

# THE COMMUNICATOR

2017

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**UConn**  
COMMUNICATION

VOL. 5, JUNE 2017

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**BROUGHT TO YOU BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNICATION SOCIETY**

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The Communication Society is an undergraduate student led organization. Through workshops, field trips, fundraising, alumni networking, and guest speakers, the Communication Society offers educational and extracurricular opportunities to students interested in the Communication field.

# A LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD: LESLIE SNYDER

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Another great year for the Communication Department. We're up to more than 800 majors, now that we admit students directly into the major at any point in their career. Congratulations to our graduating seniors – we're all proud of you.

This year saw tremendous growth in the number of students taking digital production classes, including the pioneer-run of the advanced class. We're very pleased to be able to meet student demand for production classes that combine learning hands-on skills, state-of-the-art best practices, and the underlying theories. Similarly, we are about to ramp up another new practical course – Professional Communication. In the Fall we held our first ever Open House for Undergraduates within the Comm Department, to highlight the cutting-edge research by our faculty and graduate students (and show off cool research "toys" in our labs, like our virtual reality platforms). We are looking forward to involving more undergraduates as research assistants, and are very appreciative to those who worked with us in the past year.

In terms of faculty milestones, next time you communicate with Dr. Amanda Denes and Dr. Kenneth Lachlan, congratulate them on their promotions – Dr. Denes to Associate Professor with tenure, Dr. Lachlan to Full Professor. In addition, Dr. Lachlan will be taking over as the new Department Head as of June 1. Kudos to Dr. Rory McGloin, who deservedly won the annual university-wide teaching award from our union, despite lots of excellent competition for the honor. Dr. McGloin first started teaching in the department as a graduate student, and we're very pleased that his teaching prowess has been recognized as outstanding.

We are looking forward to our first alumni reunion during homecoming/ Huskies Forever weekend next October. Friend our Communication Department Facebook page and sign up as an alum on our website so you don't miss out on fun events, and keep us informed about your accomplishments!

On a broader level, there has never been a more important time to reflect on the nature of public communication: how we learn and share news and other types of information across a broad range of media and within different types of relationships; approaches that promote the separation of fact from fiction and "fake news"; strategies for protest, persuasion, negotiation, and conflict resolution; and ways to improve communication between diverse segments of our population. As you can see in this newsletter, many of our faculty research and teach classes on these and other socially important topics. **Communication matters.**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE SPRING 2017 COMMUNICATION SOCIETY PRESIDENT:

Dear readers,

As the 2016-2017 academic year comes to a close, I am proud to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of the Communication Society this year. In May 2016, many of our dedicated members graduated and this past fall the group had to learn how adjust without those individuals. Members of CommSociety have worked diligently over the past year to keep our traditions alive and well. The newsletter committee began collaborating on content during the fall semester and is excited to showcase what we've been working on. In addition to the newsletter, members were kept busy during the spring semester organizing the 4th Annual Public Speaking Competition.



The Communication Society is appreciative for the faculty and staff within the Department of Communication, specifically Rory McGloin. Rory works closely with all his members to guide us in our decisions and make sure we are functioning in the most effective way possible.

CommSociety will embark on a new transition in the fall of 2017 as I pass on the role of president to Julie Pycz. I am confident the group will continue to experience upward growth over the next few years. Thank you to everyone for your continuous support. Enjoy!

Best,

Grace Gagnon '18  
grace.gagnon@uconn.edu  
Communication Society President



Dear readers,

Welcome to the fifth annual edition of The Communicator. We are so very excited to share this year's newsletter with our readers. The student editors, writers, and photographers began working on this year's newsletter back in September and their hard work has really paid off. This year's newsletter featured a few renovations from previous layouts and a number of new article features are introduced as well. This year's newsletter showcases the talented students that we have in the Communication Department here at UConn!

Five years ago, we put together the first edition of The Communicator. My goal for that first edition was to ensure that folks enjoyed it, at least just enough that they would want to see another version the next year. Five years later and The Communicator has now become an annual tradition! I look forward to seeing where the newsletter goes in the next five years when we celebrate its tenth annual edition. In the meantime, we hope that you enjoy catching up with all of us here in the Communication Department at UConn. We also would love to hear from you! You will see a few feature pieces on some of our alumni in this year's newsletter and we would love to feature more. Reach out and let us know what you are doing and where life has taken you since leaving Storrs. Also, be sure to let us know if you're coming to campus so you can stop by and say hello.

Go Huskies!

Rory McGloin, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Advisor, Communication Society



# NEW FACULTY: SHARDE DAVIS

This year, the Department of Communication welcomed two new faculty members, Assistant Professor Dr. Sharde Davis and Assistant Professor-in-Residence Dr. Thomas Meade.

Davis received her B.A. in communication and feminist studies and M.A. in communication from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She began her doctoral studies at UCSB before moving to the University of Iowa, where she earned her PhD in communication studies and a doctoral certificate in gender, women's, and sexuality studies. Moving to Conn. was certainly a change of pace for Davis, but a welcome one.



"I have spent most of my life surrounded by the Pacific Ocean in the cities of San Diego and Santa Barbara. Living near the beach was certainly a treat, but I can honestly say that I appreciate the serenity and peace of living in an agricultural town like Mansfield," Davis said.

Davis said she remembers her first experience with the study of communication well.

"My first real experience with the study of Communication was in my undergraduate course on family communication taught by Dr. Tamara Afifi. I enjoyed the course immensely and later asked Dr. Afifi to advise my undergraduate thesis on divorce in Black families through the McNair Scholars Program," Davis said.

As for her decision to pursue communication, its ubiquitous nature led her to explore multiple facets of the discipline.

"Communication imbues every facet of people's lives, including family, work, media, and politics, to name a few. Each of these communication contexts is an important avenue for researchers to explore, but the study of interpersonal communication interests me the most. I am firmly rooted in the area of interpersonal communication, but I use my academic background in feminist studies, specifically Black feminism, to extend interpersonal research and theory," Davis said.

Just as Davis' research interests are diverse within the broader field of communication, she also understands the unique perspectives that students of communication must consider when following their own career path.

"A degree in communication is so far-reaching. Students must decide how this degree will work for them. That is, they must figure out how a degree in communication will help them accomplish their personal and/or professional goals. The career path is not clearly marked for communication majors, which means they have the unique opportunity to blaze their own trail," Davis said.

Outside of the classroom, she enjoys making memories with new friends, in addition to taking advantage of her new surroundings.

"I often find activities that are specific to northeastern living. For example, I recently went sledding in the snow and it was so much fun! I grew up in southern California, so this is the first time I have been able to partake in winter activities. I also enjoy exploring local festivals on the weekends and taking day trips to Boston and New York City," Davis said.

**ARTICLE BY: JORI HOUCK**

# NEW FACULTY: THOMAS MEADE

Meade received his B.S. in advertising and his M.A. in communication studies from West Virginia University, earning his PhD from the University of Alabama in mass communication.

He says his experience at UConn has been great and said he enjoys one thing in particular about being in Storrs.

"I enjoy working with some of the best and brightest in the nation! From the students to the faculty, working at UConn has been incredible so far. But if I really had to choose one thing, as a dog lover, I would say it has to be the ever-present possibility of seeing Jonathan on campus," Meade said.

As for Meade's beginnings within the field of communication, his lifelong interest in media made communication a logical career path.

"I've always been interested in media, so I feel like communication was a natural step for me," Meade said.

Communication processes evolve throughout one's lifetime, and Meade's experiences in the field are no exception.

"I suppose you could say that I 'studied' communication my entire life. But my first real experience with the idea of studying communication for a career came as an undergrad at WVU. As a senior, I took a media effects course that made me wonder how my life had been affected by media," Meade said.

He offered his advice for current communication students, and gave some words of wisdom.

"First of all, I would say to enjoy college and be happy! But I would also say that it's never too early to position yourself for a job after college," Meade said.

Outside of the classroom, Meade is a new father whose hobbies currently revolve around taking care of his daughter, but he also enjoys sports, staying active, hanging out with his wife, and taking his dog for walks, among other things.



# FROM JERUSALEM TO THAILAND, PROFESSOR MARK HAMILTON HAS SEEN IT ALL...

Professor Mark Hamilton is well-traveled. He's been all the over world and in 2015, he lived in Thailand for two semesters while on sabbatical.

Professors who take sabbatical are expected to use the time to focus on writing and research. Typically, professors go on sabbatical every seven years.

Hamilton said, "There's some faculty, who we know here, who just stay home. I've always gone to different countries, you have that cultural experience."

In previous sabbatical trips, Hamilton stayed in Jerusalem, the Netherlands, and France. He said going on sabbatical broadens your experience so you have more to write about in your research and it broadens teaching.

On his last sabbatical in Thailand, Hamilton worked with Chulalongkorn University's Nitade program, which is the school's communication program, in Bangkok.

"Thai students are very different from UConn students. They like to talk to each other during lecture to the extreme and it's very unsettling to most western instructors," Hamilton said, "and how they cope with that is they use a microphone and broadcast to the students."

With the Nitade program, Hamilton went on four field trips with his students and visited Asian countries including China and Cambodia.

New York City is known as the big apple, and like New York City, Bangkok is called the big mango. Hamilton said it's cultural capital of Thailand. "It's wonderful to walk around. You can go at midnight and get any food you want," he said.

Hamilton talked about the Thai-style and how much he liked it. There are winged-roofs, incredible diversity, good nightlife, and universities.

While he was in Thailand, Hamilton enjoyed the food, his favorite dish being spicy catfish.

"Here in Storrs, I know where all my food comes from, I eat organic, I do all my own cooking. There, I never cooked once," he said.

Pictured here is the Old Temple in Sukhothai Historical Park, located in Ayutthaya, Thailand.





**Professor Mark Hamilton on a hike through the rainforest.**

worked on this study with a Thai PhD student, and is presented his findings at the International Communication Association Conference in Fukuoka, Japan.

As mentioned earlier, professors on sabbatical are expected to use their time to write, and while he was in Thailand, Hamilton certainly wrote a lot. Hamilton said he started writing a book about the Trump presidency.

"I started writing about the processes, and then it became clear once he won that no one could explain it very well. As much as I don't like the policies, then if the book sells well, it could be the best thing that's ever happened to me," Hamilton said.

Hamilton didn't experience too much of a language barrier because he said most people there speak English. He said the people in Thailand are very friendly and it is called "the land of smiles."

"No matter what occupation a person is in they enjoy socializing so much that they just talk and they love social exchange," Hamilton said.

Usually a professor can take sabbatical every seven years, but Hamilton said he had to postpone his last sabbatical and will be able to take his next one in five years.

Hamilton's housing in Thailand was rather unique - he said he stayed in an international house called the I-House, which is in the shape of an "I". He said he paid \$300 a month for rent, and a nice meal in Thailand only costed him about \$3.00.

Despite having healthy food in Thailand, Hamilton said they are dealing with an obesity crisis. Thailand is second among all Asian nations in terms of obesity. The research Hamilton conducted on his sabbatical goes hand-in-hand with this crisis.

One research study Hamilton completed in Thailand was about clean food and the clean food campaign that is trying to change the lifestyle they have. "They were a rural country until recently and have become industrialized and post-industrialized very quickly, and their culture has not adapted to the fact that there's a lot of food that's available, tasty, and fattening," he said. The other research Hamilton completed while abroad was about dessert cafes and how they are marketed. He said he

# MARTIN HORN SCHOLARSHIP

## KATIE LANDREY | 2017 RECIPIENT

### HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN COMMUNICATIONS?

I became interested in communication my junior year. I always enjoyed taking part in discussions and presentations in my classes. I particularly liked the public speaking that was involved in these classes and that ultimately made my decision in becoming a communication major.



KATIE LANDREY, 2017 RECIPIENT

### WHAT ARE YOU INVOLVED WITH ON CAMPUS?

I am a UConn S.H.A.P.E intern and S.H.A.P.E focuses on body image and promoting an acceptance of all body types. Some of the events this group does includes the catwalk to end fat talk, in which models of all sizes and ethnicities walk the runway. I intern specifically in the nutrition office. One of my duties as an intern includes promoting campus events about body positivity.

### WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE CAREER PLANS?

I am very interested in higher education and would like to attend graduate school. However ultimately in the future I would like to do anything that involves working one on one with students. I am interested in doing something like career counseling or development. I would like to be able to help students figure out what they want to do in the future.

### WHAT IS YOUR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE?

I participated in FYE as a mentor and teaching assistant. As an FYE mentor I would engage students in discussion and create presentations. Another leadership experience I had was as a Servant Leader at the freedom school in Hartford, while there I assisted second grade students who were from low income families and behind in their reading level. I helped these students with their reading ability and literacy.

### HOW WILL THIS SCHOLARSHIP HELP YOU IN YOUR CAREER GOALS?

Ultimately, I believe it will help with networking with others in the field of Communication. It will help me gain connections and reach out to professors. Overall I think it's nice to be able to stand out in a group of talented students.

# STUDENT WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT // ASHLEY BRANNAN

Ashley Brannan is a junior Communication student from Stamford, Connecticut. Ashley works in the Communication Department and her official title is the student written communications assistant. She landed the job after seeing one of Joel's mass emails about job opportunities. The department needed someone to help with its social media and website so Ashley applied and got the job after being interviewed. As the student written communications assistant, her duties include running all of the social media accounts for the Communication department, writing blogs for the department, publicizing events for the department, assisting the Communication Society in event promotion, and other little promotional things that the department might need help with.



After being asked about her favorite part about the job, Ashley said, "I like knowing everyone in the department. As an undergrad student, not everyone gets to have conversations with staff members." She continued, "I like knowing everyone on a personal basis because it helps knowing how the department is changing [from a student's perspective]." So far, Ashley's favorite thing that she has worked

on as the student written communications assistant is a documentary she made for her Comm 2940 class in the fall of 2016. Working very closely with Steve Stifano and Adam Renier, Ashley was able to create a documentary on the class itself and publish it directly on the Communication department website. "I used a class project as a promotion for the department which I thought was really cool," she said. "Since then, we have started doing

**"I like knowing everyone in the department. As an undergrad student, not everyone gets to have conversations with staff members."**

more media promotion so that has definitely been fun." Aside from her involvement with the Communication department, Ashley is also a member of Alpha Omicron Pi, the newest social sorority on campus. In her sorority, she is Vice President of Communications and is responsible for overseeing all of the chapter's social media. She also created their website and a public relations plan for members. Overall, Ashley is in charge of promoting events and keeping the best image possible for the chapter. After graduation in the May of 2018, Ashley hopes to pursue a career in public relations. However, her long-term goal is to eventually become a professor. But for now, she loves her job in the Communication department and enjoys working so closely with other department staff members. **ARTICLE BY: CALLIE LANNING**

# THIS IS WHAT COMM SOCIETY'S BEEN UP TO... FALL 2016 - SPRING 2017

ARTICLE BY: GRACE GAGNON AND CALLIE LANNING

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT - GRACE GAGNON

VICE PRESIDENT - LORRAINE CARLUCCI

SECRETARY - CALLIE LANNING

TREASURER - STEVEN REILLY

PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR - JULIE PYRCZ

EVENTS COORDINATOR - WILL WELENC



Members gathered around the dinner waiting for pizza after a long day in New York City. Photo by Grace Gagnon



From left to right, Julie Pyrcz, Nicole Coscia, Jessica DeVitto, Liza Zark, and Liz Atkinson after the taping of Harry.

## Fall Field Trip:

During the fall semester, members took a day off of classes for an adventure in New York City. They started the day by eating lunch near Central Park, then sat in the audience during the taping of Harry Connick Jr.'s new show, Harry. After spending all day in the studio, everyone shared pizza at a local New York City pizza restaurant.



From left to right, Catherine Jones, Lorraine Carlucci, Jori Houck and Grace Gagnon sitting on the set of Harry. Photo by Grace Gagnon

# Spring 2017: Public Speaking Competition

CommSociety members with the contestants, judges, and hosts after the 4th Annual Public Speaking Competition. Photo by Owen Bonaventura



Emily Chekmeyan and Nicole Coscia handing out tickets to audience members. Photo by Jessica DeVitto



From left to right, Nicole Coscia, Will Welenc, Steve Reilly, and Lorraine Carlucci selling candy before the competition. Photo by Jessica DeVitto



A few other activities club members enjoyed this year included various presentations and informational forums. There were presentations on LinkedIn, resumes, and how to use Photoshop. Additionally, several meetings were dedicated to members sharing their internship experiences and sharing what classes they enjoyed most to help other members decide what classes to enroll in during their impending pick-time.

When next year's Communication Society president Julie Pycz was asked about her plans for the club next year she said: "I am really excited about being the president of this group next year. I think we have some great new executives who are enthusiastic about continuing to make Comm Society even better. I look forward to welcoming new members into our group and showing them what a distinct and valuable experience being a member of Comm Society is."

# COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE GLOBE



Around 1,043,839 international students enrolled into public and private institutions in 2016, according to Project Atlas. At UConn alone, 3,555 international students are enrolled here and 1,303 of those students are undergraduate students. Studying communication provides student with a comprehensive knowledge of the nature of human interaction. They study the way communication works, the environments in which it occurs, and its media and effects. Anyone seeking a degree could go into different fields after graduating which includes marketing, advertising, public relations, and research. There are 609 students studying communication here at UConn.



## KAILEY TROLLER

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**Year: Senior**

**Major: Communication,  
International Studies Minor**

**Hometown: Wilton, CT**

**Place of Study: Amsterdam**

### **What is the biggest difference with America you have encountered versus the country you studied at?**

The biggest difference between America and The Netherlands is the increased tolerance displayed in Dutch society. For instance, they have legalized both, soft drugs such as truffles and marijuana as well as prostitution. More examples of their tolerance are displayed through their prisons that act as more of rehabilitation centers or their hierarchy on the road where bike riders are always given right of way rather than automobiles.

### **Has your experience here at UConn and as well at the country you visited, plus being a Communication major, do you feel you have gained an ability to communicate among and within different diverse groups of people?**

During my experience abroad I met and befriended a diverse group of people and through this experience I would agree that I have gained a greater ability to communicate with others. But more so than that, my worldview has been greatly expanded -- rather than reading about places and people in books or from films I was fortunate enough to actually experience these things and to meet so many new and amazing people. Study abroad has been the most eye opening experience of my life thus far.

# MELANIE KAHN

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**Year: Sophomore**

**Major: Communication**

**Home Country: Costa Rica**



"I actually attended the last three years of high school in Massachusetts, but my home is still Costa Rica. My mother is Costa Rican and my father is from the USA. We have always lived in Costa Rica though, I made the decision to live with my aunts in the USA and attend school. After high school I decided to continue my education in the United States instead of attending a school in Costa Rica (mainly because I have been influenced by movies and wanted the experiences I saw - contrary to what some may believe the education in Costa Rica is excellent. It would have been great to stay in Costa Rica to study but I always dreamed of having the experience of college in the states)"

**What is the biggest difference with America you have encountered here at UConn versus your home country?**

Culture and people. People are always outside doing things, exploring nature. The United States has been a lot more indoors and sedentary (may be because of the cold too!) -- This one is almost a little hard for me to answer because of my unique experience. I grew up Americanized. I attended bilingual, private schools. Most of my school peers were students from the United States or other kids like me who had one Costa Rican parent and one parent from the USA. I grew up in an intersectional world. I also grew up in a tourist town.



# HAO YANG

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**Year: Sophomore**

**Major: Communication**

**Home Country: Costa Rica**

**What is the biggest difference with America you have encountered here at UConn versus your home country?**

The biggest difference I think is the demand of self-control and time management. In my home country the study hours are incredibly long and busy, you don't really have your own time to manage. Here at UConn, there are too much leisure time that needs to be managed well.

**Do you want to work here in America or back in your home country?**

Hopefully I can get a job in film production industry in America. The reason I came to this country is not only for the education. I've always admire this country for its fairness and acceptance.

**ARTICLE BY: CARLEIGH CAUFIELD**

# HOW OLD AM I?

MATCH THE JOHNATHAN LOGO TO THE CORRECT YEAR IN WHICH IT REPRESENTED UCONN. STUDENTS TODAY, HUSKIES FOREVER!



- KEY**
- A. 1959
  - B. 1960S
  - C. 1970S
  - D. 1980s & 1990s
  - E. 2002-2013
  - F. 2013-Present



# PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Hundreds of students and staff alike gathered in the Student Union Theatre to watch five contestants display their public speaking skills in the Fourth Annual Public Speaking Competition.

The competition, organized by the Communication Society, took place on Monday, April 3, 2017. Professor Rory McGloin and Professor Sharde Davis hosted the competition.



The theme of this year's competition was what role social media should play in our civil and political discourse? The panelists included Fox61 News anchors, Jenn Bernstein and Al Terzi, along with assistant professor in communication, Anne Oeldorf-Hirsch.

Anne Oeldorf-Hirsch's expertise lies in social media, where her research is centered on how social media changes the way we communicate and how we engage in news content.

The five contestants who fearlessly took center stage were Marvin Louis, Nicholas Hartunian, Christine Martin-Kisby and two returning contestants Bianca D'Agostino and Edward Pankowski.



4TH ANNUAL PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION  
IN THE STUDENT UNION THEATER





Each contestant delivered a prepared speech for the first round, answered a judge's question for the second, and lastly delivered an impromptu speech. Each round provided an opportunity for the contestants

to expand upon their beliefs and gain advice and insight from the judges.

Pankowski, who was runner up last year, took home the trophy and the title of UConn's best public speaker.

In an interview with Communication Society president, Grace Gagnon, Pankowski summed up his feelings on winning the title.

"I am so overwhelmed, this is basically the pinnacle of my public speaking career. I am just so happy to be here and to have competed against people who are just so good at what they do and to be judged by people who are so renowned and so skilled is a real honor," Pankowski said.

The Communication Society's Annual Public Speaking Competition was indeed another success and provided a showcase of UConn's many talented public speakers.



**ARTICLE BY: AMANDA  
OLAVARRIA**

# PROFESSOR RORY MCGLOIN ACCEPTS AWARD AT STATE CAPITOL

ARTICLE BY: GRACE GAGNON

Friends, families, colleagues, and legislators gathered at the Connecticut State Capitol Building to honor the recipients of the UConn-AAUP Excellence Awards on Monday, April 20, 2017. One of the recipients of this award was the Department of Communication's very own, Professor Rory McGloin.

McGloin was presented with the AAUP Teaching Excellence-Early Career award, which he said is given to professors who are in the first three to six years of their careers at UConn. The recipients who receive this award go above and beyond for their students and exemplify exceptional classroom engagement.

"Receiving this recognition means a great deal to me. I take tremendous pride in my role as a teacher here at UConn," McGloin said.

McGloin is active within the Department of Communication not only as a researcher and lecturer of Public Speaking, but he is also the advisor of the Communication Society. McGloin said, "I enjoy teaching because of the unique challenges it presents. Every student is different and as a teacher it is my job to identify the best methods to help that student achieve their very best."

McGloin has learned many lessons from being a teacher and said he uses his interactions with students as an opportunity to meet new people and learn from their perspectives.

"I have been teaching at UConn for over a decade and I feel that I have learned something new every semester. During this time, I feel I have developed a set of skills that helps me work with my students," he said.

McGloin said the ceremony included presentations and speeches from members of the Connecticut General Assembly, the AAUP President, and Vice Provost Dr. Sally Reis. Following the presentations, McGloin said him and the other recipients were presented with their awards along with a Connecticut State General Assembly Citation. The Department of Communication is incredibly fortunate to have professors such as Dr. McGloin.



# RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT:

## JOHN CHRISTENSEN

For Professor John Christensen, the future is truly now. Christensen has been drawing plenty of attention for his current research involving video games and virtual reality.

This semester, he has been involved in creating a smartphone app designed to prevent risky sex, a virtual grocery store simulator that promotes healthy eating, and a virtual reality exposure therapy intervention designed to make people overcome their fear of riding in self-driving cars. Christensen said the intersections between the virtual and physical realities of our world are fast approaching.

"We are going to witness some pretty amazing things in our lifetime," Christensen said. "In the near future, video games will be able to sense our heart rate, skin conductance, eye movements, emotions, and brain waves. Imagine a video game that adapts to how focused, tired, or scared the player is at a particular point in time. Applying this technology to health and education could have a profound impact on society."

Christensen said academics can draw inspiration for research ideas from a variety of sources. Informal conversations with students and colleagues in the halls of Arjona can even develop organically into a solid research plan.

"Research is a team effort and so the process is social by nature," Christensen said. "Narrowing down the focus is never a quick process. Then we send a few emails back and forth before having a series of face-to-face meetings where the idea slowly develops over time."

In his lab, Christensen's research ethos is a noble one and brings focus to his work. "Solving the world's social problems is the overarching goal of every study performed in my lab," Christensen said.

Christensen said his research has focused on a wide variety of social issues such as homophobia, racism, substance abuse, and climate change.

"My approach to solving these social problems usually involves communication technologies such as educational video games, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence. These are typically in the form of 'digital media interventions' that change people's attitudes and behavior for the better," Christensen said.

There are many different research methods available to communication scholars based on the kind of information they need to gather and the topics they are studying, but Christensen prefers the more interactive setting of a research laboratory as compared with the impersonality of less direct methods.

"Online studies can be so impersonal," Christensen said. "You never get to talk to the people providing data. In a laboratory setting, you can actually see the positive impact you are having on participants first hand. I also love laboratory studies because I get to play with really cool toys."

In the near future, Christensen's research plans include examining big data, augmented reality, brain-computer interfaces, and holograms.

**ARTICLE BY: JORI HOUCK**



# RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: ROSS BUCK

**ARTICLE BY: AMANDA OLAVARRIA**

Ross Buck is a professor of communication and psychology at the University of Connecticut. Buck has always been interested in emotion and communication of emotion.

His first job was at the University of Pittsburgh medical school, where he worked with Robert E. Miller studying rhesus monkeys.

The research involved getting two monkeys to press a bar whenever a light came on. He separated two monkeys, so that one monkey saw only the light and the other did not see the light, but could only press the bar. He televised the face of the first monkey that could see the light. He said he believed that if the second monkey could correctly interpret the facial expressions of the first monkey then it would press the bar. It was found that the monkeys were able to complete these tasks rather simply.

Miller did a variety of other research as well, including research on drug effects and on deprived animals that were isolated for the first year of life. It was found that these same animals were unable to send or receive messages due to their condition.

Buck said, "I am a social psychologist, so I was hired on to create a similar situation in humans and we devised a task where people watch emotionally loaded images and without their knowledge they are videotaped and then we tell them about the camera later on and they give consent."

People were to watch these and then attempt to decipher the kind of image they were watching.

Buck's research found that women are far better senders than men. It was also discovered that people who were better senders had smaller physiological responses to the images. Those who tended to internalize their emotions were not good senders and had high physiological responses to the images. Women tend to externalize more, while men tend to internalize.

Buck carried out this same experiment, except with young children. He found that being a good sender was not related to sex in children from ages three to six.

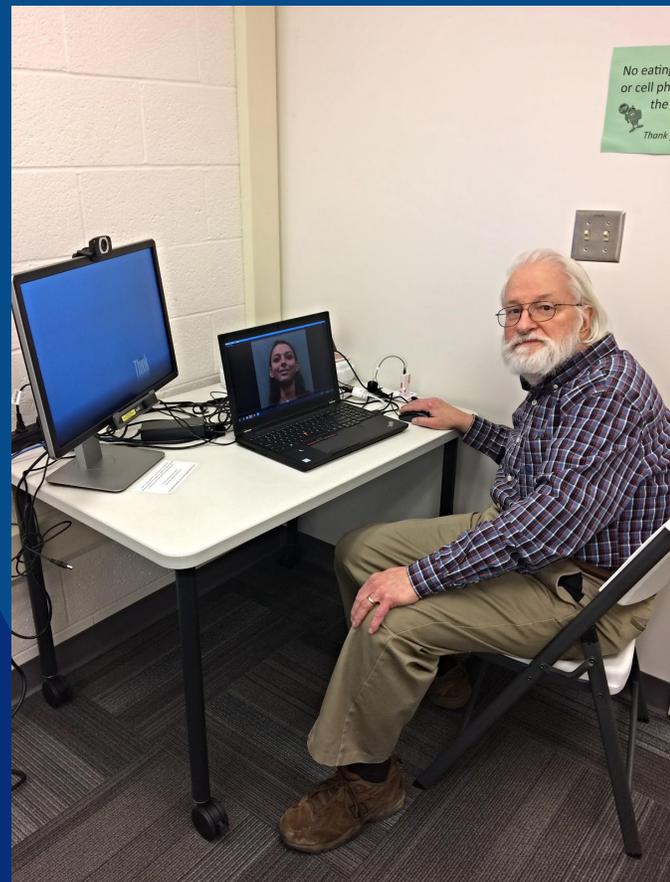
Buck said, "This suggests to us that little boys are taught to inhibit and mask their overt expression of emotion and this has an indirect effect of increasing their physiological response. Down the line that can become stressful to the body."

Recently Buck has become interested in taking the digital images of people watching the emotionally loaded images and showing them to individual in an FMRI. This research showed how the brain responds to spontaneous and dynamic facial expressions. He plans to carry out more of this work in the brain research-imaging center on campus.

Buck tested a variety of different patients in the FMRI machine. He tested young adults, preschool children, schizophrenia patients, brain damaged patients, and children with emotional and behavioral problems. It was found that schizophrenia patients and children with emotional and behavioral problems were very poor at communicating their emotions, which he believes enter into their social and emotional problems.

Overall Buck said he sees communication as two simultaneous streams. He said, "one is a symbolic stream, that we pay attention to and the other is spontaneous stream, that we kind of take for granted, but is very important in social organization."

In the future Buck said he hopes to study those with autism and psychopaths to see how their brain responses may differ to dynamic images.



# HERE'S WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE

ARTICLE BY: CALLIE LANNING

Whether you graduated in 2006 or 2016, a lot of changes have happened on and around campus here in Storrs, Conn - the home of cows, horses, and the national record of women's basketball championship wins. Check out some of the changes that have happened since you've been gone:

## **Student Recreation Center**

Let's start with what some might agree as one of the most needed changes on campus: the Student Recreation Center. The new center is expected to open in 2019 and will be located where Connecticut Commons Residence Halls resided before they were demolished in the summer of 2016. As most former and current students know and have expressed concerns about, the existing student recreation center is way too small and outdated. The new 200,000 square foot, three-story high facility will include a 20,000+ square foot fitness center, five full-size basketball courts, a running track, an aquatics center, a wellness center, squash and racquetball courts, dedicated space for club sports, and a dedicated space for BodyWise classes. Additionally, an outdoor recreation field will replace parking lot D off of Alumni Drive. Students will finally have a recreational space that reflects the university's regards for athletes.

## **NextGen Residence Hall**

To make up for all of the student housing lost when Connecticut Commons were demolished, the Next Generation Residence Hall was constructed and opened in the summer of 2016. The NextGen Hall is the first new on-campus housing in 13 years and is the first building to be completed under the initiative to increase UConn's STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) programs. As one of the tallest buildings in Storrs, it houses 727 beds of mostly freshmen and sophomores, who are more than 50% engineering students. It includes a roof garden, channels that direct water to rain gardens, a white roof to deflect sun, and solar panels to heat water. Not only do students here get to live in the newest building on campus, they also get easy access to the newly renovated Putnam Dining Hall.

## **Putnam Dining Hall**

Many recent alumni may remember Putnam Dining Hall as the old dining up the hill that was home to student recreation BodyWise classes. Now, it is one of the most visually interesting places on campus that provides a unique experience for students who are grabbing a bite. While the construction of Putnam Dining Hall began in early 2016, it officially shut down in March of 2016 after spring break. Students housed in the surrounding residence halls (Garrigus Suites and Hilltop Dorms) were awarded 600 meal plan points to use around campus and in the Student Union to make up for their lack of easy dining hall access. The newly renovated dining hall was open in time for the 2016-2017 school year and is a refreshing change for UConn dining. Unlike other campus dining halls, Putnam includes a juice bar, a living wall of herbs used for recipes, and a modern design with an open staircase, various art pieces, and lounge style seating. NextGen residents are spoiled with both their modern living and modern eating space that are unlike any other part of campus.

# STUDENTS TODAY HUSKIES FOREVER

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## Tech Park

The next time you find an excuse to visit your alma mater, enter campus through the new entrance on Discovery Drive to check out the giant construction site on your right before the road to Charter Oak Apartments. This new technology park is called the Innovation Partnership Building, or IPB, and will be completed by fall 2017. The 115,000 square-foot space will have flexible-use laboratories and is intended to increase Connecticut innovation and competitiveness in the region and beyond. According to UConn Today, the park will be used by teams of world-class academic researchers, private industry scientists, and business entrepreneurs in other fields. It will help build a stronger future economy for the state through connections with research facilities located not only in Storrs, but also at UConn Health locations in Farmington and New Haven.



## Storrs Center

Although Storrs Center is not technically on campus, it is one of students' favorite places to stroll around. It allows for activities from anything to a sweet treat from Insomnia Cookies to a new tattoo from Pandora's Playground Tattoo, Piercing, & Gallery to an authentic Italian meal from coach Geno Auriemma's restaurant, Geno's. Storrs Center began development in 2011 and by the end of 2015, 16 businesses were serving customers and 127 apartment homes were leased and occupied. Downtown Storrs is now home to more than 20 restaurants, an Amazon store, the UConn Bookstore at Storrs Center, Price Chopper, and Bliss, an upscale clothing consignment shop. It is also the home to one of the most popular off-campus apartment options, The Oaks on the Square. Storrs Center is continuously growing and more stores are expected to open by the summer 2017.



These are just a few ways the University of Connecticut is currently evolving. Other campus plans include a new STEM academic building that is already underway and the demolition of the abandoned "Greek Row" houses on Gilbert Road. The next time you come back and visit your alma mater, maybe nothing will be different or maybe everything will. Hopefully, no matter what changes UConn goes through, it will always bring back your cherished memories from when you were a student. **Huskies forever.**

# MEET OUR EDITING TEAM!



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