Dear COM Alumni,

Welcome to the third edition of COMConnect, a newsletter dedicated to CMU’s Communication Alumni. We are excited to keep you informed about your fellow alumni and COM events at CMU. In particular, we hope to spotlight alumni and their experiences in future editions of the newsletter, so please email us your news at comconnect@cmich.edu.

In addition to hearing from our Alumni, we also enjoy meeting you during our alumni events or during your trips back to campus. Please connect with us on facebook or twitter (@cmichcom). Looking forward to hearing from you or seeing you soon!

All the best,
Bill Dailey, Chair

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We Want to Hear from YOU!

Haven’t filled out our alumni survey? Click here to tell us what you’ve been up to. We want to stay in touch and add you to our interactive alumni map! Where in the world are our CMU Communication Alumni? Let’s find out...

Have questions, comments, concerns, or news? Email us at comconnect@cmich.edu
Follow us on Facebook or find us on Twitter: @cmichcom
Dr. Alysa Lucas

The truth is out about Dr. Alysa Lucas. She recently had a book chapter published. Her book chapter entitled, “‘Got a Secret, Can You Keep It?’ – Pretty Little Liars, Friendships, and Privacy Management” was published early in 2016 and specifically looks at the Pretty Little Liars show and the connection she makes the show to her research and communication theory. She has been an avid television watcher for years now and she has been a fan of the show from the first season.

“As a teacher, I’m particularly interested in connecting class concepts to pop culture and media examples that students are familiar with…and sometimes introducing new examples that students may not know…to demonstrate that theory is all around us on a daily basis,” Dr. Lucas said.

Not only has Dr. Lucas published a chapter, but she also earned an award for her teaching. She was one of the 2016 recipients of CMU’s Excellence in Teaching Award at the Faculty Excellence Exhibition ceremony on March 23.

There is no doubt that Dr. Lucas loves to teach and incorporate her teaching style to pop culture. Unlike the girls in Pretty Little Liars, she has no secret to hide.

Professors Travel to the Iowa Caucus

From January 28th to 31st, three CMU Communication staff traveled to Iowa to experience the Iowa presidential caucuses and kickoff to the presidential election season. Dr. Ed Hinck, Dr. Shelly Hinck, and Dr. Michael Papa were able to experience multiple political rallies and observe the way Iowans engaged in the political process through thoughtful and respectful consideration of the candidates. The professors were intrigued by how willing the attendants of the rallies were to discuss multiple viewpoints, and even their server at a local restaurant asked who they were voting for and why! However, the most remarkable part of the trip was Dr. Papa’s opportunity to briefly meet with President Bill Clinton before and after he gave a speech at Cornell College.

President Clinton and Dr. Papa were able to connect through discussing social change initiatives in developing countries, comparing research Dr. Papa has done with Dr. Arvind Singhal to the Clinton Foundation’s work in Africa and South America. “I was impressed by how personable President Clinton was and on how genuinely interested he was in what people had to share with him,” said Dr. Papa.

Dr. Shelly Hinck has been keeping busy this semester with three publications and more research in progress. Her publications include an article detailing an assessment tool for higher cognitive learning in honors students, a chapter about the constraints and opportunities as perceived by faculty on moving into administrative roles, and an article in Argumentation and Advocacy talking about service learning as a transformative pedagogy.

All three publications are with co-authors, from former students, to family members, to faculty from other departments, and even our own former dean.

Dr. Hinck says, “I love working with research teams. I love hearing what their perspective is on the project that we’re currently engaged in. It becomes a way in which we engage our scholarly identities with one another.”

Dr. Hinck is involved in research on presidential debates. She is also beginning a project examining online support networks for people with a courtesy stigma, such as family members of incarcerated persons.

When asked how she ties all of her research agenda together, Dr. Hinck responded, “Civic engagement is what drives me – volunteerism, informed citizenship, and civic engagement.”
Tessa Rieger Stromdahl has a heart for non-profit work and a thirst for justice. Tessa made a move in 2014 from working on international human rights issues at The Carter Center to Habitat for Humanity, where she now works to address the global poverty and shelter crisis. Tessa’s work allows her to develop programming and connect donor interest, which affects how Habitat for Humanity functions at the community level in a positive and significant way. In her free time, Tessa enjoys running competitively and spending time with her family. CMU Memories: Tessa loved to dance at Oldies Night at the Wayside. She also enjoyed her time as a COM 101 instructor and an Assistant Basic Course Director and remembers, seeing people blossom and finding their voice and power before their eyes.

Hey Alumni! Know of a job opening? Share it with us and we can pass along the information to COM alumni and students. Email us at comconnect@cmich.edu

Want to know what the CCFA alumni are up to?

We caught up with one of our very own from Moore Hall...

The Future Doctorates

Samantha Rooney

Samantha Rooney will be studying Health Communication at the University of Florida where she will work towards her Ph.D. in Mass Communication and a Certificate in Public Health. Sam is excited to start applied research within the University of Florida health system and to begin making a difference in the lives of others. Sam wanted to thank the multiple professors at CMU who took the time to make her a better teacher and scholar, and her fellow GTAs who have stuck with her “through blood, sweat, and many, many tears.” Sam will always remember her cohort and their two-week teacher training when they first started the program. She says, “The entire seminar was one terrific memory that I will always cherish. I had so much fun with my cohort and we had a blast getting to know one another and created lifelong friendships.”

Jamie Osborn

Jamie Osborn will be traveling to Knoxville, Tennessee where she will be studying Family Communication at the University of Tennessee. Jamie has never lived in a town bigger than Mount Pleasant and is excited to experience the difference of a big city. Jamie fondly thinks of her time at CMU as one of confidence building and great relationships. One of her favorite memories is when Dr. Michael Papa put two cardboard cutouts of vampires in the entrance of the GTA office and turned off the lights and shut the door. She says, “We have the type of relationship with the faculty and staff, and they have the type of relationship with one another, where we can joke around.” Jamie also remarked on the leaders of the program that built her up both in her teaching and academically.
Our COM Students: *What's next after graduation?*

**JD Sterba, BAA Student**

[Image of JD Sterba]

Hometown: Troy, MI  
Minors: Marketing & Legal Studies  
Dream Job: Working for the Chicago Cubs, national politics

JD Sterba is a 2016 graduate who studied communication (major) and a marketing and legal studies (double minor). Sterba was involved in several different organizations on CMU’s campus including: Greek Life, the Student Conduct Office’s Hearing Board, the Honors Office, and the Leadership Institute. Additionally, he worked for the University Communications as a public relations intern. “All of these diverse experiences have provided me with many learning opportunities outside of the classroom and have really added value to my college experience and complemented my coursework quite well,” Sterba said. All that hard work paid off because Sterba was offered a job at Dow Chemical Company, a Fortune 50 company and one of the world’s largest chemical companies. He will join the company’s Public and Government Affairs team starting the end of June. He would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Alysa Lucas for serving on her research team for the last two years. “I’ve learned a lot and found an amazing friend and mentor along the way,” Sterba said. “There’s no way I could’ve gotten the project done without her.”

**Maddy McCafferty, BAA Student**

[Image of Maddy McCafferty]

Hometown: Waterford, MI  
Career Goals: Event Coordinator for a Nonprofit Organization

Maddy McCafferty is currently a senior at CMU majoring in communication with a minor in event management. Her senior year of high school she was diagnosed with Hodkin’s Lymphoma, a blood cancer, and every day she thanks her parents for all the support they have given her through this journey. “I would not have survived those obstacles without the love and support of my family and amazing friends,” McCafferty said. “Their constant encouragement and advice in times of trouble led me to where I am today.” Her ultimate goal is to work within a nonprofit organization as an event coordinator or continue her work with fundraising events. In all, she would like to give back to the community in some way. “I have a passion for helping others and providing positive experiences that others can enjoy and reflect on in times of trouble,” McCafferty said. Her favorite memory in the COM department was working with the professors which made her enjoy each, if not all, of her classes.

**Upcoming events in 2016-2017**

**November 10-13:**  
National Communication Association 102nd Annual Convention in Philadelphia, PA

**February 2017:**  
3rd Annual Michigan Undergraduate & Graduate Communication Conference

**March 15-19:**  
Central States Communication Conference in Minneapolis at the Hyatt Regency
A handful of CMU alums took the time to answer questions about their life as PhD students at Texas A&M.

Robert Hinck graduated from CMU in 2013 with his MA in communication. He now focuses on U.S.-China strategic and economic dialogues (SED) through an organizational and rhetorical lens. When asked what he likes most about the career path he has chosen, Hink said he has the “time and flexibility to both research something of global importance, but also of interest to me, while also educating young, new scholars about communication.”

Sara Kitsch also graduated in 2013 from CMU with a MA in communication. When asked about how her time at CMU in the COM department helped her pursue a PhD, Kitsch said, “the department offered several vital experiences, including the opportunity to serve as the assistant basic course director, interning in the dean’s office, as well as completing a wide variety of Master’s course work and completing my thesis.”

Ryan Rigda graduated from CMU in 2014 with a MA in communication. Rigda has always been a sports fan and he studies the rhetoric of sports and gender. He has recently published a book on Harry Potter Studies titled, “Muggles vs. Wizards.” The chapter examines quidditch blogs as a site of feminist agency and empowerment in sport.

Katherine Hodgdon graduated from CMU in 2015 with her Master's degree. She said one of the hardest things to do is “managing your time effectively… and reminding myself it's ok to take some breaks.” She worked side-by-side with Dr. Joseph Packer as his GTA for speech and debate and she really enjoyed the research he was doing and wanted to expand video game research into the field of organization communication.

Know of an alumnus we should feature? Email us at comconnect@cmich.edu with updates on your life.
Congrats 2016 COM Grads!

Undergraduate

May 2015

- John Bachor
- Audrey Barto
- Austin Black
- Jessica Blackburn
- Abby Bodzick
- Jalynn Bruske
- Kent Burnett
- Amanda Casler
- Mallory Church
- Derrick Daigneau
- DaLaun Dillard
- Terra Feys-Volmering
- Jarrod Foster
- Brianna Frison
- John Glazier
- William Gray
- Joseph Hall
- Jonathan Harris
- Jocelynn Heard
- Kenzie Hixson
- Juwan Holley
- Kelsey Ivan
- Joshua Jarvi
- Angela Koski
- Torrey Laffoon
- Robert Langen
- Zachary Lietz
- Charles Mahone II
- Aaron Martin-Green
- Jason McArt
- Ryan McFadden
- Mark Moultrup
- Colton Odykirk
- Hanna Quinlan
- William Radatz
- Caesar Rodriguez
- Stewart Rudman
- Peter Ruggirello
- Benjamin Saylor
- Callee Schaeffer
- Maria Shimones
- Seth Sprague
- James Sterba
- Lauren Vanden Bossche
- Tayler Watrous
- Lauren Wytiaz
- Sang-yang Yim
- Jarek Zager

August 2016

- Hannah Angsioco
- Harper Halley
- Colleen Kelly
- Madison McCafferty
- Joshua Pierce
- Miles Potter
- Zachary Spearman
- Audrey Barto

Comprehensive Exam

Emily Gesell - Comprehensive Exam

August 2016

Laura Jennings -
Friends with Benefits
Relationships: Coordination Strategies and Rule Implementation

Meagan Mooney -
I'll Support You No Matter What, But...: Social Support in Unplanned Pregnancies

Chris Mundie -
Investigating Romantic Role Strain in Non-Marital and Marital Romantic Relationships in the Video Game Harvest Moon

Thank you Alumni & Friends

The COM Area gratefully acknowledges the generosity of its alumni and friends. You, too, can make a significant impact by giving back to the COM Area. For information on making contributions, please contact Dr. William Dailey, Chair, at 989-774-3177 or by email to daile1wo@cmich.edu.

333 Moore Hall, (989) 774-3177, cda.cmich.edu