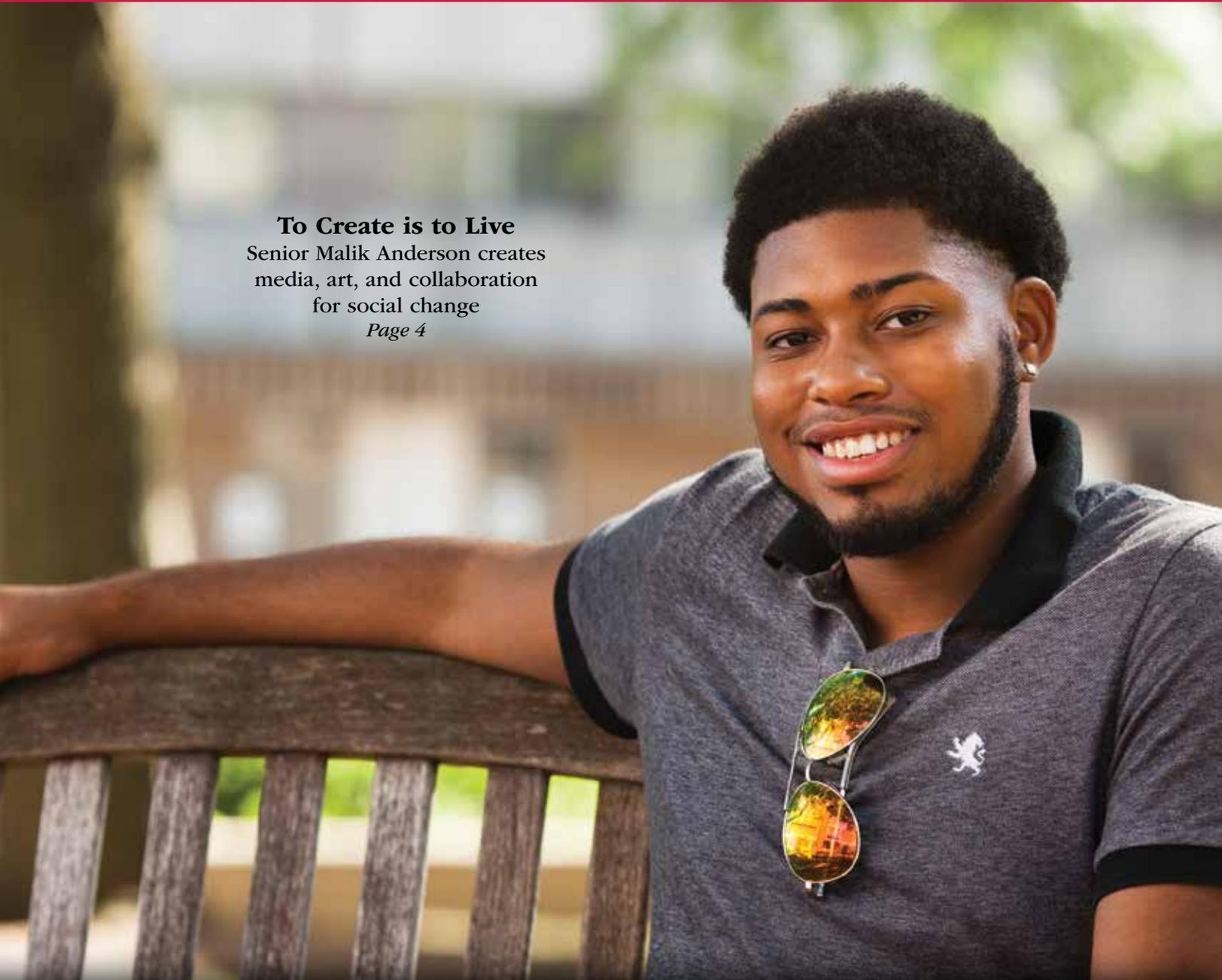




# VilasVoice

Fall 2016 | For Alumni and Friends of the Department of Communication Arts

**To Create is to Live**  
Senior Malik Anderson creates  
media, art, and collaboration  
for social change  
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## VilasVoice

is the alumni newsletter of the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, 821 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

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## Chair's Voice

# Communication Arts and the Ties that Bind

MICHAEL TREVIS



When I was hired as an assistant professor in 2005, the rich variety of approaches to communication represented in the Communication Arts Department immediately caught my attention. As I prepared to teach my first classes, I remember marveling at this place where I could not only find brilliant colleagues who shared my interests in communication science and media effects, but also world-renowned experts on all manner of cinema (including independent film, French, and Russian cinema), global media and cultural studies, interpersonal communication, rhetorical studies, public speaking ... and that was just the people I happened to talk with in my first week.

As the Department Chair, I have the opportunity to interact with our amazing alumni working in a vast array of careers. Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin truly spans the full gamut of human communication. To be sure, many of our graduates can be found in the entertainment industries or careers focused on advocacy and public relations. You are film producers and media executives, attorneys, and brand managers. But if you talk with more graduates and read more of the wonderful alumni updates, as I have, you will find Communication Arts alumni working in many different business careers, in

education, in the nonprofit sector, and in government.

Tying these seemingly disparate strands together, both within and outside the Department, is the unifying thread represented in our mission statement—using human communication to make a difference in the world. As you will see in the pages that follow, a current initiative of ours, in concert with the College of Letters & Science, is to push this idea even further by working with interested alumni to help them establish lines of communication and engagement with our current students and with other alumni, whether through the new Badger Bridge platform, internships and mentoring, or other forms of departmental support.

We are truly grateful to those alumni who have already started us on this path, and we are hopeful that more will join the conversation in the months and years to come. To learn more about current developments in Communication Arts, as well as how you can engage with and support the Department, please visit our website, or connect with us on social media.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Xenos".

Michael Xenos  
Communication Arts Partners  
Professor and Department Chair

## Alumni Network

### Badger Bridge: Your Alumni Network

When Kristin Johnson (B.A.'03) moved to New York from Wisconsin, she knew only one person, a fellow Badger. "Finding my place socially and professionally was all on me, but it was certainly supported by people I had never met who all shared the Badger connection—the alumni network. I now count many of the Badgers who I met as a young alumna my close friends, and am committed to contributing to the alumni community that welcomed me when I was new to a city and my career," Johnson says.

Nearly 11 years later, Johnson is a well-established executive consultant at Logos Consulting Group, an adjunct public relations instructor at New York University, and a member of Big Apple Badgers. Eager to expand her alumni connections, she joined Badger Bridge, a professional networking resource exclusively for University of Wisconsin–Madison alumni. "The University of Wisconsin has an impressive list of alumni who

can support each other in a multitude of ways. Beyond professional networking and mentoring, I can see us supporting each other with projects, finding synergy, and simply reconnecting with old friends. It's like a virtual Terrace ... without the band and the beer!" says Johnson.

Alumnus Braden Pittman (B.A.'15) agrees wholeheartedly. "Our strength," he says, "is in our size, passion, diversity, and proactivity." He adds, "Connecting with fellow Badgers is always an awesome experience, whether it's in person or via email or phone." Pittman, an assistant with Miscellaneous Entertainment, a young production company located in West Hollywood, encourages other Communication Arts alumni to join Badger Bridge.

Learn more about Kristin, Braden, and other alumni's professional experience and willingness to help fellow Badgers, by activating your Badger Bridge membership.



#### Badger Bridge: Getting Started

*Badger Bridge is a professional networking tool exclusively for University of Wisconsin–Madison alumni. Join the group to find a mentor, an alumnus, or to support fellow Badgers as they explore career opportunities and new cities.*

#### JOIN

Visit [badgerbridge.com](http://badgerbridge.com) to activate your membership. Log in with your email or through Facebook or LinkedIn. You will be asked to enter your degree information to verify that you are a UW–Madison graduate.

#### PROFILE INFORMATION

Include your latest professional information and relevant past experiences. If you register through LinkedIn, you can import your profile information.

#### WILLING TO HELP?

Indicate your availability to help other Badgers. For example, sign up to connect fellow alumni with local professionals, answer industry specific questions, or be a mentor.

#### INVITE ALUMNI

Already a member? Encourage a Badger colleague or friend to join the network.

#### ON, WISCONSIN!



UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

### Malik Anderson: To Create is to Live

MICHAEL TREVIS



Emma Bowen Scholar Malik Anderson’s personal mantra is “to create is to live.” From his three-year stint as an intern at Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR), to his work as co-founder of the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s first chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), he is inspired to produce work that effects social change. “Creating art and media that has a social justice element to it is essential to life for me,” says Anderson. “Just as essential as eating or breathing.”

As a senior double-major in Journalism and Mass Communication and Communication Arts with a certificate in digital studies, Anderson’s

time at the University of Wisconsin–Madison has been prolific, with professional and artistic work spanning the media spectrum. He has written for online newspapers like *The Madison Times* and *Madison 365*; produced radio programs like *The Larry Meiller Show*; and even worked as a photographer for the play “Jungle Kings” during UW–Madison’s first Multicultural Theater Festival.

Many of these opportunities were afforded to him through the Emma Bowen Foundation Scholarship. The program, which awards scholarships to minority college students who aspire toward a career in media, connects promising candidates with industry internships. For Anderson,

this led to work at WPR, as well as an array of networking opportunities at national conferences that inspire his creative endeavors on campus.

However, something deeper unifies Anderson’s diverse resume: issues of identity and diversity. “When we talk about bias in the media, we don’t often take into account that there are factors in our stories that are missing,” says Anderson. “There’s a crucial human element that is ignored when we don’t acknowledge identity.” His concerns about representation solidified when he noticed his cohort in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication was comprised of only four other black students: one woman and three men. This realiza-

## Giving Matters

### Supporting Our Students

tion motivated him to start the NABJ, a campus group that aims to connect journalists of color across campus to collaborate on projects and discuss issues about media diversification. “When the media reflects our identity, it means that much more,” he says. “I’m glad to be part of this new era of journalism that’s becoming more reflective of that.”

He is particularly grateful for his Communication Arts education, which supports his interest in critical media studies around topics of race and sexuality. “It’s fun for me because I can analyze my own identities and how I relate to media,” Anderson says. These experiences have led him to his most recent project: a podcast that aims to bring new voices into the public media discourse. “We want to spotlight people who aren’t reflected in normal media—to get people who don’t look like us to engage in important conversations,” he explains. “Not just talk about having a conversation, we want to actually have those conversations.”

As for post-graduation, Anderson is not yet sure what he wants to do. He says he might go to graduate school, or he might take time off to pursue work that inspires him. Whatever he does, he knows he’ll be creating. “I don’t know who I would be if I didn’t create things,” he says.

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS



I am always amazed by L&S alumni. Not only do you take your L&S experiences out into the world, becoming leaders and innovators and wonderful community members, but you also give back. The generous financial support from L&S alumni amplifies all that makes the College great. But what also touches me is your willingness to help our students.

To date, more than 300 L&S alumni are directly engaged in mentoring, networking, and opening doors for L&S students as part of the ever-growing L&S Career Initiative, launched in 2012. Many serve as mentors for our Taking Initiative course (Inter-LS 210), which teaches students how to identify their unique talents and articulate their skills to employers. L&S

alumnus Steve Pogorzelski (JBA’83) (former president of Monster.com) has been a Taking Initiative mentor since the course was launched in fall 2015. Why does he give back this way? Pogorzelski says he’s had many mentors over the years and is committed to providing guidance for others, whether it’s his two grown children, the boards on which he serves, his employees or UW students. “I believe that coaching is a gift and one should give it and receive it in that spirit,” he has said. “I derive tremendous satisfaction from the whole process.”

I get this question a lot: “Dean Scholz, what can I do to help students map their future path?” Your financial support for the L&S Career Initiative is vitally important, of course. We are leading the way among public research universities with our focus on career success for liberal arts graduates, and the entire LSCI is funded by sponsors and donors. But there are so many ways to be involved!

Here are just a few:

- Sign up for the new Badger Bridge online networking program to connect with students exploring careers in your field ([badgerbridge.com](http://badgerbridge.com))
- Post an internship
- Offer job shadows
- Help students network

Visit [careers.ls.wisc.edu](http://careers.ls.wisc.edu) for more information on all of the above. And know that we are beyond grateful for your support.

On, Wisconsin!  
Dean Karl Scholz

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS



#### COMMUNICATION ARTS INITIATIVES

The Communication Arts Department is very grateful for your generous support. We rely on your gifts to help us fund essential initiatives, such as technological improvements, special events, and scholarships. Thank you for giving to the Communication Arts Annual Fund and to specific initiatives listed on our website, [commarts.wisc.edu/giving](http://commarts.wisc.edu/giving).

### The Advice Column

MICHAEL TREVIS



Graduate student Andy Prah and Professor Lyn Van Swol

*Before you offer advice or replace your co-worker with a robot, read this column. Professor Lyn Van Swol and her research team share their latest findings on giving advice and provide insights into the communication research process.*

#### IMPOSED ADVICE

Communication Arts Professor Lyn Van Swol has some advice for you: Beware how you give advice. Her current research explores how people feel when they get advice from others about their problems, either after requesting that advice—or not. Her study invites participants to share a personal problem with another student, who is actually Van Swol’s research assistant, graduate student Andy Prah (M.A.’15). In response, Prah asks participants if they want help. The catch: All participants receive advice.

Additionally, when participants arrive at the lab, Van Swol manipulates their sense of power by having them recall times they felt powerful or powerless. “Studies show that powerful people don’t take advice,” says Van Swol. “We thought, maybe, this happens because imposed advice makes them feel devalued.” Her findings support her prediction, but only for advice about serious topics. People did not seem to mind imposed advice about trivial matters, like which iPhone case to buy. Still, there is one unexpected

trend in the data: Recipients are more bothered by advice that is delivered politely.

This discovery currently serves as the basis for a follow-up study. “When you apologize for giving advice, you seem to acknowledge that you know you’re imposing and shouldn’t be,” says Van Swol. “And people don’t seem to like that.”

#### SERIOUS VS TRIVIAL PROBLEMS

Undergraduates play a valuable role in communication research. When Van Swol was struggling to make sense of her study’s findings, undergraduate research assistant Annie Hwang came to the rescue. “Annie went back and coded the severity of people’s problems as either trivial or severe,” says Van Swol. “That’s how we realized the effects only happened for more serious problems.” Hwang says that seeing this level of detail that goes into research has benefitted her education. “Not everyone realizes what a long process research can be and that groundbreaking discoveries take time,” she adds.

### People vs Computers

While working on advice-focused research with Van Swol, graduate student Andy Prah developed the driving question for his master’s thesis: How do people react to advice—both good and bad—from people versus computers?

To test this question, he asks undergraduate study participants to make “forecasting decisions” for the scheduling of hospital operating rooms, an unfamiliar task that requires advice. They receive advice from either a human or a computer. After completing seven of the 14 trials, participants are given bad advice. The question is whether they will continue to listen to their advisee after this error. “Basically I’ve found that after a mistake, people forgive humans but punish computers by not using them for the remaining trials,” says Prah.

For his follow-up study, Prah will explore decisions among groups of people with more realistic problems, such as emotional issues or problems with moral implications.



ISTOCK.COM/SHIRONOSOY

## Research Experience Paves Career Path for Carolynne Thomas



*Did you have an “aha moment” as an undergraduate? Carolynne Thomas (B.A. '00) remembers hers—junior year when she declared the Communication Arts major. She credits*

*her undergraduate research assistantship and her relationships with Communication Arts faculty as contributing factors to her obtaining an entry-level position with the consulting firm where she is now a partner.*

### What were some of your most memorable or formative experiences in the Department?

I was at the university for three years before I decided to major in Communication Arts. At that point, I wanted to get the most from my remaining time. It was easy. A professor and a few graduate students noticed my eagerness and exposed me to some of the Department’s research. They then connected me with another professor who needed a summer research assistant. After working with him for the summer and the fall semester, he recommended me for a role with a consulting firm that I have called home since I graduated. My Comm Arts experience taught me that opportunities really do come from doing great work and building relationships.

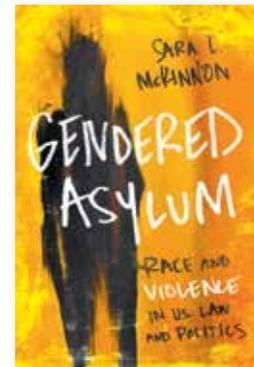
### How did you come to be a supporter of the Department?

The Department of Communication Arts created opportunities for me and now I want to help create opportunities for others. When I considered becoming a donor to the university, I intentionally designated Comm Arts as the recipient for my funds. I wanted to make a tangible difference and by directly giving to the Department, I feel like I’m able to do just that.

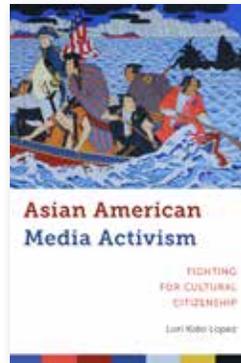
## Professors’ Voices



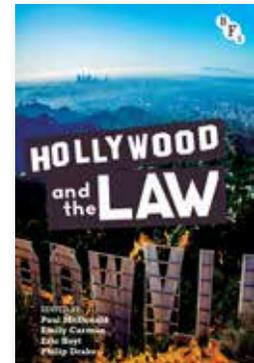
Kelley Conway  
*Agnès Varda*



Sara L. McKinnon  
*Gendered Asylum*



Lori Kido Lopez  
*Asian American Media Activism*



Eric Hoyt  
*Hollywood and the Law*  
Edited with Paul McDonald, Emily Carman, and Philip Drake

To continue our history of looking forward we need to advance in all directions. Your gift to Communication Arts will support scholarships, facilities improvements, student travel, faculty research, and curriculum updates.

# W

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Help us move forward at

[allwaysforward.org/giveto/communicationarts](http://allwaysforward.org/giveto/communicationarts)



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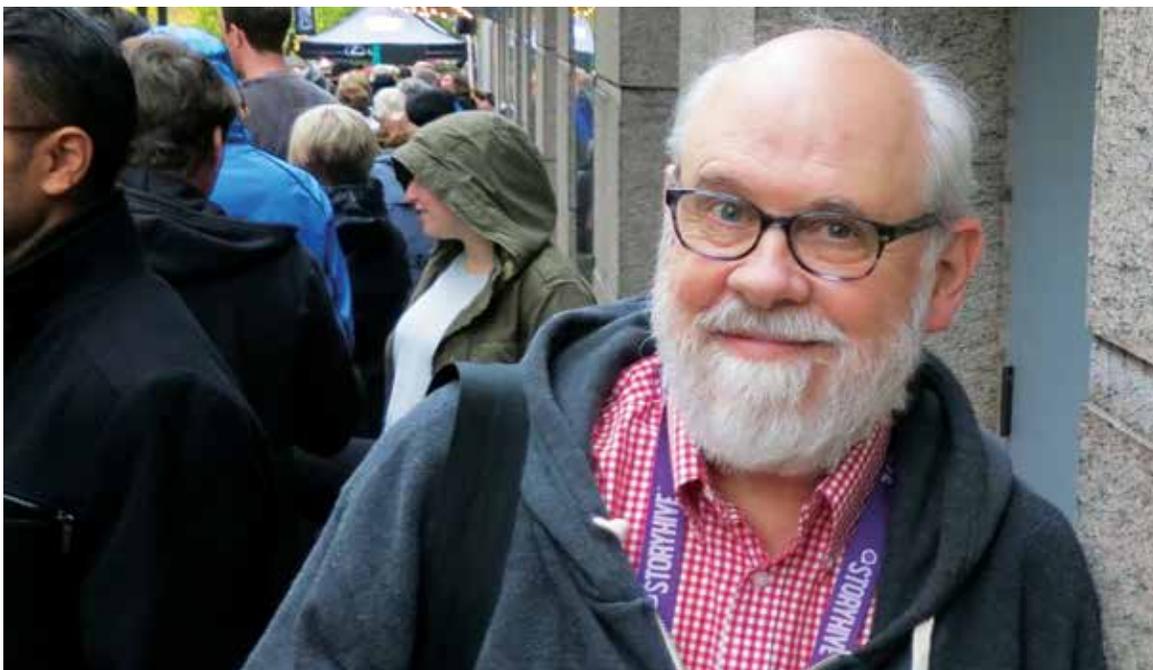
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Emeritus Professor David Bordwell is headed to Washington, D.C., to serve as the Senior Chair of Modern Culture for The John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress. He will have access to the Library's expansive film, literature, and multi-media collections for his research. Congratulations, David!