When Joanna Parada transferred to The Beach, she knew that she wanted to major in Communication Studies. Her eagerness to integrate herself into student life on our campus led her to the discovery that our beloved Student Communication Association (SCA) had become inactive due to the lack of an Executive Committee and members. After hearing this news, she made it her mission to gather some of her peers together in order to re-launch the SCA. The SCA is now a strong presence in the Department with over 50 outstanding members in the organization.

Joanna is thrilled to have been a part of the SCA. “My most memorable moment at The Beach was definitely revamping SCA and serving as the President for a year and a half.” However, re-establishing the SCA was not without its challenges. Joanna recalled, “The biggest challenge that the board and I faced when rebuilding SCA was gaining students’ interest. Regardless of the fact that we attempted to balance our workshops with social outings, we were struggling to gain student interest.” The major turn occurred in the SCA branding strategy of making shirts with the slogan, “I Got 99 Problems But A Speech Ain’t One.” When students saw these shirts around campus, their interest peaked, and more students became involved in the organization.

Joanna has recently graduated, and is now working for the Feminist Majority Foundation’s “Choices Campaign” (part of Ms. Magazine). She will be aiding and working with feminists at a variety of California university campuses in order to launch effective and sustainable feminist advocacy groups. Specifically, she hopes to promote “issues that affect women and men alike—we will be advancing not only gender specific issues, but issues regarding sexuality, sexism, and racism.” She is excited to pursue a future career that combines her “love for speech writing, public speaking, and community organizing.”

She leaves behind the following advice for undergraduates on their paths to graduation. “Search for internships and seek networking opportunities early on. Do not wait for the last minute. Start building a name for yourself in whatever field you are interested in.” She continued, “Above all, always carry yourself in a professional manner; prove to potential employers that you are worth the investment. And, get involved on campus…stay connected!”

In addition to serving as SCA President, Joanna was an Outreach Coordinator for the College of Liberal Arts Student Council, Committee Member of the Alumni Association’s myBeach Senior Class, and a Mentor for the Upcoming Leaders in Liberal Arts. The Department is proud of Joanna Parada, and all of her accomplishments.
Transitioning to a New Department Chair

A Message from the Acting Chair

Dr. Sharon Downey
Acting Chair

“I'M BACK!” (Arnold Schwarzenegger, Terminator), but only “acting” as a chair for a while since we are in the midst of a change in department leadership. In early March, outgoing chair Dr. Amy Bippus was appointed as the “data-cruncher” Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts. To help us, this means figuring out how to serve so many majors (1,300) and general education students (4,500) with so few faculty and useable classrooms. In the interim, I am holding down the fort until summer’s end when newly elected chair, Dr. Ann Johnson, begins her 3-year term in office.

“MAKE MY DAY” (Clint Eastwood, Dirty Harry). On a different front, the 7-year evaluation of our department is now finished, and the reviews made our day. The external reviewer (Dr. Peter Andersen, SDSU) called our Department one of the two best in the CSU system, and singled out for special recognition our advisors (Ms. Dawn Kelsey and Ms. Jamie Wiles), forensics program, interACT performance troupe, Center for First Amendment Studies, and Hauth Center for Communication Skills. The University’s Internal Review Committee gave us a high grade as well, especially about the quality of our undergraduate and graduate students. They recognized that our staff and faculty are “overworked” (and underpaid, but they didn’t say this) compared to other academic units, and recommended hiring 8-10 new tenure-track faculty to best meet the needs of students and our surrounding communities. Wishful thinking perhaps, but we appreciate the recommendation anyway.

A Message from Immediate Past Chair and Current Associate Dean, Dr. Amy Bippus

Dr. Amy Bippus
Associate Dean
College of Liberal Arts

Starting March 1st, I accepted the position of Associate Dean for the College of Liberal Arts at CSULB. In this capacity, I oversee enrollment management for the College, contribute to the College and University’s focus on student success, and work on community partnerships and outreach. It is an exciting opportunity to help CSULB chart a path for continued excellence in a time of rapid change in higher education.

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as Chair of the Department of Communication Studies. I will dearly miss being in such a vibrant and successful department – the satisfaction of collaborating with our talented and charismatic faculty, the exhilaration of seeing students apply communication concepts to gain insights into their own identities and experiences. But with the Communication Studies Department being such a large and integral part of the College of Liberal Arts, its people and its mission will never be far from my thoughts.

Scholarships Awarded to Outstanding Students

Each year, the Department is pleased to award two scholarships to outstanding undergraduate students. This year, the recipient of the Audrey Nichol Hauth Scholarship is Natalie Ohishi. She will be assisting with the Luster E. and Audrey Nichol Hauth Center for Communication Skills beginning in the Fall Semester, 2013.

The Department is also pleased to award the Irv B. and Karen A. Gamal Award to Jared Long. Congratulations to both of these remarkable students!

Pictured (Left to Right):
Luster E. Hauth, Audrey Nichol Hauth, Natalie Ohishi, College of Liberal Arts Dean David Wallace.
Irv B. Gamal: Distinguished Speaker, 2013

Each spring, the Department welcomes speakers to share some experiences of their time at CSULB as a Communication Studies major, and to reflect on their communicative life post-graduation. The annual event is intended for graduating seniors to celebrate their journey together, for continuing students to learn about ways to enrich their undergraduate experience on their path to graduation, and for alumni to interact with our outstanding students.

This year, we had the honor of spending an evening with distinguished alumnus Irv Gamal. He is currently President and CEO of INSIGHT SYSTEMS™ GROUP, a South Orange County organizational and leadership development consulting firm. He has forty years experience in the field, and has successfully worked as an internal and external consultant with many Fortune 500 Companies, as well as local, state, and federal government agencies. He shared many lessons that he has found to be most important in pursuing a career, including following your passion, never burning bridges, staying connected to CSULB, and remaining positive amidst challenges in establishing a career. Following the speech and Q & A session, the Department gathered for a reception to enjoy live violin music, wine, refreshments, and time together.

Faculty Publications


Dr. Timothy Plax is the winner of the College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2013. Dr. Plax earned degrees from CSULB in Speech Communication (1970) and Rhetorical Studies (1971), and is one of the most prolific communication scholars in the United States.

Dr. Patricia Kearney has announced her retirement to begin in August, 2013. She has been a vital member of the Department for many years. We will feature a story about her years of service to the Department in the next newsletter.

Dr. Timothy Plax and Dr. Patricia Kearney were honored with the Distinguished Article Award by the Instructional Development Division of the National Communication Association for their 1985 Communication Education article (co-authored with Virginia Richmond and James C. McCroskey) titled, “Power in the Classroom III: Teacher Communication Techniques and Messages.”

Jennifer Holmgren (M.A. Student) won the top paper award for the Instructional Development Division of the National Communication Association for her study written with Dr. San Bolkan (based on her thesis, directed by Dr. Bolkan).

Alumnus Yuhua “Jake” Liang is graduating with his Ph.D. in Communication from Michigan State University, and has accepted an Assistant Professor position at Chapman University where he’ll begin Fall, 2013.

Alumnus Dr. Lea C. Hellmueller received a Fulbright Scholarship for work at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, a Swiss National Science Foundation Grant for continuing work at the university of Missouri, and another Swiss NSF post-doctoral fellowship to work at the University of Texas, Austin. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, and has accepted a tenure track position at Texas Tech University beginning Fall, 2013.


11 graduate students in the Department gave a total of 16 research presentations at academic conferences this year. The graduate cohort combined to travel to 60 speech and debate tournaments to coach and judge intercollegiate competitions.

Dr. Stacy Young was honored with the Most Valuable Professor by the CSULB University Honors Program.

Dr. Lynda McCroskey’s father, Dr. James C. McCroskey, passed away this winter. He was the most published person in our discipline, and his research remains vital to communication science. The Department sends its condolences to Professor Lynda McCroskey and her family.

Bryan Malinis and Jeffrey Samano were named Distinguished Graduate Students by the College of Liberal Arts.

Anthony Cuomo was recognized by the Communication Studies Graduate Committee as the Outstanding Graduate Scholar.

Shadee Abdi, Kameron Brown, Jennifer Holmgren, and Alyse Keller were named Distinguished Graduate Students by the Department of Communication Studies.

Bryan Malinis was named the Outstanding Teaching Assistant for the Department of Communication Studies.

Joseph Evans was named the Outstanding Forensics Assistant for his work with the Speech and Debate program.

Shadee Abdi received the Top Debut Paper Award at the Western States Communication Association Convention in Reno, NV.

Alumnus Derek Pavia was named Trainer of the Year by the Spectrum Athletic Club of Redondo Beach. He is currently training to appear in fitness competitions.

Recent Hires: In the next issue we welcome our newest faculty members, Dr. Subrina Robinson and Jessica Russell.
The Center for First Amendment Studies is conducting its 3rd Annual Richard Clarke Essay Contest. This year’s topic concerns the ethical and legal questions surrounding the use of drones. The contest is open to all law students in good standing and makes $35,000 available in prize money from a grant from A-Mark Financial Foundation. The Center will again co-sponsor forums this July in Rome at John Cabot University. Professors Craig Smith, Kevin Johnson, and Jennifer Asenas, will participate along with scholars from Italy. The Center’s Graduate Research Fellow Anthony Cuomo will help with the forums. Anthony has been such a wonderful and bright scholar to work with the Center, has finished his MA degree, and leaves big shoes to fill. Director Craig Smith continued his lecturing on First Amendment issues at campuses as varied and far apart as Cypress Bay High School near Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and CSU, Northridge. He will lecture at the University of Texas in the fall. Alums are invited to visit the Center’s website at www.firstamendmentstudies.org to review our research papers, publications, and links to YouTube videos on the “First Amendment and You.”

The Multicultural Center (MCC) concluded the year with several positive and thought provoking events, helping to bring together over 1000 people to engage each other on issues of cultural significance. The Center hosted “Shihan,” a three-time National Slam Poet and frequent performer on HBO’s “Def Poetry.” The Center helped form a coalition to bring Wendy Barranco, a Combat Medic who served in Iraq, to share her compelling and difficult account of rampant sexual misconduct in the military as well as challenges faced by returning veterans. The MCC also participated in an alliance between the Muslim Student Association and CSULB’s Jewish student organization, well as challenges faced by returning veterans.

The Department’s Tutoring Center continued its tradition of providing academic support and mentorship to Communication Studies students. For spring 2013, peer mentors conducted a total of 176 tutoring sessions focusing on COMM core classes (e.g., COMM 200, 300, 301, 306, 307, 309, 330); students received one-on-one assistance with course-specific assignments and general study skills. The peer mentors also organized, designed, and facilitated a series of collaborative learning sessions addressing: How to Select a Rhetoric Artifact/Topic; How to Do a Topics Bibliography; How to Present Theory-Driven Hypotheses; How to Compute Statistics. Student visitors to the Tutoring Center praise the peer mentors by noting that they are “wonderful,” “helpful,” and “a true asset to the department.” Both students and peer mentors believe that the Center has made a difference in their lives by providing a space to receive academic guidance and to make lasting networking connections. The Department is pleased to be able to provide this free resource to students and we extend our deepest appreciation to the graduate (Shadee Abdi, Kameron Brown, Jennifer Holmgren, Alyse Keller) and undergraduate (Mike Burke, Aron Chan, Chris Forsythe, Adriana Gonzalez, Christopher Gutierrez, Jazmin Jimenez, Jo-Marie Lawrence, Thuy Pham, Jacky Sosa, Ryan Stephens, Claire Trinh, Sarah Williams) peer mentors who make it possible!

The Beach Forensics Program has a lot to celebrate. Ending the season with a coveted top-25 ranking in parliamentary debate, and former students on nearly every other major program’s coaching staffs, CSULB Forensics demonstrated to our colleagues and community why the Beach is the best. The program has grown from a core of about 20 students to a core of about 35. To add to these numbers, the program’s directors recruited 16 top-ranked community college students, including several students with national championships at that level. The other good news is that we have rebuilt our policy debate program, and have experienced some early successes including a second place finish at Diablo Valley College. For the first time since 2006, CSULB had students competing at the Cross-Examination Debate Association’s National Championship Tournament, where the Beach was recognized for its aggressive efforts to rebuild the policy debate program.

In sum, a season full of sweepstakes awards, top rankings, and full-service forensics have set the Beach apart. Not only has Beach Forensics established itself as a “full-service” forensics program, but it is quickly distinguishing itself as a leader in forensics pedagogy and success.
Department Staff

Wendy Lucas — Administrative Coordinator
Nancy Comito— Administrative Services Assistant II
Ann Kinsey— Administrative Support Coordinator

Newsletter Ideas?

Would you like to become more involved as a volunteer for our department? Do you know communication studies graduates who would be good candidates for alumni profiles? Please contact the editor, Dr. Kevin Johnson, with these (and other) suggestions for the newsletter at: rhetoricalcritic@gmail.com

BEACH FUND

Though Cal State Long Beach is a publicly supported institution, generous contributions to the Beach Fund are critical to keeping the University thriving. More than 20,000 alumni, parents and friends of the university contribute to the Beach Fund each year. Gifts to the Beach Fund make it possible for our gifted students to earn the lifelong benefits of a quality CSULB education and protect the value of degrees already earned. When you receive a phone call from the Beach Fund, please consider directing your gift to the Communication Studies Department.