

CommUniqué

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A publication of the Department of Communication

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Notes from the Chair

By Dr. Michelle A. Holling

Greetings readers of *CommUniqué*! With my co-editor, Donovan Johnson, I'm pleased to publish the first issue of the newsletter for the academic year 2015-2016. The stories composing this issue reflect department events as well as faculty and student accomplishments.

As I reflect on this semester, the notion of growth comes to mind. Growth reflects an expansion in size as is evident in the increase of student majors and faculty in the department. There is also intellectual growth that likely students have experienced exponentially given courses completed this semester.

Growth also manifests in various ways (i.e., personal, professional, etc.) and may be an effect of change. While change tends to bring anxiety for individuals, change and growth open up possibilities for development.

A desire for personal growth is beneficial for individuals simultaneously, it may provoke sadness. Many students, and faculty, have come to know Debbie Andrews, administrative coordinator in

the Communication Department. In September, she accepted a position to support the Departments of Philosophy and Economics. While faculty were saddened to lose her, we very much appreciated the support, kindness, and friendship she extended to all of us. We now welcome Josie Rosas to the department! Although her time with us began but a couple of months, we are glad to have her as the administrative coordinator. Welcome Josie!

Finally, "growth" – welcoming, adjusting, and learning from it – is quite apropos in my case. During this academic year, I serve as Interim Chair for the Department of Communication. This first semester has brought many challenges; yet, I also see this and next semester as opportunities for growth. Here's to each of us—students, faculty, and staff—and the growth we may or will experience that enriches us, personally, interpersonally, and collectively.

My sincerest wishes that everyone has a very happy holiday season!



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5th Annual Meet & Greet Event

by Donovan Johnson & Michelle A. Holling



On October 20, 2015, Communication and Mass Media students and faculty alike congregated in the SBSB courtyard to look ahead to a year of academic excellence in the Annual Meet & Greet event. Faculty in the Department of Communication conceived of the Meet & Greet as an opportunity to welcome newly hired faculty into the department and to foster a sense of community between and amongst faculty and students. Early each semester, the Department of Communication, along with officers of both Communication Society and Lambda Pi Eta, host the Meet & Greet.

At this year's event, the department welcomed five new faculty members and celebrated two tenured faculty members. The department welcomed James Anderson, M.A.; Jericho Burg, Ph.D. Erin Nelson, Ph.D.; Alexandra Jackson Nevis, M.A.; and Gloria Pindi, Ph.D. Of these five new additions to the faculty, Dr. Pindi, who currently is a "Visiting Faculty" will join the group of department tenure-track professors in Fall 2016. Also, James Anderson is the only professor who instructs courses in both focuses, Communication and Mass Media.

Among all the happenings and excitement of this year's event, the celebration of recently retired Dr. Bud Morris was recognized as he became Emeritus Faculty. In addition, Dr. Michelle Holling was recognized for her promotion to Full Professor and

moved from the courtyard into the classroom. To experience the most recent Meet & Greet, visit <http://www.csusm.edu/communication/meetandgreet20151.html>



Above: Recognition of Dr. Holling's promotion to full professor

Below: Recognition of Dr. Morris' as emeritus faculty

Department Chair. All in all, the 5th Annual Meet & Greet offered a friendly and inviting atmosphere for all who attended and likely the ambiance



An Interview with Dr. Pindi: Culture-to-Culture . . . it's all Communication

by Donovan Johnson

The department expanded this semester with the addition of five new faculty members, among them Gloria Nziba Pindi, Ph.D. who made her way to CSUSM from the Central African region of the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo). The DRC is considered to be the crossroads for neighboring nations. The DRC is bordered by nine countries, holds the second largest geographic capacity in the region, and accounts for the fourth largest population size on the continent. Originating from *Kinshasa*, the capital and one of the two largest cities in the DRC, Dr. Pindi began her academic journey that would eventually lead to her position at CSUSM, but education was not the only passion that Pindi harbored. During our interview when asked if she always wanted to teach, she responded, "I wanted to be a lawyer or to study law and public relations, or an ambassador." Such interests were stimulated from growing up in the DRC's capital, rich with culture and political climates. Nonetheless, her story doesn't end there, it is just beginning.

Dr. Pindi completed her undergraduate work with a focus in Communication and Media Studies at the Catholic University of Congo. Upon receiving a Bachelor's degree Dr. Pindi decided to step out of her comfort zone by furthering her education, literally, across the world. Starting at local institution SDSU (San Diego State University), Dr.

Pindi received a Master's degree in Communication Studies in August of 2010; her thesis focused on Congolese women and their mediated representations of gender and beauty. From there Dr. Pindi left the coast and traveled to the mid-west where she continued her studies at SIUC (Southern Illinois University Carbondale) and received her doctorate in Communication Studies. Her dissertation titled "Performing Black Feminisms in Diasporic Contexts: Sub Saharan Women Negotiating Identity Across Cultures" won the Research Award at SIUC in 2013.



Along the way to receiving her doctoral degree, Dr. Pindi acquired a sufficient resume equipped with a sufficient amount of skills that make her a valuable asset to this department. Currently, Dr. Pindi holds a unique title as a "Visiting Faculty," and will join other tenure track professors beginning Fall 2016. Included among the courses she has

taught in the United States (both at SUIC and CSUSM) are: Public Speaking, Communication in Cross Culture, Multicultural Perspectives on Women in Gender and currently, Intercultural Communication, Communication and Pop Culture, Communication and Transnationalism, and Research Methods. She also, taught French 101 at SDSU. Dr. Pindi is multilingual. In addition to being fluent in English and French, she also speaks *Congolese*, her native dialect; *Swahili*, the language used by African nations amassing Eastern Africa; *Kikongo*, the language used by the people inhabiting the west side of Congo; and lastly, *Lingala*, the national language of the Congo. Dr. Pindi is undoubtedly experienced, cultured, intellectual, and overall well rounded. She is a unique and rare individual wielding expertise in Intercultural Communication, Women and Gender Studies, and Qualitative Methods that adds even more variety to her dynamic aesthetic.

Dr. Pindi is not always wrapped up in academia though, she has a passion for dancing, specifically Zumba, which she expressed a lot of joy for when speaking about it. In addition, she loves to travel; her favorite city in the U.S. is Chicago and although she has yet to visit, Rome, Italy remains her favorite place in the world. When asking Dr. Pindi what she loves about her work she insightfully articulated, "Communication is everything, and nothing," she simplistically added, "We can't live without communication."

Student Honors: R. Pinto & T. Boyd

by Donovan Johnson

Creative Expression Earns Recognition at CSU Media Arts Festival

On November 7th, 2015 Cal State San Marco's Mass Media student, Richard Pinto, received the Rosebud Award in the Experimental category with his work titled, "Just People" at the annual CSU Media Arts Festival. Pinto's creation depicts the clash amongst the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States. His piece offers powerful implications of the consistent struggle between our political party's ideologies. Pinto's work provokes one to take a step back from the chaotic clamor in its entirety and assume a less bias, democratic role in society. "Just People" allows one to adopt a more critical view of our political climate and grasp that America is not constituted by one parties ideologies or beliefs but that we are all one, one republic, one democratic nation bound together under the same stars and stripes. Richard's video ascends the message that our identities should not be constituted by left or right, liberal or conservative, blue or red, donkey or elephant. We are all Americans; we are all people, just people.

Congratulations Richard, your work has earned you acknowledgement by the CSU Media Arts community and nothing less than admiration and respect from your institution and all

whom it embodies. Continue evolving and extending your creative talents, you truly are an inspiration.

The Road Less Traveled

On November 21st, 2015, Tiffany Boyd presented her research "Communicating and Creating Safe Spaces: Ethnographic Research in a Cultural Center" at the 101st Annual NCA (National Communication Association) Conference. Her audience consisted of undergrads, scholars, and esteemed members of the community, not to mention our some of our astounding CHABSS (College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences) department faculty. One would presume the setting for such an event would occur in a location of modishness yet, the congregating epicenter for these artisans of communication studies is none other than the Rio Hotel in Sin City. Boyd was recognized for her outstanding research that evolved from mere observation into 20-pages of scholarship that reveals how the Cross Cultural Center at Cal State San Marcos echoes an environment of security and stability for all its students. Her competitive paper is one of the three undergraduates in the Department of Communication's history to be accepted by the NCA situating her amongst an exclusive group of Cal States academic elites.

Although Tiffany has many accomplishments and successes, she is far from done. Boyd did not derive from a place of privilege; she has

earned everything she's acquired by virtue of her aspirations, determination, outstanding work ethic, and fortitude. Tiffany hails from the city of Hemet, a smaller town in Riverside County where she attended Tahquitz High School receiving her diploma with the graduating class of 2010. Once fully admitted to CSUSM, Boyd became the first member of her family to pursue a degree from an institution of higher learning. After completing her general education requirements, Tiffany wasted no time familiarizing herself with the department, become active in as many extracurricular opportunities as she could. Boyd is now the current ASI (Associated Students, Inc.) President; member of BSU (Black Student Union); and member of LPE (Lambda Pi Eta), the National Honors Communication Society for which she served as president in 2014. In addition to her impeccable repertoire, Boyd attained an internship with the District Attorney's office of San Diego this semester. She will receive a Bachelor's Degree in not just one but two majors of study: Communication and Social Science in Spring 2016, accompanied with a cumulative 3.8 GPA. Following graduation Tiffany plans to travel for a year before pursuing either graduate or law school. She's currently grappling with which direction to go but, I've been assured that a higher level of education is definitely in her future. Congratulations Tiffany, you've achieved acclimations of academic prestige. The sky is the limit for Miss Boyd as she continues to spread her wings and soar.

Celebrating Grant Recipients

by Michelle A. Holling

Dr. Vincent Pham's research entitled "The Exiled Speak Back: Communicating Asian American Local and Transnational Global Solidarity through Documentary Film," earned him \$700 from the CHABSS Faculty Development Grant. He presented his scholarship at the National Communication Association convention in Las Vegas, NV

Dr. Gloria Pindi was awarded \$500.00 from the CHABSS Professional Development Grant to support her two research projects presented at the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender Conference. The titles of her projects are "Performing the 'Good Wife': An Ethnographic Analysis of Sub-Saharan Women's Experiences of Sexuality in Intimate Relationships" and "Communication About Sexuality in Academic Settings: An Autoethnographic Journey of Identity Negotiation Across Cultures."

Prof. Marilyn Ribble was awarded \$325 from the CHABSS Lecturer Professional Development Grant to purchase equipment and supplies to advance her pedagogy.

Dr. Kendra Rivera's research, "Exploring Relationships and Treatment Between Faculty of Different Ranks," which is co-authored with Prof. Caroline Sawyer, was awarded \$1,200 by the CHABSS Faculty Development Grant. Dr. Rivera presented her work at the National Communication Association convention in Las Vegas, NV

Dr. Cecilia Uy-Tioco was awarded \$1,200 by the CHABSS Faculty Development Grant for her research entitled "Mobile Phones in the Philippines: Social Transformation and the Reproduction of Power." She presented her scholarship at the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) in Montreal, Canada.

The Whiteness Forum: Racial Resistance Through Research

by Donovan Johnson

What exactly is "whiteness?" What does it mean? According to the dictionary whiteness is broadly the "quality or state of being white." Hmm, seems harmless wouldn't one might think. What this definition omits however is the extreme levels

of racism it casts on all other racial and ethnic groups in society consequently connoting a preservation of archaic ideals that support white supremacy, dominance, and hegemony. For Dr. Dreama Moon and students enrolled in her COMM 454 course, whiteness remained the topic of focus for the entire semester. What students came to find throughout their research is how powerfully prevalent white dominance is in society and the forum provided them with a stage from which they could publicize their findings concerning these topical issues.

On December 3, 2015, the 12th Annual Whiteness Forum, sponsored by the Department of Communication, took place in the USU Ballroom from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Various groups of

attendees ranging from students to faculty to administrators to alumni to community members partook in this year's Forum. This year's COMM 454 students beautifully presented their research, engaged respectfully with the audience, and undoubtedly helped shed light on the socio-racial epidemic that has for century's impeded societal growth. A variety of topics such as racial segregation in restaurants; perpetuating colorism in hip-hop; white dominance in health care; militant support of white supremacy; trigger warnings that enable less diverse curriculums; international adoption; white supremacist influence on children's identity; and even, white dominance in the NFL were densely researched and presented. The topics differ every year and remain equally thought provoking. The forum also

involves interactive games conducted by the student research groups, question-answer, and souvenir-like tokens for audience members to take home and share with others.

What is clear from the groups presenting their research is not only the array of foci to understand whiteness but also that an astounding array of social, political, and economical structures and institutions are contaminated by ideologies of hegemonic whiteness and most people are oblivious to it. In efforts to educate the university and community, Dr. Moon and her students showcase their research projects in an informative open house format every fall in hopes to raise racial consciousness and awareness. The forum is not only a wonderful opportunity for students to display and discuss their work, it also operates as a platform for students and audience members to have conversations about important issues that are not regularly given the spotlight. Although the topical scale is diverse, it is a benefit to all because it really aids one's grasp of just how present and serious whiteness has been, is, and may remain should we not continue to have discussions about whiteness and its implications.

Comm Society

by Pierson Cepeda

"Communication Society is an organization that is meant to help students develop their professional skills and connect with the community" - Club President, Pierson Cepeda

We host guest speakers at our monthly meeting to better equip students with the



PHOTO

Above: Officers of COMM Society & Dr. Rivera, faculty advisor.

knowledge and necessary tools to network with professionals. In addition, we host events for students to network with each other as well to ease the transition from school to career.

Comm Society is open to any major, for this organization strives to foster campus and community involvement for all students. Attendance at events hosted by Comm Society allows networks to develop amongst fellow students as well as professionals that can launch members into their future careers.

For more information, visit

<http://www.csusm.edu/communication/student/commsociety.html>

Did you know.....

- All COMM & MASS majors have two advisors: a faculty member in the department and an academic advisor in Undergraduate Academic Services.
- Student majors are distributed by last name to tenure-track faculty members. Visit the department homepage to identify your advisor!

Lambda Pi Eta (LPE) Communication Honor Society

by Selena Gallardo & April Emerson



PHOTO

Above: Officers of LPE & Dr. Pham, faculty advisor

“Get recognized for your hard work and enhance your academic experience” -Society President, Selena Gallardo

“LPE is a nationally recognized Honors Society, that provides Communication and Mass Media Majors a platform to engage scholastic achievement and philanthropically use that knowledge to enhance our own lives and our communities to understand where we fit in as global citizens” - Society Vice-President, April Emerson

Lambda Pi Eta is the National Communication Association’s official honor society at four-year colleges and universities. As an accredited member of the Association of College Honor Societies, LPE has active chapters at colleges and universities worldwide. LPE represents what Aristotle described in *The Rhetoric* as three ingredients of persuasion: logos (Lambda), meaning logic; pathos (Pi), relating to emotion; and ethos (Eta), defined as character credibility and ethics. Lambda Pi Eta recognizes, fosters, and rewards outstanding scholastic achievement while stimulating interest in the communication discipline. Visit <http://www.csusm.edu/communication/student/honors.html>)

FACULTY ADMINISTER GUIDANCE AND INSIGHT AT MAJORS/MINORS FAIR

The Department of Communication made quite an impression on CSUSM students at this fall semester’s Majors/Minors Fair held on Oct 20th in the USU Ballroom.

Knowing what you want to do but not knowing which path to take can be unsettling for students and cause angst. For students, who are either undeclared or looking to change majors brings on the fear of choosing the wrong major or wasting time in

academia. Fortunately, the department was well equipped with Dr. Gloria Pindi and Dr. Cecilia Uy-Tioco, faculty representatives for the Communication major, Mass Media major, Communication minor, and Critical Intercultural minor.

Throughout the fair, both Dr. Pindi and Dr. Uy-Tioco offered valuable insight and guidance for interested students from all areas of the spectrum and helped students to understand exactly what the department has to offer. Dr. Uy-Tioco commented on the Fair stating, “It was a great opportunity for students to explore different majors and for us faculty to tell them about the Comm and Media majors.”

Even though this gathering is situated to better enhance the student’s knowledge of each study, the professors also benefitted from their exchanges with those in attendance. Dr. Pindi said, “It was a great way to connect with other faculty, and colleagues.” She too talked about how she thoroughly enjoyed helping students find how their interests coincided with Communication. She also said, “I really liked interacting with students,

I had a lot of great conversations.” The significance of the Majors/Minors Fair is, of course, to help students commit to a focus of study that best suits their goals simultaneously, to provide them with a plethora of options from which they can decide. Regardless of whether 5, 50, or 500 students decide to study Communication or Mass Media, the fair fosters the value of education and that is the most important token to be taken.

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ABOVE PHOTO

Left to right: Selena Gallardo, LPE President; Dr. Gloria Pindi; Dr. Michelle A. Holling, Dept. Chair; Dr. Cecilia Uy-Tioco; Dr. Vincent Pham; April Emerson, Co-Vice President, LPE



DID YOU KNOW....

718 students major in COMM

175 students major in MASS

35 students minor in COMM

Did you know the department offers a minor in critical intercultural communication? Talk to a faculty advisor!

experiences and knowledge of other icebreaker exercises . . . voilà, Hello Bingo was born. Upon returning to the classroom she implemented her masterful creation into the course introduction itinerary and found nothing but sheer success.

Congratulations Professor Saner! On behalf of the Department, we celebrate your achievements and thank you for your dedication!

Returning back to school in 1997 after an unfortunate series of events, Dr. Matsumoto was on a mission to find meaning in the work she would eventually be doing. After breezing through Palomar College and shortly thereafter receiving a Bachelor's degree in Communication from CSUSM, she cautiously decided to continue on after our own Dr. Rossman recommended she attend graduate school. Upon Dr. Matsumoto's first day in the classroom as a graduate teaching associate, she knew she wanted to be a college professor. She then received her Master's degree in Communication from San Diego State where she focused on organizational and intercultural communication as well as developed a fascination with Brian Spitzberg's theory of communication competence. With encouragement from mentors such as Dr. Rossmann, Dr. Spitzburg, Dr. Morris, Dr. Brown, and Dr. Rivera, she has reached the realm of academic excellence and now looks to future possibilities, namely a tenure track position.

Catherine Matsumoto has just recently received her Ph.D. from Capella University in Education with a specialization in Post-secondary and Adult Learning, which focuses on

Congratulations to “Dr.” Catherine Matsumoto

by Donovan Johnson

experiential curriculum development. Given Dr. Matsumoto's area of instruction in courses such as the internship and interviewing, in addition to serving as the Internship Coordinator, her graduate studies had strong influence on her passion to help students find their niche and thrive as individuals inside and outside of educational institutions. Dr. Matsumoto's expertise in combining experiential learning into the communication curriculum provides meaningful opportunities for students to engage on campus and in the community, which has been her overall objective from the beginning.

Dr. Matsumoto's dissertation juxtaposes the perceptions of first year students with the lived experience of fourth year students who have successfully completed internships. By examining the barriers first year students perceive in comparison to the barriers overcome by fourth year students, the intention was to create interventions that would positively prepare first year students to see internships as a viable option to enhance their educational experience and develop their social capital. What she came to find is that first year students were highly fearful not only about having the time or financial means needed to acquire such an opportunity but also lacking the opportunities or connections. In this regard, she found that fourth year students harbored much concern not about necessarily having opportunities or connections but more so gaining the *right* connections and opportunities to receive jobs

upon their departure from academia. In concluding her research, the link between the barriers of both first year and fourth year students shared was their overall fears and concerns of building connections, whether it be the right connection or any connection at all the common site of struggle for both groups resided with connections.

Dr. Matsumoto's research led her to connect theories of social capital and communication competence as the former is often determined by the latter. Her dissertation work spills over into the curriculum she delivers in that she seeks to include opportunities to build communication skills and make connections with and for students whether that is working in groups or in the community. Her academic success is inspiring and as a first generation college student herself, she's exceeded the expectations of many. The department is honored to celebrate her for all the outstanding work she's done. Congratulations Dr. Matsumoto!

Until the next
issue...

If you're interested
in contributing
stories to the
newsletter, contact
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