



VilasVoice

Fall 2017 | For Alumni and Friends of the Department of Communication Arts



The Power of Education

Women's Education Project
intern Krystal Du visits
students at their home in
Madurai, India.

Page 3

INSIDE
VILAS

2 Communication
and Connection

4 A Major
Difference?

5 Giving
Matters

7 Campus
Climate

VilasVoice

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

Email
info@commarts.wisc.edu

Website
commarts.wisc.edu

Department Chair
Professor Michael Xenos

Newsletter Editor
Mary Rossa (BS'86, MA'90)

Donor Contact
Andrew Kitslaar
UW Foundation
608-308-5314
andrew.kitslaar@supportuw.org

Online Giving
commarts.wisc.edu/giving

Design
Danielle Lawry
University Marketing

Production Editor
Jennifer Klaila (BA'00)
University Marketing

This newsletter was printed through gift funds administered by the UW Foundation.

© 2017 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System

The University of Wisconsin is an equal-opportunity and affirmative-action educator and employer. We promote excellence through diversity in all programs.

Front page banner photos: All by iStock Photo, except third from left by University Communications.

Chair's Voice

Communication and Connection



MICHAEL XENOS

With a heavy heart last spring, I watched legendary faculty member Vance Kepley deliver remarks at his retirement reception. (More on Kepley's history with the Department and his retirement on p. 5.) As difficult as it is to ponder the departure of someone who has made so many great contributions to Communication Arts over his long and distinguished career, I am buoyed by his reflection on the state of the Department that has been his professional home for decades. Characteristically modest about his own contributions, Kepley posits that in terms of overall strength, intellectual vigor, and esprit de corps, the Department is as healthy as he has ever seen it. Given our program's rich history of excellence, this is the kind of observation that makes a department chair's year.

Like our peers in many other large public research universities, we in the Department of Communication Arts have spent a great deal of effort responding to significant changes in higher education. Since I became chair nearly four years ago, we have substantially increased the efficiency with which we serve our students, and we have pushed the envelope with new innovations in curricula and classroom practices, all while maintaining the standards of

excellence that have been the hallmark of a UW–Madison Communication Arts degree for generations. We are extremely grateful to our many alumni and other supporters who helped us meet these important challenges. These past few years have pushed us to think of creative new ways to help students find their passion for the study of communication in all of its forms, and quite frankly, they have made us a better Department.

Looking ahead, we are strongly committed to continuing this trajectory and updating you along the way. Working closely with the Communication Arts Partners, we will be expanding our communication with alumni. You can expect to hear more from us in the coming months, and we hope to hear from you as well. 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 that reads "Michael Xenos".

Michael Xenos
Communication Arts Partners
Professor and Department Chair

Student Profile

The Power of Education



Krystal and WEP students create a poster of the scholarship students' information.

A senior from Quanzhou, China, Krystal Du loves traveling and learning about new cultures. When exploring opportunities for a summer internship, she found the perfect match, The Women's Education Project (WEP) in Madurai, India. The non-profit founded by Zoë Timms (BA'97) helps young women 16-28 years old from families living on less than \$1.50 a day succeed in college and begin their careers. The program provides the essentials, such as college scholarships, supplemental training in technology, access to computers, and career exploration opportunities.

The life stories of these women provide a powerful message. While interning at the WEP's Sudar Center, Krystal accompanied the director on home visits to learn more about the girls' needs. Krystal says, "The home visits are such a

remarkable experience for me . . . Many of their houses are probably as big as 20 by 20 square feet, with very little furniture and lived in by a family of 5-7 people . . . They use bamboo mats for sleeping and roll them up during the day to save space for activities. What strikes me the most isn't the poverty they are facing, but their positive attitudes. These girls come to the center everyday with the brightest smiles and positive energies."

Krystal is helping WEP students and alumnae record and share their life stories. She conducted one-on-one interviews, videotaping some of them. In addition, she further applied her video skills by taking photos and short video clips of the city, the center, and the students for use on their social media sites and for future projects. Through this experience, Krystal concludes,

"The power of education and career development is transforming, especially to girls from disadvantaged families."

During her internship in Madurai, Krystal immersed herself in the culture and lived like a local, following traditions and customs. She, for example, wore the traditional churidar and didn't use toilet paper. She visited temples, watched processions, and spoke to the locals about topics like arranged marriages. Krystal says, "Through this internship, I was also able to narrow down my future career plan into working in communications for an NGO (non-governmental organization) abroad. I really enjoyed my time in India learning Indian cultures and traditions, offering help to people in need, applying and advancing communications skills, making new friends, and thriving in this great place."

Communication Arts Then and Now

A Major Difference?

How much has the UW experience changed over the last 30 years? We recently asked Jennie Reul (BA'85) and her daughter Laura Reul (x'18) to compare their experiences as Communication Arts majors.

The Reuls chose the Comm Arts major decades apart, but for similar reasons. Initially a music major, Jennie enrolled in Comm Arts courses as electives. She says, "I found the content of the courses and the top-notch faculty

in the Comm Arts Department to be intriguing and challenging." The diverse career opportunities also interested Jennie, so she switched her major. Likewise, Laura is drawn to the possibilities. She believes communication is the most valuable skill she can master as an undergraduate. Laura adds, "Regardless of the direction I take after college, I know my experience with communication will serve me well."

Rhetoric classes are among their favorite courses. Jennie's favorite is Great Speakers and Speeches. It was taught by Professor Donald K. Smith whom she recalls as an engaging lecturer and a treasured member of the Comm Arts faculty. Laura believes the Rhetoric of Campaigns and Revolutions course should be mandatory for every student on campus. She says, "Although this course proclaims to be a study of the rhetoric of the abolitionist and civil rights movement, I came to realize that the themes still remain extremely relevant today."

Technology is a point of contrast for the two. "From what I understand," Laura says, "signing up for classes was an even greater source of stress than it is today, with students physically running from building to building to reserve spots in their preferred courses. Say what you'd like about our course enrollment system, but at least our schedules are not tied to our endurance levels." With web course enrollment, current students are able to register for classes and make changes to their schedule at 2 a.m. from their living room, if they choose.

What remains the same? Quality and value. "The major did and still does provide a strong, liberal undergraduate education that prepares students very well for many career and post-graduate study paths. It encourages critical thinking," says Jennie.



Jennie (BA'85) and Laura Reul (x'18)

Favorite Places
Hanging out
Studying
Eating
Going out

Jennie
Memorial Union
Chadbourne Hall Lounge
Gino's, The Baker's Rooms
Kollege Klub, Brathaus

Laura
Memorial Union
Memorial Library study cages
Memorial Union
State Street Brats



Giving Matters

Professor Vance Kepley: Thirty-Six Years of Giving Back

MICHAEL TREVIS



Front Row: Kristin Thompson, Professors Lea Jacobs and David Bordwell; Back Row: Professors Donald Crafton, Vance Kepley, Tino Balio, J.J. Murphy

Distinguished scholar, teacher, and alumnus Professor Vance Kepley (PhD’78) retired in May. Of the many academic and life lessons he taught over the years, his example of giving back may be the most memorable. Kepley says, “I was doubly fortunate, first to have been a Communication Arts alumnus and then to have had the chance to serve on the Department’s faculty. I had a wonderful experience as a film studies graduate student, studying under such stars as David Bordwell and Tino Balio. I owed the Department quite a debt for that education, and I’ve spent the last 36 years trying to give something back.”

And give back he did. Kepley’s contributions range from years of Department service to daily acts of kindness. With strong leadership skills and diplomacy, he served as the Department chair and the director of the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theatre Research. He is also a member of the Communication Arts Partners (CAPS).

Vance along with his wife Betty (MBA’77) are the dynamic duo of kind-hearted support. They magically appear to shovel your driveway when you are ill, graciously welcome guests into their home for Department events, and generously fund a scholarship to support excellence in teaching among graduate students. This year’s recipient of the Kepley Teaching Award, Kaitlin Fyfe (MA’03), says:

“It’s an honor to be recognized for one’s teaching. It’s a particular honor to be recognized for this award. Vance has had an impact on how I teach, demonstrating not only how to get students engaged in the classroom, but also how to guide them to a deeper understanding of the material. Getting them to take another step in their thinking and then another, and another which creates a shared experience for all of the students. He is one of the reasons why our graduate program produces not only good scholars but good teachers.”

We thank Vance for his many contributions to the Department and congratulate him on his retirement.

Faculty Updates

Faculty Receive Prestigious Grants

Critics declare this to be the “Golden Age” of podcasting, but this new media is vulnerable and in need of preservation. Recently tenured Communication Arts faculty members Jeremy Morris and Eric Hoyt’s new project, PodcastRE Analytics: Investigating the Golden Age of Podcasting through Metadata and Sound, hopes to change that. “This project will pioneer new techniques for analyzing and visualizing audio and metadata, allowing users to explore audio in ways that are as familiar and useful as how they currently explore books in libraries,” they explain. Researchers will be able to examine trends, such as the rise and fall of shows devoted to topics like education, politics, sports, and entertainment. Podcasts will be automatically collected and archived, so you will no longer need to worry about losing access to your favorite show.

Funded under the Digital Humanities Advancement program of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the project will further Morris and Hoyt’s cutting edge



MICHAEL TREVIS

Professors Eric Hoyt and Jeremy Morris

research on digital communication and culture. The NEH grant builds on an earlier grant from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education as part of their UW2020 WARF Discovery Initiative program, designed to fund projects

that UW–Madison researchers have dreamed about doing.

Read more about Morris and Hoyt’s path-breaking research and look for updates on the Communication Arts website as the project progresses.

Retro-Radio on WSUM



Scott Broetzmann (BA’82) spinning tracks back in the day. During this year’s Homecoming Week, Scott and other student radio veterans from the Department produced a retrospective program on WSUM. Check the Communication Arts website for information on how you can access a podcast produced from the show!

W ALL WAYS FORWARD

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.

Help move us forward at allwaysforward.org/giveto/communicationarts



From the Dean's Desk

Campus Climate

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS



Here at UW-Madison, the leaves are turning and the view from Bascom Hill is as beautiful as ever. But under the tranquility is a current of

unrest. Issues of race, inclusivity, and free speech have caused (and will likely continue to cause) divisiveness on our campus, just as they have on many other campuses around the country. There is a tension in the air, the likes of which has not been felt here since the Vietnam War era.

In this climate, what we do in Letters & Science is more important than ever. We are fiercely committed to an institution where every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential, and where the campus environment and the knowledge discovered here become guiding lights for Wisconsin, the nation, and the world.

As the Chancellor has emphasized, only in an environment safe

and free from harassment can our primary mission of teaching, learning, research, and service take place. For many students who arrive on campus, UW-Madison is the most diverse place they've seen. Others have never seen a less diverse place. But the education we provide in Letters & Science teaches people to confront problems from many perspectives, to imagine alternatives, to put themselves in others' shoes. Together, we create a welcoming place to learn.

We are grateful for the unwavering support and advocacy our alumni and friends offer on behalf of our faculty, our research endeavors, and our great students. As Letters & Science alumni we hope you draw daily, not only on the knowledge you gained, but on the values you absorbed here. We are counting on you in an uncertain world. Thank you for all you do to support the College of Letters & Science at UW-Madison.

On, Wisconsin!
Dean Karl Scholz

In Memoriam

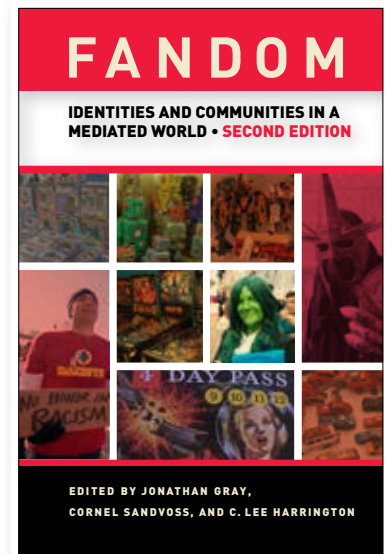
IMAGE COURTESY OF UW-MADISON ARCHIVES, #S11328



Professor Lloyd Bitzer

Professor Emeritus Lloyd Bitzer passed away in October of 2016. Bitzer, a faculty member in the Department from 1961 to 1994, played an important role in the Department, the university, and the communication discipline. His classic essay, "The Rhetorical Situation," published in 1968 was arguably the single most influential piece by a rhetorical scholar in the discipline during the second half of the twentieth century. Nearly 50 years later, it is still taught in classes across the country.

Professors' Voices



Jonathan Gray

Fandom

Edited with Cornel Sandvoss and C. Lee Harrington



Lori Kido Lopez

The Routledge Companion to Asian American Media

Edited with Vincent N. Pham



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Department of Communication Arts
University of Wisconsin-Madison
821 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53706

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Madison, WI
Permit No. 658

STAY CONNECTED!



Follow @uwcommarts on Twitter



Like the UW-Madison Department of
Communication Arts on Facebook



Join the University of Wisconsin-Madison
Communication Arts Group on LinkedIn

We want to hear from you!

Send us your update:

<http://go.wisc.edu/commartsupdate>

Please update your contact information in the
Alumni Directory by calling (888) WIS-ALUM
(947-2586) or email your changes to
AlumniChanges@uwalumni.com



Comm Arts major Natalia Lucero's (x'17) close-up of a Costa Rican neotropical jumping spider on the edge of book pages was named a winner of the 2017 UW Cool Science Image Contest.