



SACRAMENTO STATE

CommConnect

Spring 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME
NEW FACULTY

• 2 •



*COMS Senior Wins
Trustee Award*

• 3 •



*Alum funds first-
ever undergraduate
research prize*

• 7 •

U-Nite celebrates 10th birthday Founders honored with Community Service Award

U-Nite, the College of Arts and Letters' collaboration with the Crocker Art Museum, brings the best of Sac State's art and education into the Sacramento community.

Founded 10 years ago by Dr. **Elaine Gale**, Communication Studies professor, U-Nite is a tremendous bridge between the university and the public. A showcase of faculty and student talent, it is a one-of-a-kind, interactive evening that involves hundreds of faculty, staff, students, and community members.

"I created U-Nite in 2011 from a dream," Gale said. "I'm happy U-Nite is still going strong, and I'm just delighted at all the new connections and the relationships that I've made through the event."

In fact, two of those relationships would help keep U-Nite going over the years. "I co-ordinated it with **Lorelei Bayne** [Professor of Theater and Dance] from 2013-2015. Then **Michele Foss-Snowden** [Professor of Communication Studies] and Lorelei co-ordinated in 2016, and we moved it to the fall to be in line with the Art-Ober initiative at the time."

In honor of their ongoing service and collaboration, Gale, Bayne, and Foss-Snowden were awarded the Outstanding Community Service Award by the Sac State Faculty Senate. They will receive the award at a ceremony in early March.

"This project was always about love, about creating community, celebrating creativity, and about a deep love for the arts," Gale added. "My colleagues enjoy it. The community enjoys it. It touches my heart."



Communication Studies Professors **Elaine Gale** and **Michele Foss-Snowden** at the Crocker Art Museum for U-Nite 2022.

See **U-NITE**, page 2

Welcome new faculty!

In Fall 2022, the Communication Studies department welcomed three new faculty members.

■ **Fernando Gallo** is a multimedia journalist with 15 years of experience across multiple platforms. He's been published in outlets including the San Francisco Chronicle, Sacramento Bee, and Associated Press. A Sac State alum (Class of '08), he joined the department to serve as the advisor to the State Hornet, where he was once a reporter.



Fernando Gallo

■ **Dr. Morgan Morley** specializes in interpersonal, health, and identity communication, and quantitative research methods. She completed her doctorate at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she wrote the dissertation titled, "Changing with

Chronic Illness: Exploring Multi-Dimensional Aspects of Identity Change."

"It has been a joy to join the impressive faculty, staff, and students within the Communication Studies department," Morley said. "Over my first semester I was able to see the passion that students have for learning and applying communication in their personal and professional lives. The immense support that I have felt from the department and students has truly been unlike any other university. I feel incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to grow at Sac State!"



Morgan Morley

■ **Dr. Nate Woo** specializes in interpersonal, health, and affectionate communication, as

well as quantitative research methods. He completed his doctorate at University of Arizona where he wrote the dissertation titled, "Testing the Effects of an Affectionate Communication Intervention to Bolster Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic."



Nate Woo

"Having supportive and thoughtful colleagues made the transition to Sac State an enjoyable experience. It's wonderful working with fellow educators who are changing lives in the classroom and who have fostered such a collegial climate," Woo said. "It was an absolute pleasure teaching undergrad students last semester. I'm excited to teach the conflict management graduate seminar this spring and meet more of our grad students, too. Stingers Up!"

Continued from page 1

U-Nite turns 10; founders honored



Grad students visit U-Nite to analyze aesthetics in action. From left: **Kaylie Jonutz, Julian Stacy, Davis Tran,** and **Alex Valverde,** with Dr. Foss-Snowden.

After two virtual years during the pandemic, the 2022 event brought almost 1,000 people to the Crocker, the first time U-Nite has been in person since 2019.

In addition to opening remarks and a retrospective panel featuring Gale, Bayne, and Foss-Snowden, a number of Communication Studies department faculty showcased their work. The program included Gale's stories "I Ate All the Muffintops," "Exit Row," and "Open Robe: America's Successful Pandemic" as well as the films "Sonically Seen," by Associate

Professor **Dan Janos;** "Pretty is as Pretty Does," by Professor **Jenny Stark,** and "The Stainless Stealer Steals the Universe," by Assistant Professor **Kathryn Kasic.**

SAVE THE DATE: Professors Bayne, Gale, and Foss-Snowden will receive the Outstanding Community Service Award for the College of Arts and Letters, March 9, 2023, from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Pacific Suite in the University Union. All are welcome to attend. No RSVP necessary.

Communication Studies senior nabs University's highest student honor

Communication Studies senior **Kenya Burton** was awarded the 2022 Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement in the fall. The award—given to one student at each California State University campus each year—recognizes superior achievement in academic performance, community service, personal accomplishments, and future goals. The award also comes with a substantial scholarship. Burton is the Chancellor Emeritus Charles B and Catherine Reed Scholar, and received a \$12,000 scholarship to finish her education

"As a little girl, I always dreamed of going to college but growing up in poverty and in a single-parent home meant college was not a guarantee," Burton reflected. "Where I come from, it is a privilege that many do not get to experience. The Trustee award means I will be one of the first people in my family to go to college. I can concentrate fully on my studies and aspirations. It means that the little girl gets to graduate like she always dreamed and access opportunities we never thought we would have."

Burton is active in the Sac State community and in her hometown of Salinas, California. On campus, she is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and president of Alliance for Black Thought, which supports students of color. At home, she works in community service and activism, including on Monterey County's Domestic Violence Coordinating Council.

"Kenya was in my organizational communication



Kenya Burton is a Communication Studies senior, specializing in organizational communication. Her dream is to start her own nonprofit organizational to help families escaping domestic violence to find resources (Photo: Sacramento State/Andrea Price)

senior seminar last semester and blew me away with her contributions to the class," said associate professor **Shawna Malvini Redden**. "She showed up ready to dig into the material, which asks students to bring a critical lens to understanding organizing. Every class period, she not only critiqued problematic organizational processes—and encouraged her classmates to do the same—she pushed us to develop practical communication solutions that were empathetic and focused on cultivating equity and well-being."

"And besides regularly demonstrating brilliance, Kenya was a kind, conscientious, and humble member of class. In fact, I had a good chuckle when she apologized for missing class mid-

semester to attend 'an awards thing' in Southern California," Malvini Redden added. "And then I read in one of the President's messages that the 'awards thing' was actually the highest student honor in our university system!"

In a feature story about Burton, Sac State President **Robert S. Nelsen** said, "Kenya truly embodies the Hornet spirit, and I am proud she is part of the Hornet Family. I can't wait to see what else she will accomplish."

In addition to exemplary academics, Burton is an artist and poet, and was actually named as Salinas Youth Poet Laureate. After graduating, she plans to pursue a master's degree in Organizational Communication in support of her goal to continue nonprofit work in Monterey County.

"I want to make a difference in any way I can," Burton said. "Currently, I help local nonprofits find their voices through communications and share their work with those in need. My goal is to one day work with my family to open a nonprofit organization to help families escaping domestic violence find resources and transitional housing. As a survivor, I want to help children in the same situation I was once in. Hopefully, I open a door for another little girl and show her that anything is possible!"

LEARN MORE: To learn about the CSU Trustees Award, including how to donate and how to apply, please visit: <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-trustee-awards>

Communication Studies faculty news

■ **Dr. Diego Bonilla**, professor, co-wrote and co-directed a generative video poem, *Big Data*, published in *Electronic Literature Collection, Volume 4*. *Big Data* was a finalist for the 2021 Coover Award for best electronic literary piece. Venzmer and Fernández Larrere authored an essay about *Big Data*, published in the book “*Impact on Tomorrow*” by the Hochschule Fulda University of Applied Sciences in Germany.

Dr. Bonilla will be keynote speaker at the VII Encuentro Iberoamericano de Investigadores de Narrativas Audiovisuales (VII Ibero-American Meeting of Audiovisual Narratives Researchers) in Trujillo, Peru, June 1-3, 2023. This year's congress is entitled: “*Stories and Narratives for the World*.”

■ Professor **Molly Dugan** spent her fall semester sabbatical as a visiting professor at the University of Lodz in Poland, teaching classes in media theory and writing, working on news articles about Ukrainian refugees in Poland, and doing research on disinformation in the region. She also received a Fulbright award for spring semester and will teach investigative journalism and continue research on disinformation at Corvinus University in Budapest, Hungary. The prestigious Fulbright Scholar Program funds opportunities for U.S. citizens to teach, conduct research, and conduct professor projects abroad.

■ **Dr. Carlos Flores**, assistant professor, will present an award-winning paper at the 2023 Western States Communication Association conference in Phoenix, Arizona. His paper, “*Working for the miracle: A critical, visual analysis of Disney’s Encanto*,” written with co-authors Dr. Raisa Alvarado from CSU San Bernardino, and Dr. Raquel Moreira from Southwestern University, won a Top Four paper

award from the Media Studies division.

Dr. Flores is also one of 10 faculty fellows to assist in the Diversity Hiring Fellows program during the 2022-2023 school year. Fellows work with Dr. **Lina Rincón** to facilitate and support academic job search committees across the university. The fellows’ work to ensure hiring process are rooted in diversity, equity and inclusion. Flores is also serving as a SAGE [Students Achieving Greater Excellence] Faculty Fellow for the College of Arts and Letters. In this fellowship, Arts and Letters colleagues provide advising support to the undergraduate students

across the college via the SAGE Center. Dr. **Kiko Omori**, associate professor, is also one of the Fellows for this year.

■ **Dr. Elaine Gale**, professor, has been active on the storytelling circuit in Los Angeles, training with master storytellers and performing in six shows in the last year. In 2022, she wrote and performed original stories in the following storytelling series: *Revealed*, *Rant & Rave*, *Strong Words*, *Riveted*, and *Nectar*. Already this year, she’s performed in *Revealed* and *Rant & Rave*, in addition to booking three more storytelling performances this spring, for *Strong Words* in Palm Springs, *ANIMA* in Santa Barbara, and *It’s Funny Now* in Santa Monica.

Dr. Gale is also part of two dedicated performance troupes—*ANIMA* and *Nectar*—and in addition to the outlets mentioned above has performed at *The Rapp Saloon*, *Beyond Baroque*, and *Gorgeous Stories* in Los Angeles; *Backbone Storytelling*, *WyldWorks*, *ANIMA* and *Nectar* in Santa Barbara; *TrueStory*, *the Brickhouse*, and *U-Nite* in Sacramento; and the

See **Faculty news**, page 5



Monopolis, Lodz, Poland (by **Molly Dugan**)

Happy retirement, Nancy Caselli!



Lecturer **Nancy Caselli** poses with her cardboard likeness. The retirement celebration station was developed by her officemate of 22 years, **Timi Poeppelman**. In addition to teaching at Sac State, Caselli also regularly taught at Sacramento City College.

After 23 years in the classroom, **Nancy Caselli** retired from Sac State at the end of fall 2022. Originally hired in 1985 to teach public speaking, she started teaching in earnest in 1999. Over the years, she taught 12 different courses in the curriculum, including 219 classes and more than 5,500 students. She specialized in organizational, small group, and health communication, and regularly taught public speaking.

Her long-time officemate, **Timi Poeppelman**, couldn't let the occasion go unmarked. Poeppelman, who is the internship coordinator and teaches communication and journalism courses, crafted a surprise retirement celebration station in the Mendocino fifth floor lobby. In addition to a life-size Caselli cut-out, the station featured Nancy's favorite candy, the venerable Big Hunks, as well as papers for students, faculty, and staff to offer well wishes.

Congratulations, Nancy! You are missed!

Faculty news Continued from page 4

United Solo Theater Festival in New York City.

■ **Dr. Cheng Hong**, assistant professor, recently published two first-authored articles: the "Spiral of silence or social loafing? A parallel mechanism to explain why people defend their stances on controversial sociopolitical issues" in the *International Journal of Communication*, and "When transparent leadership communication motivates employee advocacy: Testing the mediator roles of employee attributions in CEO activism," in *Public Relations Review*.

In addition, she co-authored with **Dr. Jiangmeng Liu** from Seattle University and **Dr. Bora Yook** from Fairfield University, and published the article "CEO as 'Chief Crisis Officer' under COVID-19: A content analysis of CEO open letters using structural topic modeling," in the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*. She also co-authored with **Dr. Grace Ji** from Boston University and published the article, "Engaging Employees in CEO Activism: The Role of Transparent Leadership Communication in Making a Social Impact" in the *Journal of Mass Communication and Society*.

Dr. Hong also received a Sac State Anchor

University Strategic Investment Grant in the amount of \$5,000 as the Principal Investigator in 2022. The grant allowed Dr. Hong to start an internship program to connect students with female founders to learn about brand communication.

■ **Dr. Shawna Malvini Redden**, associate professor, planned the Organizational Communication Division program for the National Communication Association convention in New Orleans, LA, in her role as vice chair of the division. During the conference, in which she co-facilitated a preconference and co-lead the division business meeting, she assumed the role of division chair. She also presented a research paper with coauthor **Amy Way**, associate professor at Villanova University, titled: "How Young People Frame 'The Other' Online: Empathy, Experience, and Awareness Transform Allyship and (In)Action on Social Media Platforms."

Dr. Malvini Redden also provided public speaking training for the Women's Foundation of California's Dr. Beatriz María Solís Policy Institute retreats in Spring 2022. She worked with fellows from State and Local programs who were learning how to advocate for gender, economic, health, and safety equity in California policies and laws.

See **Faculty news**, page 6

Faculty news Continued from page 5

■ Dr. **Fred Molitor**, lecturer, published the article “Unemployment, SNAP enrollment, and food insecurity before and after California’s COVID-19 shutdown” with colleagues Dr. **Celeste Doerr**, chief of the Adolescent Program Evaluation and Data Unit at the California Department of Public Health and **Sarah Kehl**, MPH, California Department of Social Services, in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. He also published “COVID-19 Benefits and Dietary Behaviors among Mothers from Low-Income, Food Insecure Households” in the same journal.

■ Dr. **Kiko Omori**, associate professor, published an article in the *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* titled, “Acculturation and social media: How do international students engage with Facebook while abroad?” The study was coauthored with **Michael Schwartz**, director of the Intensive English Center and associate professor at St. Cloud University. It followed 15 international students’ Facebook walls during their first and second semester in the U.S. to investigate how they use social media while in the U.S.

Dr. Omori also published “When age and race/ethnicity salience meet: Group salience and its association with communicative behavior, and intergenerational communication satisfaction among Japanese Americans” in the *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*. Her coauthors were **Rachel Keiko Stark**, health sciences librarian at Sac State, and Dr. **Hiroshi Ota**, professor and chair of the Global Culture and Communication department at Aichi Shukutoku University. Using Communication



The International Communication Association convention was held in Paris, France, in late May 2022. Several faculty members and graduate students from Sac State attended (Photo from ICA)

Accommodation Theory as a theoretical framework, this study investigated the role of group salience when young and middle-aged Japanese Americans communicate with older Japanese Americans.

In May, Dr. Omori teamed up with Dr. **Carmen Stitt**, professor, to present research at the International Communication Association conference in Paris, France. Their paper, “COVID-19 and the Anti-Asian racism in the U. S. through the lens of the scapegoat and social attribution theory” investigated the use of China-related names for COVID-19 and relationships with COVID-19 information sources. Omori and Stitt analyzed endorsements of China/Asian-related conspiracy theories using scapegoat and social attribution theories as theoretical frameworks.

■ Dr. Nate Woo, assistant professor, published “Preferred Communication Strategies Used by Physical Therapists in Chronic Pain Rehabilitation: A Qualitative Systematic Review and Meta-Synthesis” in the *Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Journal*. With co-authors **Chelsea R. Chapman**, doctoral student at San Diego State University and University of California, San Diego, and Dr. **Katrina Maluf**, professor of physical therapy at San Diego State University, Woo proposed an evidence-based conceptual framework for preferred communication behaviors for pain management clinicians.

Woo also published an entry in the *International Encyclopedia of Health Communication* titled “Psychophysiological Measurement” with Professor **Kory Floyd** from Arizona State University.



Overlooking Jackson Square, French Quarter, New Orleans, LA during the National Communication Association convention, November 2022. Professors Hong and Malvini Redden attended the conference, as did graduate program alum, **Jamison Warren**, who presented his paper “Queering the Looking-Glass Self,” based on his thesis project.

Author alum launches inaugural award for undergraduate research

When she's not volunteering, writing, or authoring children's books, Veronica Perry Wilson (BA '16 Communication Studies) dreams about research—specifically, how to use research to make the world a healthier, more resilient place. And there's nothing Wilson would like more than to instill that research excitement in others.

"I am so passionate about communication research, especially with regard to mental health and positive youth development," Wilson said.

At Sac State, Wilson studied interpersonal communication and participated in debate, learning how to craft arguments as well as develop healthy relationships with others.

After graduating from Sac State, she completed her Master's degree at University of Southern California in Communication Management. While at USC, she earned the Finnie Endowment

for mental health research and was awarded the Order of Arête, the highest honor for graduate students, in 2020.

"After I left Sac State, I noticed that there is no formal award for independent research for Communication Studies students," Wilson said. "And I really wanted to change that and give back."

Wilson approached the Communication Studies department about creating a research award that was aimed at undergraduates, to recognize and honor exemplary undergraduate research in the field of Communication Studies. And Wilson was adamant that the award come with cash. The winner of the Wilson



Veronica Wilson, founder of the Wilson Communication Research Award, and author of *Rio the Raccoon*, a children's book that teaches about mental health and resilience

Communication Research Award will receive \$500.

In Fall 2022, Wilson started a doctoral program in the Department of Communication at University of California Santa Barbara, where she is studying wellbeing and mental health.

APPLY NOW: Undergraduate students interested in applying for the Wilson Communication Research Award should contact Dr. Nate Woo (woo@csus.edu)

TOPSS students on top academically

Now in its second year, the Transforming Outcomes Project at Sacramento State (TOPSS) is showing strong success. TOPSS is Sac State's BA program inside Folsom and Mule Creek state prisons. Participation is growing, jumping from 11 students in 2021 to 36 in 2022. In Spring 2022, nearly 93% of TOPSS students made the Dean's List.

TOPSS is the largest and most complex prison BA in California, and has been an early site of the Second Chance Pell experiment. TOPSS students were the first

in the state prison system to use laptop computers, to utilize Canvas for classes, and to access a corrections-friendly EBSCO portal.

In November, TOPSS Director and Communication Studies professor **Dave Zuckerman** and Criminal Justice faculty member **Christine Morse Fitch** invited colleagues from Project Rebound—Sac State's program to support formerly incarcerated students—as well as representatives from Folsom State Prison, to participate in a panel at the National Conference on Higher Education

in Prison, the largest conference on prison education.

The TOPSS program is also getting regional and national recognition. In fall Zuckerman was interviewed by Open Campus, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and the California Attorney General's office. Zuckerman said, "TOPSS will continue to lead nationwide as our two prisons—now included in our university's WASC accreditation as Sac State sites—will increase in size from the current enrollment of 36 to approximately 120 students in Fall 2023."

Deck the Doors contest brings holiday cheer to Mendocino Hall's 5th Floor

As winter is her least favorite time of year, assistant professor Dr. **Kimberly Aguilar** was looking for ways to brighten the season—and Mendocino Hall. Together with **Kate Wallace**, interim Comm Studies staff member, she created the Deck the Doors contest, offering a way for faculty and staff to cheer up the fifth floor.

“I wanted to bring the holiday spirit to the halls,” Aguilar said. “There were a lot of challenges last semester. And this was the first time the majority of us were fully back on campus. I thought it would be a nice way to wrap up our first semester back together.”

The premise was simple: faculty, staff, and grad students were invited to decorate



The winning prize: Bragging rights and a dozen of Aguilar's impeccably decorated (and delicious!) sugar cookies



Top left: **Morgan Morley**, winner of the contest, with her expertly engineered Christmas tree door; **Alexis Garcia** with her Grinch-themed door decor; **Chris Maben** and **Jacqueline Irwin**, with their Key West-inspired door; **Aryana Gooley** with a Charlie Brown Christmas theme; **Katrina Roose** with her Polar Express-themed door; and **Kimberly Aguilar's** gingerbread house

their office doors for the holidays and compete for a chance to win bragging rights and a dozen of Aguilar's artisan sugar cookies.

Within a couple weeks, 14 doors were decorated, featuring gingerbread houses, wrapped presents, Christmas trees, Nakatomi Plaza (#DieHardIsAChristmasMovie), holiday squirrels, administrators, Key West Christmas, Snoopy, Polar Express, wishes from COMS 5 public speaking students, the Grinch, and more. One door, crafted by instructors **Pam Sanger** and **Miles Cochran**, featured the iconic Christmas Diva Mariah Carey. A sign asked people to include post-its of their Christmas

wishes, in keeping with Carey's classic song “All I Want For Christmas Is You.” (The song played via a QR code on their door.)

After the voting window, one winner was crowned—Dr. **Morgan Morley**—who created her elegant red and gold Christmas tree with the engineering help of her husband, Chase. They savored a dozen decorative cookies—which were coordinated with the door decorations, naturally.

“I was just so pleased at how Deck the Doors was received,” Aguilar said, mentioning that it was fun to see students wandering the halls looking at doors, as well as to hear positive feedback from colleagues.”

See **Deck the Doors**, page 12

Rising Star uses communication know-how to propel law career and win alumni award



Communication Studies alumna **Liku Amadi, Esq.**, class of 2013, received the Rising Star Award at the 2022 Distinguished Alumni Awards. The Rising Star Award is given to a graduate who received their first Sacramento State degree within the last 10 years and has made outstanding contributions professionally, to the community, or to Sacramento State.

In the nearly 10 years since she graduated from Sacramento State, Amadi has made important strides as an attorney and champion for women's empowerment. She graduated magna cum laude from Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego in 2017. During law school, she served as the first Black female Editor-in-Chief for the Law Review and on the first Law Review managing board in California comprised of Black women.

In 2019, while working as a corporate lawyer, she founded Tryb, a networking community for Black women entrepreneurs and professionals focused on wealth and wellness. In 2021,

she founded Anasa Law Firm, which focuses on helping small business owners understand the value of law to help them make informed business decisions. She also teaches legal essentials for business owners online, and speaks about motherhood and entrepreneurship.

One former professor is not at all surprised by Amadi's legal success. **John Gilgun**, instructor for her 2009 freshman argumentation class, remembers an assertive, exceptional student. "Liku would do whatever was necessary to

achieve the best grade possible," Gilgun said, describing how she considered and incorporated feedback to nail her first debate. "As a bonus, she accomplished this high achievement with uncommon poise and professionalism. As a freshman."

"Liku has not only been an unequivocal professional success, she's also contributed significantly to my beliefs that patience and understanding are critical to all my students' successes," Gilgun added. "She inspires me now as she did over a decade ago."



Alum **Liku Amadi**, top left, pictured next to President **Robert Nelsen**, at the Distinguished Alumni Awards ceremony in 2022. Amadi won the Rising Star Award.

NOMINATE AN ALUM: Know of a stellar Communication Studies Department alum and want to nominate them for a Distinguished Alumni Award? It's an easy, online process. Learn more: <https://www.csus.edu/experience/alumni-association/programs/distinguished-alumni/>

ALUMNI DONATIONS: Did you know you can donate directly to support the Communication Studies Department? Learn more by contacting Tess Dyer, Director of Development for Arts & Letters at tdyer@csus.edu

COMS faculty member finishes squishy California International Marathon

While many Comm Studies faculty were focusing on the end of fall semester, **Chris Maben** was lacing up his sneakers to join 10,000 other runners for the 39th California International Marathon (CIM).

“On December 4, I ran/jogged/walked and completed my first—and almost certainly last—marathon,” Maben joked. “Sometime around noon, as I was passing in front of the J street entrance to Sac State, the thunder roared and rain started pouring down. Clearly it was a sign, though of what I am not sure.”

During the weekend, Sacramento saw almost 2 inches of rain—including a deluge during the latter hours of the marathon.

“I am so grateful to my friends and family,” Maben said, conspicuously not mentioning the sister who roped him into the marathon. “For the sake of this newsletter, let me mention a few friends/colleagues who offered their support along the way: To Dr. **Shawna Malvini Redden** and Professor **Pam Sanger**, thank you. Neither of you mocked me when I first told you I was going to undertake this 26.2 mile journey, though clearly it was a ridiculous idea.”

According to race organizers, runners from all 50 states and 37 countries participated in the 2022 CIM, which was the fifth largest marathon in the nation, after New York, Chicago, Boston, and Los



Molly Maben, BA '12 (Psychology), and her brother, **Chris Maben**, MA '10 (Communication Studies) after successfully completing the California International Marathon (left and below with their family). To prepare, Chris followed a 16-week training program, running six days per week, including focusing on speed/hills, long distance, and cross-training. He also takes the stairs to Mendocino's fifth floor more often than not.



Angeles.

“And thank you Professor Sanger (and your husband Tom) for providing a place to stay in Folsom the night before the race and a 5 a.m. ride to the starting line,” Maben

continued. The marathon started at 7 a.m. near Folsom Dam and continued 26.2 miles, past Sac State and to the State Capitol.

“To Dr. **Jacqueline Irwin**, who came out in the rain and cheered me on as I slowly meandered my way down Fair Oaks and again as I entered downtown,” Maben added. “I was so exhausted by mile 24, that I broke down in tears when I saw Dr. J, and gave her a very sweaty hug.”

Maben routinely runs in Sac State-sponsored events, including the annual Thanksgiving Run to the Feed The Hungry and the Sac State 5k Fun Run each spring.



FUN RUN: Registration for the 15th Annual Sac State 5k Fun Run is open, if you want to join Chris in the festivities: <https://thewellsatsacstate.com/events/5k> Early registration = best pricing. All fitness levels welcomed. Costumes encouraged.

Study abroad? Mais oui!

At the end of spring semester, Dr. **Jacqueline Irwin**, professor, will lead her third study abroad trip to La Muse Artists and Writers Retreat in Labastide-Esparbairrenque, France. Students will take Dr. Irwin's COMS 168 Approaches to Rhetorical Criticism course while soaking up the sunshine in the South of France.

The 2023 class will span May 29 to June 6, and will include undergraduate students: **Jaqueline Ruvalcaba, Michaela Graves, Phillip Martini, Malia Arenas, Irene Regalado, Sofia Swayne, Juan Gonzalez, Joseph Galvan, Araya Corral, and Hannah Leonard-Pepin.**

Those interested in joining the 2024 class should contact Dr. Irwin for more information (irwin@csus.edu).

Pictured right: The 2022 class in Carcassonne, France in front of the Place Carnot fountain.



Modular virtual reality film wins awards

Dr. **Diego Bonilla**, professor, directed and programmed a modular virtual reality project titled Uku Pacha that has completed a year of film festival participation. Uku Pacha won three awards for Best Virtual Reality Film, received two honorable mentions, and became an official selection in 16 more festivals in different countries. Dr. Bonilla's modular filmmaking involves creating a computer program that generates multiple versions of a film, in this case a virtual reality film, based on the story and the preferences of the viewer.

Dr. Bonilla describes the synopsis: "In an old van crossing the Andes, three unknown passengers share a secret. A person has committed suicide, the victim of false news spread on social media, and someone blames them for it. You are the fourth passenger and witness of their journey through the Uku Pacha seeking to return to the natural order, the order of the Andean worldview. Each trip is a different story, a recurring dream

where events never happen in the same way or in the same order: an opportunity for salvation or condemnation."

Uku Pacha was produced by the Universidad de Cuenca and shot in the Jubones desert, Ecuador, in July 2019. The production team involved faculty, artists and students from Ecuador, Mexico, Spain and the United States collaborating online.

To watch the VR film on a personal device, use headphones and open <https://www.youtube.com/embed/PHw6R2rYOMI> on the YouTube app. Move the phone around as you watch the story, you will experience a 360 environment as if you were there, shooting the film. To watch an 8K immersive film on a virtual reality headset, use the same link on the headset's YouTube app or look for Uku Pacha on Oculus TV. The film is in Spanish and Kichua (local indigenous language) with English subtitles. For details, visit: <https://www.ukupacha.info/>

Deck the Doors

Continued from page 8



One of Dr. Aguilar's favorite hobbies is creating sweet treats. She regularly crafts themed cookies for family, friends, and grateful coworkers.

"I was so glad that the competitive spirit in our department came out," Aguilar added. "It gave me an opportunity to see how creative my colleagues are and to see them show off a little of their personalities through the art on their doors. And that just felt really heartwarming."

After the success of the inaugural competition, rumor has it a spring version is in the works as well. Stay tuned!



Winner Dr. **Morgan Morley**, assistant professor, showing off her tasty prize!

Grad Program application deadline March 1, 2023



Dr. **Kimberly Aguilar's** COMS 222 Instructional Communication graduate seminar students. From top left, clockwise: **Kaylie Jonutz, Sage Beamon, Alex Valverde, Christine Shelby, Lucas Wilsom, Elizabeth Boyer, Ari Duran, Britt Grotz, Michelle Compo, and Sierra Roe.** Leading the class is Pawfessor Winnie.

Want to join the 10.7 percent of the U.S. population who have earned a Master's degree? Better yet, do you want to deepen your knowledge of human communication and develop a customized plan of study in Mass Media, Organizational, Health, International, Intercultural, Interpersonal, Rhetorical, Political and Instructional Communication? Apply to the Communication Studies Graduate Program today!

The program is 30 units and takes approximately two years to complete. Courses are offered in the late afternoon or early evening to accommodate working professionals. Funding is available in the form of teaching assistantships. Applications are due by March 1, 2023 to start in the Fall 2023 cohort. Applications for Spring 2024 are due by September 15, 2023. Details and instructions: <https://www.csus.edu/college/arts-letters/communication-studies/graduate-study-communications.html> Contact Graduate Coordinator Dr. **Shawna Malvini Redden** with questions at malviniredden@csus.edu

Journalism alumni news

■ **Nijzel Dotson**, BA '22, is now a digital producer at KCRA 3.

■ **Mack Ervin**, BA '22, is now an operations technician at KCRA 3.

■ **Jordan Parker**, BA '22, is now a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle

■ **Odin Rasco**, BA '22, is now a reporter at the Mountain Democrat in Placerville.

■ **Cameron Salerno**, BA '22, is now a reporter at 247 Sports.

■ **Krys Shahin**, BA '22, is now a multi-platform producer at ABC10 Sacramento.

■ **Blynn Beltran**, BA '21, is now a sports reporter at the Roswell Daily Record.

■ **Camryn Dadey**, BA '21, is now an audience growth producer at the Sacramento Bee.

■ **Kaylin Flatland**, BA '21, is now a social media associate at the Sacramento Kings.

■ **Tara Gnewikow**, BA '21, is now a digital producer at Politico.

■ **Isabelle Juarez**, BA '21, is now an audience growth producer and newsletter writer for the Sacramento Bee.

■ **Anila Lijo**, BA '21, is now a newsletter producer at the Tampa Bay Times.

■ **Sara Nevis**, BA '21, is now a photographer at the Sacramento Bee.

■ **Dominic Vitiello**, BA '21, is now the weekend anchor at NBC Montana.

■ **Margherita Beale**, BA '20, is now an editor at Law360 in New York City.

■ **Kayla Brown**, BA '20, is now a news producer at KSHB TV in Kansas City.

■ **Alyssa Douglas**, BA '20, is now a reporter at WFVX TV in Bangor, Maine.

■ **Victor Martinez**, BA '20, is now an assistant producer at CapRadio.

■ **Kameron Schmid**, BA '20, is now a producer for Good Day Sacramento.

■ **Adria Watson**, BA '20, now a reporter at the Boston Globe.

■ **Janelle Williams**, BA '20, is now a newscast producer at KAKE TV in Wichita.

■ **Will Coburn**, BA '19, is now a producer at KRQE News in Albuquerque.

■ **Thomas Frey**, BA '19, is now a writer at MaxPreps.

■ **Claire Morgan**, BA '19, is now the digital editor at CapRadio.

■ **Joseph Daniels**, BA '18, is now digital desk editor at KCRA.

■ **John Ferrannini**, BA '18, is now a digital producer at KRON-TV in San Francisco.

■ **Kris Hooks**, BA '18, is now an assistant metro editor at The Boston Globe.

■ **Ashley Nanfria**, BA '18, is now a weather forecaster and reporter for Fox21 News in Colorado Springs.

■ **Matthew Nobert**, BA '18, is now a site producer at KTXL FOX 40.



Cameron Salerno



Ashley Nanfria



Sara Nevis



Odin Rasco



Adria Watson

SHARE YOUR NEWS: Make a move recently? New job? Promotion? Share your news and get featured in CommConnect. Email: malviniredden@csus.edu



Mishaal Gill



Willy Linares



Kateri Rasteiro



DaVaughn Smith



Ilian Cervantes

PR alumni spotlight

■ **Mike Angelidis**, BA '12, is a retail and hospital recruiter with Robert Walters

■ **Rosa Belamy**, BA '11, is a project manager for the California Department of Public Health

■ **Chris Berry**, BA '12, is a principal account manager at Google

■ **Jason Brand**, BA '08, is a senior manager of Human Resources Services at Oracle

■ **Ilian Cervantes**, BA '15, is a business and education senior advisor team manager at Apple

■ **Whitney Clark**, BA '11, is a project manager and customer relationships manager at CEN and CENELEC

■ **Mishaal Gill**, MPH, BA '14, is the director of policy and advocacy at CASBO

■ **Holly Hua**, BA '14, is global communication manager at Ubisoft

■ **April Mae Saenz Johnson**, BA '10, is communication director and co-founder of Aging UP

■ **Luis Kischmischian**, MA, MBA, BA '14, is director of creative operations and business relations for Dannis Woliver Kelley

■ **Joan Kudin**, BA '08, is the senior public information officer at Sacramento County

■ **Sheenal Kumar**, BA '13, is a marketing and communication leader at Eyefinity

■ **Walter "Willy" Linares**, MBA, MA, BA '07, is a public affairs manager for Kaiser Permanente and University of San Francisco

■ **Briana McGee**, BA '12, is director of recruiting at 24 Seven, Inc.

■ **Walter Michael**, BA '13, is vice president in account operations at Cordeiro Vault Co

■ **Manuel Miramontes**, BA '09, is vice president of sales at MIM Logistics

■ **Marlene Navarro**, BA '13, is account director at Augustine Agency

■ **Jaime Orozco**, BA '08, is a client coordinator at Staglin Family Vineyard

■ **Christie Pierce**, MSC, BA '13, is media director at 3fold Communications in New York

■ **Kateri Rasteiro**, BA '16, is a nurse recruitment supervisor at UC Davis Health

■ **Manuel Ronquillo**, BA '10, is a regional recruiter for Verizon Wireless's pacific market

■ **Jazzmen Simms**, BA '14, is a store director for Nugget Market, Inc.

■ **DaVaughn Smith**, BA '16, is a recruiter for Maven Recruiting Group in Los Angeles

■ **Patrice Stephens-Sobers**, BA '13, is the founder of Pink Ship Ltd.

■ **Elvia Valenzuela**, BA '13, is a senior public relations representative at Northrop Grumman

■ **Briana Washington**, BA '12, is vice president of Communications at JPMorgan Chase & Co

■ **Erin Wolff**, BA '08, is managing partner at AimPoint, Inc.

■ **YuWai Michelle Wong**, BA '17, works for Cathay Pacific Airways

■ **Liz (Nguyen) Zimbelman**, BA '10, is owner of Liz Zimbelman Photography

NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Sacramento State
5014 Mendocino Hall
6000 J. St.
Sacramento, CA 95819

DEPARTMENT CHAIR: Mark Ludwig

OFFICE STAFF: Katrina Roose, Alexis Garcia, Paige Austin, Nia Lewis

FULL-TIME FACULTY:

Kimberly Aguilar; Diego Bonilla; Molly Dugan; Carlos Flores; Michele Foss-Snowden; Elaine Gale; Fernando Gallo; Cheng Hong; Timothy Howard; Jacqueline Irwin; Dan Janos; Kathy Kasic; Mark Ludwig; Shawna Malvini Redden; Morgan Morley; Kikuko Omori; Phillip Reese; Jenny Stark; Carmen Stitt; Don Taylor; Andrea Terry; John Williams; Mark Williams; Nathan Woo; David Zuckerman

PART-TIME FACULTY:

Michael Althouse; Jared Anderson; Adam Austin; Paul Bestolarides; Sonia Borg; Alexandra Boyd; Matthew Campbell; Evan Clark; Miles Cochran; Daniel Devere; Judy Farah; Rebecca Gardner; John Gilgun; Aryana Gooley-Carlson; Leland Gordon; Karl Grubaugh; Kyle Hanners; Patty Harris-Jenkinson; Mark Herzig; Sheryl Hurner; Samuel Johnson; Rik Keller; Banafshae Khan; Donna Knifong; Becky LeVally; Haley Lucero; Chris Maben; Trinetta Marquis; Fred Molitor; Barbara Myslik; Edward Ortiz; Chris Patterson; Timi Poeppelman; Bill Poindexter; Ryan Pritchard; Pam Sanger; Clayton Terry; Karen Vasquez; George Warren; Frances Winters; Walter Yost; Cynthia Zeiden

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS & TEACHING ASSOCIATES:

Alondra Botello; Britt Grotz; Michelle Guilford; Kaylie Jonutz; Kat LaGrande; Logan Leal; Calie Siplon; Davis Tran; Lucas Wilson

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Shawna Malvini Redden

COPY EDITORS:

Mark Ludwig, Phil Reese

FOUNDING EDITOR:

Andrew Stoner

Mark your calendars for 'Give Sac State Day' 2023

Want to support Communication Studies students? Consider donating to Give Sac State Day 2023 and directing your gift to Communication Studies.



The annual 36-hour fundraising event starts at 5 a.m. on Friday, April 21 and concludes at 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 22. Throughout the event, there will be opportunities to double the impact of your gift through matching with other donors. Stay tuned for details: <https://givesacstateday.csus.edu/>

Join us for Festival of the Arts and U-Create!

Looking for nearly of week of art events? Look no further. The College of Arts and Letters is thrilled to present Festival of the Arts (FOTA), which boasts six days of creative and interactive events, classes, lectures, films, and performances. Held in late April, FOTA includes U-Create—a partnership with Verge Center for the Arts downtown—and Sunday Funday on campus, with entertainment and games for all ages. Keep your eyes peeled for more details: <https://www.csus.edu/college/arts-letters/festival-of-the-arts/>

CommConnect with us

Do you have news to share? A new position, promotion, award, accomplishment, or other career activities in your life? Tell us everything!

Communication Studies students, alumni, staff, and faculty are invited to share news with for future newsletters. Just email malviniredden@csus.edu. We hope to hear from you!



**SACRAMENTO
STATE**