Every year at the Communication Studies graduation dinner we end the evening with our last words of encouragement and a farewell from the faculty. We embolden our students to take what they have learned into the world. Our nation, communities, workplaces and families all so desperately need people who can communicate with integrity, with compassion, and with the ability to create change for the better. And no one is able to accomplish these goals with greater finesse than our majors!

We then ask all of you to stay in touch. Well, let’s face it, none of us have remained as connected as we would have liked. With that in mind, welcome to our brand new Communication Studies newsletter! It provides an opportunity for you to see all the wonderful things happening in our growing program as well as spotlighting what some of our alumni are doing with their lives. And, trust me, you are doing a lot! Please take a minute, read the newsletter, and then reach out to one of us (and then maybe a fellow alum, you know, the one that got you through John Seiter’s final exam!) and tell us what you are up to. We’d love to know!

Warmly,

Jen Peeples and the rest of the Communication Studies crew.
# 2016-2017 Academic Year in Review

Graduates 44  
Accepted New Majors 45  
Students Taught 1,555

**Congratulations to our 2016-2017 graduates!**

**Fall 2016:**  
Samantha Askerlund  
Loretta Beaty  
Miranda Bodkin  
Stephen Compton  
Nina Davis  
Kaleb Esplin  
Kylee Hopkin  
Felicity Hughes  
Baylee Jensen  
Joseph Meadows  
Daniel Mikkelsen  
Brenna Ponting  
Wesley Steele  
Reece Sullivan

**Spring 2017:**  
Karlie Arave  
Luis Armenta  
Travis Barger  
Aubrey Beck  
Max Benson  
Ian Blake  
Daniel Blakely  
MaKayla Chadwick  
Makinzie Clark  
Jaron Christenson  
Tucker Cottrell  
Ashton Crump  
Erin Dimond  
Matthew Dove  
McKall Earnshaw  
Benjamin Fredrickson  
Dallin Grow  
Haylee Hunsaker  
Marley Jardine  
Karlie Linton  
Savanna Louder  
Emily Maxwell  
Jeremy Miner  
Audrey Pope  
Laura Prusak  
Kaitlin Schramm  
Shaylen Snow  
Chris Sorensen  
Matthew Weed  
Kierstin Williams  
Mikala Wride

**Summer 2017:**  
Kellie Parry

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**STUDENT OF THE YEAR**

The Student of the Year is selected from senior students with the top 10% highest GPA's in Communication Studies. Out of these students, the faculty then looks at their activity in the major and decides as a group who will be awarded the Student of the Year.

**Travis Barger**

Travis Barger is the Communication Studies Student of the Year not only because of his irrepressible eagerness for learning and excellence in his studies but for his leadership and team spirit as well! This year, he served as club president, helped fellow students, and made a positive difference in all his classes. His generosity is admired by all.

Travis will begin a Masters of Human Resources degree at Utah State University in Fall 2017.
Harold J. Kinzer is the founding faculty member of the Communication Studies program. The Harold J. Kinzer Scholarship honors his impact on the Communication Studies program and is awarded each academic year to outstanding students in the major.

Amanda Allen Cooper

“Amanda is a standout student who is both curious and dedicated to conducting high quality research. I can always count on Amanda to reflect thoughtfully about what she is learning and apply it to a variety of contexts.”
- Kristina Scharp, Assistant Professor

“Amanda Allen Cooper is one of our outstanding Communication Studies students who is graduating Fall 2017. She has tackled some tough classes and has kept her 4.0 in Communication Studies courses. She loves being a TA for Public Speaking helping the masses learn to be better public speakers. She has also loved doing research with Kristina Scharp.”
- Suzann Winn, Academic Advisor

Malivanh Soumpholphakdy

“I have been impressed by Mali’s capacity to apply what she learns in meaningful ways. Her academic work displays depth of thought and the ability to make important connections between ideas and her own life. In her work as a teaching assistant she has been an invaluable resource to students because of her ability to be organized and structured. This has set an example to such a degree that I have frequently received glowing comments and feedback from those she works with about the positive influence Mali has had on them.”
- Clair Canfield, Lecturer

“What strikes me most about Mali is her positive attitude and desire to excel in class. She is a leader in creating a great learning environment and I look forward to seeing her grow each week.”
- Kristina Scharp, Assistant Professor
Kimberly Jacobs
Part-time Persuasive Communication Instructor, University of Montana

During her time at Utah State, Kimberly found many ways to get involved and enhance her learning experience. She was a Public Speaking Teaching Assistant for two years, CHASS Peer Advisor, and Rhetoric Associate, where she helped students one on one to improve their writing skills. Kimberly also had an outstanding research opportunity where she studied “Responding to Derogatory Nonverbal Behaviors in Televised Political Debates” with Dr. John Seiter and Dr. Harry Weger. In addition to this research, she conducted her own research which she presented at the Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies Research Symposium and won the “Outstanding Paper Award”. Kimberly was an Ambassador and council member for CHASS, organized Homecoming activities with Lambda Pi Eta, and participated in both the Speech and USU Spanish Clubs. She traveled to Mexico with the USU Spanish Club during Spring Break of 2004 and worked with FAI to create adobe bricks for homes and to teach hygiene habits to school-age children.

Kimberly loved her time in the Communication Studies program so much that after she graduated in the Spring of 2006, she pursued her Masters in Interpersonal Communication at the University of Montana and is now a part-time Persuasive Communication Instructor. Although Communication is her profession, the benefit of Kimberly's education has gone far beyond aiding her at work. Kimberly's awareness of persuasion in her everyday life has increased and she is better able to avoid falling victim to unwanted messages presented to her. “It has enhanced my ability to be aware of messages around me, and not be susceptible to being persuaded if I don’t want to do something.” This has especially rung true with recent elections, presidential debates, and advertisements presented daily, and helped her to make informed decisions. Kimberly also loves being with her children and balances her work so she can dedicate herself to being a stay-at-home parent.

Dion-Jay Brookter
Executive Director, SE Community Facility Commission

Dion-Jay (DJ) Brookter is the Executive Director of the Southeast Community Facility Commission at the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). In this role, DJ is responsible for working with local leaders, government officials, nonprofits, and the community to ensure that residents in San Francisco’s Southeastern neighborhoods—and beyond—have access to educational and job opportunities through the SFPUC’s Southeast Community Facility and various programs. “There is nothing more fulfilling than being approached by city residents and receiving thanks for the day-to-day work I do in the community,” said DJ. “I’m both proud and humbled to work for and in collaboration with the people of San Francisco.” DJ was recognized as one of the Bayview Sun Reporter Newspaper’s Talented 25 in 2016 for his accomplishments and dedication as a shining star in the Bay Area’s African American Community.

Over the years, DJ has dedicated his personal and professional life to improving the well-being of others. Prior to joining the SFPUC, DJ worked as the Deputy Director at Young Community Developers Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to providing job training and educational opportunities to residents in San Francisco’s Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood. He has also served on several nonprofit boards including Fresno’s Leading Young Professionals, Reaching Potentials, Frandelja Enrichment Center and has mentored and been an inspiration to countless youth.

DJ holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix and a B.S. in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Business from Utah State University. As a Utah State student on a full athletic scholarship, he spent his time studying; practicing and playing football; and serving as a Student Athlete Mentor helping other athletes to also excel in academics. DJ is still a proud and true Aggie!
Greg Allred  
Anesthesiologist

Greg is a Cache Valley native who has always had a deep love for learning. One of his fondest memories of Utah State was playing soccer for the USU Men's team. He enjoyed the workouts, traveling with the team in tournaments throughout the west, and the camaraderie of his teammates, all of which gave him a much-needed outlet from the stress of everyday studies. As he was deciding which major to pursue, he enrolled in Interpersonal Communication with Dr. John Seiter. His experience in this class was “refreshing” and “mind-blowing” compared to what he’d been accustomed to, and Greg immediately applied for the major after completing this course. He also enjoyed Dr. Andy Anderson’s emphasis on form and function in his anatomy and physiology courses. This propelled him into pursuing a degree in medicine and on to his current professional endeavors.

After graduating from Utah State in 2008, Greg attended Midwestern University in Arizona and completed his Masters in Biomedical Sciences in 2011 and Doctorate in Medicine in 2015. Over the years, Greg has also received certification in ACLS, BLS, PALS, is licensed in neonatal resuscitation and pursuing board certification in Anesthesiology. He has volunteered at various places to the medically underserved. Currently, Greg is a Resident Physician at LSU Health Sciences Center in Louisiana and training to become an Anesthesiologist. As an Anesthesiologist, he only has a few minutes to connect with patients and gain their trust before they literally put their lives in his hands. Greg attributes the interpersonal skills needed to gain that trust, in part, to his education in Communication Studies.

Natalie Pickett  
Masters in Communications, University of Utah

Natalie Pickett was an exemplary role model during her time at Utah State, both in and outside the classroom. She was an Ambassador all four years she was at USU and helped recruit students at high schools around the state. During her junior and senior year, she was a President’s Ambassador and served on the Ambassador cabinet. Natalie worked closely with USUSA as the CHASS Event Planner her senior year and was given a Distinguished Service Award from CHASS. She was also a Teaching Assistant for Public Speaking, sang with the Latter-Day Voices of the Logan LDS Institute for two years, and completed a minor in Spanish. She graduated in the Spring of 2010.

Natalie went on to graduate school at the University of Utah, finishing in 2012 with her graduate in Organizational Communication and Conflict. During school, she had many opportunities to dive deeper into her studies. She taught Interpersonal Communication and spent a year studying and receiving hands on mediation training which was both exciting and unique. Natalie found that anything she was passionate about could be studied from a communication perspective. Especially interesting to her was the topic of bullying, which shaped her thesis project of studying violence prevention programs in schools. During and after graduate school, Natalie interned at Time out for Women, which led to a full-time job traveling, giving presentations, and working on their website. Now, Natalie dedicates her time and skills to being a full-time parent to her three children, ages four, two, and one.
Brad, Matt, Jen and Clair with students at graduation.

Suzann Winn showing her support for graduating students.

Clair Canfield presenting at TEDx USU.

Brad Hall with Kristina Scharp, who received Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year for 2017.

Jennifer Peeples bonding with Communication Studies students.

Jason Gilmore and Jennifer Peeples with Crescencio Lopez, Languages, Philosophy and Communication Studies Teacher of the Year.

Jason Gilmore receiving the USU President's Diversity Award.

Matt Sanders receiving the 2017 USU Community Engaged Faculty Member Award.

Jason Gilmore with students at #morethanstudyabroad trip to Salvador, Brazil.

Brad, Jen and Clair at May 2017 graduation.

Brad, Jen and Clair at May 2017 graduation.
Bradford Hall
brad.hall@usu.edu
I completed, with two new co-authors (Patricia Covarrubias and Kris Kirschbaum), a new revision of my textbook, *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication* and that has been sent to the publishers. I also completed a chapter on culture and communication for a new handbook on communication. My most enjoyable activity was teaching two sections of the senior capstone course, and a section each of Language, Thought & Action, and Intercultural Communication. I am consistently impressed by the quality of work our students produce. I also joined with our faculty to start planning for a potential Master’s program in Communication Studies. This graduate degree would bring exciting new possibilities to our program here at Utah State.

Suzann Winn
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Did you know we had 18 Communication Studies grads in Spring 2006 and now it is almost double that for Spring 2017. Can you believe this Communication Studies program has grown that much! It has been amazing to watch the growth with numbers but also the growth in amazing faculty who make this program fly. The faculty continue to make USU’s Communication Studies program “Rock Star” quality. I love graduation time but it is a mix of excitement and sadness because I will miss the fun and crazy students who make my job as Academic Advisor such a delight. We truly hope that our grads, old and new, will keep in contact so that we can keep our friendships fresh. Hoping you are all well.

John Seiter
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This year I was able to teach Intercultural Communication and Persuasion. Matt, Jen and I have been working on an edited book entitled *Communication in the Classroom: A Collection of G.I.F.T.S*. The book is expected to be published in 2017 and will contain over 100 teaching activities that Communication Studies teachers from across the discipline will be able to use in their courses. Matt, Jen, and I contributed a couple of activities to the book as well!

Jennifer Peeples
jennifer.peeples@usu.edu
In the fall, I published a co-authored book, *Under Pressure: Coal Industry Rhetoric and Neoliberalism*, which earned Book of the Year for the Environmental Communication Division at the National Communication Association Conference, 2016. Based on the findings from the book, we wrote an article that was picked up in over 60 newspapers. I am also co-authoring a book on communication activities with Matt and John. I am developing an advanced conflict class and an Honors course on communicating science, both of which I will teach next year.
Kristina Scharp

One of the most rewarding experiences this year was working with Communication Studies students in the Family Communication and Relationships Lab. Over the course of the year, Elizabeth Dorrance Hall and I mentored 18 students, many of whom we hired from research grants as paid research assistants. Together, we engaged in both qualitative and quantitative research studies and published journal articles on topics such as parent-child estrangement, foster care, and family member marginalization. Another highlight was getting to work with Matt Sanders and Clair Canfield on developing teaching activities as well as collaborating with John Seiter on a narrative study. I also taught Qualitative Research in Communication Studies and received the Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year for 2017. It’s great to be a part of a busy department full of talented and kind colleagues!

Matthew Sanders  
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This year I moved into a part-time administrative role as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. I published a co-authored book chapter on nonprofit organizations and signed a contract to co-author a book on the same topic. In addition, I gave a number of keynote addresses around the state on Becoming a Learner. I was also awarded USU’s Community Engaged Faculty Member for 2017 and taught the Leadership and Nonprofit courses.

Jason Gilmore  
jenason.gilmore@usu.edu

Two USU faculty and I took students on a #morethanstudyabroad trip to Salvador, Brazil in the summer of 2016. It was the product of a $55,000 international initiative grant from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences to study race and class in modern Brazil. We were there for 24 days. I was also the faculty recipient of the USU President’s Diversity Award for championing issues of diversity and inclusion at USU and taught Introduction to Global Communication and Advanced Perspectives in Global Communication this year.

Clair Canfield  
clair.canfield@usu.edu

This year I gave a talk at TEDx USU titled “The Beauty of Conflict” which is available via their website as well as the YouTube TEDx channel. I also collaborated with Matt Sanders on a new workshop for incoming students that deals with how to manage conflict more effectively. These workshops were presented to nearly all the incoming freshman. I also published an article in Communication Education co-authored with Kristina Scharp. I taught Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication, and Communication and Conflict.

Kristina Scharp  
kristina.scharp@usu.edu

One of the most rewarding experiences this year was working with Communication Studies students in the Family Communication and Relationships Lab. Over the course of the year, Elizabeth Dorrance Hall and I mentored 18 students, many of whom we hired from research grants as paid research assistants. Together, we engaged in both qualitative and quantitative research studies and published journal articles on topics such as parent-child estrangement, foster care, and family member marginalization. Another highlight was getting to work with Matt Sanders and Clair Canfield on developing teaching activities as well as collaborating with John Seiter on a narrative study. I also taught Qualitative Research in Communication Studies and received the Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year for 2017. It’s great to be a part of a busy department full of talented and kind colleagues!