



COMMUniqué

Department of Communication

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A Note from Josie Rosas

After 4 years as A.C. for the department, it became a big part of my life and I assumed responsibility for it's happiness and well being. I have gotten to know the faculty, as well as many of the students...I will treasure the many conversations and relationships that have developed. My memories include experiencing PaintNite with faculty, a number of parties--even a celebration with karaoke entertainment! I have enjoyed helping to organize the numerous events such as Meet & Greet, the annual Graduation Celebration, and the controversial Whiteness Forum. I was a part of establishing social media for the department and involved with publishing this newsletter. So many memories--leaves no room to include my picture ;). The faculty and students became to feel like part of my extended family and I was not actively planning to leave...but in life, sometimes doors open and we move on. It was a difficult decision to make but I am confident that I am handing over the reins to someone that will care for the department with the same passion and commitment that I did.

Although I am leaving the department, I am not going very far. You will see me in the CHABSS Dean's Office as Administrative Analyst and of course I will be available to help the new A.C. as she trains and embraces her new role and responsibilities. I will miss everyone and I wish the department, all faculty, students, and Nancy the very best in life and promise to visit as often as possible. Cheers!



New Administrative Coordinator

Nancy Santiago

By Nancy Santiago



- I am a CSUSM Alumna and currently working on my Masters in Social Work through Extended Learning.
- I worked for over five years in the Fallbrook School Districts. I have had the pleasure of working in many different roles within the school district, ranging from student registration to teaching in the classroom, and most recently, working in the IT department.
- I am passionate about education and strive to help and empower students in their educational journey.
- I enjoy hiking, working out, exploring new places, and meeting new people.
- I have two kids. My daughter, Leslie, is 13 years old and is an amazing soccer player. My son, Noah, is 5 years old, and he is one adventurous little boy who loves to be active.



Welcome Dr. Deya Roy

By: Brittany Dominguez-Hood

This semester CSUSM welcomes Dr. Deya Roy to the Communication department. At the beginning of her college career, she did not plan on becoming a communication professor. She had originally gone to school to become an automobile journalist, but her goal changed after she accepted an assistantship with her Health Communication Scholar at the age of twenty-one. During that time, she realized that she was passionate about teaching which inspired her new goal of becoming a professor. Dr. Roy is currently teaching Communication and Gender as well as Intercultural Communication. If you plan on taking one of her classes, then you can look forward to her fun approach to teaching. Dr. Roy likes to give her students a chance to use their voice by giving them an opportunity to ‘teach the class’ in their own presentations. She allows her students to find any video they would like and have them relate the video to the course reading materials. In her experience, she has found that having her students teach class keeps everyone engaged in learning since she isn’t the only one lecturing. After taking her classes, she hopes that her students gain the confidence to use their voice and speak out against any inequality that they see going on. It is also important to her that her students realize there is a whole world out there and that they need to be culturally informed about other cultures.

For those of you thinking about applying to grad school, Dr. Roy has some advice, “Don’t be afraid to screw up.”



Dr. Deya Roy

In her eyes, there isn’t much growth when you’re always successful. She believes that when you “screw up” you are able to learn from those mistakes and thus are able to grow. Dr. Roy is aware of how intimidating applying for grad school can be, but she recommends students pace themselves. There are a ton of forms that must be filled out, and she recommends that students complete them over a course of a few weeks rather than all in one go. She also hopes that students will shoot their shot while applying to grad school even if they do not meet the grade point average cut off. Dr. Roy believes that there is no harm in taking a chance since there is a possibility that they may get accepted.

Welcome Elvis Nshom

By Brendan Kraus

This fall, the Communication department welcomed Dr. Elvis Nshom into the CSUSM family. Coming from the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, Dr. Nshom is now 4 months into his teaching tenure at CSUSM. We caught up with him to reflect on his time here so far and to present an opportunity for students to get to know him better.

Reflecting on his first few months at CSUSM, Dr. Nshom's experience has been a very positive one so far.

"My first few weeks of teaching have been very exciting. I love the students; we are having great conversations in class which is important to me." In transitioning from living in Finland to the United States, Dr. Nshom has cited the other faculty as a key factor in his transition going as smoothly as it has. "My colleagues were very helpful. They have been providing constant support. I will just ask one of them how does this work, and they are kind and patient enough to explain it to me." Dr. Nshom, who has also taught in Cameroon, talked about how his teaching style has varied in each university he has taught at. "In Finland, the teacher really is not seen as disseminator of knowledge. The teacher is there to guide you to the info, we don't have many contact sessions. In Cameroon, the system is similar to the U.S. The students are exposed to a lot of content". Through his various teaching experiences, Dr. Nshom brings a unique international perspective that not many professors can say they have. Dr. Nshom, who



Dr. Nshom

has also been a student in various countries, hopes to take everything he has learned from his time in other countries and apply it to his teaching here at CSUSM. "I'm in a beautiful place to take from both worlds and create my own philosophy of teaching." For Dr. Nshom, teaching is about more than simply sharing knowledge with students for an hour and then sending them on their way. For him, the joy of teaching comes from helping his students better themselves and their ability to think. When asked why he took the position at CSUSM, he discusses what it means for him to help students. "When I teach, I try to expose my students and inspire them and encourage them and train them to develop their skills. I want them to develop and practice these skills." Dr. Nshom believes that everyone possesses a special gift, and he wants to help his students build up their gifts.

His work which deals in prejudice and intergroup conflict is very important to him. He believes that today it is more relevant than ever. “This is relevant in American society. We see groups facing discrimination on a daily basis. One of my goals is to understand the facts that make people to be predisposed to these attitudes”. Dr. Nshom has been trying to incorporate his work into his teaching at CSUSM. He hopes to help students understand how conflict can be resolved and resolutions found. “True conflict resolution is when you both get your needs met. That is conflict resolution.”



Brendan Kraus

Student Intern Brendan Kraus

By Brittany Dominguez-Hood



This semester the Communication Department welcomed Brendan Kraus as a new student intern. He is a Media Studies major and is in his fourth year of college. This semester, His favorite class is MDIA 470: Digital Policy in the U.S. which is taught by Dr. Brian Dolber. Brendan initially decided to take the internship with the Communication Department because he thought it would be interesting. He has enjoyed conducting interviews with professors as well as learning how the Communique is created. Brendan has gained many valuable skills as an intern such as filing documents, creating a newsletter, and handling the Communication Department’s Facebook and Twitter. He advises students to start looking for internships very early because it can become stressful trying to find one that is interesting at the last minute. Brendan believes that it is important for students to intern especially if they don’t know what they would like to do after college.



Brittany Dominguez-Hood

Student Intern Brittany Dominguez-Hood

By Brendan Kraus

This semester the Communication Department welcomed Brittany Dominguez-Hood as one of its student interns. Brittany is a 4th year Communication major. Her favorite aspect of working for the Communication department is getting to write the department newsletter, The Communiqué. The interactions with the professors she has found very interesting. This semester her favorite class has been COMM 430, Power, Discourse and Social Identity taught by Professor Fredi Avalos. Brittany’s favorite aspect of the class is being able to discuss speech and how hate speech can specifically affect minority groups. Outside of school her hobbies include baking, sewing and enjoying a good horror movie.



Dr. Antonio De La Garza (Center Left) with his students

Bad Hombres / Good Wives

By Andrea Lujan

On Friday October 25th Dr. Patrice Armon of the CSUSM Visual and Performing Arts Program gave Dr. Antonio De La Garza and five of his students the opportunity to attend the San Diego play, Bad Hombres / Good Wives written by Herbert Siguenza. Bad Hombres / Good Wives is centered around the LatinX community which comedically critiques the tropes of Machismo and Narco culture, while addressing the common cultural sensibilities of living within the borderlands.

Bad Hombres / Good Wives is important to Southern California’s Communication program because it speaks directly to the LatinX community by providing them with a platform to express their realities through the performing arts. Bad Hombres / Good Wives begins a shift in communication with the LatinX communities by drawing on transformative experiences filled with culture, familiar identities and

customs. The theater was filled with the laughter cheers and the native sounds of corridos which brought the audience together in song. *Bad Hombres / Good Wives* is a transgressive play because it pushes the boundaries on controversial topics such a machismo, sexuality, and narco culture to challenge tradition while maintaining relevance to the LatinX community. The CSUSM Theater Arts program is instrumental to the LatinX community because it creates a network for marginalized individuals to share their stories and thrive through theatre.

Prior to the viewing of *Bad Hombres / Good Wives* Dr. De La Garza treated his students out for dinner in the San Diego's Gaslamp quarter. The out-of-classroom experience gave students the opportunity to get to know Dr. De La Garza outside of academia, which was a pleasure because very seldom do students get to connect with their professors on a more interpersonal level. After the performance, the students got to meet the cast and writer of *Bad Hombres / Good Wives* thanks to Dr. Patrice Armon. During the cast meeting the students were given the opportunity to network and interview the cast and producers of the play, further adding to the already incredible event. Overall, the experience served as a vehicle for both an educational and entertaining night. The influence of the field of Communication within the Visual Performing Arts is unmistakable and further builds a bond in both fields of study.



Dr. Spieldenner

The Presence of Absences

By Brittany Dominguez-Hood



Dr. Andrew Spieldenner recently won an award for his art piece, *The Presence of Absences*, that he presented at the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (OSCLG) in 2019. The art piece was based on an issue of the *OUT/LOOK* journal. The journal inspired him to create a piece about remembering those who were a part of HIV organizations and LGBTQ movements, but are not here to share their stories. His art piece focuses on the absence of those people and how their presence can still be felt long after their passing. The art piece is a four-minute video that Catron Booker helped create. Booker is a video and performance artist in the LGBTQ community.



In the video, Dr. Spieldenner remembers people from HIV organizations and LGBTQ movements that he knew as well as those he didn't get the chance to meet. The piece first went up in 2017 and has been shown at multiple stigma conferences since then. His art piece will be shown again this fall for the first time at his alma mater Howard University. <http://www.queeroutlook.org/portfolio/andrew-r-spieldenner/>

9th Annual Meet & Greet

By Brittany Dominguez-Hood



Dr. De La Garza

On September 24th the Communication Department held its 9th Annual Meet and Greet in the SBSB courtyard. The event was co-hosted by the Department of Communication and the student organizations, Communication Society and Lambda Pi Eta. Dr. Antonio De La Garza opened the event with words of welcome, and welcomed new faculty Dr. Deya Roy and Dr. Elvis Nshom to the Communication Department. The Meet and Greet gave students the chance to connect and network with faculty and peers. Students had the opportunity to speak with faculty and learn more about them in an informal setting.

Students were also able to learn more information about student organizations and how to join them. Faculty and students who attended the event enjoyed good food and conversations with new and old friends. The faculty also showed their appreciation for former Department Chair Dr. Michelle Holling by thanking her for the hard work she put into the job. New Department Chair, Dr. Katherine Brown presented Dr. Holling with a gift from the Communication faculty, thanking her for her service as outgoing chair.



Dr. Nshom and Dr. Roy



Dr. Uy-Tioco, Debbie Andrews, Dr. Rossman, Dr. Rivera, Dr. Matsumoto, Lucia Gordon, and Dr. Brown





Dr. Fredi Avalos (Center) and Dr. Catherine Matsumoto (Second on the left) pictured with students who are involved with The Beloved Community Project.

Creating a Beloved Community

By Brittany Dominguez-Hood



Last year, Dr. Fredi Avalos' students in her Leadership and Social Change course had started the "Beloved Campus Community Project." Her students used posters with quotes from positive leaders like James Baldwin and Ellen DeGeneres, as a way to receive input from students on campus about what they believe makes a "Beloved Community." The project was based on a shared vision that Grace Lee Boggs and Martin Luther King, Jr. had of everyone in a community would participate in creating new values, truths, and relationships as a foundation for a new society. The foundation of the project is dialogue and being able to understand and embrace our differences. Beloved Community is not attempting to be a Utopian project, for at the center of a Beloved Community lies conflict and positive disruption.

The project was put into motion last spring after a CSUSM student had attacked a local Jewish Synagogue. The note he left before the attack suggested that he was "not alone". After the attack, many students and faculty did not feel safe, but they tried their best to go about their days as they normally would. The project is aiming to help the faculty, staff, and students collectively heal from the trauma that many are dealing with as a result of the attack. We need to heal as a whole in order to move forward as well as allowing everyone to feel safe on this campus. Dr. Avalos wanted to create a way for the campus community to heal through the project. She believes that we need to be thinking about how to prevent or reduce the chance that another attack by a student could happen. Dr. Avalos is worried that isolated students may become vulnerable to hate groups since they prey on lonely people. Throughout her research, she has

found that isolation is political and can lead to a person being easily manipulated by hate groups. She referenced the work of Dr. Hannah Arendt and Olivia Lang who both share similar ideas about the way isolation can be used to pull a person into a hate group by using their loneliness against them. Hate groups offer isolated people a community, so they no longer feel alone. Dr. Avalos hopes that the Beloved Community project will help prevent our students from feeling isolated on this campus since the project challenges the political “manipulation by isolation” tactic that many hate groups use. Being inclusive is an important aspect of the project as it allows everyone on campus the opportunity to be included.

As a way to deal with ambiguity, stress, and difference there will be a series of “World Cafés” throughout the spring semester that will be held campus-wide. Dr. Avalos hopes that through the World Cafés, students will be able to have meaningful dialogue with each other to listen and understand their differences. Again, the Beloved Community is not attempting to be a Utopian project, but rather a project that allows students the space to have said dialogue. Dr. Avalos and her Leadership and Social Change students will be gathering and analyzing the data that they collect from the World Cafés. They will be using their data to create a written report about their findings, and they will share the information with the campus community.



Dr. Dolber

Dr. Dolber and the Gig Economy

By Brendan Kraus

Many professors at CSUSM are involved in work outside their teaching duties. Dr. Brian Dolber, whose work examines the relationship between labor and media, has been researching the gig economy. The gig economy, as described by Dr. Dolber, is work “that allows people to work flexibly at a piecemeal rate.” Arguably the most well known jobs that operate within the gig economy are ride sharing services like Uber and Lyft. Dr. Dolber’s work over the last year has had him working with Ride shares Driver United, an independent organization fighting for better workers’ pay and rights for drivers. The organization gained much media attention when they organized drivers to strike before Uber and Lyft had their IPO (Initial Public Offering) launch. Dr. Dolber worked with the organization to help build an app, which drivers can use to become connected to one another. He believes that communication is key in movements like this. “Social media advertising was used to attract drivers to our



website and have important conversations through our app.” Over the last year, the organization and Dr. Dolber’s primary work has revolved around their attempt to help pass California Assembly Bill 5. The bill, which is also known as AB 5, will limit the ways in which companies can classify workers as opposed to independent contractors. Dr. Dolber points out that the bill isn’t necessarily creating a new law, but rather ensuring that older laws are being followed. The California Supreme Court ruled in the Dynamex Operations s Superior Court that an “ABC” code would be adopted in order to determine whether an individual would be classified as an employee or as an independent contractor. The test has 3 qualifications and if a person does not meet them, they would be considered an employee. As Dr. Dolber points out “By the ABC test there is absolute no way you would ever mistake a gig worker for being a 1099 independent contractor. Because Uber drivers don’t set the rates, don’t know who they are picking up or where they are going. Because they don’t have the same control over themselves as a small business person they are technically employees.” Dr. Dolber believes that it is important that drivers be considered employees to make sure that they receive fair treatment. He pointed out that conditions for many drivers have gotten worse over the last few years. An example he cited was that last March, Uber lowered the price driver’s make per mile by 20 cents. No driver was consulted and they had no say in the matter. Drivers are making less money today compared to 5 years ago.



New Class Queer Media

By Brittany Dominguez-Hood

This Spring, Dr. Andrew Spieldenner is teaching a new class MDIA 470: Queer Media. He was inspired to teach the class because of the film, Tangerine. He was interested to look into new queer media since there is a lot more than there used to be. Dr. Spieldenner is excited to teach the class since there have been more openly queer people in different genres such as stand-up comedy and music with a dedicated following. The class enrollment is currently full, but students have the option to waitlist if they want to crash the class the first week.

Congratulations Dr. Corey

By Brendan Kraus



The Department of Communication would like to take a quick moment to congratulate Dr. Amy Corey on having her article *Love is love is Love: From Flaktivism to Consumer Activism in LGBTQ+ Communities*. Her article, which was published in *Queer Studies in Media & Popular Culture* looks at consumer activism in the LGBTQ+ community and the importance it plays in raising awareness. Good job Dr. Corey!

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