockwood. Originally scheduled to appear last March, cast members in *Muses* worked together to devise a script which blended poetry, feminist historiography, auto/biography, and mythology to explore the relationship between creative work and "women's work." In December, MA student Charlie Hope Dorsey returned to the stage in her solo show, *Poetry Is Not a Luxury*, directed by Dr. Elyse Pineau with audiovisual direction by Shelby Swafford. Weaving Audre Lorde's work with original poetry, and accompanied by the music of Nina Simone, *Poetry* highlighted the urgency and exigency of the Black Lives Matter movement while honoring the legacies of Black women warrior-mother-poets.

The Spring semester began with an exciting virtual guest artist residency on vocal performance with Dr. Scott Dillard of Georgia College and State University (see "Dillard" on p. 7

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Above: Charlie Hope Dorsey in *Poetry is Not a Luxury*

Top: Jodie Salazar in *The Muses are Calling*

SCOTT DILLARD RETURNS FOR DIGITAL RESIDENCY

By Shelby Swafford, Publicity Director, Kleinau Theatre



In February, the Marion Kleinau Theatre and Department of Communication Studies, with support from the Fine Arts Activity Fee, welcomed back departmental alum Dr. Scott Dillard as a guest artist for a virtual residency

Dillard is a Professor of Rhetoric at

Georgia College and State University and is the Chair of the Communication Department where he teaches courses in Performance Studies, Public Address, and Voice. He received his B.A. from Blackburn College before attending Southern Illinois University Carbondale for his M.S. and PhD. Dillard's scholarship engages voice and diction, narrative, gay spiritual-

ity, and service learning, and his publications have appeared in *Text and Performance Quarterly*, *The Flannery O'Connor Review*, *Storytelling, Self, and Society*, *The Successful Professor*, and *Reaching Through Teaching: A Journal of Practice and Philosophy of College Teaching*. He also co-authored *The Speaker's Voice*, a textbook which offers helpful strategies for enhancing oral communication skills and abilities. Dillard has performed numerous one person shows, acted and directed in local theatre productions, done voice over work, adapted literature for the stage, and produced, with his students, a weekly radio show of literary adaptations. Dillard's scholarship and contributions to the field have been recognized with the Outstanding Performance Studies Scholar Award from the Southern States Communication Association, the Randy Majors Award for Outstanding Contribution to LGBTQ Scholarship from the LGBTQ Caucus of the National Communication Association, and was named the Outstanding Graduate at Blackburn College.

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THE KLEINAU: YEAR IN REVIEW (CONT.)

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for details). In March, we saw the premiere of our third and final original graduate student production of the season with PhD student Angela Duggins's *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*. Influenced by artists Brian Froud and Kay Nielson, Duggins worked with various creative teams to adapt and revise the eponymous Norwegian fairytale through visual storytelling animation. Finally, the 2020-2021 Kleinau season came to a close with a virtual spotlight hour featuring a variety of performances from CMST undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty. The spotlight hour included 17 performances in total, including those from students in Performing Cultures, Storytelling, Performance in Everyday Life, and Performance Criticism, as well as contributed performances from graduate students and Dr. Jonny Gray.

Directors and performers across the season met this moment with resourcefulness and ingenuity, adapting their practices with pandemic safety in mind, and audiences responded. Over the course of this academic year, our four Kleinau productions were streamed over 800 times on our official YouTube channel. We offer thanks to those who joined us in the audience, as well as those who worked hard behind the scenes to make it possible: the performance studies faculty, Drs. Craig Gingrich-Philbrook, Jonny Gray, and Rebecca Walker, as well as the 2020-2021 Kleinau staff, Technical Director Devin Collins, Assistant Technical Director Jesse Snider, and Publicity Director Shelby Swafford. We hope you will join us in the Kleinau during the 2021-2022 season!



Top: *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*

Above: Devin Collins, Alex Lockwood, and Shelby Swafford perform in the Kleinau Virtual Spotlight Hour

SCOTT DILLARD RETURNS FOR DIGITAL RESIDENCY (CONT.)

(Continued from page 7)

To begin his virtual residency, Dillard offered a public presentation on vocal performance in which he led audience members in vocal warm-ups and discussed core elements of effective vocal performance, characteristics of voice, types of performed texts, and mechanics of audio recording. Over the course of the week, Dillard met one-on-one with SIU undergraduate and graduate students to coach them on their individual performances of poetic, narrative, and dramatic texts. He then curated those performances into a podcast which features eight pieces, ranging from Langston Hughes poetry to a trailer for an original podcast.

PhD student Alex Lockwood was one of the participants in Dillard's workshop. He expressed appreciation for Dillard to be able to share his expertise as a voice actor with the SIU community. "I thought it was a helpful experience to take time and re-focus on the voice: a part of the actor's toolkit that has become far more important in this time of distanced, virtual work," he said. "I only hope that the next time he visits, we'll be able to spend more time face-to-face with him."

Although we were not able to host Dr. Dillard in person this time, his residency offered students effective strategies and tools for vocal performance that they will undoubtedly carry forward with them into future performances—virtual or live

NEW SCHOLARSHIP FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

By Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway

Those who knew and learned from Suzanne Daughton and Nathan Stucky are quite likely to remember their generosity of time, attention, and knowledge. It didn't surprise me, then, when Nathan came to me early in the Spring 2021 semester with an idea to help encourage graduate students along their academic journey to degree completion. The result of that continued generosity is the Suzanne M. Daughton and Nathan P. Stucky Scholarship. Dr. Stucky wanted to develop a way both to honor the students they had the pleasure to teach and advise throughout their careers, and to encourage graduate students through the grad school grind. Practically speaking, whenever a graduate student hits a milestone—completing their MA, passing prelims, defending a prospectus, and finally receiving the PhD—they will receive a modest gesture of financial encouragement in their bursar accounts. Grad students began benefitting from the scholarship during the Spring 2021 semester. PhD candidate recipient Shelby Swafford commented, "I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from both Nathan and Suzanne before they retired, and I am so grateful to feel their continued support, encouragement, love, and light through this scholarship." Likewise, PhD candidate Alex Lockwood called the scholarship a "welcome surprise" and described how it made him feel "reconnected with



the love and support" that characterized Nathan and Suzanne. Alex is "happy that students who may not have been here during that time are still able to have a way of understanding the care that these two had, and continue to have, for the students of the communication studies department." The Department thanks Dr. Stucky for this incredible gift!

You can learn more about the Daughton-Stucky Scholarship here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITOcDn2Asb8>

STUDENT COMM. ORGANIZATION (SCO) UPDATE

By Bolton Morales, SCO President

Over a year ago the university and the world were forced to change the ins-and-outs of daily life. As our past president, Shelby Swafford explained in last year's update, "Fundraisers, service events, professional development sessions, research symposiums, committee meetings, and social gatherings were all put on hold until further notice as we find ways to prioritize our collective health" (p. 14). The Student Communication Organization (SCO) did not allow COVID to derail us completely as Shelby did a fantastic job of maintaining communication and community throughout the end of the Spring semester and summer. Though the format of her duties looked different, Shelby's superb service to SCO continued through the first weeks of the fall semester as she facilitated elections and the first SCO meeting. This year's officers were Bolton Morales-President, Caleb McKinley-Portee-Vice President, Secretary-Shelby Swafford, Treasurer-Kevin McCarty, Librarian/Historian-Alex Lockwood, Intercultural Relations Officer-Maddie Wiles, Social Director-Janine Armstrong.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the shape of the world. Higher education is not exempt from these

changes, and as such, neither are the student organizations which form the backbone of various departments and campus life. While SCO continues to feel the waves of change from this pandemic, the organization focused on doing its best to be business-as-usual. This year, everything was held remotely. With the help of our social chair, Janine Armstrong, we continued our tradition of department community events and opportunities. Additionally, the organization helped with various department events on campus. Most recently, members of SCO helped set-up and facilitate a graduation event for our department graduates. One of the SCO's proudest traditions is being able to award the John T. Warren and Bryan Crow memorial scholarships. This year's recipients were Dianah McGreehan and T Brown. This year was a challenging one, to be sure, but none of our efforts would have been possible without all of our amazing general members and the Executive Board. So, a large thank you to everyone who helped make this year happen with minimal setbacks and rose to the occasion so that SCO would survive this pandemic.

FACULTY UPDATES

Dr. Randy Auxier writes “Everyone will say it has been a strange year. The sudden shift to virtual classes in the middle of spring had us all steppin' and fetchin' as we tried to adjust our planned courses to something do-able at a distance. Like everyone else, I am adjusting. I managed to finish up two textbooks I had been working on, *Persuasion: The Real Process of Imaginative Thinking*, and *Logic: From Images to Digits*, both published by Linus Learning of New York. Both hit the market as of this spring. I ran an experimental course in Dark Communication during our very dark election season and am now working with two colleagues at other schools to create a textbook for a course like that. I've had a few book chapters and articles come out, and the young journal I helped to start, *Eidos: A Journal of the Philosophy of Culture*, is now listed by the SCOPUS Index, which is a major accomplishment after only four volumes. I look forward to a sabbatical in the fall of 2021 that had to be postponed due to COVID travel restrictions.”



Dr. Nilanjana Bardhan continued to teach graduate and undergraduate courses in intercultural communication and advise MA and PhD students. Her co-authored article (with Dr. Karla Gower) titled “Student and Faculty/Educator Views on Diversity and Inclusion in Public Relations: The Role of Leaders in Bringing about Change,” was published in the *Journal of Public Relations Education*. At the past NCA, her co-authored paper (with Dr. Engstrom) titled “Using Symbolic Convergence Theory to Prescribe D&I: A Fantasy-Theme Analysis of PRSA’s Diverse Voices” was on the top faculty paper panel for the Public Relations Division. She continues to actively serve on The Chancellor’s Task Force for Diversity and Inclusion and on the SIU systemwide Diversity Action Committee. She also serves as board member and co-chair of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee of the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations. She is actively engaged in research and programming in all these capacities and is getting closer to completing a book on the challenges facing diversity and inclusion in the U.S. public relations industry. In November last year, she started service on a steering committee appointed by the Chancellor to develop a strategic plan for comprehensively internationalizing SIUC through curriculum, study abroad, exchanges, partnerships, and other forms of global engagement. Like everyone else, she is looking forward to a time when there will be fewer zoom meetings and more F2F human interaction!

FACULTY UPDATES (CONT.)

During the 2020-21 academic year **Dr. Craig Engstrom** published research in *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* and *Journal of Workplace Learning*. During the National Communication Association's annual conference, he presented a top paper (co-authored with Dr. Nilanjana Bardhan) and presented on a panel that earned the Top Panel Presentation Award from the Training and Development Division. He received the 2020 NCA Training and Development Outstanding Service Award. He also passed the Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD) examination from the Association for Talent Development and completed the Master Online Leader and Administrator certification from the University of Illinois-Springfield.

Connect with Dr. Engstrom on LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/craigengstrom](https://www.linkedin.com/in/craigengstrom)



Dr. Craig Gingrich Philbrook writes “I spent my year navigating the pandemic by developing new pedagogical approaches to students via standing weekly conversations that have transformed the way I think about teaching and learning. It was a somewhat surreal year as I worked with the reality show *Relative Race* on the BYU network to meet a nephew, the child of a late sister I did not know I had. That experience has transformed the way I think about family stories and time; it will no doubt influence my future work in important ways once I can write about it, officially, after the show airs in the fall of 2021. As I close in on my last few issues as editor of *Text and Performance Quarterly* and my co-editorship of *The Routledge Handbook of Performance Studies Research Methods* (with Jake Simmons), I am grateful to the assistants that have offered such good counsel (Colin Whitworth and Shelby Swafford). I hope the best for you and yours as we continue to weather what we all hope will be the last of the pandemic, allowing us to return to our various campuses—though, honestly, I’ll miss spending this much time with my co-worker Donut (pictured here).”

FACULTY UPDATES (CONT.)

Dr. Todd Graham directed the debate team as they continued to compete in intercollegiate competitions. During this academic year, all competitions have been online, but that hasn't stopped the team from competing in many tournaments, including the United States Universities Debating Championship and SIU will also compete in the World Championships, to be held online this summer and hosted by South Korea. Dr. Graham also analyzed the general election presidential and vice-presidential debates for CNN and other media outlets. Dr. Graham taught his regular courses in interpersonal communication, persuasion, argumentation and debate, and advanced public speaking.



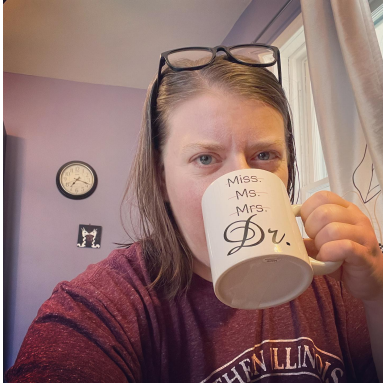
Dr. Jonathan "Jonny" Gray entered into the pandemic while on sabbatical in the Spring of 2020. While not ideal for many reasons (many travel plans for research were scuttled due to the disease), it also meant he was late to the party for on-line pedagogy as the predominant accommodation for pandemic protocols. He took his courses on-line starting in the fall of 2021. He found previous work with online performance collectives such as @Platea useful experience to draw from to keep his classes engaging. This was particularly true for his new course offering, "Performing Graphic Novels."

As with most of us, Jonny has spent the bulk of this academic year figuring out how to do his work during CoVid-19. He was convener for the virtual fall conference for Gay Spirit Visions on the theme, "Resilience through Recounting." He continues to produce a weekly LGBTQ themed talk show, "Isn't It Queer," for WDBX. He has also been exploring podcasting as an outlet for both public speaking and performance adaptations. He will be offering a course in the Fall of 2021 on adapting texts for scripted podcasts. He is looking forward to travelling again and getting back to field research for his "Art and Environmental Advocacy" book project.



Josh Houston created and taught a new *Communication and Leadership* course in the spring semester. The course is part of a larger departmental effort to supplement the Organizational Communication curriculum with a greater focus on leadership development. Josh is also building distance education versions of all his courses to reach students beyond campus in the years to come.

FACULTY UPDATES (CONT.)



Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway writes “Over the past year, I have enjoyed the virtual time I spend with my colleagues in meetings and conferences, and have a new appreciation for when an actual person stops in my office! I taught two courses this year, a combined Introduction to Graduate Studies and Teaching Communication Studies at the University Level (two of my favorite courses) in the Fall, along with Critical Communication Pedagogy in the Spring. I also had the honor of publishing a book chapter with my former advisee--now friend and colleague--Dr. Darren Valenta, for the 2nd edition of the *Handbook of Autoethnography*. I presented work at both the National Communication Association and the Central States Communication Association conferences. Whoops--I spent way too much time playing Chuzzle 2 on my phone. I look forward to transitioning into the School of Communication Studies.”

Dr. L. Shelley Rawlins received her Ph.D. in Relational Communication in May 2020 from the Department of Communication Studies at SIU. Research from her dissertation, *Collective Protesting as Existential Communication: A Phenomenology of Risk, Responsibility, and Ethical Attendance* (2020), is making its way to press. Presently, a manuscript entitled “Democracy at Dangerous Intersections: Communication, Protest, and Guns” is being prepared for journal submission. During the past year, Rawlins had the pleasure of teaching four online sections of CMST 101: Introduction to Oral Communication during both the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. She also served on the Communication Studies Undergraduate Committee. Rawlins recognizes that each of us – as teachers, students, friends, family and community members – have faced the challenges and devastation from the COVID-19 global pandemic and are hopefully looking forward to brighter days ahead. Rawlins is grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication of her CMST 101 students during these difficult times. She also wishes to thank the Department of Communication Studies faculty members for their optimism and support throughout the past year. This summer Rawlins looks forward to working on more publications about collective protest, as well as spending time in the beautiful southern Illinois outdoors, hiking, swimming, and kayaking with friends.



FACULTY UPDATES (CONT.)

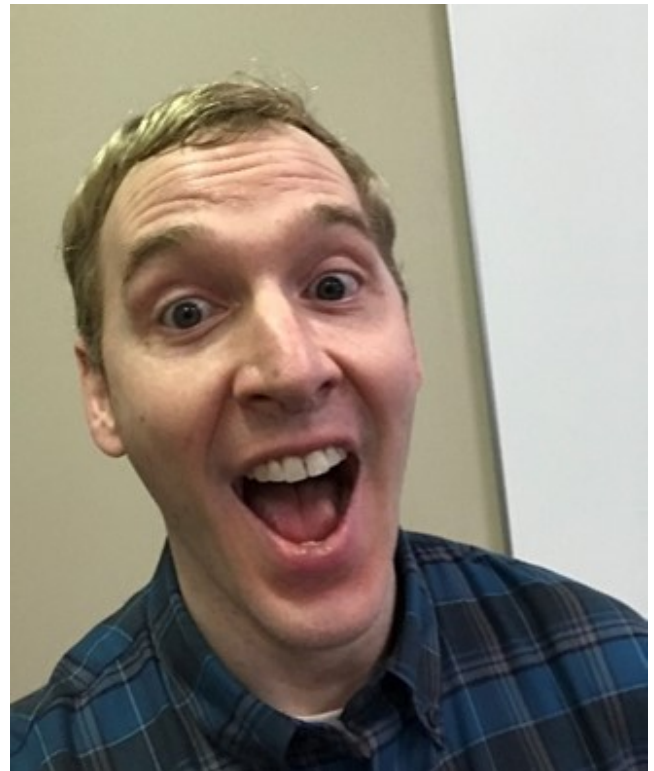


Dr. Rebecca Walker served her first year in her new role as director of graduate studies for the department, and is looking forward to welcoming next year's class of incoming graduate students in person this fall. While serving in this new role, she continued to teach some of her favorite courses, CMST 445: Performance in Everyday Life, and her popular Storytelling undergraduate class. She worked hard to adapt both these courses to a new online pedagogical environment, moving from her storytelling students from live-to-camera storytelling to digital stories which were shared in the recent Virtual Spotlight Hour as the final show of our Kleinau Theatre season. She is currently working on several articles, including one on using digital storytelling practices in the classroom and another on the feminist performance methodologies used in her 2018 show, *Hardened*. She is also beginning work on future performance projects, including both a cast show examining dystopian narratives and a solo show about stuttering and disability.

Justin Young has been incredibly proud of how PRSSA has handled the transition to largely virtual. Students have managed to produce departmental videos, hold trivia nights, and even recruit new members all while remote.

They have also contributed immensely to PRSSA's new website at SIUprssa.com. While it launched at the end of last spring, this year students have populated it with articles on guest speakers, social media platforms, PR in television and video games, job leads, and more. Traffic has grown steadily, and other chapters at other universities have even shared the pieces. Everyone should check out the students' hard work.

Otherwise, Justin has stayed busy teaching Persuasion for the first time, writing film reviews, and working on a long gestating book idea



2021 COMMUNICATION STUDIES AWARDS

John T. Warren Excellence in Graduate Student Research: **Tao Zhang**

Ronald J. Pelias Excellence in Graduate Student Service: **Bolton Morales**

Elyse Pineau Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching: **Janine Armstrong**

Outstanding Faculty Award: **Justin Young**

Bryan K. Crow Memorial Scholarship: **T Brown**

John T. Warren Memorial Scholarship: **Dianah McGreehan**

Marion Kleinau Achievement Award: **Shelby Swafford**

Marion Kleinau Literature in Performance Award: **Charlie Hope Dorsey**

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

By Scott Jarmon

It's been a heck of a year. It's been 15 months since the beginning of the pandemic, and while it seems that it's subsiding for now, I'm sure I speak for others when I say that the mental and physical toll that this has taken on our lives and work has been staggering. To everyone reading this, just know that what you've done this year matters. The moments where you were kind and gracious, the moments where you chose to press on, the moments where you chose to be encouraging to others—these matter more than you know. Our world has been thrown into a new era, one that will impact generations to come. Those kind and good acts, as small as they may be, help shape this new moment in history, and have kept others going. Thank you to all the individuals that have contributed articles and provided updates with this newsletter, on top of everything else you have going on. The updates you provided are but a fraction of everything that has happened this year, but they still speak volumes. Without you, this newsletter would not exist. When I see what our school of Communication Studies has achieved over the past year, I'm amazed. I really don't know how some of you do it. And thank you to Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway, who has offered her kind and ingenious support every step of the way as I edited together this newsletter.

I hope this newsletter has brought some peace and joy as you checked in with our school and what we've been up to. All the best to you and your future endeavors.

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Charitable Giving

If you would like to contribute to a variety of school events, student professional and academic development opportunities, of any of our scholarship and award funds, please visit our school giving page at <https://cola.siu.edu/communicationstudies/giving/> or contact school director Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway (sandypc@siu.edu). Our alumni and friends make a world of difference! Thank you.

