



# Links

Connecting Alumni,  
Students and Faculty

Wittenberg University  
Department of Communication  
Newsletter

2014

# From the Alumni Liaison

Ciara Colvin ('16)

As you open this booklet and read about the amazing lives of our Communication alumni, I hope you realize that doing what you know you should be doing, even when you don't want to do it, is one of the most important keys to being successful! This issue of *Links* has shown me how grateful I am to be the newest intern as Director of Publicity and Alumni Liaison. I've built an amazing bond with my staff along with my mentor, Dr. Broz. With this internship I've witnessed some of the strongest Communication alumni and it makes me eager to want to learn more and continue my journey to becoming the best I can be.

As I finish my first issue of *Links* I want to say thank you to all of the alumni who have given my staff and me the opportunity to "pass on the light" through their stories. I'm positive that this issue has changed someone's life for the better. You all are the reason why Wittenberg has given so many opportunities along with why many of us haven't given up.

I want to thank Dr. Broz for having faith in me and seeing potential in me to create this issue of *Links*. She has shown me that being scared to fail is the reason why our Communication Department and alumni are as successful as they are.

I want to give a special thanks to all of my *Links* Staff Writers. You all have done an amazing job with the features you have written. My hope is that our alumni have inspired you with their stories to continue to fight for a promising future. Thanks for making my first issue successful and congratulations to all of the graduating seniors. Your futures are as bright as you make them.

## Links Staff Writers

- Kelsey Claar ('15)
- Meghan Concannon ('15)
- Megan Conkle ('14)
- Pearl Ernat ('17)
- Regina Gasser ('14)
- Madeline Geiger ('16)
- Rebekah Hart ('14)
- Maggie McIlvain ('14)
- Kristin Mercer ('15)
- Katie Murphey ('14)
- Victoria Perlak ('15)
- Kirsten Stricker ('14)
- Marley Tullis ('17)
- Emily Van Buren ('15)



Director of Publicity and Alumni Liaison Intern, Ciara Colvin ('16)

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# Dr. Waggoner Receives Alumni Association Award for Distinguished Teaching

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by Ciara Colvin ('16)



Dr. Catherine Waggoner with her Distinguished Teaching Award.

Thanks to secret nominations from students, colleagues, and alumni, Dr. Catherine Waggoner, Professor of Communication, received the Wittenberg University Alumni Association Award for Distinguished Teaching at the 2014 Honors Convocation. This award is presented in recognition of superior classroom teaching and contributions to the academic life of the students and faculty of Wittenberg University, and it is the highest teaching honor a Wittenberg professor can receive.

Former students Eric Rusnak ('00) and Kristen Mathias ('00) presented the award, drawing from their own experiences and from the many nominations that were received. In their remarks, they noted Dr. Waggoner's initiative to create the Communication major. Even before the major existed, however, she created innovative Communication courses and inter-departmental

majors to meet students' interests. Later, she collaborated with administration and faculty members to propose and create what is now one of the biggest and most popular majors on campus today.

"Dr. Waggoner is a visionary, a role model, and a dedicated servant to the students of Wittenberg. She made a lasting impression on me, and on countless others," said Rusnak. "Dr. Waggoner served as an advisor on my senior thesis in the Business Department, and she taught me many of the effective communication and presentation skills I use today as a litigator."

Waggoner, who began her career at Wittenberg in 1995 in the Department of Theatre and Dance, has broadened students' opportunities within and beyond the classroom. In 2012, she created an alternative spring break service trip to the Mississippi Delta, an area that is near and dear to her home and heart. In the classroom she continues to "pass the light" and create unforgettable experiences with her students.

"Dr. Waggoner ranks in my top professors because her teaching style fit, encourages, and expanded my learning style. I learned early on that I could succeed in school with very little effort, but I always loved and worked hardest for the professors that made me want to put in the effort," said Kristen Mathias ('00). "Dr. Waggoner is one of those professors. I wish I could encapsulate her better, but if you want to know more, sit in on a class of hers. Her strength as a teacher is unmistakable."



Dr. Catherine Waggoner and Eric Rusnak ('00), one of the alumni who presented the award at the Honors Convocation.

Congratulations, Dr. Waggoner on your award, and thanks for all you do.

# Communication Majors and Alumni Reflect on Dr. Waggoner's Outstanding Teaching

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*Dr. Waggoner ranks in my top professors because her teaching style fit, encouraged, and expanded my learning style.*  
- Kristen Mathias ('00)

*Dr. Waggoner is a visionary, a role model, and a dedicated servant to the students of Wittenberg. She made a lasting impression on me, and on countless others.*  
- Eric Rusnak ('00)

*She helped to pioneer the development of the Communication degree on campus, and has helped it to mature and develop into one of the most popular and applicable majors Witt offers.*  
- Michael Wesbecher ('04)

*Dr. Waggoner is an outstanding teacher and puts so much time into her students. She deserves this award so much.*  
- Katie Lewis ('16)

*Being able to travel with Dr. Waggoner [to the Mississippi Delta] and experience life outside the classroom was incredible. This trip opened my eyes, and showed me just how passionate Dr. Waggoner is about her job.*  
- Erin Harte ('13)

*Dr. Waggoner cultivates the minds of students, models and promotes critical thinking, and recognized the unique opportunity as a teacher to motivate students to excel personally and contribute collectively to a better world.*  
- Gretchen McIntosh ('10)

*She is now my advisor for Communication and has helped me in a lot of ways.*  
- Mackenzie Bolon ('16)

*Dr. Waggoner is extremely deserving of this Distinguished Teaching Award. As her former advisee and student, I know she challenged each student to work beyond their comfort zone and always ask "why" questions.*  
- Katie Bauer ('12)

# From the Classroom to California: Swati Shivshankar ('13)

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by Katie Murphey ('14)

Just as she did when leaving India to come to Wittenberg, Swati Shivshankar ('13) did not hesitate to travel a long distance to her new home in San Francisco, California to begin her career at Callsocket as an Account Manager.

Her time at Wittenberg as a Communication major has not only helped Swati personally but also has helped her professionally in her current position.

"Being a communication major really taught me to step out of my comfort zone and participate in events and activities that I am not comfortable with. In my current position, I know my superiors appreciate me taking on a task twice my size and expertise. Even if I fail, I am okay with it because I tried and put myself out there," said Shivshankar.

Not only was she a Communication major, she was also a part of the Communication Leaders program, currently known as the Communication and Business Leadership Experience (CABLE), in which she gained lifelong friends and expertise that she could not have experienced in the classroom alone.

"The whole experience of working on a high-profile project for Google, making connections and lifelong friends was the highlight of not just being a Communication major but also of the four years at Wittenberg. EPIC," said Shivshankar.

Swati believes Wittenberg gives students ample opportunities where they can feel a part of something and can really succeed. She is thankful her communication major challenged her in the classroom and would like to thank her fellow classmates who pushed her along the way. Looking into her future plans, she wants to be in a position that constantly forces her to grow and learn, and she is also prepared to eventually go back to graduate school.

While at Callsocket, she gained experience with client relationship management and market analysis, which she says "ended up being the perfect use of my double major in Communication and Economics." She has recently moved back to Mumbai, India, with plans to begin a career in brand and communication strategy.

While her career may not lead Swati back to Ohio, she is adamant about returning to Springfield sometime to speak with students.

"I would love to be back at Witt. Wittenberg is home for me. I would come back in a heartbeat to help out in any way I can."

**"Being a communication major really taught me to step out of my comfort zone and participate in events and activities that I am not comfortable with."  
- Swati Shivshankar**



Shelly Gregory ('13) and "dearest friend" Swati Shivshankar ('13) in San Francisco

# California Dreaming, the Wittenberg Way: Shelly Gregory ('13)

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by Kelsey Claar ('15)

Most college students would love to get paid for managing social media accounts, and Shelly Gregory ('13) has done just that. Going through college so certain about leaving Wittenberg with a Communication degree, Gregory did not expect to be thousands of miles away from campus pursuing her passion in a place that is just as sunny as she is.

After graduating, Gregory found herself working as a Social Media Specialist for the Robert Rothschild Farm in Urbana, Ohio, where she fell in love with the world of social media. As her passion outgrew the small town she was living in, Gregory began dreaming of life in the city that she calls the "mecca of social media," better known as San Francisco, California.

Using the experience she gained from her time with the Wittenberg Communication Department, Gregory began job searching in the sunshine state and soon became employed at LEWIS PR in their digital marketing and social media branch, LEWIS Pulse, as a Digital Marketing Specialist. This new position allows her to work on a team, interact with clients, and manage their social media goals.

Owing a lot of her post-graduation success to the former Communication Leaders program (now known as CABLE), Gregory says, "The hands-on approach to professional development really set me up for success by giving me confidence and helping to ease my worries about the transition to 'the real world.'"

While at Wittenberg, she participated in many extracurricular activities, as a WUSO general manager, President of the Student Senate, a member of Communication Leaders, Integrated Media Corps, the Department of Communication Alumni Liaison, and the Editor of "Links."

With so many connections to her Wittenberg family, taking the job at LEWIS PR was made easier knowing that fellow Communication alumna, and one of Gregory's "dearest friends," Swati Shivshankar ('13), was already located in San Francisco.

Gregory has also kept in touch with the Communication Department faculty saying, "The Communication professors at Witt are some of my biggest cheerleaders and they supported and encouraged me during my...undergraduate experience. I really cherish all my Wittenberg relationships; they have all played a part in shaping me into who I am today."

**"Set yourself up for success, then breathe because it really does all work out."  
- Shelly Gregory**

Gregory's advice to current Communication students is something that she herself needed to hear as a senior. "Do your best and do good work," she says. "Set yourself up for success, then breathe because it really does all work out." She also urges students to do exactly what she did after college – "follow your heart!"



## Building Her Own Empire: Cristina Recalde ('08)

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by Rebekah Hart ('14)

From guiding visitors around Wittenberg's campus to guiding Ecuadorians out of poverty, Cristina Recalde is a trailblazer. Recalde has been using the skills she developed as a Communication major and Journalism minor by working as a freelance journalist, photographer, and communication consultant for a variety of companies in Ecuador. She is currently in the process of building her own business around these types of work, called Kiki Recalde Comunicaciones.

"I love being able to do what I am passionate about, we worked day in and day out in order to provide communities with the tools and skills necessary so that they can get out of the poverty state and grow as a community," said Recalde. "It was hard. But it was rewarding, there is nothing better than their smiles."

Recalde credits much of her success to Wittenberg, with the help of the amazing staff and wonderful professors she was shaped as a professional. She was a member of a large assortment of activities that have also shaped Recalde and provided her with the experiences to be a better leader. During her time at Wittenberg Recalde co-founded the Hispanic Culture Club, was the International Senator in Student Senate, and was involved with American International Association.

I am truly thankful for everything that Witt gave me; it wasn't just a B.A., but a well-rounded education."  
- Cristina Recalde

"I am truly thankful for everything that Witt gave me; it wasn't just a B.A but a well-rounded education," said Recalde "It was home."

Fresh out of Wittenberg, Recalde moved to Denver and studied publishing, then went on to earn two masters degrees in Communication and Journalism in Ecuador and Argentina. She also worked for a 24 hour news channel called TN (Todo Noticias) in Argentina.

Recalde is very happy in her current career. However, her dream job would be to work for National Geographic as a travel journalist.



## From Communication To Education: Emily Willis ('10)

by Emily Van Buren ('15)

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When Emily Willis first attended Wittenberg she knew she wanted to be involved in education. Witt's beautiful campus and its great education program was what initially brought her to the university. However, true to a liberal arts experience, Willis looked to other opportunities available. She knew there was more than one way to get into education and began looking for a degree that wasn't specific to one field. After finding interest in an introductory course for Communication, she decided to switch majors her sophomore year. "Communication prepares you for so many things," said Willis. She liked the many possibilities that the major provided.

"Communication prepares you for so many things."  
- Emily Willis

While at Wittenberg, Emily worked as an admissions tour guide, helped students in the Writing Center and Oral Communication Center, worked in the career center, and participated in Communication Leaders (the predecessor to the C.A.B.L.E. program). She was no stranger to on-campus involvement, but also dedicated time to Young Life and the Northwestern School District working with children in Springfield.

After graduating, Emily took an admissions position in Arizona. She soon realized that she didn't enjoy it. Her advice to students who are graduating is, although it is tempting, to not necessarily take the first job that comes to you. She cautions against getting cornered into one area, and notes that it is good to experiment. It allows you to discover what you really want to do. Experiencing different fields and having that understanding of what is out there helped Emily know what she really wanted to do, which was to teach.



Currently, Emily works as a special education teacher at Harshmen Magnet Middle School. She finds her communication skills help her when working not only with children, but co-workers as well. She feels it is extremely important to know how to communicate with teachers and administration.

"Good relations with teachers help the kids," said Willis. Being a special education teacher, Willis often moves around the school helping different teachers with their students. Because of this, having effective communication skills is imperative to helping students learn.

## Reconnecting with Advisors and Advisees at Academic Conferences

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by Dr. Stefne Broz

Academic conferences provide opportunities for scholars to present their work, hear from colleagues in the discipline, and network with each other. They also are a chance for us to reconnect with our alumni who are attending graduate school or are now professors themselves.

Last November, Dr. Catherine Waggoner caught up with several Wittenberg Communication alumni at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, held in Washington, D.C. She was there presenting a paper entitled, “Butter Doesn’t Melt: Paula Deen and the Politics of Charm.” Our alumni were there to present their recent research projects and attend sessions related to their interest areas.



Dr. Waggoner (far right) with Witt alumni at NCA. From left: Touby Bender (BUSN '12, Lauren's fiancé), Lauren Harris ('12, M.A. student in Communication at the University of Maryland), Jeff Hannah ('09), James Hunter (BUSN '09, Keeley's husband), Keeley Buehler Hunter (COMM '08, Ph.D. student

This past spring, I had the opportunity to present alongside my academic advisor from my undergraduate Communication program at Concordia College (Moorhead, MN). Our panel at the Central States Communication Association conference in Minneapolis was about creating and running study-abroad programs in Communication. This was quite fitting because one of my three study-abroad experiences while in college was with this former advisor of mine. We spent a month traveling around Western Europe and learning about Intercultural Communication in May 1997.



Dr. Broz (right) with her undergraduate Communication advisor at CSCA

Between sessions at CSCA, I ran into one of our early Communication graduates from Wittenberg, Laura Russell ('04), who is now an Assistant Professor of Communication at Denison University. She serves as Chair of the Health Communication Interest Group for CSCA; she also presented two papers and participated in a panel about research in Health Communication.

At times, the Communication discipline feels a bit like a huge family. We talk about who studied where with whom and how we are academically “related” to each other. We always enjoy seeing our alumni, as well as our own advisors and mentors from our alma maters. We also enjoy continuing to expand this family network by introducing our alumni to our colleagues and meeting theirs as well.



Laura Russell ('04) with Dr. Broz at CSCA

## Dr. Katie Warber Takes Her Sabbatical at Home and Abroad

by Kirsten Stricker ('14)

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Dr. Warber at the Tower of London, England.

Dr. Katie M. Warber, Associate Professor in the Communication Department, received tenure in May 2013. Following her tenure, she has been on sabbatical for the past year. She has taken this time away from teaching to further her own research. She published five new articles—which appear in scholarly journals and popular magazines like *Psychology Today*—as well as an entry in the *International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication* on evolutionary psychology.

About that entry she said, “In all honesty, if my career ended tomorrow, I’d be happy having just published this one piece. I feel honored to be recognized as an expert in evolutionary psychology within the communication discipline.”

Along with Dr. Warber’s most recent publications she has participated in conferences in London, England (International Communication Association) and Albacete, Spain (R Users Conference), along with others that are closer to home in Seattle, WA. and Louisville, KY.

While on sabbatical, Dr. Warber has maintained a strong connection with the Wittenberg community through her role as Grand Marshal of the University. It is customary for a Grand Marshal to step down during their time on sabbatical. Rather than doing so, Dr. Warber has continued to serve in this capacity and take part in Wittenberg ceremonies such as the Opening Convocation and Commencement. Dr. Warber has also been developing two new classes for the Communication Department, one of which will be the first entirely online course to be taught at Wittenberg University.

Outside the world of academia on a more personal level, Dr. Warber has taken time to participate in classes on mindfulness meditation and yoga. She believes that these will promote “a greater level of connection between my physical, social, and emotional well-being.” Along with the personal benefits of these practices, she says they will prove beneficial to her academic life as well. She will return to teaching in the fall of 2014 as well as step into a new role as Director of First-Year Programs.



Dr. Warber in Madrid, Spain for the annual R Users Conference.

# Scholarship and Service: Lambda Pi Eta Communication Honorary

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On Monday, February 24, 2014, in Bayley Alumni House five students were inducted into Wittenberg's chapter of the national Communication honorary, Lambda Pi Eta.

Following the induction these five students sat with advisor Dr. Sheryl Cunningham to discuss the different events they would like to do in the future.

Congratulations to the newest Lambda Pi Eta members!



The five newest members of Lambda Pi Eta, from right to left: Jordyn Baker ('14), Laura Rose ('14), Victoria Perlak ('15), Kristin Mercer ('15), and Brian Brown ('15).

## Alumni, we want to hear from you!

One of the most common questions the faculty in the Department of Communication get asked by prospective students and majors is, "What can you do with a Communication major?" We like to answer that question by handing them this newsletter and inviting them to explore the many different interesting and fulfilling things our wonderful alumni are doing with their degree.

But we need your help! Please send us your news about where you are and what you're doing! We also appreciate photos – from your wedding, of your baby, at your job, etc. Please send all of your updates, especially your current mailing address, to our Alumni Liaison, Ciara Colvin ('16) at [wittcomm@wittenberg.edu](mailto:wittcomm@wittenberg.edu) for inclusion in the Alumni News and Notes section of next year's issue of "Links." Keep in touch!



# These Students Are 4 Real: Helping Kids Find Their Cinema Voice

by Meghan Concannon ('16)

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"Students 4 Real" is a project created by The Springfield Arts Council and Project Jericho that aims to help Springfield students create their own documentaries with the help of Wittenberg and Wright State student mentors. Springfield students between the ages of 12 to 18 created 3 to 5-minute long documentaries with the help of their mentors, ranging from stop motion videos to stories about their daily lives.

Dr. Matthew Smith was involved with the Students 4 Real project working with the Wittenberg student mentors. "Our Cinema Studies students stepped in to provide creative guidance and logistic support to the school children making the documentary films," said Dr. Smith. "Wittenberg students did not make the films for them, but rather helped guide them through the filmmaking process."

Kaitlyn Carter, a senior Communication major, got involved with the Students 4 Real and applied her work as a mentor to the Wittenberg Community Service requirement. "I am hopeful the program will have a strong continuation. The students and peer mentors produced some really amazing films, and I know we all grew on each other, as well as learning new things from each other," said Carter.

Talking about the middle school student she worked with, Carter said, "Through our project she opened up more and more to me, and I got to see her pride in the progress she was achieving through this project. I became very close with her family since her documentary was set around the importance of family, and I was very pleased with how well they treated me and accepted me into their household. I hope to keep in contact with Alona. I had a very strong sense of accomplishment and self satisfaction participating in this project."

"The students and peer mentors produced some really amazing films, and I know we all grew on each other as well as learning new things from each other."  
- Kaitlyn Carter ('14)

Senior Communication major Regina Gasser also enjoyed her work on this project "because it gave me a chance to hear all of these kids' great ideas and watch them bring them to life on camera! My partner, Billy Rice, was a blast to work with. I am really thankful that I had the opportunity to work with such great students and the Springfield Arts Council."



Cinema Studies students presented about mentoring their Students 4 Real participants and screened the resulting short films at the Celebration of Learning event in April. Pictured here from left to right are Amarra Oriaku ('15), Kaitlyn Carter ('14), and Regina Gasser ('14)

## Communication Alumni Live By Integrity: Hannah Powell ('03) and Allen D'Andrea ('03)

by Ciara Colvin ('16)

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COMM alumni Hannah Powell ('03) and Allen D'Andrea ('03) talking to the 2014 Senior Capstone Class.

The Communication Department invited two of its first graduates, Hannah Powell ('03) and Allen D'Andrea ('03), to speak to the Senior Capstone Seminar course for Communication majors this spring. They came to the class to discuss life in the real world and how communication ethics is relevant to jobs in today's society.

With ethics being the main focus for the course, Dr. Catherine Waggoner and Dr. Matthew Smith asked the alumni to discuss communication-related ethical dilemmas they have faced and how do they address them.

"Bringing in distinguished alumni like Hannah and Allen helps students to see how their education is laying the foundation for a promising future," said Dr. Smith.

Powell is the Executive Director, for KIPP Journey Academy, Columbus Branch, and D'Andrea is the District Manager for the Midwest Stanley Steamer. While expressing how they continue to take pride in pursuing their career titles, they both emphasized the importance of being a person of integrity in their careers.

"The Comm major has helped me in teams, confidence, and being able to communicate with others," said Powell.

The alumni also talked about how people often ask them to do unethical things in their careers. Powell and D'Andrea emphasized how their experiences here at Wittenberg have strongly helped them to prepare for living an ultimate life of integrity.

**"Bringing in distinguished alumni like Hannah and Allen helps students to see how their education is laying the foundation for a promising future."  
- Dr. Matthew Smith**

"The great thing about Wittenberg is that there are always alumni helping you out. They talked about how "passing the light" to others is a main part of what they do and I just thought it was so cool how they have Wittenberg's values in the back of their minds every day. It makes going to Wittenberg so much more special to me," said Caroline Eldridge, a senior Communication major in the Capstone course.

Powell and D'Andrea have both set high goals for themselves and their teams to achieve greatness. They encourage students to reach out to the Wittenberg alumni for guidance and opportunities in their career fields.

## Most Diverse Group Yet: C.A.B.L.E. 2014 - 2015

by Kelsey Claar ('15)

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The Communication and Business Leadership Experience, better known as CABLE, is an academic professional preparation program for Communication and Business majors and minors who want what Dr. Matthew Smith calls a "leg up" on the competition. This faculty selected group of 11 Wittenberg leaders, advised by Dr. Smith of the Communication Department and Dr. Wendy Gradwohl of the Business Department, provides just about everything one needs to succeed in the professional world.

**"It has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had since I've come to Wittenberg."  
- Dr. Wendy Gradwohl**

After evolving from the Communication Leaders program, a Communication-centered opportunity, CABLE has continued to change in order to give members the most beneficial experience they can have – including the addition of the Business Department's involvement.

"It has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had since I've come to Wittenberg. I think I can speak for the Business Department in saying that we are glad we partnered with the Communication Department for this program and we look forward to our continued collaboration," said Dr. Gradwohl.

This year, further adjustments have been made to the program, such as teambuilding opportunities and the introduction to a variety of new in-class speakers. Since these revisions have been made, the 2014-2015 C.A.B.L.E. members have been actively working with each other, as well as Wittenberg alumni, during site visits, class discussions, and client-based projects.



C.A.B.L.E. members at Wilt PR in Springfield  
Back row (left to right): Emily Widener, Maureen Buchan ('09), Grace Monahan, Jess Stankeveh, Michael Norby, Kelsey Claar, Ana Paula Veiga, Allie Hermes, Marin Smith.  
Front row (left to right): Miro Nugyen, Meghan Concannon, Gabrielle Bell, Victoria Perlak, Hannah Yalaz

At the end of the Spring 2014 semester, the group will have completed their first client-based project, creating a business plan for the Cincinnati Chapter of the Wittenberg Alumni Association. Allie Hermes ('15), a current member, believes she is benefiting from the client-based project and the overall CABLE experience because it teaches its members how to present themselves in a professional and appropriate way.

"CABLE is special to me because it brings together leading Communication and Business majors and minors. This allows us to form bonds with one another – supporting each other in both our studies and the beginning of our professional lives," said Hermes.

Dr. Smith describes the eleven leaders as the most "geographically and intellectually diverse group yet," and both advisors are excited to see each member grow into a confident professional by the time they graduate in 2015.



**2003**

**Todd Dillon** is living in St. Louis, MO and working for Nestle Purina as a Digital Strategist.

**2004**

**Kate (Williston) Stankovic** lives in Decatur, IL and works at Primrose Retirement Community as Life Enrichment Coordinator.

**2005**

**Aubrey (Anderson) Davis** is living in rural Rwanda working for a Boston-based non profit healthcare organization, Partners in Health (PIH) as an External Relations Coordinator.

**Scott Olmsted** is living in Centennial, CO and working as an Event and Sponsorship Manager for Subaru Elephant Rock.

**Jake Rollefson** works at Pandora as an Account Executive. (See feature on p. 22)

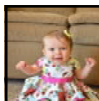
**2006**

**Kylie (Evans) Majot** is working as the Educational Outreach Counselor for Student Support Services/TRiO PROGRAM at West Virginia University. She is also teaching as an Adjunct Instructor for the WVU School of Social Work. This past year Kylie and her husband Adam ('06) welcomed their first child, Violet Mae.



**Courtney (Bennett) Sanders** is working at The Ohio State University as a Graduate Program Coordinator in the Department of Political Science. She also works for a company called RBI Strategies and Research based out of Denver, CO. Her official title is Communication Technology Strategist. Courtney is raising a future Tiger by the name of Alexandra.

**Phil Steffes** is married to **Sarajane (Stofac) Steffes** ('09). Their daughter, Brielle Harper Steffes, was born in July 2013. Phil is a Consumer Loan Underwriter at Kemba Financial Credit Union in Gahanna, OH.

**2007**

**Tara Beckman** recently took a new role with Nationwide Insurance as a Commercial Field Adjuster and now resides in Lakewood, Ohio.

**Melissa Crosby** works as an Analyst—Insights and Consulting at Converseon, a social listening company in Manhattan.

**Abby (Hurt) Fisher** is Assistant Vice President of Programs for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central Ohio, where she has worked for six years. She married Aaron Fisher in 2010, and their daughter, Amelia Rose, was born in 2013.

**2007, cont'd**

**Ashley (Petersen) Harriman** is a Senior Community Manager at Angie's List in Indianapolis, IN. She earned her M.S. in Strategic Communication from the University of Denver in 2011. She married **Mark Harriman** ('07) in October 2012.



**Jeniece (Gibbs) Pritchett** is a Senior Digital Manager at GolinHarris, Global PR and Digital Media Agency. She is married to Colby Pritchett of Dallas.

**2008**

**Jocelin Baker** took a position with Shumsky (parent company Boost Technologies, LLC) in January of 2014

**Sarah Fetters** lives in Starkville, MS and is the Assistant Director of Media Relations at Mississippi State University.

**Michael Holley** moved to Staten Island, NY this past February to take a position as Director of Marketing with the Staten Island Yankees



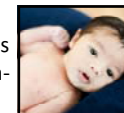
**Zoe Lamberson** is currently living in Columbus, OH working as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for the Fairfield County Prosecutor's Office. She graduated from OSU Moritz College of Law in 2012.

**2009**

**Sara McKinniss** completed her graduate certificate in Marketing Strategy from Cornell University. She was promoted to Senior Marketing Manager for ODW Logistics in Columbus, OH.

**Lukas Treu** is working as a Content Architect at AKHIA.

**Kathleen (Graham) White** is working at Gordon Food Services as a Marketing Services Leader. She is married to **Brandon White** ('08). They welcomed their son Declan Callaghan White on July 20th.

**2010**

**Kelly Clark** is working as an Account Executive at Walton Isaacson in Chicago, Illinois. She is working on two brands owned by Beam Inc.—Skinnygirl Cocktails and Cruzan Rum.

**Jennifer Dick** passed the Ohio Bar exam in November of 2013. She is now working as an Associate Attorney in the Bankruptcy Department at Barr, Jones & Associates in Columbus, OH.

**Jade Chivington** lives and works in New Albany, OH at Bob Evans Farms, LLC as a Treasury Analyst. She graduated in December from Ashland University with an MBA in Executive Management.

**Joelle Ghanem** was promoted to Senior Account Executive this past August at Leo Burnett. In September it will be her fourth year marked at the agency.

**2010, cont'd**

**Gretchen McIntosh** is finishing her PhD at Ohio State in Cultural Policy and Arts Management and in May of 2015 she will be graduating. She is also a graduate teaching associate for two classes.

**Caitlin Welsh** is interning at Kent State's Office of Admissions and will intern at Ursuline College's International Office.

**2011**

**Lisl Davis** has recently transitioned to Capitol Hill as the Scheduler/Office Manager for her hometown Congressman.

**Heather DeSantis** is currently working as a Food Publicist and Media Relations Specialist. (See feature on p. 28)

**Stephanie (Springer) Ison** is a Business Analyst for a real estate investment company called Ohio Investments, which is owned by Wittenberg alumnus Brad Zitzner.

**Meredith (Berzins) Level** is the Coordinator for Engaged Learning in the Business Department at Wittenberg University.

**Ben Noble** finished his post-baccalaureate work at Wright State for his prerequisites for medical school. He is preparing for the MCAT and will be applying to medical school.

**Emily Shaw** lives in Columbus, OH and recently received a promotion as a VISTA Leader for Ohio Association of Food Banks.

**Chris Tabler** is working at Garber Engineering as a Manufacturers Representative in Piqua, OH.

**2012**

**Brian Duke** is living in Boston, MA and working at The Computer Merchant Limited in Norwell, MA. He is currently holding the position as a Technical Recruiter.

**Benjamin Groff** accepted a position at Cengage Learning working as the Student Engagement Coordinator. He is also the defensive coordinator for the men's varsity lacrosse team at Sycamore High School.

**Tyler Hall** is working as a Social Media Specialist in Dayton, OH. He married Elizabeth (Leigh) Hall ('13 Witt grad) on June 8, 2013.



**Lauren Harris** is currently living in Washington, D.C. and is works as a graduate teaching assistant. (See feature on p. 23)

**Nishant Makhija** is working as a Broadcast Producer for Youth Beat Radio, sponsored and funded by The Ohio State University.

**2012, cont'd**

**Hannah (Leguillion) Taphorn** started a position in February for the CincinnatiUSA Regional Chamber as the Economic Development Research Coordinator for the Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI Cincinnati).

**2013**

**Alissa Armstrong** is working at Farmer Lumpe and McClelland as a Client Relationship Team Leader in South Charleston, Ohio. She married Kevin Flax on July 12, 2014.



**Kristine Burkitt** is a Senior Analyst in Inventory Management at Cardinal Health in Columbus, OH. She got married in Laguna Beach this past winter.

**Shelly Gregory** is working at LEWIS PR as a Digital Marketing Specialist in San, Francisco. (See feature on p. 5)



**Elizabeth Guyer** is a Account Support Representative for WorldStrides. She also is involved in The Junior League of Charlottesville. She serves as the committee chair for a healthy living event for youth, and she will be the Branding and PR Chair for the 2014-2015 year.

**Erin Harte** is currently living in Chicago, IL working at Crain's Chicago Business as an Event Marketing Intern.



**Breanne Ziegler** is working as an Easy Tech Associate at Staples in Columbus, Ohio. On Sunday mornings she works as an Air Talent at KOOL 101.7 FM WNKO/970 AM WHTH.

**Elizabeth Thomas** finished her internship as the Marketing Assistant for Bradley University Athletics in Peoria, Illinois. She will be moving to Champaign, IL to begin working on her masters program in Sports Management at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She will also be working with the Fighting Illini Athletic Department as Marketing Graduate Assistant.

**2014**

**Caroline Eldridge** is currently working in Columbus, OH at a company called geoAMps as the Administrative Assistant. She is living in Upper Arlington with fellow graduates Francine Murzynski and Lauren O'Conner. They spend their weekends at the OSU games and hanging out with other Wittenberg alumni.

**Regina Gasser** is getting married to **Jake Sigafos** ('10) in September of 2014. She recently began working as a marketing specialist at a company called TekDog in Columbus, OH.



**Matthew Pfouts** is a Regional Sales Director for Compass Group North America currently residing in Dallas, Texas.

**Michael Waring** is living in Buffalo, NY and working at the HarborCenter as COACH or Coordinator of On-Air Activity, Audio/Visual, Channel Programming, and Historical Statistics.



**Andrea Mattingly ('16)** presented her research on "Deportation of Illegal Immigrants: Are there Exceptions?"

# Liberal Arts in Action: A Celebration of Learning

The 2014 Celebration of Learning was Wittenberg's second campus-wide celebration of academic excellence. The series of events on April 11 included more than 130 student-led panel sessions, posters, presentations and performances by students from across the university. The Department of Communication was well represented among the presenters, who discussed their research and work from a variety of learning experiences.



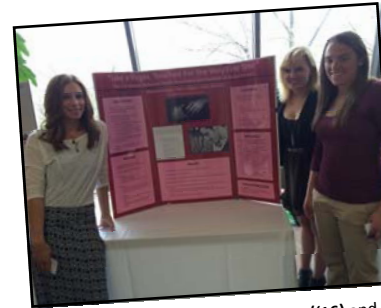
**Danielle Mace ('16)** presented her research on "Another Solution: What to do About Illegal Immigrants Currently Residing in the United States."



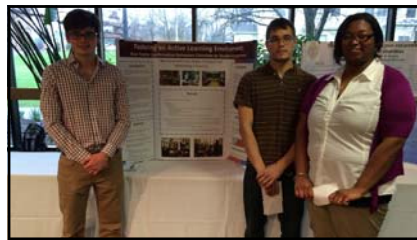
**Linzey A. Rice ('16)** presented her research on "Public Education in the United States."



**Tyler Visagie ('14)** presented his research on "Representing Religion in Adult Animated Sitcoms."



**Abby Gilligan ('16), Madeline Geiger ('16) and Kaitie Harrison ('14)** presented their research on "Touch Avoidance and Sexual Experience."



**Evan Baker ('15), Ben Kazarinoff ('14) and Chanteal Hall ('14)** presented their research on "The Effects of Teacher Confirmation Behaviors in the Classroom."



**Megan Conkle ('14)** presented her research on "Melodrama and the Media: An Environmental Tactic of Change."



**Nathan Dillahunt ('15)** presented his research on "West Virginian War Zone: Apocalyptic Narratives and Framing in the Battle over Coal."



**Maddy Straughn ('16) and Ashlee Wright ('15)** presented their research on "Professor Immediacy Behaviors and Student Attentiveness."



**Alyssa Dotson ('16), David Jacquet ('16) and Brett Wilson ('15)** presented their research on "Rapport and Commonalities: Testing Uncertainty Reduction Theory."



**Andrew Feese ('15), Kristin Mercer ('15) and Brenna Doherty ('16)** presented their research on "Affectionate Communication and Relationship Satisfaction."



**Matt Burr ('14)** presented his research on "Fortunate Son and Protest Songs: How well Does it Fit the Genre?"



**Rebekah Hart ('14)** presented her research on "Public Campaigns and the Use of the Body."



**Laura Rose ('14)** presented her research on "Gender in Sports Illustrated Magazine."

## A Note from the Department Chair: Dr. Stefne Broz

20

Anyone who has ever taken one of my classes knows that I love my job. I love interacting with and learning from the many students I encounter every day. I love seeing those students learn and grow and succeed—both while they're here and after they've left. I love hearing about those successes and I feel privileged to have known so many extraordinary people as they moved farther into adulthood and closer to their own self-fulfillment.

This newsletter is a wonderful way for others to hear about those successes and understand how a degree in Communication helps prepare our students for a meaningful career and a fulfilling life, and I appreciate everyone who contributed to it, from our student writers who shared their talents, to our alumni who took the time to share their stories. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter as much as I have enjoyed overseeing its creation and production.

We are excited about a new development at Wittenberg, called the Wittenberg Commitment. It sets forth six promises to incoming students, such as comprehensive advising, a full-year first-year seminar, and active and engaged learning opportunities. One promise about which I am particularly excited is the Wittenberg Network, a resource for current students to connect with our alumni to learn more about careers and opportunities of interest to them. We already maintain a strong connection to our alumni through social media and this annual newsletter, but we rely on and very much appreciate all of you making the effort to keep in touch with us, to keep that connection current and that relationship meaningful. We hope we can continue to stay in touch with our Communication alumni, who now number nearly 400!

All updates, questions, greetings, inquiries—and anything else that's on your mind—can be sent to [wittcomm@wittenberg.edu](mailto:wittcomm@wittenberg.edu). We look forward to hearing from you!



*Broz appeared in the 2014 Wittenberg University television commercial, which aired regionally on various cable networks.*

## Comm Majors Featured in Senior Salutes



Two graduating Communication majors were featured as part of the *Senior Salute* series on the 2014 Commencement website: Julia Devine and Jordyn Baker.

You can read their remarks at:

<http://www.wittenberg.edu/features/2014/senior-salute/julia-devine.html>

<http://www.wittenberg.edu/features/2014/senior-salute/jordyn-baker.html>



Both of these outstanding women also were selected as our department's 2014 Communication Laureates (see p. 31).

## “Just Do It”: Communication Students Study Abroad

by Pearl Ernat ('17)

21

Communication majors are interested in understanding how people interact with one another. For those who are interested in studying abroad, they have the opportunity to experience communication in different cultures from an interactive perspective.

Jennifer Klose ('15) spent spring semester in the Wittenberg in Wittenberg program, which is located in Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Germany. Students take several courses, including one offered by the Wittenberg professor who serves as the director of the program during that semester—in Klose's case, it was a biology class with Dr. Margaret Goodman. Students also have an internship experience based on their major. As a double major in Communication and English, Klose worked with an organization called Christian Tours.

“It was the most amazing internship! They work with English speakers to plan tours/accommodations throughout Europe. I worked on itineraries for actual tour groups and at the end got to go with a group that toured around Germany! I absolutely loved it,” expressed Klose.

Klose acknowledges that one of the biggest challenges she faced was navigating the language barriers while in Germany through the Wittenberg in Wittenberg program. However, the language barrier didn't stop her and her host family from communicating. “My host parents knew some English but I had to learn how to find ways to communicate when there were miscommunications. Sometimes that included having conversations by passing the laptop back and forth on Google translate,” said Klose.

Bobby Kirwin ('15) traveled to London, England for spring semester. He found that “having the opportunity to travel to other countries while overseas was definitely the best part of studying abroad. I never planned to travel as much as I did, but once I got to Europe I realized that the opportunity to see other countries so easily may never present itself again.”



*Jennifer Klose ('15) at the Berlin Wall in Berlin, Germany during spring semester 2014.*

Other Communication majors are heading overseas this fall. Kayla Villegas ('16), who will be at Kansai Gaidai University near Osaka, Japan, says that, “this will be the first time I completely immerse myself in a place I've never been before, in a culture I do not know, and without any of my family members or friends around - talk about a leap of faith!” As a Communication major, Villegas hopes “to understand a new culture and learn about why the Japanese people walk the way they walk and talk the way they talk.”

Students who choose to study abroad also have the chance to take unique classes and have internships in their particular countries. Katie Lewis ('16) will be studying at Bond University, located on the Gold Coast of Australia. She plans to take a class on the Australian media and is very excited “to take a class that is not centered around the United States and their attitudes towards certain subjects.”

Jordan Allen ('16) will study International Business, Contemporary British history, and economics at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He hopes “to make some connections through networking to hopefully create opportunities for future employment or internships in Europe.”

Studying abroad has made a huge impact on Klose and Kirwin, and will be life-changing for those about to depart this fall. Katie Lewis ('16) remarked that “one of the most important things a student can do is see the world,” and all of these students clearly intend to see as much of it as they possibly can.

# Networking His Way To The Top: Jake Rollefson ('05)

22

by Ciara Colvin ('16)

Not every graduate uses networking to find their future job but for Jake Rollefson ('05) he can say networking has made a bright future for him. Initially moving out to the Bay from Milwaukee he knew that he wanted to work for a digital music company. With Rollefson's connections he landed a position at Pandora working as an Account Executive.

"Understanding not only what is said, but by whom and in what context, is a skill that's incredibly valuable but often overlooked as it becomes a reflex for most former Communication scholars."  
- Jake Rollefson

"Account Executive is a fancy way of saying Ad Sales. I'm the guy who interrupts your free listening experience with ads. You're welcome! In all seriousness, advertising, while sometimes annoying, is the engine of most media; especially in the digital age," said Rollefson.

Rollefson currently works in Oakland at Pandora's headquarters and he owns the Southeastern market which allows him to travel back and forth to Dallas and Atlanta to meet with agencies and clients to get them to advertise with Pandora.

"I work in performance marketing, meaning that my clients measure results beyond mere impressions and need to see a return on their ad spend. So when I'm not actively trying to close new business, I'm working with my Account Manager to make sure my campaigns are running efficiently to drive sales, app-downloads, email registrations, and other measurable actions," said Rollefson. "I also read a ton of industry news to help prospect news advertisers and keep up-to-date on the most recent digital advertising trends."

While at Wittenberg, Rollefson utilized Media Literacy, Media Law, and the research and critical thinking skills he developed as a Communication major to determine and understand the real meaning behind communication.

"Understanding not only what is said, but by whom and in what context, is a skill that's incredibly valuable but often overlooked as it becomes a reflex for most former Communication scholars. I also give a ton of client presentations and pitches, so I have to give a shout-out to Dr. Broz's Public Speaking class. I remember delivering a eulogy for ODB (O! Dirty Bastard) from Wu-Tang, so obviously that was a pretty fun class," said Rollefson.

His advice to current students is to leave a good impression on your last job so you can use those connections in the future.

"The power of networking is HUGE. Get involved in local meet-up/industry groups and don't be afraid to meet new people. It sounds crazy, but meeting strangers has done a ton for my career—you never know who you'll meet," said Rollefson.



# From Student To Teacher: Lauren Harris ('12)

23

by Victoria Perlak ('15)

Lauren Harris ('12) fell in love with the small campus atmosphere and the family-like feel of Wittenberg. She enjoyed her time at Wittenberg so much that she hopes to return to such a school after completing her Ph.D. at the University of Maryland.

Harris majored in Communication with a double minor in Political Science and Journalism. In addition to academics, she was a member of Alpha Delta Pi Sorority and the Vice President of Lambda Pi Eta. Harris was highly involved in many other aspects of Wittenberg's campus; she was a member of the Integrated Media Corps, a producer for the Tiger Sports Network, an intern for the Torch and a research assistant for Dr. Post in the Education Department.

Currently, Harris is living in Washington D.C. and she is in her second year of a Ph.D. program at the University of Maryland in the Communication Department with a special track in rhetoric and political culture. She also works as a graduate teaching assistant, acting as the instructor of record of three undergraduate introductory oral communication classes.

Looking back at her time as Wittenberg, Harris credits the professors for preparing her well for her graduate coursework and as a teaching assistant.

"My professors were excellent role models. I like to take aspects from each of my classes that I really enjoyed and bring them into the classroom. The upper-level classes also helped me get teaching experience by asking me to lead class discussions," said Harris. "The wonderful Communication professors acted as examples for the type of teacher I would like to be in the future."

Harris has three years left of school before finishing her Ph.D., but only one more year before her dissertation. "After that, I hope to return to Ohio and find a teaching position at a small school like Wittenberg," said Harris.

This summer she married Touby Bender, a Wittenberg alumnus.

Her advice to current students is to take advantage of everything Wittenberg has to offer! "Enjoy the short four years you have at Witt! It goes by so quickly and those years really are some of the best times we will ever have. Wittenberg is a great place to get involved in groups and clubs, even ones you may not initially believe are a good fit for you but may end up being the best decisions you have ever made!"

"The wonderful Communication professors acted as examples for the type of teacher I would like to be in the future."  
- Lauren Harris



# I'm Going On An Adventure: The Experience at Comic-Con

24

by Madeline Geiger ('16)

Whether it is Batman, Lord of the Rings, or Walking Dead, everyone has something they admit to “geeking out” about. Now, imagine going to a place where “geeking out” is not only accepted, but is celebrated. That is what can be found at Comic-Con International in San Diego, California. For five days every July, over 140,000 people from all over the world congregate in this one place to share and embrace their pop culture passions.

Dr. Matthew Smith takes full advantage of this congregation as not only a fun adventure, but also a teaching opportunity. As he has done for the past several years, this summer he took ten students to Comic-Con from July 23 - July 28 to do an ethnographic study. He allowed the students to choose what they found most fascinating while immersing themselves in the convention. Students interviewed other attendees of Comic-Con, talked to vendors at their booths, and attended panels occurring each day. Many creative studies began to emerge such as cosplaying as the opposite sex, social media use, artists' interpretations, and what it is like to bring young children to Comic-Con.

On the final day of the convention, all ten students hosted their own panel, as part of the Comic Arts Conference, to share what they had found in their studies. They explained the nature of an ethnographic study as well as the work that was put in leading up to the convention. A few of the students briefly explained their individual studies as well as conclusions they had drawn thus far. The floor then opened up for a Q&A portion, after which the students were welcomed with a round of applause, an affirmation that they had to come to Comic-Con for good reason.

While the students were there for academic purposes, it was not all work and no play. A few of them cosplayed for the convention, dressing as Captain America, Poison Ivy, and Harley Quinn. There also were plenty of run-ins with celebrities. Wittenberg's students Madeline Geiger ('16) and Kat Deck ('15) had close encounters with celebrities down to a science. They were able to get within five feet of stars such as Orlando Bloom, Benedict Cumberbatch, and even Robert Downey, Jr. However, taking pictures with cosplayers was the most fun part. They snapped pictures with Gandalf, Captain Jack Sparrow, and Thor and Loki, among others. Seeing the creative costumes of other attendees only added to the excitement that Comic-Con created.



Madeline Geiger (left) and Kat Deck (right)  
with Dr. Who cosplayers

Wittenberg senior Kat Deck said, “I met and talked to a range of people who shared the same interests as me while also being involved in different things... It was all about the love for the fandom, and respect for the other fandoms.”

Everyone arrived home with memories that will last a lifetime. Comic-Con is an eye-opening experience that really cannot be truly understood until one finds themselves right in the middle of it. For more information about this annual field study, visit [www.powerofcomics.com/fieldstudy](http://www.powerofcomics.com/fieldstudy)



Kat Deck (left) and Madeline Geiger (right)  
with Johnny Depp from  
*Pirates of the Caribbean*

As the students made their way to the airport to head back home, there was a feeling of nostalgia. No one was ready to leave the incredible adventure they had gone on. Everyone had made new friends, discovered new passions, and got to escape the real world for a few days. Comic-Con is its own city filled with people who celebrate exactly who they are.

# Sticking to What He Knows Best: Aaron Copley-Spivey ('04)

by Kristin Mercer ('15)

25

Communication alumnus Aaron Copley-Spivey ('04) became involved on Wittenberg's campus by becoming a three year Resident Advisor, Ezry the Tiger, and participating in different programs outside of Weaver Chapel. His involvement, and the support from the Wittenberg community, led Copley-Spivey to jump start his career as a Coordinator for Residence Life and Student Relations at Columbia College Chicago.



Aaron (center) with his husband Rickey and Chicago Fire mascot Sparky at their wedding reception.

After graduating from Wittenberg, Copley-Spivey attended Bowling Green State University where he earned his M.A. in College Student Personnel. While at BGSU, he had the opportunity to work as a graduate assistant where he supervised undergraduate resident assistants at Bluffton University.

The classes he took at Witt prepared Copley-Spivey for life in graduate school and beyond. He gives credit to the writing-intensive and research classes he took as an undergraduate that made being in graduate school easier. “I felt that my writing skills, which were sharpened at Witt, put me at a great advantage compared to some of my grad school colleagues,” said Copley-Spivey.

In his position, Copley-Spivey supervises a graduate assistant as well as a group of Resident Assistants who oversee student conduct in the residence halls. Within the residential facilities, he also focuses on student satisfaction and learning outcomes, handles leadership development workshops and seminars for undergraduate students, and determines outcomes for inappropriate conduct within the residence halls. “Wittenberg and the Communication Department definitely helped get me to where I am today. Dr. Waggoner wrote an outstanding recommendation letter that helped to get me into the College Student Personnel program at Bowling Green State University,” said Copley-Spivey.

“Wittenberg and the  
Communication  
Department definitely  
helped get me to  
where I am today.”  
- Aaron Copley-Spivey

His time as Ezry the Tiger proved to be beneficial for his future because he is currently Sparky, the mascot of the MLS soccer team the Chicago Fire. Sparky is a Dalmatian that performs on the pitch and at community events. Copley-Spivey is in his second season performing as Sparky.

In his spare time, he loves running along Lake Michigan, taking road trips, exploring Chicago's food and festival scenes, watching “So You Think You Can Dance,” and cheering on the Chicago Fire. Currently, Copley-Spivey is adjusting to life as a married man. He and his husband, Rickey, were wed on January 19<sup>th</sup> of this year and are currently saving money in anticipation of adopting their first child.

Copley-Spivey has found a career that he truly loves and is dedicated to, and he is eager to “pass on the light” he received at Wittenberg to the young adults he works with today.

# Communication Majors Earn High Honors at the 2014 Honors Convocation

26

**Jordyn M. Baker** ('14) and **Julia J. Devine** ('14) were awarded the highest honor in our department, Laurels in Communication. (See feature on p. 31.)

**Linh Nguyen** ('14) won the Economics Prize.

**Andrea Mattingly** ('16) was recognized for making the Field Hockey National Academic Squad.

**Brian Brown** ('14) was recognized for membership in Alpha Sigma Lambda.

**Andrea Mattingly** ('16) was recognized for membership in Ivy Ring.

**Jordyn M. Baker** ('14), **Brian Brown** ('14), **Julia Devine** ('14), **Kristin Mercer** ('15), **Victoria Perlak** ('15), and **Laura Rose** ('14) were recognized for membership in Lambda Pi Eta, the national Communication honorary.

**Claire Beckett** ('15), **Beth Hubbard** ('15), and **Laura Rose** ('14) were recognized for membership in Tau Pi Phi (national Business honorary).

**Victoria Perlak** ('15) was recognized for membership in Mortar Board.

**Andrea Mattingly** ('16) was recognized for membership in Omicron Delta Kappa.

**Linh Nguyen** ('14) was recognized for membership in Phi Beta Kappa.

**Andrea Mattingly** ('16) was recognized for membership in Pick and Pen.



Jordyn Baker ('14) carrying the Wittenberg Flag for the Honors Convocation. Photo credit: Erin Pence ('04)



Dr. Waggoner after receiving the Distinguished Teaching Award. Photo credit: Erin Pence ('04)

**Chanteal Hall** ('14) received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award.

**Lucas McSurley** ('14) received the Heimtraut Dietrich Award.

**Ashley Milliner** ('14) received the M. Alice Geiger Award.

**Ben Longstreth** ('14) received the John F. Mitchell Award.

**Katherine Deck** ('15) received the Ralston C. Thompson Award.

# Overcoming Dyslexia: Nick Clemente ('11)

by Marley Tullis ('17)

27

Communication alumnus Nick Clemente ('11) is doing his fair share in passing on his light to others. Clemente is the Founder and President of Education Equality for Dyslexics (EED), a program in the stages of early development that will raise money to build schools for those who struggle with Dyslexia. Inspired by his own struggles with Dyslexia and by the book *David and Goliath* by Malcom Gladwell, he is now doing his part to aid the issues caused by this learning disability.

Clemente, who currently resides in Ashburn, VA, expressed that his passion flourished when he discovered that 33% of the United States prison's population was Dyslexic and had the most effect in communities made up of minority groups. His inspiration was also influenced by the professors in the Communication Department, especially Dr. Cunningham who he says "taught me to look at life a different way" and encouraged him to receive assistance for his own Dyslexia which allowed him to graduate and develop the courage to establish EED.



Left to right: Dwight Schar, President Bill Clinton, and Nick Clemente at a fundraiser at Schar's home.

While at Wittenberg, Clemente was involved in the Communication Leaders program and held an office within the College Republicans. Outside of Wittenberg University Clemente stayed involved with his passion for politics running Josh Mandel's State Treasurer Campaign in Clarke County along with being Director for Rob Portman's US senate campaign within the county as well. After Wittenberg University he persisted until he was accepted into graduate school through a Social Entrepreneurship program. Currently Nick Clemente works as the Government Relations Coordinator for the small lobby firm Thompson Advisory Group. This allows him to represent a number of domestic companies and one foreign government. The companies he represents are diverse from cloud computing to an Ohio based coal company, Murray Energy. His favorite client is the Sri Lankan Central Bank, which he aids by educating members of US congress on the events happening in Sri Lanka and its success story.

Clemente looks back on his time spent at Wittenberg University fondly as he now realizes how each class prepared him for his future. From Family Communication which helped him understand communication within his large family to Intercultural Communication which he commented "has helped me in my current job as a lobbyist for the Sri Lankan Central Bank and in my first business trip to the Eastern European country Georgia that we were trying to sign as a client."

"The hands-on experience is far better than the rat race that is corporate life."  
- Nick Clemente

His advice to current Wittenberg students is to know that "the world is what you make it ... find something you are passionate about and try to work for a small company right out of college. The hands-on experience is far better than the rat race that is corporate life."

## The Gifts of Service and Synergy: Heather DeSantis ('11)

28

by Ciara Colvin ('16)

While a student at Wittenberg, Heather DeSantis ('11) took advantage of every opportunity that came to her. She was the Class President for 2011 and was heavily involved in Student Senate. DeSantis also was active in the Community Service Scholar and ran a program called Girl Power for at Risk Teen Girls. She was a member of Alpha Delta Pi Sorority and held the positions of Executive Vice President along with Panhellenic Delegate. In 2011 she was named Greek Woman of the Year. She also played Field Hockey for two years and worked with the Bailey Alumni Office Relations and Center for Civic and Urban Engagement.

**"We're relentless when it comes to living up to our promises."  
- Heather DeSantis**

After graduating from Wittenberg with a degree in Communication, she attended Georgetown University for The Fund for American Studies, a program that focuses on profits and philanthropy.

DeSantis recalls her time at Wittenberg fondly. "Dr. Smith and I met frequently to discuss my big goals and how I saw myself making a difference in the world," said DeSantis. "My favorite class from Dr. Smith was Media Law, and from that I developed my LOVE for the regulations and law behind broadcast media."

Among her other courses in the department, DeSantis also took Dr. Broz's Health Communication course, through which she developed a love for that field, as well as cause marketing and public policy. When it came to research methods, a course many students find challenging, she expressed an appreciation for the accessibility of the faculty. "Dr. Warber really supported me through our methods class."

DeSantis is currently working as a Food Publicist and Media Relations Specialist in Columbus, Ohio. She focuses on broadcast media for television and radio, as well as nationally syndicated radio shows such as ABC Sports, Yahoo Sports, Sports Byline, and Fox Sports. She also focuses on cause marketing campaigns and grass roots initiatives to support events into new markets.

"Simply put, we're a brand strategy, advertising and public relations agency that gets it. We drive results from day one. We're tenacious," said DeSantis. "We think hard for your brand. We accept nothing but success. It's true. We're relentless when it comes to living up to our promises."

Along with the love she has for her career, DeSantis has developed a strong passion for raising awareness for Alzheimer's disease. She is currently the President of the Central Ohio Alzheimer's Association Junior Committee. After investing her time in a Young Professionals Group they have raised more than \$20,000. DeSantis also serves as the chair for the B2B Sig Chair of the Columbus chapter of the American Marketing Association.



"I am committed to fighting Alzheimer's disease because too many people associate Alzheimer's as normal aging. In addition, from watching my mother serve as a caregiver for my father who had lung cancer, I quickly learned the pain, suffering, and emotions that a caregiver has to go through," said DeSantis. "Because of that, and how long someone serves as a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's disease, I am fighting to help people understand that caregivers need help and support – they cannot do this alone."

In the future, DeSantis would love to come back to Wittenberg. She wants all Communication majors and minors to know that they can give the greatest gifts of service and synergy to all people.

## My Life As A Cruise Director: Amy Fickert ('08)

by Maggie McIlvain ('14)

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As Cruise Director for Royal Caribbean International, Amy Fickert ('08) has had the opportunity to experience what most of us only get to see on television. Not only is she able to travel around the world for her career, but she has also gotten the chance to skydive at Lake Taupo, New Zealand, repel down waterfalls in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, ride a camel in Lanzarote, pet a koala and kangaroo in Brisbane, Australia, and more.



*Fickert skydiving at Lake Taupo*

Working as a Cruise Director is much more than just sightseeing. When Fickert isn't touring places like Ireland and Florence, she is responsible for the overall operation

and execution of cruise programs, guest activities and entertainment onboard. This means she is in charge of managing an international group of performers, technicians and activity staff, as well as engaging the guests by hosting, performing, networking onstage on screen and at events.

Currently, Fickert is on the Radiance of the Seas ship, which sails half the year in Australia/New Zealand and half the year in Alaska. Typically, Cruise Directors spend four months on the ship and two months off. "I try to spend as much time with family and friends as possible during my vacation months," she says.

Fickert did not originally plan on a career working on a cruise ship. After graduation, she worked as an Employee Activities Coordinator for Aramark near Denali National Park in Alaska. After six months in that position, her fellow employees suggested that she try working for a cruise ship. She decided to give it a shot and after five years, she is still with Royal Caribbean International and loving it.

As Cruise Director, Fickert says that she uses her communication skills every day. She believes that her Communication degree gave her a leg up in her job search, saying, "The skills I acquired as a Comm major at Witt have allowed me to stand out among my co-workers in written, verbal and nonverbal communication." In particular, she attributes her successes in her career to her experiences in the Communication Leaders program (now known as CABLE) and the Public Speaking and Interpersonal Communication courses she took while at Wittenberg.

**"Do what you want to do! This is a rare time in your life when you have little or no responsibilities so take advantage of that freedom and take a risk."  
- Amy Fickert**

When asked what advice she would offer to current Communication students, Fickert believes they should follow their hearts. "Do what you want to do! This is a rare time in your life when you have little or no responsibilities so take advantage of that freedom and take a risk."



## Communication Alumna Hannah Powell ('03) Honored at Homecoming

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Hannah Powell ('03) was a member of the very first class of Wittenberg students to graduate with a major in Communication. Her impressive career since graduation made her an excellent nominee for the Outstanding Young Alumna Award, which was created to recognize outstanding achievement of young alumni in their profession, vocation or avocation, which exemplifies the liberal arts tradition of Wittenberg. It is awarded to alumni who have graduated in the past 15 years. Dr. Broz highlighted some of Hannah's accomplishments in her introduction at the Alumni Awards Dinner.



Dr. Broz with Hannah Powell ('03), recipient of the 2013 Outstanding Young Alumna Award

Upon graduation, Hannah joined Teach for America, teaching 6th and 7th grade full time in the inner-city, while also pursuing a Master's degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. After she completed her Teach for America service, she began working as the Director of Education Services at an Ohio-based charter management organization, where she succeeded in raising students' performance in her first year.

Her passion for increasing access to equitable education for disadvantaged students led her to her next career as part of the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), where she is not the Executive Director of KIPP Central Ohio. She says that "the most important aspect of my work is the daily dedication to ensure more children have the opportunity to make it to - and through - college."

Other Communication Alumni in attendance at the awards dinner included Erin Pence ('04), Andy Gallatin ('05), and Tara Beckman ('07).



Communication alumni Erin Pence ('04), Tara Beckman ('07), Andy Gallatin ('05) and Hannah Powell ('03) with Dr. Broz

## Giving Back to Wittenberg and the Department: Thank You for Your Support!

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The Department of Communication would like to thank those alumni who have given back to the program since graduating from Wittenberg. We are moved by your acts of generosity and the kind words you send to us as you reflect fondly on your time in the Communication program.

The Wittenberg Fund provides financial support for virtually every purpose and function of the Wittenberg learning community. Contributions provide sustaining support for academic, scholarship, cultural and athletic programs; faculty retention and recruitment; campus renewal and beautification; and other department programs and initiatives. Your gift makes the difference in the lives of current and future students, so support the Wittenberg community by making a gift today at [www.wittenberg.edu/give](http://www.wittenberg.edu/give)

Should you choose to give financially to Wittenberg, you may designate your gift for the Department of Communication. Thank you for supporting your alma mater!



## 2014 Communication Laureates: Julia Devine and Jordyn Baker



2014 Communication Laureates Julia Devine and Jordyn Baker

Established in 2005, the *Laurels in Communication* award is intended to honor a Communication major who has distinguished him or herself while at Wittenberg.

Specifically, this award recognizes one outstanding Communication senior who has embodied the highest ideals of academic and ethical excellence.

However, this year the faculty selected two recipients, Julia Devine and Jordyn Baker, both of whom have proven themselves to be precisely the kind of students this award was intended to honor. Congratulations, Julia and Jordyn!



## Passing It On Through a Passion for Service: Stephanie Davis ('13)

by Meghan Concannon ('15)

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*Davis ('13) enjoys working with children through the Springfield Promise Neighborhood initiative.*

Continuing the Wittenberg traditions of community service and passing the light on, Stephanie Davis ('13) became an AmeriCorps VISTA member serving the Springfield Promise Neighborhood after graduating from Wittenberg last spring.

Davis works on many different projects with the Springfield Promise Neighborhood "I am the Pre-School Readiness Leader, which means that I create programs, events and write grants for programs that benefit families with pre-school-aged through third grade children. I address in-school and out of school factors that affect student success both academically and socially, even before they enter Kindergarten," said Davis.

Davis also works with the Summer Bridge Program, working with officials from the Springfield City School District to ensure that each student entering kindergarten meets or exceeds Ohio State Standards for school readiness in areas of literacy, math, social studies, motor skills, and cognitive development.

While at Wittenberg Davis was involved in many campus organizations and clubs at Wittenberg including Concerned Black Students, Campus Ministries, WUSO, Residence Life, Symphonic Band, and Jazz Band. Stephanie also had a passion for service during her time at Wittenberg, and was involved in the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program at Lincoln Elementary, and the community block party at the Springfield Promise Neighborhood, which is where she first learned about the AmeriCorps Vista position.

"I enjoyed the bond that I formed with some of the kids and was excited when I heard that Promise was accepting new VISTAs. I went through the application process and when I got the call saying I was accepted for the Preschool Readiness position, I was excited that I could remain in the Springfield Community for at least another year and serve our kids," said Davis.

Stephanie expressed her experience as a Communication major has unquestionably helped her with her work as an AmeriCorps Vista especially with being a spokeswoman and analyzing and compiling data.

Stephanie advised current students, "You're as engaged as you want to be with the community and the Communication Department." In Stephanie's case, being engaged with the community paid off and helped her turn a passion for service into a career.

**"You're as engaged as you want to be with the community and the Communication Department."  
- Stephanie Davis**

## Work Hard-Play Hard: Joelle Ghanem ('10)

by Regina Gasser ('14)

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Joelle Ghanem ('10) graduated from Wittenberg University with a degree in Communication. While at Wittenberg, she became a member of Delta Gamma sorority, played lacrosse, and was a member of Just Eve. She was also a Communication Leader (the program which is now known as CABLE) on campus. "Comm leaders was one of the best things that could have happened to me in college," said Joelle. "It gave me the techniques and confidence students need to survive in the real world. You aren't afraid to reach out and network and you aren't afraid to go for what you want."

Her experiences with Senior Seminar and an array of Wittenberg classes also helped her prepare for her current role. Along with the many classes she took, she says her jobs on campus played a big role. "I worked with University Communications and the Oral Communication Center. I worked with University Communications as a New Media Producer right when that started to take flight." The opportunity allowed her to use her creative talents to spread the good word about Wittenberg University.

**"It gave me the techniques and confidence students need to survive in the real world."  
- Joelle Ghanem**



*Kelsey Phillips and Joelle Ghanem ('10) at a #fightfattalk promotional set up for Special K.*

Joelle has taken all of these opportunities and experiences she gained at Witt and now uses them at Leo Burnett where she is an Account Executive. Although every day is different, she helps brainstorm ideas, calls clients, and works with the creative team. "The best feeling in the world is to sit in a room during a brainstorm and an idea comes to mind and everyone looks at each other and knows it's going to be big," said Ghanem. As far as the office culture goes, she believes it is "work hard-play hard."

"Sometimes you could be having the longest day and all of a sudden you get an email that a band they were recording for a commercial is doing an impromptu concert on a certain floor and you can just step away from your desk to watch. Like I said every day is different," said Ghanem. In the future, Joelle hopes to continue her career in advertising, focusing more on the planning and strategic side.

# Integrated Media Corps Interns Gain Professional Development Opportunities

by Megan Conkle ('14)

For the fourth year, the Wittenberg Integrated Media Corps (IMC) has helped students gain relevant skills in media fields, promote the university and its events, and connect with people in the industry. This fall, the IMC was named the 2014 Distinguished Program by the Ohio Communication Association for its innovative experiential and engaged learning design.



The Integrated Media Corps presenting their work from the past year to a big group of Witt students, faculty and staff in Hollenbeck.

The IMC is a paid internship that invites students from all majors to work closely with the Wittenberg Department of Communication and the Office of University Communications. Interns gain experience with digital production, including filming, editing, and distributing coverage of various campus events, as well as social media management.

But the IMC is not just about gaining skills, it is also about putting these skills to work on campus. "The integrated Media Corps has taught me how to apply the skills that I have learned and use them to market myself in the workplace," said Samantha Reynolds ('14).

The structure of the internship, which involves a weekly meeting, optional office hours, and assigned campus events, allows those involved to stay active all week long. At the end of the year, everyone in the group is required to put together a portfolio of work that they've completed, giving them a tangible collection of the work they have completed through the year.

"IMC has not only taught me the skills I need to work in the real world, but has allowed me to gain practice in those areas as well, which is beneficial for my career goals," said Grace Monahan ('15).

Unlike the typical on-campus job, the IMC also allows students to network with various professionals in the business. This year's speakers included filmmaker Matt Cline, Wittenberg alumnus and founder of Knowble Media Bob Rafferty, Witt Communication alumna and *USA Today* writer Sarah Gearhart ('06), and WYSO executive producer Neenah Ellis. The program is a great resource for students looking to make connections for their future.

"IMC is an awesome resource that the Communication department offers, and I'm glad I've had the opportunity to be involved," said Monahan.

"IMC is an awesome resource that the Communication Department offers, and I'm glad I've had the opportunity to be involved."  
- Grace Monahan

The IMC truly embodies the liberal arts experience, allowing students of various disciplines and interests to come together and work for a better Wittenberg, all while honing important life skills. It is a unique and valuable experience for those involved.

"The IMC is a valuable program for Wittenberg because it is a great way for students interested in media production to gain skills that are necessary to find jobs and internships in this field," said Reynolds. You can check out their work at <http://www.youtube.com/user/wittenbergethletics>

# Internships in Communication Provide Students with Real-World Experiences



From left to right: Shelby Ross ('14), Brittany Goehmann ('15), Madison Moon ('14), President Joyner, Meghan Concannon ('15), Kelcie Webster ('14) at The Golden Leaf Gala and Monte Carlo night. Webster helped plan this event as part of her internship with the Greater Springfield Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

Several recent studies have clearly demonstrated the significant value of an internship when it comes to hiring recent graduates, with experts concluding it is one of the best things students can do while in college to set them apart and make themselves more attractive to prospective employers. Therefore, Communication majors at Wittenberg are strongly encouraged to complete an internship as part of their liberal arts education. These hands-on experiential learning opportunities give them a distinct advantage when it comes time to seek employment after graduation. Our students gain valuable experience in a wide variety of work contexts, which helps them network with professionals in the field and determine whether that career is a good fit for them.

These are just a few of the sites where Communication majors completed internships for academic credit this past year:

- Ambiance Event Planning
- The Ohio Machine (professional lacrosse)
- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
- SOMA Community Church
- Lulu Frost
- Bloom Africa
- Hagen Center for Civic and Urban Engagement
- Tecumseh Land Trust
- WYSO 91.3 Yellow Springs
- Greater Springfield Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Wittenberg University Office of Admission



Kelcie Webster ('14) at the Golden Leaf Gala participating in the "Deal or No Deal" fundraiser.

As part of the requirements for earning academic credit for their internship, students give a public presentation at the end of the semester detailing what they did and how they incorporated what they've learned in their Communication coursework into the work they did in their internship. This helps other students gain a sense of what an internship is like and encourages them to pursue one for themselves.

If your company is hiring interns, please let Career Services know! Send position descriptions to [careers@wittenberg.edu](mailto:careers@wittenberg.edu)

## Department of Communication Faculty Awards and Accomplishments

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The Department of Communication faculty. From left:  
Dr. Sheryl Cunningham, Dr. Catherine Waggoner, Dr. Katie Warber, Dr. Matthew Smith, and Dr. Stefne Broz

**Dr. Stefne Broz** continues to serve as Department Chair and as a member of the Faculty Executive Board at Wittenberg. She also serves on the Executive Board for the Ohio Communication Association as manager for the *Ohio Communication Journal*. This past spring she presented at the Central States Communication Association conference in Minneapolis alongside her undergraduate advisor on a panel about study-abroad programs in Communication. She is heavily involved in Admissions activities at Wittenberg, such as contacting and meeting with prospective students.

**Dr. Sheryl Cunningham** won the Ohio Communication Association's Distinguished New Teacher award last fall. Her latest publication, "Accruing Masculinity Capital: Dominant and Hegemonic Masculinities in the 2004 Political Conventions," written with several colleagues, recently appeared in *Men and Masculinities*. She serves on Wittenberg's Sustainability Task Force and is also part of a team of faculty working toward building issues of environmental sustainability into Wittenberg's curriculum; the faculty group's project was awarded a \$50,000 grant from InTeGrate. Dr. Cunningham was also recently tenured and promoted to Associate Professor of Communication; she has several projects planned for her sabbatical next spring.

**Dr. Matthew Smith** continues to co-direct the successful Integrated Media Corps internship experience (see feature on p. 34). He also was named a Distinguished Teaching Fellow by the Eastern Communication Association and a visiting scholar at the University of Puerto Rico. He also published a new book, *It Happens at Comic-Con: Ethnographic Essays on a Pop Culture Phenomenon* (co-edited with Ben Bolling of UNC-Chapel Hill), featuring essays for his ongoing summer field study program, The Experience at Comic-Con, now in its eighth year.

## Department of Communication Faculty Awards and Accomplishments

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**Dr. Catherine Waggoner** was the recipient of Wittenberg's 2014 Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award. She continues her research on Southern identity and women, writing a book currently titled *[Real]izing Her Place: Identity and Authenticity in the Mississippi Delta*. In November, she presented "Butter Doesn't Melt: Paula Deen and the Culinary Politics of Charm" at the National Communication Association Convention in Washington, D.C., where she also gathered with Wittenberg Communication alumni Keeley Buehler Hunter ('08), Jeff Hannah ('09), and Lauren Harris ('12). Dr. Waggoner is creating a service-learning May term field study course called "In the Land O' Cotton: Wittenberg in the Mississippi Delta," based on her spring break service trips to that area in recent years.

**Dr. Katie Warber** spent her sabbatical this past year continuing to pursue her research on the effects of social media on interpersonal relationships (see feature on p. 9). To that end, her work was presented at the International Association for Relationship Research's conference in Louisville, KY and also at the International Communication Association's annual conference in Seattle, WA. She was awarded a project grant and a growth grant from the Faculty Development Board to fund her research endeavors. In addition, she has published five articles over the past year. Dr. Warber was recently chosen as the Director of First Year Programs, and will spearhead the new First Year Seminar program, which begins in fall 2014. She also continues to serve as the University's Grand Marshall.



The Communication faculty gather for a group photo following Honors Convocation this spring, when Dr. Waggoner was awarded the Distinguished Teaching Award from the Alumni Association.

# Congratulations, Class of 2014!



*Senior Seminar students performed a dramatic reading of Plato's Gorgias in Commencement Hollow — complete with togas and a chorus — as they reflected on the centrality of ethical considerations to all communication.*

