



The COMM Husker

University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Department of Communication Studies Newsletter

From the Chair's Chair

Greetings alumni, students, and friends of UNL Communication Studies!

It seems as if just a few moments ago it was spring and we were sending out our first newsletter. Six short months later we are now putting the finishing touches on our fall newsletter. Time sure flies! We have lots of news to report: accomplishments, new arrivals, a goodbye, and changes.

As we look back during the past six months, we have had many accomplishments. Dr. Jody Koenig Kellas was promoted to associate professor with tenure, she was awarded the 2009 College of Arts and Science Distinguished Teaching Award, and just a little of over a month ago had a baby boy (Jackson Thomas). Dr. Kristen Lucas was awarded the Central States Communication Association's Federation Prize and she taught in the CIMBA study abroad program in Italy this past summer. Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite (First Vice-President of NCA about to become President) has planned the 2009 NCA conference in Chicago. Congratulations to her on a job well done! At our 6th Annual Awards Recognition Reception held this past April, we honored Dr. Jordan Soliz with the Bruce Kendall Award for teaching. We also celebrated Comm Studies undergraduates who made the Dean's list, Lambda Pi Eta initiates, the top student in each class, the top graduating senior, the Phi Beta Kappa Initiates, the undergraduates graduating with high distinction, and the recipient of the undergraduate leadership award.

This fall also brings new arrivals and a departure. Two months ago Dr. Damien Pfister arrived on campus. Dr. Pfister received his PhD from the University of Pittsburgh in the area of rhetoric and culture. His research centers around digital media and its impact on public deliberation. And this fall we admitted our largest number of graduate students in the history of the department. One of these students, Kristen Carr from Texas Christian University, received the prestigious Othmer Fellowship. In terms of changes, COMM 286 (formerly COMM 311), Business and Professional Communication, received an extreme makeover by Dr. Kristen Lucas. The course has been offered since 1942 and in it we have taught over 40,000 students. Dr.



Bill Seiler,
Professor
and Chair

Lucas updated the curriculum to make the assignments more relevant for students. She also worked with Kathy Castle to implement an online version of the course. Check out our "Real Nebraska" clip, an interesting and humorous video promoting COMM 286. You can find it on our Facebook fan page linked on the department's home page www.unl.edu/cs.

Dr. Phyllis Japp will be retiring at the end of December after 25 years of service to the department and our students. Dr. Japp was my very first hire in the department when I was interim chair. Dr. Japp has taught in rhetoric and culture, with courses in health communication, the university honors seminar, communication and popular culture, gender and communication, cultural criticism, current issues in communication and culture along with a host of special topics courses. Dr. Japp's contributions over the years have been significant and her presence will be greatly missed. I will especially miss her because of her wonderful counsel over the years.

Fundraising always a delicate subject to bring up – especially during trying economic times like these. But never before in the history of the department has your financial support been more important to the success of our program. Please consider supporting the department. See the fundraising item in the newsletter for more details on why and how to contribute.

It has indeed been a great beginning to the year with lots of good things to come. Please keep us posted on your news. And if you should return to Lincoln, please make sure that you stop by and visit.

Go Big Red
Bill Seiler, Professor and Chair



Front Row: Rachel Stohr, Suthida (Mai) Prasitthipab, Tiffany Wang, Sarah Jones, Zantel Nichols, Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite Back Row: Sara Baker, Kristen Carr, Travis Bartosh, Adam Knowlton

ISSUE 1, SPRING 2009

Featured articles

Click on the story below to go directly to that page



Interview with
faculty member
Damien Pfister

2



Departmental
Updates: Comm
Club, Forensics,
Grad Studies

3



Interview with grad
alumna Leah Bryant.
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Photography, by Robin Sloan

5



Reports on visiting
scholars Mottet and
Manusov

6



Alumni Updates

7-10

Newsletter Editors:
Colleen Colaner &
Dawn O. Braithwaite

Focus on Faculty: Dr. Damien Pfister

We are so pleased to have a new faculty member join us this fall at UNL! Dr. Damien Pfister joins our faculty in the Rhetoric and Culture emphasis. He recently responded to several questions for our newsletter:

1) Where did you earn your doctoral degree?

The University of Pittsburgh, graduating in May 2009.

2) Were you a faculty member anywhere before joining the UNL faculty?

No, this is my first job.

3) Why did you decide to join the faculty at UNL?

I was attracted by the mix of top-notch research support, unique teaching opportunities, and convivial colleagues. The Department of Communication Studies at UNL has a strong reputation and I am honored to be a part of it.

4) What classes do you teach?

I am currently teaching a Special Topics class on "Networked Politics." Next Fall, I will be teaching a course called "Visual Citizenship." I will also be teaching Contemporary Rhetorical Theory at the graduate level.

5) What research projects are you working on?

I am currently drafting a book manuscript tentatively called *Blogs: Rhetoric and Attention in the Networked Public Sphere*. This project explores how the rhetorical practices of bloggers focus public attention in digitally-mediated environments. I am also working on a project that theorizes group formation on the internet, a project that reconsiders a central argumentation theory, and a



project that theorizes attention from an Isocratean perspective. On the backburner is an exploration of how Barack Obama uses networked digital media.

6) What are some of your biggest recent accomplishments?

I defended my dissertation in January of 2009, had a co-authored article anthologized in a book, got married this past summer, and made a cross-half-country move. I'm still kind of catching my breath.

7) What do you do when you are not working?

I spend a fair bit of time wrestling with two newly adopted puppies, traveling abroad, photographing a variety of natural and unnatural phenomena, and rooting for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

8) What is a favorite memory(ies) of your short time in Communication Studies at UNL?

The welcome back picnic at our Chair Bill Seiler's house was really nice--it's great to see folks with their

significant others and/or families relaxing before the intensity of the semester begins!

9) In what ways can alumni support our department and students?

Stay tuned in: don't graduate and forget your roots. Alumni have a crucial role in expanding opportunities for future generations of Communication Studies students. Stay connected via the Department's Facebook page, drop in on old professors when you return for a Huskers game, and commit to making modest donations to further the Department's mission.

10) What advice do you have for current undergraduate/graduate students in our department?

I like this Zen koan: A man is fleeing a tiger. He comes to a precipice, the tiger near him. Grabbing a vine, he leaps over the precipice, dangling while the tiger licks it's lips above. Two mice, one black and one white, begin to gnaw at the vine. The man sees a luscious strawberry dangling within reach and plucks it. How sweet it tasted!

Department Updates - Highlights from student groups

UNL Cornhusker Forensics Program Off to a Strong Start in 2009

The forensics team attended its first speech and debate tournaments of the season and has already had some great results. The first tournament was held September 25th-27th at Sterling College in Kansas. This was a rather large tournament featuring a total of 21 colleges and universities from all across Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Texas, and Nebraska. The speech team had a great weekend breaking a total of 20 events for the weekend and finishing in 3rd place as a team. The debate team also had a great weekend. Despite the size of the tournament we still managed to have three of our debaters place in the top eight at the tournament in varsity Lincoln Douglas Debate. Freshman Michael Crelin and sophomore John Holen each broke to quarterfinals varsity LD. Sophomore Carly Persell advanced all the way to the finals of the tournament before losing on a very close 2-1 decision. Additionally, Carly Persell also received the 1st place award for top speaker at the tournament. The debate team placed second in the debate portion of the tournament. Finally, the speech and debate teams combined to win the overall portion of the tournament. This award means a lot to me because to win it you have to a strong showing in both speech and debate. The forensics team hopes to build on this momentum as it heads into the heart this semester's tournament calendar.

Aaron Duncan

Director of Forensics



The team at the 2009 Nebraska Intercollegiate Forensics Association

From the Desk of the Graduate Director

Our year is off with a bang here in Lincoln. We brought in our largest graduate class in recent memory, ten new students, and the group is having a very successful semester. New students have joined us from University of New Mexico, San Diego State, Texas Christian University, San Francisco State, Texas Southern University, Minnesota State Mankato, and UNO. Students joined us in the Ph.D. and MCA programs from China, Ethiopia, and Thailand. Alumni attending the National Communication Association meeting in Chicago will get to meet them at our reception.

Even though jobs were harder to come by given the economy last year, our students did extremely well, some receiving multiple offers. Students completing their degrees (or soon to complete them) and accepting tenure line positions are:

Christy Rittenour, West Virginia University, Allison Thorson, University of San Francisco, Erin Willer, University of Denver, Josh Hammonds, SUNY Oneonta, and Michelle Maresh Texas A&M Corpus Christy. Others have taken temporary one-year positions as they finish up. MA graduate Shireen Ghorbani is a doctoral student at the University of Utah and MCA graduate Jill Talman is working in the private sector in Houston.

We do appreciate how our alumni support our current students, helping them to collect data for their research, giving advice on the job market, and reading dissertation chapters. In addition, much needed financial support helps current students in such important ways.

Dawn O. Braithwaite

Comm Studies Club

The UNL Communication Studies Club has an exciting 2009-2010 academic year planned! We are working on many fund-raising endeavors as well as enhancing our members' experience through internship education and increased awareness of other career and research options. We are currently planning a benefit concert for November 3rd at 8:00 p.m. that will showcase local and national talent and 90% of the proceeds will go to the Communication Studies Club fund which will benefit future generations of Communication Studies students. Comm Club has also been active in co-sponsoring events with Lambda Pi Eta, we recently hosted doctoral student Brent Yergensen's research presentation on the rhetoric of science. Communication Studies Club meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. Feel free to email unlcommclub@gmail.com if you have any further questions.

Caleb Bailey, Communication Studies Club Co-President

Angela M. Hosek, Communication Studies Club Advisor

Help the students and department - please consider donating

Many thanks to our undergraduate and graduate alumni who donate to the department! Several of you started this year and we are extremely grateful.

We need your help more than ever. *For the first time we can remember our foundation fund will be at zero after the NCA reception this year. We will not be able to fund anything else.* Like so many across the nation, our financial resources are more limited now than ever before. We are doing our best to “tighten our belt” and trying to stretch our funds to cover our day-to-day operations. But for any “special” but important expenses, we are faced with the having to cut programs and activities unless we can raise enough “foundation funds” to keep these important student support programs going. This is where we need your help.

Your financial support is important to our program and we use it to help the department directly:

- **Help graduate and undergraduate students attend professional conferences**

A gift of \$110 will support one undergraduate or graduate student’s registration fee to attend the national conference where he or she can learn about research and teaching, engage in professional development activities, and participate in Job Fair interviews. Additional donations would help defray some of the students’ costs of attending the conference (e.g., airfare, hotel, which can add up to \$800-\$1000). We have lost a big part of our budget for student support and the students need your help.



- **Support the Communication Studies Club**

A gift of \$300 would support the modest annual budget of this undergraduate student organization that hosts guest speakers, provides career services to members, and support for us to participate in University’s Big Red Road Show, which promotes the undergraduate major.

- **Recruit undergraduate majors and graduate students**

Recruiting talented students is one of our top priorities. Recruitment expenses include updating our website and promotional materials, hosting an informational booth at the NCA Graduate Student Fair, and attending recruiting events for high school students. A gift of \$100 would offset a good-sized portion of the \$2,000 annual expense in this area.

- **Host the annual reception at the National Communication Association annual meeting**

The NCA reception is the one time a year when current graduate students and faculty can reconnect with program alumni and recruit prospective students and faculty, and for programs with jobs to come and meet our students. The costs of a modest reception is \$2500 to \$3000—not because of our extravagance, but because of

prices charged by the conference hotel.

How to make a donation

We need financial donations, both big and small. The good news is that you may now set up to do an *automatic monthly donation* of \$10 or \$20 or any larger amount. Making a donation takes just a couple of minutes. Click on the button to the left, or follow this link:

<http://nufoundation.org/Page.aspx?pid=450>. Click “Give Now” and choose “one-time gift” or “recurring gift”

Also, we welcome “in-kind” support.

For example, some donors invite students to stay with them at conferences. It didn’t cost the donor anything (other than sharing the bathroom!), but it saved our students the expense of paying for their own rooms. Other in-kind donations could be donating your technical expertise to get our website updated, your media relations skills to get some media coverage for our department, or your time to be a guest speaker at a Communication Studies Club where you share pointers on putting together a professional resume or portfolio.

Contact Bill Seiler to discuss how you can make a financial or in-kind donation: bseiler@unl.edu

We assure you that all of your support—big or small, dollars or in-kind services—mean so very much to us and our students.

**New Feature:
Automatic Monthly Donation Option Available**

Spotlight on Graduate Alumni: An interview with Dr. Leah Bryant, DePaul University

1) During which years were you a student at UNL and when did you graduate?

I was a doctoral student (1999-2003) at UNL. I left ABD in Autumn of 2002 (not recommended!) and earned my Ph.D. in April of 2003.

2) Why did you choose a degree in Communication Studies?

People are fascinating. And, what people say and do at a relational level is inherently more interesting to me than at the psychological or sociological levels. I was fortunate to find my path my first semester at Baylor University, and have been committed to it ever since.

3) What brought you to study Communication at UNL?

To begin with, my cousin, who I idolized as a kid, was an UNL undergrad back in the 1980's. I visited her on campus and fell in love with UNL too. When I told my advisor at Texas State, Maureen Keeley, my interest in attending graduate school in interpersonal, she pointed me to UNL because of its reputation. In addition to the regular recruitment information Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite talked with me about, she stressed the collegial atmosphere, which upon my second campus visit (after the one in the 1980s), immediately made me feel right at home.

4) What have you been doing since leaving UNL?

I left Lincoln in 2002 for a job at DePaul University; but did not graduate UNL until 2003 (seriously, leaving ABD is tough). My job is great, especially after receiving tenure last year. In addition to teaching and research, I have interesting and challenging administrative roles in student advising and academic integrity. On the personal side, living in Chicago suits me. I met my husband, Dave, at the Elvis is Alive 5k in Lincoln Park, where we now live (sidenote: Nancy (Eckstein) Brule (Ph.D. 2002) officiated our wedding ceremony). We are the proud pet parents of two cats (Gwen



Photo credit Robin Sloan at Riverbend Photography

and Wendy) and two dogs (Koko Taylor Crimefighter, a Chug, and Seamus, a Boston Terrier).

6) What is a favorite memory of your time in Communication Studies at UNL?

I have so many favorites! I'll share one of the most vivid memories, that captures the spirit of our department at UNL. After moving to Lincoln, I became seriously ill and could not teach my first class. Dawn Braithwaite immediately offered to sub for me. And Bill Seiler, knowing how broke a grad student often is, offered to help defray the cost of my medical treatment. It's giving me nostalgic whiplash just thinking of all the fun times--Paul Turman swinging into my office (he would grab the top of the door frame and do some crazy acrobatics, we called it the Seiler Swing because Paul said that's who he learned it from), all the tedious hours in the lab with Chad McBride and Karla Bergen running a deception study, my first UNL football game, dinners at the Braithwaites', martinis across the city with my cohort, the list goes on and on!

7) In what ways can alumni support our department and students?

While I was in graduate school, the

generosity of time and money of alumni created opportunities that have shaped the trajectory of my life. Because of this, we should all be committed to help make opportunities available for UNL's students. This can be done through annual monetary donations (my husband's birthday gift to me is the support of my alma mater); or through in-kind, tax-deductible, donations -- e.g., sharing a hotel room with students at a conference, donating frequent flier miles for student conference travel, things that may not cost any money but do financially help students develop their professional lives. It is sort of an adopt-a-graduate student kind of approach.

9) What advice do you have for current undergraduate/graduate students in our department?

Stay involved and connected, with UNL and in the discipline. A job may demand that you focus more on teaching or service; but developing and maintaining professional bonds helps you to keep your finger on the pulse of the discipline, while allowing for meaningful long term relationships with people who can give you ideas for teaching and research. And, UNL will always be your home. As an academic family we can grow personally and professionally by helping to support and encourage one another.

Mottet's Summer Session Beneficial for Grad Students

by Angela M. Hosek

During the 2009 Summer Session, our department was privileged to have Dr. Timothy P. Mottet, Henry W. and Margaret Hauser Chair in Communication from The University of Texas-Pan American and award winning teacher, as our visiting scholar. Dr. Mottet and seven graduate students embarked on a two-week seminar that addressed current issues in instructional communication related to Communication Assessment Learning and the Brain. The focus of this seminar was unique in that we examined how brain functioning impacts social skill development and how instructors can use research findings from cognitive neuroscience to enhance the effectiveness of their communication training and education. The seminar also prepared graduate students to assess communication knowledge, motivation, and skills as well as develop instructional interventions to enhance social communication through a culminating research proposal.

The students found the seminar to be intellectually stimulating and challenging as the course exposed them to new ideas for improving their teaching and scholarship in the areas of instructional communication and communication education. Second year doctoral student Sarah Dirks shared, "I thoroughly enjoyed Dr. Mottet's course this summer. He exposed me to a perspective of which I was previously unaware enabling me to expand my understanding of communication even more." Third year doctoral student Rich Murphy stated, "Dr. Mottet's class really re-shaped, yet tied together, everything I have done in my academic career so far. The notion of



communicability, temperament, and learning will be the centerpiece for not only much of my future research but also in the way I teach class."

The visiting scholars program is rewarding not only in that students learn new perspectives and advance their communication knowledge and skills, but it is also allows UNL students and faculty the opportunity to get to know the visiting scholar on a personal level. This is also a rewarding experience for the visiting scholars themselves. Dr. Mottet had this message to share about his time at UNL:

"Teaching at UNL was a rewarding experience for me. It was an intense summer camp that focused on the central role that brain processing plays in the learning process and the implications for instructor-student communication processes. I found my student colleagues to be prepared, curious, and fun to be with for 4 hours each day. I was most impressed with their openness to new ideas. Rather than shutting down, they allowed their synapses to do their thing while keeping their amygdalas in check. Also, there was an abundance of UNL hospitality. Thanks to my graduate student colleagues, the Seilers, Braithwaites, Jordan Soliz and especially Angela and Tim Hosek for hosting my visit. I returned to the border with extra poundage. I hope all of your limbics are happy. I hope to see you at NCA."

Thank you for an inspiring summer seminar, Dr. Mottet. We hope you will visit UNL again in the near future.

Valerie Manusov Speaks at UNL

By Haley Kranstuber

On March 12, UNL Department of Communication Studies welcomed Dr. Valerie Manusov from the University of Washington to speak on her research in nonverbal communication. Dr. Manusov has established an impressive line of research in nonverbal communication, with her most recent interests including the ways the American press discusses nonverbal events and how such discourse represents particular cultural values and beliefs. In addition to her scholarly success, Dr. Manusov has a reputation as an active member of the Communication field, serving as Chair for divisions of both the National Communication Association and the Western States Communication

Association.

Dr. Manusov's presentation, entitled "Tracing Meaning: A Program of Research on Interpretations Made for Nonverbal Cues," began with opening remarks from Dr. Manusov's former dissertation advisee, Dr. Jody Koenig Kellas. Coincidentally, Dr. Kellas was granted tenure on the day of Dr. Manusov's visit. Dr. Kellas said, "She has been there for most of the important moments in my professional career, making it all the more special that she was here visiting Nebraska when I got the final letter from the chancellor congratulating me on my tenure and promotion. What a full circle moment!" In her presentation, Dr. Manusov discussed her early

work with nonverbal communication and attribution theory, and then focused on the media representations of nonverbal events. Her analysis of nonverbal events, such as Hillary Clinton's tears and the Obamas' "bump" in the 2008 Presidential Primaries, highlighted the power of the media's discourse to shape public opinion of political events. Dr. Manusov's visit to Lincoln extended beyond her presentation. Throughout her two-day stay, she hosted Scholar Office Hours, wherein Communication Studies graduate students had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Manusov to discuss research interests and ideas. Dr. Manusov also visited Dr. Kellas' "Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication" graduate class to discuss her research on the dark and the light side of attributions and nonverbal behavior. Her trip to Lincoln wrapped up with a Happy Hour reception at Barrymore's Lounge.

UNL RECEPTION AT NCA CHICAGO

THOSE ATTENDING THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION MEETING IN CHICAGO, ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL RECEPTION:

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14TH 7-8:30 PM

TO BE HELD IN NCA FIRST VICE PRESIDENT DAWN O. BRAITHWAITE'S SUITE:

THE IMPERIAL NORTH SUITE

COME AND MEET OUR NEW FACULTY MEMBER, DR. DAMIEN PFISTER, AND CELEBRATE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DR. PHYLLIS JAPP TO OUR DEPARTMENT AS SHE RETIRES. VISIT WITH OLD FRIENDS, AND MEET NEW ONES! SEE YOU THERE!

Comm Studies B.A. Alumnus Lonnie Wilson reflects on his studies

I've been in Iraq for two years as an Infantry Officer in the United States Marine Corps, I've been living among the Iraqi people, not in a large military bases that the US transplanted here. I've seen and been a part of the worst this conflict has to offer and I have a better understanding of it than most people. I'm happy to be alive at this point. I've been involved with many different situations and nothing has given me a better feeling than saving lives. I'm ready to come home to the state and area I love and I would like to study. I know this undertaking won't be easy, but I'm up for the challenge. I didn't know how Communication Studies would benefit me when I was an undergraduate, but knowing what I did not know then, I realize it may have been the only area of study that could have benefited me. I've used what I learned from Communication Studies to lead 40 Americans in combat as well as mentor, guide, and negotiate with police, military leaders, civic leaders, religious leaders, and tribal leaders, all Iraqi, some I'd been at battle with one day and ate at their table the next. Communication Studies prepared me to appreciate and understand the entire spectrum of communication and cultures. My goal is to continue to work in an area with an importance that transcends income. I foresee the continued study of communication along with medical school as another manner in which to better understand, relate to, and help a patient.

Very Respectfully,

Lonnie C. Wilson, 1st Lieutenant United States Marine Corps

Alumni Updates: Notes Sent by our Alumni

John Heineman (BA, '82): International Baccalaureate and AP Coordinator, Lincoln High School, Lincoln, NE; Finance Committee Chair, Central States Communication Association.

Matt Pickering (BA, '94): Earned Masters of Science from Oklahoma State University in 1996, Earned Masters of Divinity from Lubbock Christian University in 2006. Worked as the Senior Academic Advisor for Academic Services for Student-Athletes at Oklahoma State University from 1996-1997. Worked as the Assistant Director for Athletic Academic Services at Texas Tech University from 1997-2007. Worked as a Chaplain Resident with Alegent Health in Omaha, NE from 2007-2008. During this time my wife worked in the UNL Athletic Dept. with the volleyball, women's gymnastics, and women's rifle programs. Commissioned in Navy in 2003, reported for active duty 2008, currently serving as the Wing Chaplain for Commander, Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Atlantic Fleet stationed in Norfolk, VA. Very interested in earning doctorate degree in an area of communication.

Juliann C. Scholl, Ph.D. (BA, '94): I am currently graduate director in the Communication Studies Department at Texas Tech University. I have also been appointed Interim Associate Chair of the department.

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Scott Ebke (BA, '99): Currently the Head Soccer Coach at The University of Southern Mississippi. After graduation, was an Assistant Soccer Coach from 2000-2003 at Mississippi State University, from 2003-2007 was an Assistant Soccer coach at Iowa State University and from 2007-2008 I was the Associate Head Soccer Coach at Iowa State University. Was named Head Soccer Coach at The University of Southern Mississippi in July of 2008. John Walker, the Head Soccer Coach at The University of Nebraska, was the person who gave me my start as I was a Volunteer Assistant Soccer Coach with the Nebraska program from 1996-2000.

Denee Janda (BA, '02): I received my MA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2004. I taught Communication classes at St. Cloud State University (MN) from fall 2004-spring 2009. Now I teach Communication class at Western Nebraska Community College.

Kimberly Leonard Hollinger (BA, '03): I am a stay at home mom to three adorable children in Omaha, NE.

Dallas (Douglass) Pourchez (BA, '03): Married Roy Pourchez Aug 8, 2008. Moved to Royal Oak, MI.

Marcus A. Powers (BA, '05; J.D., '08): Marcus A. Powers is an Assistant Attorney General in the Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources Section of the Nebraska Attorney General's Office, located in Lincoln, Nebraska. Mr. Powers represents various Nebraska state agencies in litigation, including the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Quality, and the



Students, past and present, and faculty gather for dinner at the 2008 CSCA Convention

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN DOING SINCE YOU LEFT UNL. DROP AN E-MAIL TO DONELLE (ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT) AT DMOORMEIER1@UNL.EDU WITH ANY PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL NEWS AND EVEN PHOTOS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE SHARE WITH OTHERS, AND WE WILL PUT IT IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER!

Environmental Trust. His practice primarily focuses on litigation over the regulation and administration Nebraska's water resources, including both in-state and interstate cases. Mr. Powers also pursues various enforcement actions for the state involving solid waste management regulations, groundwater remediation, groundwater well standards, and state environmental grants.

Craig McGill (BA, '05; MA, '08): I am working on a second Masters Degree at Kansas-State (via distance education) and I will be returning to UNL next week to work as an academic advisor for Bio-Chemistry and Forensic Science Majors.

Jarod Brabec (BA, '06): Currently pursuing a job with the Nebraska State Patrol.

Jessica Hustad (BA, '06): Happily married & expecting a baby girl on January 1st, 2010. Moved to Seattle in January 2008 & am working as the Program Manager for the Department of Clinical Psychology at Seattle Pacific University.

Devin Geiser (BA, '07): I work for Wells Fargo Bank.

Paula Wilson (BA, '07): I graduated in May of 2007 with my Bachelors in Communication Studies. I got a job as a Technical Recruiter with TEKsystems in Omaha, NE (but a national company) immediately after. I have been here since and love what I do. My education and experience with the Communication Studies department definitely equipped me for success in the "real world" and I am very fortunate to be so content with the way things have worked out.

Michael T. Huff Jr. (BA, '08): I have been working for a Johnson & Johnson company for a little under a year now. I am in medical sales for Depuy Spine, specializing in spine implants and devices.

Brandon Meyers (BA, '08): My business associates call me "one of those Gen Y kids", and I haven't figured out if that is a good thing yet. In June of 2008 I accepted a full time position as a Regional Sales Executive for Marex Group Inc., in Denver, CO. The Marex Group, headquartered in Lincoln, NE, is a dynamic privately held corporation with business interests in the content

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management industry and internet application development. My time is spent joyfully managing partner relationships in the West and South regions of the US, while establishing myself as a reliable sales and product resource. In August of this year my team was awarded "Top Total Regional Growth" and "Top Total Regional Sales." I can't help but attribute much of my success to the skills and concepts I learned as a Communication Studies major at UNL. It is exciting to be on the cutting edge of technology, and it is up to us "Gen Y kids" to stay ahead of the game.

Deborah Whitt (MA, '95; PhD, '93): Professor and Chair, Communication Arts Department, Wayne State College.

Diana Carlin (PhD, '85): Publications on the 2008 election: Lead article (with graduate student Kelly Winfrey), "Have You Come A Long Way, Baby? Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin and Sexism in 2008 Campaign Coverage." *Communication Studies*, 60, 326-343; chapter (with graduate students James Schnoebelen and Benjamin Warner) "You Can't Go Home Again: Hillary Clinton and the Entrapment of the First Lady Title" in Theodore Sheckels, ed. *Cracked But Not Shattered: Hillary Rodham Clinton's Unsuccessful Campaign for the Presidency* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009). Was elected as the chair of the board of directors of Kids Voting USA.

Mary Gill (PhD, '91): Dr. Mary Gill was awarded the Iowa Communication Association's (ICA) Citation Award on September 25 at their fall conference. The Citation Award is given each year to a recipient that has consistently demonstrated exceptional service to the communication field in Iowa over an extended period of time. It is the highest award the ICA bestows. Dr. Gill has been a member of ICA since 1991, serving as the association's Executive Secretary (1999-2001) and President-Elect, President, and Past-



Elizabeth Ribarsky (PhD, '09) with advisor Dawn O. Braithwaite at graduation



Comm Studies alumni Jessica Hagggar [now Jessica Hustad] on left & Paula Petrie-Smith [now Paula Wilson] on the right

President (2002-2008) in addition to being a frequent presenter at conferences over the years.

Rob Patterson (PhD, '97): Ellen and I came to Lincoln in 1994 newly married and with no children. We're celebrating our 18th wedding anniversary (Oct. 5) this weekend and we have three beautiful girls, ages 9, 7, and 5. Through a peer selection process, I've been selected to teach for the Semester-at-Sea program this coming summer. I'll teach two courses titled Great Historical Speeches and Public Speaking. See <http://www.semesteratsea.org/> (Summer 2010 voyage). My co-authored *The Essential Guide to Presentation Software* was published this year by Bedford/St. Martin's.

Jim Putz (PhD, '97): Last May I received the Murphy Library Award "in appreciation for special contributions to its mission, program, and purposes." I continue as the director of the Basic Communication Course. It is an interesting sideline to teaching; we have 44 to 48 sections of our CST 110 class every semester. It is fun working with Linda and Scott, and Cheri. We still miss Kurt. My wife, Joanne, and I have been married 52 years; we are still learning the process of interpersonal communication and loving every minute of it!

Loreen Olson (PhD, '00): Currently, I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication, University of Missouri-Columbia. Since graduating, I have gotten married to fellow family scholar, Mark Fine, had boy-girl twins (Kenyon and Keaton), and ran my first marathon. I am just crazy enough to be running my second Chicago marathon this October.

Jack E. Sargent (PhD, '00): Associate Professor at Kean University.

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Paul Turman (PhD, '00): After serving as the Director of Academic Assessment for three years, I have been recently promoted to serve as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs for the South Dakota Board of Regents. The Regental system oversees the six public four-year institutions in the state with annual enrollments at approximately 35,000 students.

Paul Schrodt (PhD, '03), Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Texas Christian University, has been named the Philip Burguières Distinguished Professor of Communication Studies on the TCU campus.

Shawn T. Wahl (PhD '03) has been appointed as the Chair of the Department of Communication, Drama, & Journalism and Professor of Communication, in the to the College of Liberal Arts at Angelo State University. Shawn has co-authored *Business and Professional Excellence: KEYS to Communication in the Workplace* (in press with Sage) and is currently working on a new book with Allyn & Bacon entitled *Persuasion In Your Life: Criticism and Application*.

Paige Toller (PhD, '06): Assistant Professor at University of Nebraska-Omaha writes that baby boy, Owen, was born to us on Sept. 29th, 2008.

Laura Pierson Wertsching (PhD, '06): I got married to my husband Alan in August of 2007, and I now have the last name "Wertsching." (I have retained "Pierson" as my middle name - no hyphen.) Since graduation, I have been working at Eastern Idaho Technical College. I have taught 3 semesters of Fundamentals of Speech as part of the college's Gen. Ed. requirements. As more money becomes available and as I move up the instructor "hierarchy," I should be



Current Comm grad students and Callie, beagle, gather outside of Dr. Braithwaite's home after meeting for Influential Books in the 2009 Summer Session

given more sections to teach. I also work on a part-time basis in the college's Testing Center and also in the Tutoring Center.

Blair Thompson (PhD, '07): Publications this past year: Thompson, B., Kellas, J., Soliz, J., Thompson, J., Epp, A., & Schrodt, P. (2009). Family legacies: Constructing individual and family identity through intergenerational storytelling. *Narrative Inquiry*, 19(1), 106-134; Thompson, B. (2009). Parent-teacher e-mail strategies at the elementary and secondary levels. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 10(1), 1-9; Thompson, B., & Mazer, J. (2009). College students ratings of student academic support: Frequency, importance, and modes of communication. *Communication Education*, 58, 433-458; Thompson, B. (2008). Applying social information processing theory to parent-teacher relationships. *RCA Vestnik*, 6, 45-65. Appointed Department of Communication undergraduate curriculum chair at Western Kentucky University and successfully revised the department's two undergraduate majors and minor receiving approval at the departmental, college, and university levels.

Elizabeth Ribarsky (PhD, '09): Completed her PhD. degree and has a book chapter coming out on reality television.

Christine E. Rittenour (PhD, '09): Assistant Professor at West Virginia University.



From left to right: Cassandra LeClair-Underberg (PhD, '08) with her advisor Jody Koenig Kellas and Dawn O. Braithwaite with her advisee Jason Thompson (PhD, '08) at graduation

Department of Communication Studies Faculty

Dr. William Seiler, Professor and Chair, Instructional
Communication

Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite, Willa Cather Professor and
Director of Graduate Studies, Interpersonal and Family
Communication

Dr. Phyllis Japp, Associate Professor, Contemporary
Rhetorical Theory, Critical Research Methods, Cultural
Studies and Communication & Gender

Dr. Jody Koenig Kellas, Assistant Professor, Interpersonal
& Family Communication

Dr. Kathleen Krone, Professor, Organizational
Communication

Dr. Ronald Lee, Professor, Rhetorical Theory, Political
Communication, and Critical Study of Contemporary
Public Discourse

Dr. Kristen Lucas, Assistant Professor, Organizational
Communication

Dr. Damien Pfister, Assistant Professor, Public
Deliberation, Digital Media, Network Culture, and
Rhetorical Theory

Dr. Jordan Soliz, Assistant Professor, Interpersonal &
Family Communication

Dr. Charles Braithwaite, Professor of Practice

Dr. Karen Lee, Professor of Practice

Dr. Dennis Bormann, Professor Emeritus, Rhetorical
Theory, Historical-Critical Study of Public Discourse

Dr. Vince Di Salvo, Professor Emeritus, Organizational
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