I write this “Chair’s Note” as the final note from the chair that I’ll submit. I’ve served as chair for the Department of Communication for the past four years. Being chair for such a large department brings both joys and challenges. The joys are having the opportunity to support students -- to hear their concerns and attend to them as best I can; to hire faculty that expands the breadth and depth of faculty in the department, which in turn benefits students; to support and advocate for existing faculty in a variety of ways, and ways that are not always visible to them; and to hire and work with eight interns and one staff, who over the years help make the department a welcoming space for visitors. Evident is my focus on individuals because they/we are the foundation for a department. The joys I list are certainly not exhaustive yet, they are things I’ve had the privilege of doing as chair of the Communication Department. And, at the same time, like many things in life, there are challenges (e.g., professionally, personally, academically, regionally, and nationally) that can provoke an array of emotions. Depending on how challenges are handled, there is the potential to improve us as individuals and as a collective and possibly make for improved conditions.

To students, be they soon to be graduates or returning in fall 2019, I hope they have experienced more joys with fewer challenges in the pursuit of their education. As well, I hope that students found time spent in- and outside of the classroom with peers and faculty as beneficial to their sense of being—that they have been enhanced and have enhanced others. Finally, I hope similar for faculty and staff along with that they/we find ways to reflect, replenish, and possibly reconnect with one another.

As my final note, this issue of COMMUniqué reflects the inaugural look for the department newsletter. Thanks to the collaborative duo of Rebecca James and Johnny Valdez, for (en)visioning a new and improved COMMUniqué look (as well as social media content)! As the content from this issue shows, there’s lots of highlights of student and faculty accomplishments to catch up on. Next, I’m pleased to announce that beginning July 1st, Dr. Katherine Brown will serve as chair of the department. Woo hoo! In addition, two faculty will join the department: Dr. Elvis Nshom will join us in fall 2019 as a conflict and peace studies scholar and Dr. Julia Johnson will join the faculty in spring 2019. Double woo hoo!

One final note, no…really, well wishes to everyone in these turbulent times.
ELVIS IS IN THE BUILDING: INTRODUCING DR. ELVIS NSHOM

by Rebecca James

The Communication Department at CSUSM is excited to welcome Dr. Elvis Nshom as an Assistant Professor in Conflict and Peace Studies beginning fall 2019. Dr. Nshom has been working as a University Teacher in the International MA program in Intercultural Communication at the Department of Communication and Language Studies at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. He has also been a Visiting Lecturer at the Faculty of Journalism, National polytechnic Bambui, and at the University of Buea, Cameroon.

His main research interest is intergroup conflict and prejudice between majority and minority groups in order to understand the antecedents of conflicts. In addition, Dr. Nshom is also interested in media representations of minority groups and immigration issues such as the adaptation of immigrants or minority groups into the host society. Dr. Nshom’s interests stem from his life experiences. As he states, “as a linguistic minority in Cameroon, a racial minority in Finland, and from my experiences as an immigrant in Europe, I am passionate about minority issues.” With academic experience in Africa, Europe, and Russia, he represents a diversity of perspectives as a new addition to the department and to CSUSM students.

Dr. Nshom’s specialization in qualitative and quantitative research means that students majoring in communication and/or media studies may have an opportunity to understand quantitative research on a macro level. Moreover, even though he sees opportunities for research collaboration with some of his colleagues in the department, he brings research on intergroup conflict and prejudice that is different and unique. “I believe it is an addition to all the amazing research work that is being done in the department.”

What made the position at CSUSM stand out? “The focus of the position was the driving force; communication and conflict” Dr. Nshom answered and continued, “I am very interested in these two phenomena. My research and teaching predominantly focuses on intergroup conflict and communication related phenomena. I immediately became excited when I saw the job ad. I also felt there was a great fit between my academic background, the position, and the department. In addition, I had been to California before, and had amazing first impressions about that part of the world. He believes that his identity as a teacher evolved over the years. “I do not consider myself to be a disseminator of knowledge, but rather a facilitator of learning. I like to engage and challenge students with difficult questions and to help them find their own answers. I am passionate about teaching and I always try to share that passion with my students and to foster student's interest in the subject.”

Striving to create a conducive and safe atmosphere for students to exchange ideas with each other and with himself is one of Dr. Nshom’s top priorities. Communication and conflict is something individuals experience on daily; the experiences of students represent a great resource and can be effectively utilized in the learning process.

CONGRATULATIONS DR. ROSSMANN

by Johnny Valdez

Let us take a moment to congratulate the prestigious, vibrant Dr. Liliana Rossmann on her recently bestowed status of emeritus. Emeritus status is no easy task and bestowed following a lengthy review process. She described it as an honor to receive the award. Emeritus status identifies recently retired Dr. Rossmann as a distinguished professor and gives her the opportunity to continue to research through CSUSM.

During our interview, I asked Dr. Rossmann what attribute is needed to achieve the status she earned, her response was heartening. She described the compassion needed to be an educator. She said, “I was just doing my job, I tried to provide the best, most humane approach to teaching.” Her compassion for students was evident during our interview and to her peers, who nominated her for the status. She said, “We should not try to be all things for people but try to meet people where they are at.”

The University and faculty remain close to Dr. Rossmann’s heart. She admires the way CSUSM has grappled with issues of diversity. She described CSUSM as being instrumental in keeping on track to fulfill their mission of inclusion through curriculum and social justice advocacy. This is no easy task yet, the needle is moving forward by people such as Dr. Rossmann through challenging dialogue and commitment to see change. Dr. Rossmann plans to remain connected to the University through events on campus and an occasional drop by.

In the final moment of the interview, Dr. Rossmann offered these words for students and faculty. She said, “Keep the faith, faith in yourself, and faith in others. Others may be the people you least expect.” Let us not say “Good-bye” to Dr. Rossmann rather let us be inspired by her compassion for people and continue to strive for a better future.
BACK IN THE WSCA  
by Johnny Valdez

Dr. Antonio De La Garza

The zeal and dedication Dr. Antonio De La Garza expresses for the WSCA Conference was evident during the interview. As parliamentarian he has responsibility for ensuring that members adhere to Robert’s Rules of Order (e.g., speaking order, voting, and/or modifying motions raised) and couldn’t be happier to do so. The benefits of participation with the WSCA are exceptional as it gives faculty and students opportunities for their voices to be heard.

Dr. De La Garza shared that the conference is a space where experts have the time to exchange ideas that create synergistic moments in research and provides opportunities for researchers to collaborate. He then expressed that for students, the conference helps develop their research and their voice. His experience watching two CSUSM students, Uriel Montes and Autumn Destarac-Saldana, present their research at the Undergraduate Scholars Research Conference was momentous as he experienced their voices being heard. The platform WSCA offers to student research is extraordinary as it creates junctures for students to advance their research.

Finally, a former mentee whom he coached throughout graduate school, who is now pursuing her doctorate, presented her research on a panel about immigration rhetoric. He expressed his feelings in his final words about the conference, “Submit your work, get your research out there. Students have powerful voices and they need to be heard.

Dr. Kendra Rivera

Dr. Kendra Rivera, an integral member of the communication department, continues to recognize the challenges and “pockets of diversity” within the rigid confines of student conferences. She recognizes that conferences may hold barriers for future students in the academic world and her desire is to prepare and introduce students to academic settings while still pushing boundaries of academic elitism.

Dr. Rivera presented research entitled “White, Bi-Sexual, Mentally Ill, Mom, & Your Professor: Vulnerability and ‘Outing’ Yourself in the Classroom” regarding alternate ways of communicating vulnerability in the classroom. She recognized that while vulnerability creates close connections with students, who then feel free to become vulnerable about their own life, student evaluations don’t always reflect the positive impacts of vulnerability.

The highlight of the conference for Dr. Rivera was watching Stephen Vandereb, our spring student spotlight present his research. Kendra said, “Watching Vee (Stephen Vandereb) do his presentation, getting to see him recognize that there’s a place at the table for him.” Let us not settle for the norm of our society but, instead let us continue to push the boundaries.

Dr. Andrew Spieldenner

February 2019 was the first time Dr. Andrew Spieldenner attended the WSCA Conference and the experience was full of memorable moments. The opportunity to network with faculty was one of the highlights for him as he found value in sharing research with colleagues. The benefits the conference holds for the students was of most important to him as he described how the conference gives student the opportunity to present their research, to meet other students who have similar research, and to gain exposure to different programs that can create opportunities for their future.

Memorable moments were created through reconnecting with colleagues from other universities, informal conversations, and the opportunity to present his insightful research entitled, “Queerifying Race, Culture and Sex: Examining HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Social Marketing for African American and Latino Gay and Bisexual Men” as well as “I Like Gay People: The Violence of Heteronormative Liberal Politics in the University.” The former presentation encompassed the idea of how heteronormativity is used in academic settings and oppositions that queer faculty face. The impact of his presentations challenged the norm of current academic settings. The gripping research helps people create long lasting impact in education and society.
The aspiring, and soon to be graduate, J. Uriel Montes recently presented his research “The Subtle Inconsistencies: An investigation on Punk Rock and its Relationship to Racial Discrimination” at the USRC. Motivated by two of the department’s professors, Drs. Pindi and De La Garza, Uriel submitted his paper to the conference. The incredible opportunity to be a part of USRC wasn’t lost on him as he stated, “It felt great being recognized for the work I was doing.” He acknowledged the faculty in admiration for the assignments assigned they create to challenge the norms. He said, “The work you’re doing has depth and practicality.”

Uriel did his research on a local venue that exists in a progressive community in City Heights and analyzed aversive racism through field research which evaluates racial/ethnic minorities by avoidance of interaction with other racial/ethnic groups. Sounds amazing? It was. Uriel is passionate about his research as it derives from conducting research at a venue where he and his band perform. The experience of being at USRC with distinguished individuals and faculty was described as both inclusive yet, intimidating because he was presenting in an academic climate with acclaimed scholars. Overall, Uriel was thrilled to be a part of USRC and inspired to be better.

In the final moments of the interview, Uriel talked about the “I just want to graduate” mentality. His response, “Enjoy your work.” As for advice for student majors --“Don’t be intimidated, don’t be discouraged.” Let us not shy away from doing uncomfortable things, instead let us cultivate courage.

Living in the Middle
The passionate, recently graduated Autumn Destarac-Saldana presented her research at USRC. Motivated by faculty advisors, Autumn built up the courage to submit her research entitled “Queering the Wolverine: A Nepantlera Reading of Logan” to the conference, confident that her paper was of quality. Autumn expressed that she always had a desire to produce something that she was proud of and this was her perfect opportunity.

Autumn’s research reflected ideas that focused on immigration and decolonization. She based her research on the idea of queering family and the perspective of being “in the middle”; “the in between state” of immigration where one identifies with multiple ethnicities. Her passion remained evident as she described her connection to her research, “I never had to do this, I did because it meant something to me.”

Autumn’s experience at the conference was nerve racking as she was to present meaningful research in front of distinguished scholars. She recalled thinking, “All these people are so accomplished.” Following her presentation, she realized that a win for her is a win for the educator in the room, as people were there attentively listening to research that she produced. She said, “After my speech I felt so accomplished.”

To conclude the interview, Autumn advised others, “Find something you’re passionate about and roll with it.” Let us not be discouraged when pursuing our passion, instead let us pursue our passion with boldness and confidence.
In 2006, Tarana Burke began using the phrase "Me Too" to raise awareness of the pervasiveness of sexual abuse and assault in society. In 2017, as news broke regarding Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse allegations, the phrase #MeToo became a global catalytic phenomenon that raised awareness about sexual harassment, abuse, and assault.

Tarana Burke, an African-American civil rights activist, discussed her past experiences and struggles to students to the audience. The OSU, filled to the brim with students and staff alike, greeted Burke with an explosive applause and standing ovation. Burke expressed her gratitude to her attendees and cracked a few jokes before beginning her presentation.

Amplifying the voice of the victims has always been Burke’s goal. Although she shared her appreciation for the women in Hollywood’s propelling the Me Too movement to a widespread and mainstream audience, she expressed her desire to keep the focus on marginalized and underrepresented communities. Despite “a great lack of intersectionality across these various movements,” Burke, whose campaign predates the widespread adoption of social media, said she also believes that the Me Too campaign is bigger than just one person. Burke discussed the racial implications of the movement with CSUSM students and faculty, discussing the importance of inclusivity and intersectionality.

“I think it is selfish for me to try to frame Me Too as something that I own,” she said. “It is bigger than me and bigger than white women in Hollywood. Neither one of us should be centered in this work. This is about survivors.” How can Communication and Media scholars present change with new forms of media? Hashtag activism can help gain the attention of widespread audiences who may feel motivated to take part in the action. By sharing relatable, engaging content on social media platforms, #TimesUp can gain recognition and inspire more change. With the accessibility of social platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, audiences can get updates about the movement anytime, anywhere. Small campaigns in the past have expanded into huge, global social movements due to hashtag activism bringing masses of people together through the use of modern communication outlets.
Dr. Gloria Pindi, a communication professor here at CSUSM, was initially inspired to write an essay on feminism after attending a conference centered on intersectional feminism. The term intersectionality, coined by feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, is an important term in communication studies because it gives an in-depth understanding of the interplay between social categories and communication. Intersectionality represents an analytic framework that attempts to identify how interlocking systems of power impact those who are most marginalized in society and has played an integral role in Dr. Pindi’s research.

Dr. Pindi’s recent scholarship explores the performance of the self in transnational context around issues of globalization, migration, and diaspora with a critical approach to social justice and cultural diversity. Her advocacy for the inclusion of Congolese victims and survivors in communication discourse stems from her upbringing in the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC]. She describes how her research work was initially a response to the #metoo, Brett Kavanaugh, and the “Mute R. Kelly” movement, yet quickly transpired into a provocative and necessary essay. She expressed how she wanted to connect these movements on a global, intersectional scale, connecting the United States to the Congo.

In her essay, Dr. Pindi calls attention to the impact of global rape culture and urges readers to advocate for marginalized bodies in intersectional scholarship and activism - not just within the field of communication, but on a global scale. In researching and writing her article, she wondered, as a black Congolese African woman immigrant from the DRC, where exactly does Western feminism’s advocacy and intersectional work stand in relationship to rape culture that has continued for two decades? Dr. Pindi takes readers to the DRC by describing the ongoing violence and terror against women and girls. Across the country, the security situation has deteriorated as government authority has collapsed, which emboldens rival militia groups, who hold sway over large areas of territory. For over two decades, civil war has devastated the Congo.

“The Democratic Republic of Congo is potentially one of the richest countries on earth, but colonialism, slavery, and corruption have turned it into one of the poorest. We’re all connected to the Congo, fighting over rare minerals, such as tantalum” (used in cellphones, DVD players, laptops, hard drives, and gaming devices) shares Dr. Pindi, expressing the global impact the world has had on the DRC. “We’re all involved; we consume but we don’t share” adds Dr. Pindi. “The fight over rare materials has in turn led to a surge of violence against women. Rape is used as a weapon of war.” Sexual violence is often a hidden dimension of war. Local populations are subject to violence and abuse not by foreign armies, but also numerous guerrilla movements fighting for control of land, resources, and people. “As in African woman, I am told to be strong and always carry the burden of our pain inside” parts Dr Pindi, “nevertheless, there is a common threat that binds women from this region of the continent but many women from other countries that faced the same dangerous realities the Congolese are subject to.” Dr. Pindi is committed to social justice and activism at the intersections of communication and African women’s identities. In addition to her newly published essay, her activist work includes volunteer work in the DRC and in the United States. She works with local non-governmental organizations in DRC for the emancipation of female youth and volunteered at the Women’s Center of Carbondale Illinois.
Dr. Dreama Moon was asked to participate in the next American Council on Education (ACE) Women’s Network event on campus. ACE is a regional group of women faculty and administrators that meet once a semester, sponsoring events for campus women who are interested in professional development and networking, such as the Together Exploring Success Stories, or “TESS Talks,” that are designed to mirror TED talks. The idea brought together women faculty on campus for some important and pertinent discussions on topics of common interest. For example, previous TESS Talks involved panel discussions about different roles on campus and career experiences, as well as timely topics such as the intersection of gender and race in careers in higher education, the impact of gender in the 2016 election, and the importance of mentorship.

A recent TESS Talk included panelists Dr. Richelle Swan, Dr. Jodie Lawston, Dr. Kristen Bates, and Dr. Dreama Moon. This semester, the topic that comes to mind as being very worthy of discussion is: Times Up and Me Too in Higher Education. Dr. Moon is no stranger to exploring issues within the areas of equity and social justice. Notably, a course she developed, Communication 454: Communicating Whiteness and The Annual Whiteness Forum are two instances highlighting her commitment to social justice.

Sexual harassment had long been a hidden problem in society and on college campuses. When asked about the implications of TESS Talk in which she participated, Dr. Dreama Moon emphasized the communicative lens. She elaborates, “Unconscious bias and stereotyping exist in every organization. The first step toward dismantling the barriers that these harmful ideas create is understanding what the barriers are in the first place.” She emphasized that there is a definite need for further examination of how faculty members are treated and subjected to inappropriate behavior. Any change must begin with increased awareness at all levels of education.

For Dr. Moon, the TESS Talks mirror the hashtag movements and demand that we analyze inappropriate behavior across multiple media platforms. She explained, “the #metoo movement has revealed that women across the country, focusing on women in higher education, have had to endure shocking abuses of faculty authority and responsibility.” She continued by emphasizing that faculty must recognize that sexual harassment is an abuse of power. Dr. Moon shared possible concrete actions toward creating a safe environment for faculty, such as the development of workshops, panel discussions related to this topic, support for victims, and sound institutional guidelines for dealing with sexual harassment. She hopes that both the subtle forms of sexual harassment and its more blatant manifestations will disappear.

Dr. Moon is hopeful that faculty will understand the changes that need to be made for respect and equality to become the norm. Her end goal is to provide a framework for faculty to be able to identify gender discrimination and eradicate sexual assault. To achieve this goal, Dr. Moon identified “clear policies, training, notification, and progressive disciplinary actions [that] should be enacted to hold faculty members accountable for unacceptable behavior. We need to create a system that encourages reporting to promote a safer educational environment.” The university environment is one where all persons have the right to seek an education in a harassment-free setting (and/or work in one), and is one that can set guidelines for social change within higher education.

Need an add code to enroll in the Internship course COMM/MDIA 495?

Follow instructions (especially #4) on the internship page:

https://www.csusm.edu/communication/internships.html
Say hello to Stephen Vanderb, our student spotlight for the spring semester. His compassion and resilience cannot go without mentioning. He has confronted and embraced a multitude of factors that could have discouraged him from continuing his education but, chose not too.

Stephen faced an unstable community environment where education was not a priority. He expressed, “I felt disconnected and unvalidated from the academic environment.” He so desired to have an academic achievement. Gang violence was a norm in the life of Stephen, which brought tremendous pressures, all while being the victim of separated parents, which has its own percussions. Instead of giving up, Stephen submerged himself into the culture of CSUSM. He began to join numerous amount of organizations, clubs, and societies such as Service Learning, Hope and Wellness Center, Transitions Collective, Student Veteran Organization, The O Team, Honor Society, and a founding father of a fraternity. Stephen still longed for more in the academic community and found the perfect opportunity to conduct and present his very own research at the Western States Communication Association with the guidance of Dr. Kendra Rivera.

Stephen was confronted with a multitude of challenges while preparing for WSCA. He was in a brutal car accident that required an extensive recovery period that halted his research. Still pursuing his desire to be proud of something academically, he conducted his research in less than a month, organized a focus group for two weeks. He presented his research at WSCA, entitled, “Waiting for a “Like:” Exploring Social Media and Mental Health amongst College Students.” It explored the social obligation that social media puts on society and the negative impacts it has created such as mental health issues. For example, he commented, “Before, people became depressed due to loneliness, now we’re more connected than ever yet there is a rise of depression and anxiety”. Stephen added, “Social media has become a new value of our society,” which causes people to maintain an identity that is not their true self. “Finsta,” which is a fake Instagram created by users to express their “true selves” was analyzed in his research, encompasses that social obligations of users that are described as “tasks” including likes and comments.

Stephen describes presenting research at WSCA as having deep sense of meaning but intimidating. He said he was nervous the night before his presentation because he felt that he didn’t know the right terminology. Full of emotions the night before, Dr. Pindi said to him, “Use your passion to speak, not the perception of other people.” As Stephen built up the courage to sit on a panel with doctoral candidates and faculty, he spoke with eloquence and passion. He expressed, “I felt like I had something to offer the world.”

As Stephen continues his education through graduate school here at CSUSM, he hopes to pay back what this environment did for him. Stephen has grown a passion for storytelling and has chosen to live a life of vulnerability through his story to create real, lifetime connections and in hopes of inspiring people to begin to tell their story.

"To the students at CSUSM, “You have a story, share it. Your story is a part of who you are today.” - Stephen Vanderb
Q) What initially inspired you to attend CSUSM?

CSUSM was actually my fall back school in the case I could not attend my first choice school which was Arizona State University. I did get accepted but due to financial reasons, it was not meant to be. So I decided to go with CSUSM and make the most of it. I started out as a freshman in the dorms and at first, it was great but then it started to get rocky. At the time, I was undeclared and then I switched to business major but I did not feel as interested in the courses and was struggling a bit to keep myself motivated. My second year I switched to communication and started with COMM 360 with Dr. Joon Lee and it was an amazing class and I never looked back. I have enjoyed every communication or media class that I've taken and I really appreciate the professors that we have here in our department.

Q) What have been some of your favorite aspects of CSUSM? Which professors have you learned most from? Been challenged by? Found their teaching approaches enjoyable? Why?

As a commuter for the majority of my time at CSUSM, I could have put more of an effort into being more involved on campus. However, some of my favorite aspects have been the courses themselves and what I’ve learned from them. I mentioned Dr. Lee previously but every class I took with him - COMM 360, MASS 301, and MASS 451 - were so insightful and eye-opening. I gained so much from his classes. I also gained a lot of knowledge and insight from COMM 330 with Dr. Fredi Avalos. All of these classes were challenging but I feel that classes like these were you have to really push yourself are the classes that make you a better student and a well-rounded individual. I also enjoyed having Dr. Gloria Pindi, not only as a professor for COMM 390 but also as the Lambda Pi Eta advisor. She is an amazing individual and mentor and has taught me so much.

Q) What do you believe are the benefits of majoring in COMM?

I believe there are many benefits of majoring in communication. I feel one of the bigger things is simply learning how to effectively communicate with people and how to navigate differing perspectives and opinions as well as handling different personality types in a proper manner. I feel that more people should learn how to properly communicate especially in conflicts or disagreements. I think another major thing is that communication is a very broad major. I feel that communication majors have opportunity to go in so many directions regarding career paths and we are not limited to just a few paths. I think comm students are trained to be very well-rounded in all respects and we have the drive to aim for anything we want to do and learn what it takes to succeed.

Q) How has your studies in communication helped you succeed in your community service ventures?

I feel that everything I learned throughout my time at CSUSM, specifically as a Communication student, applied to my community service ventures. I used a lot of what I learned in my communication classes in my Comm 310 “Group Communication” class. We had to put together a large event that benefited the community in some way. My group and I chose to focus on the San Diego Humane Society, since most of us had adopted our pets from that particular shelter. It was an amazing feeling to be able to raise awareness for animals that needed homes and to donate hundreds of items that the shelter was in dire need of. I felt that I was able to combine my communication studies with my passions for animals and community outreach.
Q) Why do you believe more students should write and submit their research papers?

I think there is much more research that needs to be conducted. We always look to other countries when comparing our political, economic, and social problems in the US, not for solutions but to measure our successes or failures. However, there is a micro society (military culture) here that practices both liberal and conservative principles and is still able to function efficiently and effectively.

Q) What initially inspired you to write a piece on veterans?

I am a Sociology and Communication major here at CSUSU, so for my final capstone project in sociology I decided to take on issues specifically affecting veterans. I chose “reintegration of veterans into society” as my topic. As a veteran, who was medically retired after serving over 14 years active duty, I wanted to address issues that made transitioning back into civilian life difficult for me. Next, I realized this topic was still pertinent as I was still coming across Marines and sailors who had committed suicide after serving in the military. Of the four suicides I was made aware of, one was my classmate here at CSUSM. I became exhausted over hearing about their deaths without seeing any significant change, spurring my passion to find a solution. I have always had a drive to solve problems or puzzles and I enjoy taking on a challenge. This paper was a culmination of all my sociological education and experiences of what I have been through or witnessed.

Q) Why did you feel compelled to share your work with other students?

I felt compelled to unveil the truth; we live in a system and culture that is constructed by political, economic, and social entities that we are groomed to accept. We are told to just accept things the way that they are. I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) while I was on Active Duty and the military doctors processed me out swiftly. My studies show this is commonly practiced across all branches of the Armed Forces. Moreover, there is a high number of false PTSD claims that are contaminating the treatments practiced, which also affect service members and veterans who truly need help. When I received aftercare treatment, I was told by many medical providers that I did not have the issues I was originally diagnosed with. I became deeply concerned because I had given up my career based on the original findings. I chose to retire after being diagnosed with PTSD because I wanted to make a decision that was best for myself and for the Marine Corps, so I decided to part ways. In my research work and activism, I wanted to reiterate that we cannot expect veterans to figure out the issues and complexities of PTSD if medical providers have not yet figured out appropriate treatments. More research needs to be conducted and analyzed before slapping a label (diagnoses) on PTSD because it’s easier than helping the service member, or wasting a position that can be filled by someone else who is healthy.

Q) What process did you utilize to complete an important research piece?

I used quantitative data from secondary research, with micro studies, that uses psychology and psychiatric disciplines. I collected and aggregated the data and contrasted it against the macro studies of culture shock in order to see the overarching problems that are causing issues with veteran reintegration. I did this for two reasons; first, I have always been the type of person that never complains unless I have a solution or idea to make it more feasible. Sociology and anthropology papers that covered culture shock and studies with collectivist and individualistic societies in the world helped me narrow my thesis down to veterans having troubles because of culture shock. Secondly, when I kept looking at the micro studies, I found that they could not explain why other countries military members did not have the same issues with PTSD and suicides in comparison to American Armed Forces. Therefore, I wanted to make sense of my research data from an entirely new perspective.

Q) What do you want to communicate to people about your research?

Regardless of the reasons we, as a society, do not understand PTSD, we need to do a better job of being inclusive to our veterans here on campus. Specifically, I see how on CSUSM’s campus, we have culture centers and clubs that are in the center of campus. However, when you attempt to locate the Veterans Center, they are in the back of campus by the parking lot, far from the campus. Geographically, it makes a statement of what we think of our veteran students and where they belong.

Spring 2019 Volume 06, Issue 3
Communication Society

by Johnny Valdez

Communication Society is a student-led and focused organization that concentrates on resume building, networking, and establishing connections. Arianna Lejbman, current Co-President joined “Comm Society” through the recommendation of faculty advisor Dr. Andrew Spieldenner. She expressed, “I wanted to be a part of something, learn from others around me, and educate myself more on communication based opportunities.”

The challenges of building quality relationships become increasingly difficult because CSUSM is primarily a commuter school. The purpose of Comm Society is to help combat these issues as Arianna states that the organization helps cultivate relationships, unite students with similar interests revolving around communication, and offer a variety of academic opportunities. The Society promotes professional and academic development and Arianna is a testament to this claim as she expressed, “As co-president I have learned responsibility. I am held accountable and responsible for my own actions, fellow officers and the actions of students in the club.”

While being a part of Comm Society students have opportunity to partake in events that are of great value. One of the most memorable events this spring semester was the Student Research Seminar hosted by Comm Society and Lambda Pi Eta, where fellow students presented research in front of students and faculty. For this event, 3 students presented their research. Events such as that one challenge and empower students and are a snippet of what to expect while being a part of Comm Society.

Arianna stated, “There’s a satisfying feeling of knowing students are receiving insightful information that challenges pre-existing perspective, inspire student research, and gives practical solutions to dreams students have.”

Lambda Pi Eta

by Johnny Valdez

Kealia Wolfe joined Lambda Pi Eta in hopes of immersing herself in a community on campus with similar interests. She was introduced to L.P.E by a friend of hers, who described the society as, “Inclusive and recognized.” L.P.E is the National Communication Association’s official honor society at four-year colleges and universities nationwide; for information visit https://www.csusm.edu/communication/studentorganization.html. Dr. Pindi is the faculty advisor for L.P.E as she assists students in organizing.

Being a part of the honor society for Kealia continues to “open up my mind and help me grow.” The honor society gives students the opportunity to network with faculty and communication and media classmates, learn from faculty advisors, provides potential mentorship, and build lifelong connections, etc. The Communication Department is proud to have this prestigious honor society on campus and encourages students to join. Kealia now serves as the co-president of L.P.E and urges all to come take part. She described the most memorable moment as being the L.P.E ceremony where family and friends come together to celebrate their achievements. Don’t miss out on an amazing opportunity to join an organization with a wide variety of philanthropic, academic, and social programs.
The online world is interwoven in one’s daily life, affecting how individuals receive, disseminate, and interact with information – news, specifically. Social media plays a huge role in political discourse in recent years and gives way to perceiving U.S. democracy in a new way. This semester’s “Speaking of Democracy” event focused on the impacts of social media on political perception and political discourse.

“Speaking of Democracy,” a bi-semester event sponsored by Civic Learning at CSUSM, provided an opportunity to talk about issues from inside the classroom to issues affecting the United States government. Students, community members, and faculty discussed topics surrounding the effects of social media on politics. How has social media changed political campaigns, and the way individuals engage in the political process? Students communicated their ideas surrounding the causes and effects of increased political engagement online. Dr. Uy-Tioco shared, “Online political discourse has largely polarized users – most individuals involved in online political discourse lean left or right, with very few moderates. Inappropriate usage of social media – such as attacking not catering their message in a relatable way to their audience – often alienates voters and creates a negative perception.” Dr. Uy-Tioco adds, “Social media plays a large role in political discourse, image perception, and communication.”

Dr. Cecilia Uy-Tioco, a media studies assistant professor in the department, was one faculty member who played a role in providing a space for local politicians, business owners, and students to come together to discuss political issues. As an interdisciplinary scholar, Dr. Uy-Tioco’s research is primarily engaged in interrogating the relationships between media, culture, and globalization. She discussed social media implications behind political discourses. Concluding our interview, she added, “People are now able to hide behind a screen, which can be both good and bad. Social media provides the potential to promote democracy on new platforms that weren’t available in years past. These platforms allow almost everyone to speak, sharing both freedom and responsibility, important to maintain a respectful and educated manner of communication.”
CONGRATULATIONS
A PLACE TO HONOR OUR DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

DR. AMY COREY

"#Hashtag Activism, Flak, and the Manufacture of Dissent" at the PCA/ACA National Conference in Washington D.C., applied for and received funding through Lecturer Professional Development, "Love is Love is Love is Love: Flakivisim and Commodification in LGBTQ Communities" has been accepted to the journal of Queer Studies in Media Popular Culture and will be in print later this year, and review of A. Zeisler’s We Were Feminists Once was published in the Popular Culture Studies Journal.

DR. ANTONIO DE LA GARZA

Exceptional Service to Students Award, co-authored article “No Olvidado” accepted into Border-Lines a Journal of the Latino Research Center, elected to serve as our College representative on the University Faculty Awards Selection Committee, helped host and presented at the Undoc-U-Allly Training at CSUSM where I spoke about organizing across status, parliamentarian for the Western States Communication Association, Presented a talk at the Latinx Center on the Central American Migrant Caravan, Presented a Scholarship Writing workshop for first generation students, and Presented a Narrative writing workshop for STAND

DR. MICHELLE A. HOLLING


DR. JOONSEONG LEE


DR. DREAMA G. MOON

Facilitated workshop at the Social Justice Symposium entitled, "If We Don’t Talk about it, It Gets Worse" conducted with students: Veronica Carbajal, Carla Jordan, Sonya Makkani, Tiffany Gonzalez, and Kara Estorga

DR. KENDRA RIVERA

February, 2019, received the "Exemplary Teacher Award" from the Communication and Instruction Interest Group within the Western States Communication Association.

LUCIA GORDON

"Relaxation Techniques Toolbox"

Recipient of the 2019 Great Ideas For Teaching Award

This award provides formal and public recognition of effective and innovative teaching practices in GEO 102 through the selection of the best submitted strategy, activity or technique employed to address an instructional problem/goal in the GEO course.
### COMMUNICATION GRADUATES

**Spring 2019**

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<th>Graduate Name</th>
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**Nicole Calvo**

**Christina M Camps**
MEDIA STUDIES/MASS MEDIA GRADUATES

Brittany A Allen-Robertson
Josue Avalos
Danielle Roraldo Bawit
Haley Dawn Bennett
Hector Max Bolanos
Malia Christina Busch
Ryan Daniel Callanta
Deven Michael Cervantes
Samantha Erica Cohen
Michael Christopher Doyle
Michael Mario Drentea
Luz Selva Duran
Layda Galvan
Brian Tomas Gonzalez
Joselyne Lilinoe Grace
Loran Reid Green
Matilde J Hull
Meghan Christine Knight
Reginald Kenneth Dabalos Kummer
John Michael Leidig
Hanna Emily Markham
Elle N McFarland
Dania Meza
Jessica Alejandra Moreno
Joshua Luis Morones
Regina Noval
Omar Orozco
Briana Elizabeth Osuna
Kevin Palomino
Taylor Scott Rood
Sarah Anne Saenz
Judy Salazar Soto
Ariya Jacquelyn Sharif
Ainsley Terese Strachan
Kelsey Ann Turchi
Emma Corrin Wallace-Potts
Katherine Mary Wasdyke
Jakob Cole Woo-Ming
Nathan Thomas Yetter
Vanessa Zaragoza