

Summer, 2026

Speak Easy

Annual Newsletter



Table of Contents

<i>Director's Update</i>	3
<i>Graduate Program Update</i>	5
<i>Undergraduate Program Update</i>	7
<i>PRSSA</i>	10
<i>Student Communication</i>	11
<i>Organization</i>	12
<i>Faculty Updates</i>	23
<i>Book Nook</i>	24
<i>Graduates</i>	25
<i>Kleinau Theater</i>	28
<i>End of Year Awards</i>	29
<i>SIU on the Road</i>	30
<i>Photo Gallery</i>	32
<i>Stay Connected</i>	



Director's Update 2026

By Dr. Rebecca Anderson School Director

It is once again time to put together the Speak Easy, our annual opportunity to take a focused look back on the year we've had in the School of Communication Studies. I have to begin by thanking editors Erin Henkel and Mario Sanders for their assistance in this endeavor.

This has been a year of changes at SIU and in some ways, in the School of Communication Studies. Earlier this year, we learned our Dean, Dr. Joddy Murray, would be leaving CoLA to pursue other opportunities. We've thoroughly enjoyed working with Dean Murray, who was a champion for the Communication Studies program, and look forward to working with whomever the new Dean may be. Currently, our wonderful associate deans, Ben Bricker and Jennifer Smith are serving as co-Interim Deans while the search for a new Dean begins.

Last year, I mentioned several new changes to the program and staff here at the School of Communication Studies, and so I'd like to begin with a brief update on those. First, we welcomed alumnus Dr. Shelby Swafford as an Assistant Professor of Practice, and it has been a delight working with her these past few years. Shelby is a wonderful teacher who consistently receives rave reviews from her students, and we look forward to what I can only hope is a long tenure with her in the School of Communication Studies.

We also launched two new curriculum changes; first, we began offering our completely online major in Communication Studies last Fall.

I'm happy to report that we are seeing some positive growth in the number of new online majors, and look forward to welcoming more students into the program and creating a more robust offering of online courses.

We also began offering a coursework-only option for our Master's students, and graduated a few of the first of those students to utilize this option this May

We think this is an excellent option that will draw students to our program, especially those students looking for an advanced degree but not wishing to enter into the academic sector upon graduation.

This year, we've done a deep dive into our course offerings, program learning outcomes, and assessment plans as part of a scheduled visit by the Higher Learning Commission to SIU, but also in a desire to update our curriculum, learning outcomes, and assessment methods to better reflect what we do and how the culture and communication practices have changed over the last decade or so.

We are excited about moving forward with stronger assessment strategies to help us create better course offerings, updated curriculum, and more relevant program learning outcomes for our graduate level degrees.

Last year, I also mentioned the planned building updates to the Communications Building here at SIU.

Director's Update *2026*

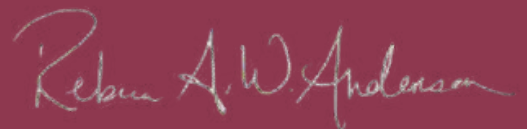
These are still in the works, but as with many things, have been delayed as plans move through the system and secure the proper permissions and updates. We look forward to the construction process hopefully beginning sometime in the 2027 year.

As in previous years, I'm very happy to report that your generous donations allowed us to support undergraduate and graduate student travel to attend and present work at several academic conferences and networking events, including the Plank Center Summit for Diversity in PR and the DePaul PRSSA conference, both in Chicago, as well as the National Communication Association's annual conference, and both the Central and Southern States Communication Association conferences where many of our faculty and graduate students were honored with awards for their research and creative work.

In my second year as School Director, I feel I've grown a bit more into the role, helped as always by my predecessor Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway, and our wonderful office staff, Laura Sims and Aimee Dasher. A special thank you to each of these folks for their assistance, patience, and support during the last year.

I hope you enjoy reading about all the wonderful things done by our faculty and students this past year in the pages of this newsletter. If you are ever in the area, please let us know so we can welcome you in person.

Also, if you have a moment, please drop us a note and let us know how you are doing – we love hearing updates from our amazing alumni! If you use social media, please follow us on our Facebook and Instagram pages, which you can find links to and more information about on the final page of this newsletter. You are an important part of our story, and all we do here in the School of Communication Studies.



Graduate Program Update

*By Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway
Graduate Studies Coordinator*

Academic year 2025-2026 was a very busy one for our talented and hard-working graduate students! In terms of research, as a group, our current graduate students gave over 25 conference presentations across various academic conferences and festivals, including trips to NCA and CSCA (Central States Communication Association). Additionally, kudos to PhD students Frankie Kimmell, Madi Marshall, and Sean Maulding, who were presented with top paper and performance awards!

Our performance studies graduate students gave over 10 individual performances, including a number of solo-performances on the Kleinau Stage. However, they also shined backstage, as they did writing, directing, and graphic design for a variety of shows.

Many of our students also took advantage of our podcast studio, hosting or co-hosting over 39 episodes of Saluki Gamescast and the Communication Studies podcast.

They also took advantage of a number of professional development opportunities, such as the certification Frankie Kimmell received from the Association of College and University Educators, "Designing Learner-Centered and Equitable Courses." These professional development events carried over into governance; our grad students held five offices in organizations on campus and at Central States Communication Association.

Throughout the course of the year, our graduate students defended one research report, one thesis, successfully passed one set of prelims, defended four prospectuses, and a whopping four dissertations. Please congratulate our graduates (listed with their advisors):

Emla Holsted, MA (Christina Ivey)
Felix Enyan, MA (Sandy Pensoneau-Conway)
Juno Blue, MA (Craig Gingrich-Philbrook)
Dr. Scott Jarmon (Jonny Gray)
Dr. T Brown (Rebecca Anderson)
Dr. India Hagen-Gates (Jonny Gray)
Dr. Sean Maulding (Jonny Gray)

In their roles as teaching and research assistants, they taught over 78 courses, ran tech for and produced 11 different shows in the Marion Kleinau Theatre, and published a new edition of Kaleidoscope, our internationally-recognized graduate student research journal. Frankie Kimmell and Casey Weaver also successfully organized two Student Speaker's Forums.

We're grateful to alumnus Dr. Patrick Seick, who had a virtual visit with our graduate students to talk about ways to use a graduate degree in Communication Studies, outside of academia.

Graduate Program Update

It will come as no surprise to anyone that our graduate students are award winning teachers, performers, and scholars. In addition to our usual in-house annual awards and scholarships, Dr. Sean Maulding received an Outstanding Queer Research Award from the SIU Paulette Curkin Pride Resource Center,

as well as Top Student Paper and Top Debut Paper awards from CSCA. Frankie Kimmell received a Top Student Paper from NCA, and Madi Marshall received Top Paper and Top Student Paper awards from CSCA. Kudos to all of you!

We were excited to welcome seven new graduate students into our cohort last fall, and extend that same excitement to an additional seven new graduate students who will join us in August 2026. Congratulations to all our current and incoming graduate students. I am grateful for the honor I have had of working with each of you as you fulfill your academic dreams!



Undergraduate Program Update

*By Dr. Jonathan M. Gray
Undergraduate Coordinator*

The School of Communication Studies is doing exceptionally well as one of the schools with the largest number of majors and minors in the College of Liberal Arts. While we have bold plans for our future and the development of two distinct majors, the university is currently directing all programs to review and revise existing curricula.

The creation of a separate Public Relations (PR) major and Communication and Leadership major as our primary undergraduate offerings is still in process, and the adjustments we have made this year have been pursued with those options hopefully still on our horizon. For now, though, we retain the one Communication Studies undergraduate major with different options for specialization in PR and/or general communication tracts.

On the other side of a Higher Learning Commission (HLC) review of the entire university, many revisions and updates are in process across the campus to remain in compliance and improve our offerings. The university is preparing, for example, to move to an online catalogue. In addition to being more accessible for students, such a catalogue will allow faster adjustments to our course offerings.

In preparation for transitioning to this online platform, all programs have been reviewing and revising their course offerings based on how frequently courses are offered. We are also reviewing names of courses, pre-requisites, other requirements, and potential new courses to add to the catalogue. After an intense review, we will submit this summer the most significant revision of our UG curriculum in my 27 years at SIU.

The HLC has also directed all programs to clarify their program learning objectives and map them across specific courses and assignments.

This has required most programs, including Communication Studies, to revise their assessment plan.

We spent a healthy portion of this academic year in consultation with the College of Liberal Arts, the University Core Curriculum, and the Provost's Office to update how we assess our courses and how well students are achieving our program learning objectives. Our new assessment model will begin gathering data in the Fall of 2026.

The good news is that the tighter focus actually streamlines the assessment process, ultimately making it easier to do while producing even more specific data we can use to continue to adjust our curriculum and its delivery. Assessment has never been my favorite part of this job, but I think we have done a lot this year to make it more meaningful and productive.

Undergraduate Program Update

To support our students, we have been able to deliver thousands of dollars in scholarships to assist and encourage their success based both on merit and need. We have worked closely with the Financial Aid Office and the SIU Foundation to make sure all available student funds are being disbursed. The university is generally looking for ways to streamline this process.

Our most noteworthy and merit-based scholarships are still determined in-School by already established committees and procedures. New online tools and greater coordination between offices has made this a faster and more efficient process. We maintain a healthy balance between supporting students who are already Salukis and using scholarship funds to encourage new students to come to SIU.

In the Fall of 2025, we began offering our online undergraduate degree.

The ability to offer distance education and convert some of our classes to asynchronous eight-week courses has also greatly assisted our in-person majors, allowing for greater flexibility in taking courses. Our faculty, in coordination with the Center for Teaching Excellence, has been directly responsible for creating and offering these courses.

Our longtime emphasis on communication pedagogy has made us particularly skilled at adapting courses to online learning environments. Online teaching and learning present both challenges and opportunities, and based on direct personal experience, I think we are definitely addressing the one with the other.

Finally, I am happy to report some new endeavors to maintain contact with majors and provide easy access to resources they may need

We have established a School of Communication Studies Team on Microsoft Teams that allows for easier email contact, direct chat contact, and an online database of information and links useful to students.

We see this growing in the future to include online events, better announcement of on campus opportunities, an easier process for exit interviews for graduating seniors, and potentially a model for a similar platform to keep in contact with graduates from our program.

Our undergraduate majors and minors are truly inspiring and talented students. From PR to performance, public speaking to more personal communication, they are skilled and diligent in pursuing understanding of the usefulness and applications of communication in their lives.

Undergraduate Program Update

Some of our graduates this year are pursuing graduate degrees, here and elsewhere. Some have incredible first job opportunities lined up, starting in the summer.

All are moving out into a challenging professional landscape with a sophisticated understanding of how their honed communication skills will help them. It is always an honor to work with them, and I am more than a bit envious of the co-workers and supervisors who get to call them "colleagues."



PRSSA

What do networking, creativity, and career growth have in common? This year, SIU's **Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)** experienced all three through professional development, community engagement, and leadership opportunities.

During Fall 2025, President **Makenzie Gaines** and the Executive Board led the chapter through a successful semester, including a partnership with Students for Kid's Sake International and attendance at the Plank Summit in Chicago where members networked with professionals from across the country. PRSSA also hosted LinkedIn and Lattes, helping members strengthen their LinkedIn profiles, expand their professional networks, and prepare for future careers.



Pictured above: PRSSA members at LinkedIn and Lattes



Pictured above: PRSSA members at the Midwest District Conference, PR-Palooza, at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois

Spring 2026 welcomed a new Executive Board under **President Addison Bean**. The chapter launched Pick Up the Phone with PRSSA, a digital campaign that invited members of the SIU community to share positive messages, transforming authentic responses into engaging social media content.

Five members also represented SIU at the 2026 PRSSA Midwest District Conference at DePaul University, where they attended professional development sessions, connected with peers from across the Midwest, and built relationships with industry professionals and alumni. Those connections led to opportunities throughout the semester, including visits from SIU alumni Andrew Krause and Grant Deady of Zeno Group, as well as communications professional Konner Gross, who shared valuable industry insights with members.

From conferences and networking events to digital campaigns and professional speakers, every experience reinforced PRSSA's mission of preparing the next generation of communications professionals. *The chapter looks forward to another year of learning, leadership, and meaningful connections.*

Student Communication Organization

*By Mario Sanders
SCO President*

As we do every year during orientation week in August, SCO hosts our first meeting of the year in which we introduce the different positions to the new class of students. Over the next few days, the murmurs of "What do you want to be nominated for?" fill the downtime during orientation.

During the week, a classmate asked if I'd have any interest in being nominated for president. I believe my response was, "Sure. I don't mind being nominated. I'd also be happy to let someone else have the position if they're super enthusiastic about it." Despite running unopposed, I ask that you mentally insert a dramatic and intense Rocky-esque montage of the campaign.

SCO hosted two brown bag sessions this past academic year. In November, Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway hosted a session centered around conference and professional funding, and in April, graduate alum Dr. Patrick Seick hosted a virtual session titled, "Expanding Your Opportunities: Preparing for an Alt-Ac Career," that focused on how graduate students can navigate possibilities for a career outside of academia. Thank you so much to Dr. Pensoneau-Conway and Dr. Seick for your time and mentorship during those sessions!

Additionally, as has seemingly become tradition over the past couple years, SCO hosted a mock panel for those presenting at the National Communication Association's annual conference. I'd like to thank Dr. Christina Ivey and Dr. Sean Maulding for responding to those presentations and offering feedback to those presenting.

Congratulations to Madison Marshall and Kamahro Scott, the recipients of the John T. Warren Memorial Scholarship, as well as Casey Weaver and Addison Bean, the recipients of the Bryan K. Crow Memorial Scholarship that SCO awards at the end of each year.

Finally, as the year concludes, I would like to express my gratitude to the other SCO officers and those who served as members on various committees: Irene Lutterodt, Madi Marshall, Jessie Paxton, Junara Quinn-Miller, Emla Holsted, Sahar Abedikadenji, Sulav Shakya, Bipin Banjara, Janifar Nova, Casey Weaver, Grace Dwyer, and India Hagen-Gates. And, of course, thank you to Dr. Christina Ivey for being our faculty advisor!

Faculty Updates

Rebecca Walker Anderson Director & Associate Professor

This past year, I've enjoyed feeling a bit more comfortable in my role as School Director, and in teaching courses like CMST 501: Introduction to Communication Research. It's been really wonderful to get to know our incoming cohort of graduate students so well with this class each Fall, and I look forward to teaching it again in Fall 2026.

This Spring I traveled to the Southern States Communication Association conference to share work honoring one of my mentors. I also enjoyed teaching my Tourism, Culture, and Communication course again, and watching as this new crop of undergraduates and graduate students learned about Southern Illinois by exploring the region's tourism opportunities and investigating tourism's broader impacts on our lives and communication practices.

My husband and I have been enjoying some of the recreational tourism opportunities Southern Illinois has to offer after taking up kayaking last year, and we can't wait to cross off all the lakes and rivers on our list to explore!



Faculty Updates

Randall Auxier *Professor of* *Philosophy and* *Communication* *Studies*

This year I spent working on our international connections in the College of Liberal Arts, especially in Poland and Italy. A new venture opened up in China at a university in Zhuhai, near Hong Kong, which resulted in an agreement to exchange and cooperate. I am continuing to develop that program. I used support from the Minor Chair for this work, and I have completed my term in that chair and am honored to have served in that role.

I also finished my three-year term in the Faculty Senate, a rather difficult year as far as finances and leadership at SIU were concerned. I am relieved to be done with that service, and to return to my more accustomed role in the Faculty Association.

I published a number of articles and book chapters, and I continue to work with SUNY Press on my book series, and with the journal *Pragmatism Today* (I edited an issue of that this year on the topic of "Absolute Pragmatism").

I was a co-organizer of the Third International Susanne Langer Conference in Vienna, and the Second World Congress of Personalism in Madrid.

I gave papers in Slovakia, Armenia, and Italy, in addition to Spain and Austria. I taught "The American Mind" in Poland. And I presented at conferences in Memphis, Las Vegas, and Charleston, IL.

The programming at the American Institute of Philosophical and Cultural Thought, which I direct, continues into its eleventh year. We will have a small conference in early December marking the completion of ten years. It has been a busy year.



Faculty Updates

Nilanjana Bardhan Professor

Dr. Bardhan is stumped! She is stumped that she has already been at SIU for 28 years and hasn't even noticed how fast the years have flown by. She is grateful for her time in this program and the countless ways in which it has enriched her life.

While she is excited to move on to her next adventure in May 2027, the memories, friendships and intellectual growth that mark her time in Carbondale are making this transition a bittersweet experience.

The next stop is Chicago, along with her partner Craig and dog Billie, but Carbondale will always remain one of her many homes.

She is publishing one last co-edited book while at SIU with her colleague Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway (and Dr. Sean Eddington of Kansas States University) titled "Leadership Communication Theory and Practice: An Advanced Introduction" (Routledge). It will be available in July 2026.



Faculty Updates

Sakshi Bhati *Assistant* *Professor*

This past academic year was marked by significant milestones in both research and teaching.

In addition to presenting research at several national conferences, I was honored with the Top Paper Award at CSCA and received the Outstanding Teacher Award in our Communication Studies Program.

My instructional portfolio this year included public relations courses spanning Introduction to PR, PR Ethics, and advising/leading PRSSA. Capsuling a remarkably rewarding year, I capped off the academic season by marrying my partner.



Faculty Updates

Craig Gingrich-Philbrook *Professor*

Craig Gingrich-Philbrook spent the last year thinking about finitude, authenticity, good faith, and embodiment—particularly as Tom Pace used and taught these terms

He continues to work on the project he began during his fall sabbatical: a book exploring the intersection of neurodiversity, psychoanalysis, performance theory, and sexual identity in his solo performance work.



Dustin Greenwalt *Assistant Professor*

During his first year on the tenure track, Dustin A. Greenwalt edited a special issue of POROI on methodologies in the rhetoric of science, technology, and medicine, wrote a book review,

and made substantial progress on several projects including his book about how food, farming, and fitness rhetorics sutured the crises of empire during the late-aughts and 2010s (more news on that soon).

He also served as the President of the Association for the Rhetoric of Science, Technology, and Medicine and continues to work with the Rhetorical Theory and Criticism interest group of CSCA. He also continues to teach courses in environmental communication, cultural studies, and rhetoric.



Faculty Updates

Jonathan M. Gray *Associate Professor, Undergraduate Coordinator*

Dr. Jonathan M. Gray had a very busy and productive academic year. In September, Jonny debuted his solo show, *Lovely as a Tree*, in the Kleinau Theater, an exploration of trees in and through art and queer ecology. In October, the Sharp Museum concluded the six-month installation of *Queer Stories/Queer Spaces: Southern Illinois Histories & Queertographies*, a representation of some of Southern Illinois' LGBTQ+ history, for which he served on the curating committee and collected/edited some of the oral histories.

He finished his second autographic (autoethnography in graphic/comic form) book chapter, "Reading the Court," which is forthcoming in *Judicial Bodies: Autoethnographies about the Supreme Court*.

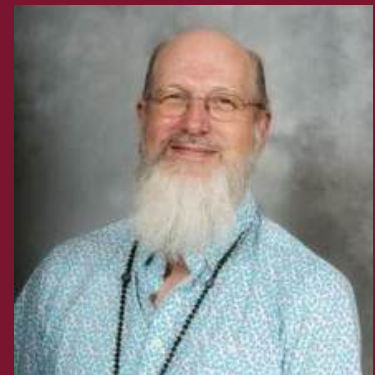
He attended and presented at the Southern States Communication Association in Birmingham, AL in April where he also was honored with a "Performance Scholar of the Year" award. In the fall, he debuted a mixed UG/Grad special topics course on podcasting.

Jonny served as both Assistant Director and Undergraduate Coordinator for the School of Communication Studies, overseeing significant revisions to the SIU UG Course Catalogue and the School's assessment plan. He is also the Kleinau Theatre Faculty Advisor and Technical Director, overseeing technical aspects for the production of five shows (including a double bill of solo shows), three spotlight performance hours, and the Fine Arts Activity Fee guest artists for the School.

In May he hooded three PhD advisees, each successfully defending their dissertations in the spring semester.

In the spring he was also invited to rejoin the university's Sustainability Council, a committee he was a co-founding member of in 2009. He continues to produce weekly hour-long episodes of *Isn't it Queer*, as a broadcast on WDBX Community Radio and across multiple podcast platforms.

Jonny maintains a steady commitment to community service in myriad ways, especially as a Sister Mothra Stewart, founding member of the SOIL Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. This summer he has also joined *Under Maintenance*, a local improv comedy troupe.



Faculty Updates

Josh Houston Senior Lecturer

Josh Houston continues to offer a full slate of online courses for students in the School of Communication and beyond. Josh once again offered CMST 486 Special Topics in PR – PR Spin Class this spring and added to the curriculum a podcast entitled The Adventures of Spin Freely.

The podcast teaches students about rhetorical terms and devices used by PR professionals. This course, and the CMST 485 PR Ethics course, help students prepare for the ethical challenges and dilemmas associated with being a professional communicator.



Faculty Updates

Christina Ivey *Assistant* *Professor*

Dr. Christina Ivey (they/she) is continuing to fall in love with Carbondale each year she is here! They got back into the undergrad classroom to teach 101 for the first time since moving to SIU in preparation for a course overhaul. (Next year is going to be very busy!)

They continued to go to conferences and presented work on Autoethnography and Trust, Barbie and Suicidal Ideation, and how to encourage pedagogical interaction with student communities.

She also won the 2026 Outstanding Scholarship Award for the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Caucus at CSCA!

To cap off a great year of scholarship, they presented their first solo show in the Kleinau: Saints, Witches, and Madwomen.

They are super excited to be continuing with the Kleinau next season for a small cast show: 3... 2... 1... Deconstruction! that will explore religious deconstruction. She is continuing her work as Sister Benedetta with the SoLL Sisters and was in the Vagina Monologues at StageCo outside of school.

Oh, and for anyone following her crazy cat lady story - Berkeley and Bert have a NEW sister: Mosaic (aka "Mo"). She has promised her partner no more cats...for now!



Faculty Updates

Sandy Pensoneau-Conway Associate Professor, Graduate Coordinator

I've had such a wonderful academic year, thanks in no small part to my colleagues and our students. I started the year off teaching two new courses: Qualitative Methods at the grad level, and Nonverbal Communication at the undergrad level.

These provided opportunities to dive into the contents of these courses, and to collaborate with students in both. I'm excited to teach both of them again in the future! I was also fortunate to be able to complete two certifications from the Association of College and University Educators: Fostering a Culture of Belonging, and Designing Learner-Centered Curricula.

Being in my first full year as the graduate coordinator has been a heartwarming experience.

I feel honored to usher our students through the administrative aspects of earning a graduate degree, particularly those who are my continuing and completing advisees (I'm so proud of the progress each of them made!). Learning this part of our university systems has given me great appreciation for all that our graduate school staff does.

I've been fortunate to feel that my academic work is supported through publication. My co-edited book, along with Dr. Nilanjana Bardhan (who you know and love) and Dr. Sean Eddington (University of Kansas), *Leadership Communication Theory and Practice: An Advanced Introduction*, will be available this summer from Routledge (with wonderful cover art by alumnus Dr. A.B. Art).

My chapter contribution, "Freire's Revolutionary Leadership and Critical Communication Pedagogy," bridges my specialization in critical approaches to pedagogy with my growing interest in leadership communication.

(I'm looking forward to teaching a new course, Nonprofit Leadership Communication, this coming Fall.) In addition, I completed a journal article and book chapter, both of which are scheduled to come out in the next academic year.

On the personal side, I took up the hobby of embroidery and have been basking in the warmth of the Heated Rivalry series (streaming show and books). I enjoy spending time with my family (including my kitty Bobo), particularly as my daughter Grayson enters her senior year of high school.

Finally, I've so appreciated the opportunity to lift my voice (as an alto and reluctant sometimes-soprano 2 and a happy sometimes-tenor and sometimes-percussionist) in song with Tesserae Queer+ choir (check out our latest concert on YouTube), where I sit on the leadership team as co-chair of the Finance and Facilities committee. (I'm very happy when I get to sing and play with spreadsheets).

(I was also promoted to Full Professor, which could not have happened without the support of all of my colleagues, students, and family throughout these past decades—insert heart hands emoji—THANK YOU!



Faculty Updates

Shelby Swafford *Assistant* *Professor*

This year, Dr. Shelby Swafford kept busy in and out of the classroom. She taught across our undergraduate curriculum, including multiple iterations of our introductory course, Interpersonal Communication, and Performing Culture—the latter of which she revamped last summer—and Storytelling, which has been a pedagogical dream come true.

Shelby also continued teaching for the Dr. Seymour Bryson Future Scholars Program, to which she'll return again this summer for the fourth consecutive year.

In addition to teaching, Shelby spent the fall in the Kleinau Theatre collaborating with graduate and undergraduate students

In October, she co-directed incoming MA student, Paula Horton, on her undergraduate thesis show, *Autism in Real Life*, which blended Paula's personal experiences with autism and fierce educational advocacy for autistic people. Then, in November, Shelby worked with most of the first year graduate student cohort on *At a Crossroads*, a cast-devised show about the crossroads of our personal lives, political histories, mythic stories, and SIU community.

In the Spring, Shelby continued working in the Kleinau by co-directing faculty colleague Dr. Christina Ivey's show, *Saints, Witches, and Madwomen*—a historiography of archetypes used to control women and a poetic reclamation of those archetypes.

Shelby then traveled to the SSCA annual conference in Birmingham, Alabama, where she performed on a panel honoring the legacy of SIU alum Dr. Scott Dillard and on a response panel to the SSCA Performance Studies Division's Digital Symposium on "Bodily Humors."

Next year, Shelby is looking forward to her roster of undergraduate classes; performing her solo show, *Reviving the Octopus*, co-directed with Dr. Craig Gingrich-Philbrook; co-directing Craig's solo show, *Clean Your Own House*; and serving as the program planner for the Performance Studies and Autoethnography Interest Group at CSCA. She's also excited to temporarily step into the Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies role while Dr. Jonny Gray is on a much-deserved sabbatical in the spring.

Shelby and her spouse, Scott, are now pet parents to six (!! adorable creatures: dogs Sammie and Dolly, and kitties Fennekin, Bilbo, Spock, and Bosco.



Faculty Updates

Justin R. Young *Assistant Lecturer*

Justin spent the last year teaching classes and working on his research. He guest spoke at various events. His creative output included podcast producing, writing, and cat wrangling. He manages SalukiGames.com.



Book Nook

By Rebecca Walker Anderson

This year, we are excited to tell you about a new book of Leadership Communication co-edited by Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway, Dr. Nilanjana Bardhan, and Dr. Sean Eddington from Kansas State University, "Leadership Communication Theory and Practice: An Advanced Introduction". The following description comes from the publisher's website:

"Through the theorization of leadership from various communicative perspectives, this book offers a comprehensive, multi-perspectival framework and actionable insights for building responsible, relational, and inclusive leadership practices.

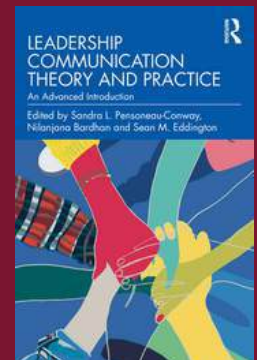
This book presents three distinct perspectives on how sub-disciplines in communication studies understand, utilize, and theorize the intersections between communication and leadership: (1) diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA), intercultural, and critical cultural approaches; (2) relational, discursive, and collective approaches; and (3) pedagogical and training approaches.

Contributors showcase how communication theory assists in building more responsible, relational, dialogical, ethical, and meaningful leadership practices, using applied cases, scenarios, and leader profiles to demonstrate theoretical approaches in practical contexts.

Each chapter features suggested further readings and questions to spark continued engagement with the issues presented.

This text is suited to advanced undergraduate and graduate students in leadership communication, organizational communication, and leadership studies within communication studies, business, psychology, higher education and administration, and military leadership programs."

This book is available for pre-order now, but will be available for general purchase on June 29, 2006. As the School of Communication Studies at SIU grows its offerings in Leadership Communication, we know this book will be an integral part of our future courses. Congratulations to Dr. Pensoneau-Conway and Dr. Bardhan on this excellent new publication!



2025-2026 Graduates



New PhD's

T. Brown

India Hagen-Gates

Scott Jarmon

Sean Maulding

New MA's

Juno Blue

Sahar Abedikedenji

Emla Holsted

Janifar Nova

Congratulations to all our graduates!

Kleinau Theater

Lovely as a Tree

Jonny Gray completed and presented his solo show, "Lovely as a Tree," in the Kleinau Theatre September 18, 19, & 20.

The School of Communication Studies hosted a student spotlight night at the Marion Kleinau Theatre. Participants were able to share some of their creative works ranging from self-written songs to performances of original poetry.

Autism in Real Life

Shelby Swafford and Christina Ivey co-directed Paula Horton's "Autism in Real Life" for the Kleinau Theatre with Jonny Gray as Technical Director.

At a Crossroads

Dr. Shelby Swafford successfully compiled and directed "At a Crossroads" for the Kleinau Theatre with Jonny Gray as Technical Director. This cast-devised show explored personal and cultural tensions that intersect within Carbondale.

Live and In Color

The Kleinau Theatre hosted Dr. Anjuliet Woodruffe and Dr. Marquese McFerguson on February 21, for their performance of Live and In Color. Written and Performed by Woodruffe and McFerguson, Live and in Color is a collaborative poetry performance, staged for the first time at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, Ohio in 2024.

Kleinau Theater

Work/Shoot

Written and performed by Mario Sanders and co-directed with Dr. T Brown, the world of professional wrestling is one that blurs the lines between fiction (the “work”) and reality (the “shoot”).

While the work and shoot elements of professional wrestling are often conceived as antithetical to one another, they can be better understood as working in tandem. This performance utilizes both work and shoot elements to discuss masculinity and grief, while simultaneously using autoethnographic reflections on masculinity and grief to illuminate aspects of professional wrestling.

Saints, Witches, and Madwomen

Written and performed by Dr. Christina L. Ivey and directed by Dr. Shelby Swafford, “Saints, Witches, and Madwomen” provided a historiography of women’s behaviors that were societally described as odd, problematic, and dangerous, this performance traces the historical connection between women labeled as “saints,” “witches,” and “madwomen” while exploring the darker areas of family communication. Weaving story, poetry, theory, and history, this autoethnographic performance examines Ivey’s relationship with their mother. Mature Themes.

Becoming Unbecoming

“Becoming Unbecoming” is an adaptation of a graphic novel about an English woman’s experience surviving sexual assault. The novel, written and illustrated by Una, is a gorgeous and grueling depiction of the sexism of the times and how it presented itself in Una’s lived experience. The production emphasizes distinctive characteristics of the graphic novel genre, allowing the performer to bring her body and words into dialogue with music and images. Mature Themes. The production was written and illustrated by Una and was adapted and directed by T Brown.



End of Year Awards

John T. Warren Excellence in Graduate Student Research/Creative Activity:
Janifar Nova (MA); India Hagen-Gates and Mario Sanders (PhD)

Ronald J. Pelias Excellence in Graduate Student Service:
Mario Sanders

Elyse Pineau Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching:
Madi Marshall and Jessie Paxton

Outstanding Faculty in Communication Studies
Sakshi Bhati

Bryan Crow Memorial Scholarship
Addison Bean (UG); Casey Weaver (Grad)

John T. Warren Memorial Scholarship
KaMahri Scott (UG); Madi Marshall (Grad)

Grant F. Deady Public Relations Scholarship
KaMahri Scott

Elizabeth Lance Toth Public Relations Student Award
Addison Bean

Dr. Tekla Story Award for Excellence in Performance
Paula Horton

Marion Kleinau Achievement Award
T. Brown

Marion Kleinau Literature in Performance Award
T. Brown, for his adaptation of *Becoming Unbecoming*, by Una



SIU on the Road

National Communication Association

This past academic year, SIUC had students and faculty present at the National Communication Association annual convention held in Denver.

SIUC had seven individuals participate, including nine panels and seven papers across multiple divisions.

Participants included:
Irene Lutterodt
India Hagen-Gates
Frankie Kimmell
Casey Weaver
Dr. Sakshi Bhati
Janifar Nova
Dr. Christina Ivey

Central States Communication Association

This year SIUC Communication Studies Department had more than 12 students and faculty present at the Central States Communication Association annual conference that took place in Minnesota.

Participants from SIUC include:
Irene Lutterodt
Janifar Kamal Nova
Madison Marshall
Jessica Paxton
Dr. Christina Ivey
Dr. Sakshi Bhati
Rebecca Lee
Dr. Craig L. Engstrom
Dr. Sean Maulding
Dr. Sandy Pensoneau-Conway
Dr. Nilanjan Bardhan
Dr. Dustin Greenwalt

Southern States Communication Association

This year, SIUC had two participants at Southern States Communication Association annual convention, Dr. Rebecca Anderson and Dr. Jonny Gray.

Dr. Gray received the Southern States Performance Scholar of the Year award at SSCA





Stay Connected



School: @facebook.com/SIUcommstudies
PRSSA: @SIUCPRSSA



School: @siucmst
Kleinau: @kleinatheatre
PRSSA: @prssa_siu

Charitable Giving

If you would like to contribute to a variety of school events, student professional and academic development opportunities, or any of our scholarship and award funds, please visit our school giving page [here](#) or contact school director Dr. Rebecca Anderson (r.walker@siu.edu). We have many more funds than what is listed on the page. Our alumni and friends make a world of difference! Thank you



MORE INFORMATION AT OUR [WEBSITE](#)