

Spring Semester 2020: A dance like no other

In mid-March 2020 President Robert S. Nelsen, in consultation with county health officials, the CSU Chancellor, and other university leaders, directed all university courses to move to virtual instruction due to COVID-19, with just four days to make the adjustment.

Additionally, all faculty, staff and students were not to return to campus for the remainder of the semester.

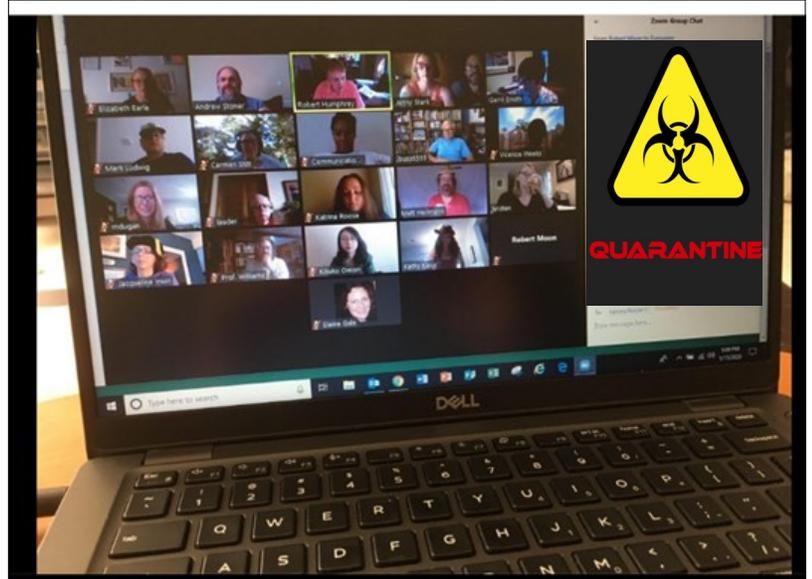
Since that time, many changes have taken place, including moving all summer classes and the majority of fall classes to online instruction. These transitions have become known as *the pivot* and as a result of the work-from-home order, the university community has also experienced a *Zoom Boom*, with multiple Zoom meetings and classes taking place daily.

As the Chair of the Communication Studies Department, I have interacted with students, faculty and staff at each iteration of our pivot dance and am impressed by the dramatic movement, energy and rhythm used to maintain instructional continuity, coherence, and quality throughout.

Some faculty who have never taught or taken online classes stretched in

miraculous ways, creating new opportunities for teaching and learning beyond the typical steps.

Students found themselves engaged in multiple courses, all from their computer screens or mobile



'THE ZOOM BOOM' — Department of Communication Studies faculty conduct a Zoom-based meeting — an increasingly familiar format as “the Zoom Boom” takes the place of in-person classes and meetings.

devices. Throughout the remaining two months of the semester, campus communities across the nation and world remained connected to instruction while ironically staying socially isolated.

For some, this dance resembled a synchronized waltz, while others experienced something more like improvisational jazz. For all, however the pivot added stress and required adjustment, all while learning new moves along the way.

While it has not yet been determined when we will return to campus, we are assured to have a new normal established.

With these unprecedented times, we have all grown in unforeseen ways, with many unpredictable, yet positive outcomes. I am so proud of the students, colleagues and staff who considered the challenges as opportunities and through it all, kept on dancing.



■ GERRI SMITH

Students, faculty make key adjustments

Since the middle of March, most members of the Sac State community have been working and studying from home in an effort to stem spread of the virus that causes the potentially deadly COVID-19 illness.

The university began preparing for online course delivery about two weeks before President Robert S. Nelsen's March 12 announcement that Sac State would shift to virtual teaching and learning.

Administrators braced for a rash of withdrawals as students adjusted to online lectures and labs and were forced to study in less-than-ideal circumstances at home or elsewhere. To help ease the transition, Sac State supplied hundreds of laptops to those without them and "hot spots" to those without internet access.

The university also offered a host of other resources, including counseling to help students cope with stress and anxiety.

In addition, the university offered "drive-in" Wi-Fi services on weekdays for students who have a hard time accessing the internet for online classes. Wi-Fi access was available to students in Parking Structure V.

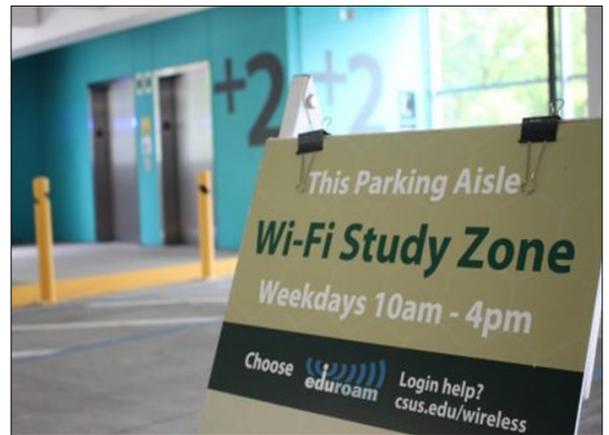
All of these factors and more likely contributed to an encouraging outcome, said Ed Mills, vice president for Student Affairs.

"The lower numbers of students who withdrew since we went virtual is a surprise for a number of reasons," Mills said. "First, we thought we might see an increase in withdrawals due to the pandemic. Second, the process of withdrawal is easier for students" this spring, requiring them to fill out one simple form, he said. Yet fewer opted out this spring than did last year and in 2018.

All of these outcomes speak to "the resilience and perseverance of our students and their desire to be successful, as well as our faculty and staff efforts and empathy," said Steve Perez, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs.

Interestingly, Sac State's Summer Session is on pace to be historic with nearly 6,000 undergraduate students registered for summer, 54% more than had signed up last year.

In part, the surge may be attributed to the fact that many students will be unable to work this summer because of the pandemic and are choosing to go to school instead.



Sac State students are forging ahead toward their degrees, perhaps reflecting a "change in culture" as the university continues to emphasize the value of graduating in a timely manner, noted James Dragna, Sac State's "graduation czar."

A special thank you!



Timi Ross Poeppelman

Journalism Lecturer

When the call to pivot to online instruction went out, Lecturer Timi Ross Poeppelman stepped up and helped faculty and students in a variety of ways. From your colleagues and students, thanks for all of your help!



Put *your* oxygen mask on first

When I'm thinking about what to include in a class, I allow myself the time to fantasize, and I create a marriage deadline.

The fantasy period is where I do research, look at my notes, think about what assignments I would change, think about what assignments I like, assess what works and does not--fantasize about how I would want my classes to proceed. But by the deadline, I have to marry these ideas and stick to it.

My guess is that most professors are in the fantasy phase, but also feeling a lot of stress due to all the chaos swirling. My advice: put your oxygen mask on first and then help your students (or anyone else.)

In addition, here is a list of my (perhaps, best?) advice.

- Try to maintain your teaching style as much as possible.
- Consider only meeting synchronously one day a week.
- Focus on the semester outcomes and double check that every assignment supports those outcomes/goals.
- Look over all the stuff you would have done during an in-person class and get rid of at least three days of planned material – use those three days to work on engagement with your students, getting to know them and they you – so this could be check-ins or a fun virtual quiz or using Flipgrid or Icebreaker.video

Perspectives on making the pivot during a pandemic

- Keep things dynamic and planned out (but be flexible too) – meaning consider moving beyond Zoom.
- Lean into whatever are your favorite components of teaching.
- Be kind to yourself – everyone is going through a tough emergency – do what you need to do to lower your stress.
- Be kind to your students – they are experiencing life in ways that they have only seen in Sci Fi movies. That goes for faculty too. But, remember, we have had more life experience, in any event, students need help in relieving stress as well.

Finally, when you find yourself saying things like, “I hate grading” or “This assignment is stressful,” listen to the voice and put your energy where you can make it so you don't say those things. For example, maybe you love to assign a term paper at the end of the semester, but you hate reading all of them because they all come in at once. Figure out a way to have staggered due dates – real, staggered dates that serve you.

It's ok to serve yourself first. Remember: you need to put your oxygen mask on first before you can help anyone else.



■ TIMI ROSS POEPELMAN



Congratulations

Class of 2020 graduates

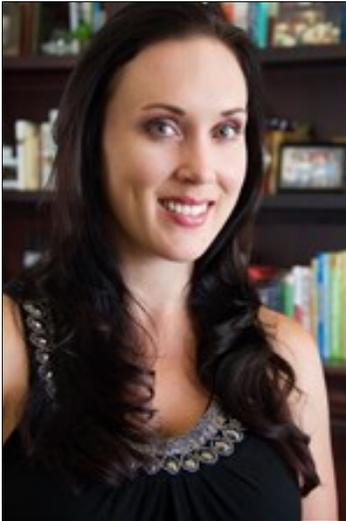


Resiliency prevails in times of crisis

When classes transitioned to virtual instruction across all 23 campuses of the California State University, the commitment to student success did not diminish.

In reporting on the efforts of faculty across the system, CSU highlighted the work of Dr. Shawna Malvini Redden, associate professor and graduate program coordinator. She was among the professors asked to discuss the help, resources and support needed to pivot to online instruction.

FACULTY NEWS



■ SHAWNA MALVINI REDDEN

Malvini Redden shared how she rebuilt her courses to maintain a high level of interaction with students. That included Zoom check-ins, discussion boards and even Twitter chats, with the intent to reduce as much burden as possible.

“I suspended the elements I normally a stickler about, such as attendance and late work in order to be as flexible and empathetic as I can,” she explained. “Many of my students have young children

or elderly family members they care for. I want them to be able to complete our class successfully while prioritizing their family’s well-being.”

To keep a sense of community, Malvini Redden said her classes “shared funny memes and pet pictures, as well as links to various resources for financial assistance and jobs, at-home exercise programs and health information.”

CSU Chancellor Timothy White acknowledged that making the jump from in-person to online teaching can be challenging in the best of times. Doing it almost overnight is something else entirely. But throughout the university, the goal was to provide students with online learning as quickly and seamlessly as possible.

CSU-trained journalists vital to California

Nearly 1,000 students graduate with journalism degrees across the CSU system each year and go on to play a key role in California communities big and small.

While journalism programs—such as Sac State’s program—educate students on the fundamentals of journalism, they also train for skills that can set graduates apart from the rest.

FACULTY NEWS



■ PHILLIP REESE

Phillip Reese, assistant professor, noted that at Sac State, journalism students are getting key exposure to elements of data journalism, a high demand skill for media professionals.

Reese’s data journalism and data visualization courses train students to find, analyze and then visualize data for a lay audience. Journalists who are able to crystalize data and break it down into a compelling story will have a competitive

advantage, Reese said.

“Those skills, even in this tough job market, are very much in demand,” Reese said, explaining that while journalists are often not drawn to math, those who are able to take a spreadsheet with thousands of numbers and find a story within it have a skill news organizations want.

Reese said student journalists at *The State Hornet* have embraced the concept of data-driven journalism fully. “They’ve done a great job of keeping up with the news and keeping our students informed,” he said.

Partnerships also play a key role, driving Reese’s effort to develop a connection with the McClatchy newspaper group to provide local reporting experiences for students.

“The goal is to instill what it is like to work on a big enterprise story,” Reese said. Students engage in fact checking, news writing and interviews, and about a dozen of the student-produced articles were published as a result.

After 35 years, Humphrey says 'farewell'

Thirty-five years after he first stepped on the Sacramento State campus as a professor, Dr. Robert E. Humphrey retired at the close of the historic 2019-20 school year.

When he was first hired by Sac State for the Journalism Department, the current home of the Department of Communication Studies, Mendocino Hall, didn't even exist. The building soon followed, as did moving journalism into the Communication Studies Department in 1996.

Humphrey holds a B.A. in American history from the University of California Riverside, M.A. in communication studies from the University of Iowa, and a Ph.D. in American history from the University of Iowa.

He is the author of two books, *Children of Fantasy: The First Rebels of Greenwich Village*, and *Once Upon a Time in War: The 99th Division in World War II*.

During his tenure at Sacramento State, he served many years as the internship coordinator in the Department of Communication Studies.

CommConnect asked Humphrey to answer five questions about his Sac State career:

How has the Department of Communication Studies changed since you arrived in 1985?

FACULTY NEWS

A: Because I had a Ph.D., I was asked to teach media law, world press, mass media and critical thinking (when I first started). Professors today are much more specialized in what they teach.

What would you say are the best improvements, or some that are not as good as others?

A: The Communication Studies Department enlarged with the addition of journalism, public relations and film. Broadcasting was eliminated, but like many departments, we have many new majors and have become a very large department. Enrollment has grown exponentially in the last 35 years.

How would you compare/contrast students here at the end of your teaching career with those at the beginning?

A: It's hard to remember what students were like three decades ago in terms of intelligence and interest in learning compared to recent generations. Today there are much larger numbers of Latino/Hispanic students and more diversity. College enrollments have increased evermore because I think students realize it is more difficult to find a job without a college degree.

New professors start their careers every year - you've had a chance to greet many of them - what sage advice would you give them to help build their success and happiness in their work?

A: In my first month on campus I was warned by a faculty member from the Economics Department that "students are horrible and you will soon be burned out." Every year I would ask myself, "Am I burned out?" and in my 10th year I asked myself, "Am I hating teaching?" The answer was no, so I had no worries about burning out.

After this many years, what is your overall impression of having been a professor?

A: I have enjoyed the students and I believe I have had something beneficial to teach them. I never stopped believing that, and students have responded positively to me. I was entertaining in the classroom. One semester I had a wild JOUR 50 class (a group



■ ROBERT E. HUMPHREY

that stayed together as they moved through all their classes in the major). They were fully engaged in every class period and it was fun. It helps if one is an extrovert who believes in the importance of the material being taught. If the professor just goes through the motions until he or she becomes tenured, that person will be burned out and cheats the students.

Student research presented

Students enrolled in the spring term of COMS 172 offered a special online presentation of their content analysis research.

The content analysis focused on storefront advertisements at more than 100 randomly sampled Sacramento area convenience stores. The stores were compared based on data regarding race, income and education of the area populations.

The study found advertisements for sugar-sweetened beverages, tobacco, the California lottery, and alcohol were most common. Ads for alcohol were more prevalent in lower-income neighborhoods.

The study replicated earlier studies suggesting unhealthy products are more likely to be targeted to low-income populations.

The class was taught by Fred Molitor, lecturer.

Graduate program adjusts amid pandemic

The Graduate Program in Communication Studies has revised the application process, in part due to the COVID-19 crisis.

According to Dr. Shawna Malvini Redden, graduate program coordinator, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) requirement for the 2020 and 2021 application cycles has been waived. In its place,

GRADUATE PROGRAM

additional supplemental materials will be required.

In other graduate program updates:

- Alumna Kiersten Brockman, a doctoral student at University of Memphis, was awarded the “20 Under 30” award, which recognizes 20 students under the age of 30 who exemplify leadership, service, and innovative scholarship.
- Alumnus Erik Ramirez was recently accepted into the Educational Leadership doctoral program at Sacramento State University and will start his studies in the fall.
- Our graduate program continues to grow with 40 new and returning students completing their masters degrees, including: Katarina Aleksic, Scott Ault, Alonda Botello, Jeanne Brewster, Zhanae Briggs, Keeley



■ KIERSTEN BROCKMAN



■ ERIK RAMIREZ

Ciccarelli, Annie Connelly, Kyle Corbet, Nikolas Crabtree, Bethany Davis, Amanda Gedda, Jennifer Hayes, Schelene Heglund, Kevin Hendricks, Erika Jauregui, Katrina LaGrande, Samantha Maples, Rachel Marthaler, Laura Martinez, Mary Ellen Mathis, Ana Mercado, Robert Moon, Benjamin Moore, Ildelisa Mora, Anastasia Pantels, Patricia Pilas, Cassandra Quinonez, Carlos Rodriguez, Trenton Sanders, Miles Schuster, Storm Sharar, Louise Thao, Tiffany Thompson, Rida Umer, Evelyn Villalobos, Jose Villanueva III, Jamison Warren, Ceridyn Wood, Andrea Yarletz, and Owen Young.

Sacramento Press Club awards three students

Three Sacramento Press Club awards have gone to Sacramento State students for the 2020-21 school year.

Senior Kelly Kiernan was awarded the Lonnie Wong Scholarship. Kiernan has been a journalism major since her freshman year and an active member of *The State Hornet* staff for multiple semesters.

The Press Club awarded its Dale Kasler Scholarship to incoming journalism major Rose Vega. Vega, completing her studies at Sacramento City College, was the editor of *The Sac City Express*, the student newspaper there.

A third scholarship was awarded to Sara Nevis, also a student at Sacramento City College and a military veteran. She has worked as a photo editor of *The Sac City Express*.

The Sacramento Press Club is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to supporting the next generation of journalists through college scholarships. The Press Club conducts regular events for members and the public featuring newsmakers from across the nation.



■ KELLY KIERNAN



■ ROSE VEGA



■ SARA NEVIS



STUDENT NEWS

Study abroad plans scuttled, for now

Among the casualties of the coronavirus pandemic and resulting public health restrictions was the opportunity for students to study abroad.

One year ago, the Department of Communication Studies launched a study opportunity in France for COMS 168, led by Dr. Jacqueline Irwin, professor. The program was so popular, the class was full by September 2019 with a group of students interested in participating in the summer 2020 version.

Despite the decision by the university to cancel all student (and faculty) travel abroad, the university was able to refund the full cost of fees already paid by students for the COMS 168 trip.

“The stress on the students was intense, to say the least,” Irwin said. “I do believe that the students learned a good deal on how to negotiate with airlines during the cancellation of their trips.”

Irwin said the majority of the students were counting on the COMS 168 class to graduate in the summer and without the trip to France and the class associated with that, some are graduating in the fall and some have had to have course substitutions done to finish in the summer.

STUDENT NEWS

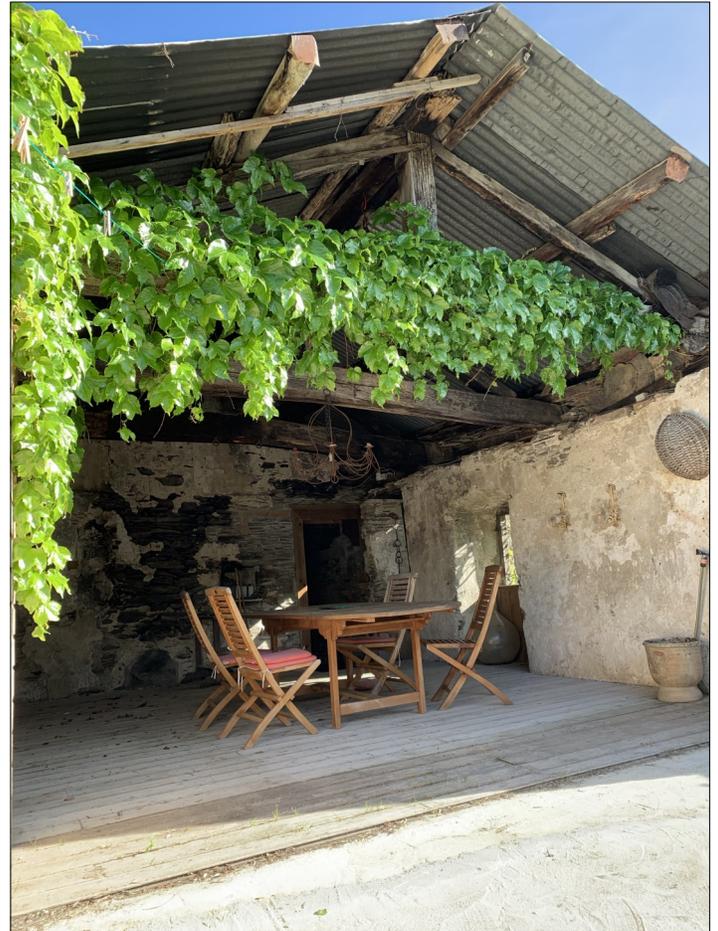
The disappointment students felt was real.

“It’s really sad that’s this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was taken away from us,” said senior Nick Leapley. “When you look forward to something like this and then it’s taken away from you it really sucks. However, I understand why they had to cancel it, and in retrospect, it was probably good that they did but that doesn’t mean that it doesn’t suck any less.”

For senior Maria Gonzales, cancellation of the COMS 168 trip to France was the end of a dream. “In my case, it was like a dream traveling to Europe,” she said. “I was very disappointed, but at the same I understand why the trip was canceled. Coronavirus ruined my plans.”

Other Communication Studies students were also impacted by the travel ban. Senior Jacob Shane was hoping to study abroad this fall in Japan. A Communication Studies major and Japanese minor, Shane said he is now unsure about when he will get to graduate.

Shane had planned on finishing his upper division courses for his minor while studying abroad. Shane said he has always had an interest in learning Japanese, and even spent some time in Japan this past winter and still hopes to pursue



OFFICE HOURS — Dr. Jacqueline Irwin used this beautiful space to conduct office hours with her students while in Labastide-Esparbaireneuve, France, during the 2019 COMS 168 study abroad class.

a career with the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program.

Shane said he was disappointed in the decision, but understood that Sac State did not have an option. “When you’re in the position to protect people but also potentially stop people from pursuing what they want to do, that’s a hard balance and I’m not envious of that position,” Shane said.

Professor Irwin added, “On a personal note, I hope that the university recognizes the value in this type of experience and allows international travel for students once again as travel has been cancelled through at least the end of 2020. I encourage all students to explore, travel, and #RethinkYourClassroom.”

Creating: Inside and outside the classroom

The *State Hornet* recently highlighted the creative activities of students outside the classroom — including the work of two Communication Studies majors.

Dancer Mathewose Hiabu and DJ Carl Anderson were profiled in stories written by Garry Singh. Excerpts of those stories follow:

■ MATHEWOSE HIABU

Hiabu is a communication studies major at Sacramento State. He has been dancing for 10 years and considers himself a hip hop and R&B dancer.

Hiabu said he would watch Chris Brown and Michael Jackson music videos on YouTube and liked to mash the moves together. He thought it was cool and he liked how it made him feel.

“I can’t sing, but I can dance like I was singing, that was always fun,” Hiabu said. “It’s a way of expressing myself, how the songs made me feel through my movement. It’s become more of a deeper outlet.”

Hiabu, whose hometown is Elk Grove, has been a part of a professional competitive dance crew called Black Flag Dance Co. since 2018. They have performed at the Golden 1 Center and traveled to many places to perform including Arizona, Las Vegas, the Bay Area and Los Angeles and have won awards in several competitions along the way.

The group won second in the “World of Dance Las Vegas” competition, were ranked sixth in the U.S. at the “Hip Hop Internationals” competition in Arizona, won second place in the Bay Area for the both the “Evolution Urban Dance Competition” and the “Collaboration NorCal” competitions, placed second in Los Angeles “Collaboration SoCal” and third in the “Prelude SoCal” and won first place in

their native Sacramento at the “Prelude Sacramento” competition.

Hiabu uses his talent to teach others how to dance. With Black Flag Co., he started a youth crew for children under 18 and teaches them once a week.

■ CARL ANDERSON

Anderson, also known as DJ Bar1, is a communication studies major at Sac State who has been DJing for four years.

Anderson, a native of San Diego, first began DJing at house parties and realized it was what he wanted to do after seeing another DJ perform.

“You’re up there having that power; to be able to control the crowd is pretty cool,” Anderson said.

Musically, Anderson focuses bringing a diversity to his sound, playing with a variety of genres.

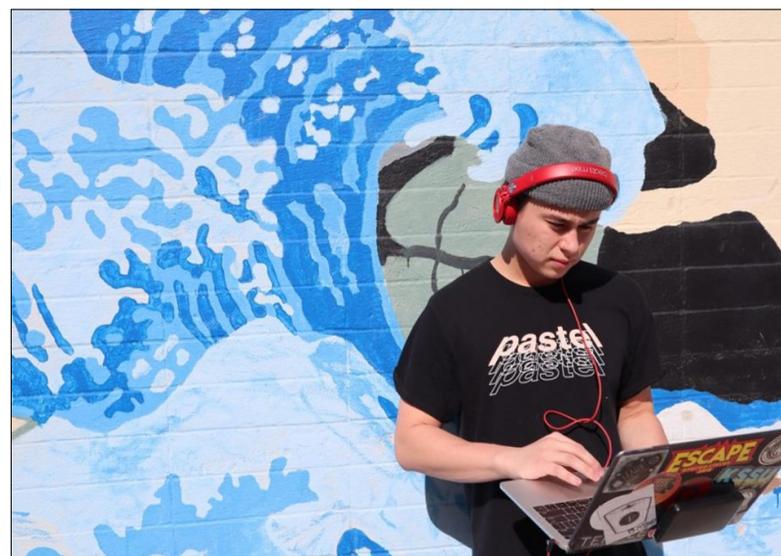
“Being a DJ, you’re able to combine different genres of music and make it into one and then you can take maybe an acapella from one song and put it over the instrumental of another song and then create it and mix them together,” Anderson said. “It gives me a reason why I keep DJing and seeing people have fun makes it fun for me.”

Anderson said he enjoys uplifting others through his music and being able to connect with the crowd he is playing for.

“Seeing people have fun makes it fun for me,”

Anderson said, as he aims to take his DJing to the next level.

Aside from music, Anderson said he’d also like to use his communications degree to explore the world of social media and work for platforms such as Twitter to understand how trends and influence are developed through these networks.



Montay McDaniel defines ‘the fast track’

Graduating from college or high school is a major life event for anyone, but graduating both at the same time is truly something to remember.

Communication Studies major Montay McDaniel II is checking off both a bachelor’s degree and his high school diploma as the Class of 2020 graduates. McDaniel, who started his studies at Sacramento State when he was just 16 years old, in 2019 completed an associate degree in interdisciplinary studies at Sacramento City College.

“This whole experience has been one roller coaster,” McDaniel said. “At the time, I had one of the most hectic schedules for a teenager. I would have to handle the course load of both high school and Sac State, and go to my internship two times a week.”

McDaniel acknowledges there were “a lot of sleepless nights” filled with studying for exams or writing papers. “Although it was emotionally and mentally taxing at times, I had a cast of people to support me along my journey.”

The next step for McDaniel, not surprisingly, is already defined as well. McDaniel will be attending Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa this fall pursuing a degree in athletic training. His long-term goal is to become a certified athletic trainer for the National Basketball Association.

In his communication studies major, McDaniel said his favorite class was COMS 100B—Rhetoric and Social Influences. “The course was taught by Mark Powers (adjunct faculty), and I specifically loved this course because it was writing-intensive and improved my writing to another level,” he said.

“All of the material from COMS 100B was extremely relevant and made me re-evaluate how I go about things in life.”



Photo by Sara Nevis—*Sac City Express*

Bathen’s research explores key mental health issues

An in-depth analysis of issues related to mental health and homelessness was recently published by Sigrid Bathen, adjunct faculty.

The article, “From the Snakepit to the Streets,” was published by *Capitol Weekly* and explored both past and current proposals to deal with mental health and homelessness issues.

Bathen was also called upon to write up follow-up stories about new state legislation to strengthen California’s “Laura’s Law” (which provides legal recourse for families to get treatment



■ SIGRID BATHEN

FACULTY NEWS



for their mentally ill relatives).

“Laura’s Law,” enacted in 2002, is named for Laura Wilcox, a 19-year-old college sophomore from Nevada County killed by a deranged mental patient as she worked at a health clinic in 2001.

■ To read Bathen’s original article, click on:

<https://capitolweekly.net/mental-health-care-from-the-snake-pit-to-the-streets/>

■ For her follow-up story on “Laura’s Law,” visit:

<https://capitolweekly.net/parents-of-murdered-daughter-seek-stronger-lauras-law/>

'Best of Sac State' honors announced

The fourth annual "Best of Sac State" poll conducted by *The State Hornet* was once again kind to the Department of Communication Studies.

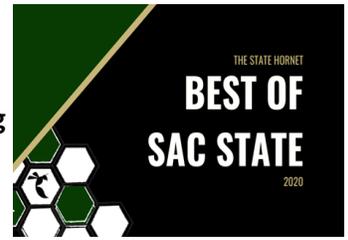
For the second year in a row, Communication Studies was named "Best Major" representing the work of more than 1,800 students majoring in communication studies, film, journalism, and public relations.

The College of Arts & Letters was named the "Best College," which includes Communication Studies and nine other departments, including Art, Design, English, History, Humanities & Religious Studies, Music, Philosophy, Theatre & Dance, and World Languages & Literature.

In addition, Dr. Andrew Stoner was named "Best Zoom Professor" in a brand new category reflecting the new nature of current online instruction.

Senior Sarah Davis, a communication studies major and member of the women's volleyball team, was named "Best Female Athlete" for her record-setting performances for the Hornets.

The "Best Club" award went to the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). The club is one of the largest student organizations on campus.



■ SARAH DAVIS

STUDENT NEWS

Active semester wraps for PRSSA chapter

Before public health restrictions were put into place, the PRSSA chapter at Sac State had a busy spring term of activities.

A variety of special speakers and events took place, including:

- Alexis Polk, digital account director for Randle Communications;
- Raymond Perez, a Sac State PR alumni, an independent PR practitioner in Northern California in the areas of sports and politics;
- Adam Martinez, another Sac State PR alum, who is Outreach Director for Blanning & Baker Associates; and,
- John Jacobs, Will Strome and Ben Gumpert, from the Sacramento Republic. Jacobs (a Sac State alum) and Strome direct the public relations program for the Republic, while Gumpert is the team's president and chief operating officer.



Before the semester ended, elections were held for new PRSSA officers for the upcoming 2020-21 school year. Rachael Botti was elected president and editor; Cassie Kendall, vice president and events chair; Cesar Espinoza, director of Records (finance/secretary); and Excell Brown, director of Digital Affairs (media relations/outreach).

PRSSA & THE REPUBLIC — PRSSA members met with executives and public relations directors of the Sacramento Republic at the team's headquarters in February.



Another successful debate season

Another amazing season for Hornet Debate concluded in the Spring semester despite the fact that the pandemic ended debate season prematurely.

Hornet Debate team members won championships, closed out tournaments, and a large team qualified in two events to the NFA national tournament.

The team competed in 11 unique tournaments this season in five different states. A total of 14 students represented Sacramento State this season and nine qualified for nationals.

“We have continued to show competitive excellence in LD debate both locally and nationally as we build towards the hope of winning a national championship,” said Jared Anderson, lecturer and head coach of the debate team. “In only our second year of competition in extemporaneous speaking we are also demonstrating that Sacramento State is difficult to beat. In our most recent tournaments, we have represented half of the field of final round participants.”

■ In January, four top debaters traveled to St. Louis for the prestigious “Gorlok Gala” tournament. This tournament is very large and typically features the very best teams in the nation.

In the varsity division, sophomore Ayyah Al-jibouri and senior Joey Barrows both finished with three wins and three losses, just shy of advancing to elimination rounds. Barrows was recognized as the 14th speaker in the division out of 61 entries.

By the numbers, the season was indeed impressive:

2	Octofinalist awards
12	Quarterfinalist awards
3	Semi-finalist awards
2	Second-place awards
9	Tournament championships
21	Speaker Awards in the Top 10
5	Top Speaker awards
13	Final Round participants (extemporaneous speaking)
2	First-Place awards (extemporaneous speaking)
9	Students qualified for NFA National Championship in LD debate
5	Students qualified for NFA National Championship in debate and extemporaneous

In the Junior Varsity division, junior Jasmine Putman finished with three wins and three losses while freshman Johnny Schimmelman advanced to the elimination rounds with a 4-2 record. Schimmelman lost a split decision in the quarter finals.

■ In February, the team remained in California to attend the “Talk Hawk” tournament at Las Positas College in Livermore. In the Varsity division of debate, Al-jibouri advanced to the quarter finals with a record of 3-1 while junior Sean Cox-Marcellin was the undefeated tournament champion and the top speaker in the division.

STUDENT NEWS



In the Novice division of debate, seniors Daniel Pasahan and Julian Stacy completed the tournament undefeated. This made them co-champions of the division and they were first and second place speakers as well. Al-jibouri, Schimmelman and freshman Jordan Waters all advanced to the final round of Varsity extemporaneous

competition where it was a clean sweep for Sacramento State, Schimmelman finishing first, Al-jibouri second, and Waters third.

■ The team also went to Chico for what would end up being the last full tournament of the season - the Northern California Championship Tournament. In Varsity debate, Al-jibouri, Schimmelman, Barrows, and Cox-Marcellin all advanced to the elimination rounds. Al-jibouri was an octofinalist while both Barrows and Cox-Marcellin ended their runs in the quarterfinals. All three were also recognized in the top 10 speakers.

In the Junior Varsity division, both Putman and Waters advanced to elimination rounds. Putman lost in the semi-finals while Waters won the tournament championship. Four Sac State debaters ranked in the top 10 for the JV division.

In Varsity extemporaneous speaking, the trio of Al-jibouri, Barrows and Cox-Marcellin once again advanced to the final round. All of this success added up to an overall sweepstakes award of third place for Sacramento State.

While the season is technically over, Sacramento State will have two students participating in the first fully online tournament this June. Al-jibouri and junior Jackie Blair will be competing in the Missouri State Grand Prix and hopefully learning some online debate skills to share with the team for the upcoming semester.

The State Hornet transitions to fully digital content

The just completed 2019-20 school year will be marked as the year *The State Hornet* completed its transition from being a print publication to being a fully online, digital news organization.

STUDENT NEWS

The transition served to dramatically increase traffic and interest in *The State Hornet's* online presence. Online traffic culminated in a record of more than 56,000 returning visitors to *The State Hornet* site, a .3 percent increase over last year. Other online data from this year noted:

- More than 665,000 unique page views (a 52 percent increase over last year);
- More than 760,000 total page views (a 21.5 percent increase over last year);
- More than 405,000 new users (a 75 percent increase over last year); and
- Nearly double the average time spent on StateHornet.com from last year, attributable largely to the increased presence of video, podcasts, and other medium- and long-form content.

The STATE HORNET

The voice of Sacramento State since 1949.

In addition, nine *State Hornet* staffers attended the Associated Collegiate Press convention in San Francisco in February for two days of sessions, workshops and keynotes.

On Feb. 29, amid national competition (and a lot of CSUs), *The State Hornet* received multiple awards, including:

- Second place for the broadcast story “Merman Mike,” a profile of Sac State student Michael Pelley who dives in rivers and lakes near Sacramento for lost treasures.;
- Fourth place for a multimedia package on Sac State’s baseball four-game sweep of the University of Milwaukee; and
- Ninth place for newspaper website for large schools with enrollment of more than 10,000 students.

“*The State Hornet* didn’t even have a broadcast team last year, so second place was a big accomplishment for our group,” said Stu VanAirdale, faculty adviser.



‘MERMAN MIKE’ — Sacramento State student Michael Pelley poses with the trash and treasure he found while scuba diving at Lake Natoma. Pelley was the subject of an award-winning feature about his unusual hobby that takes him to the bottom of area rivers and lakes in search of treasure (and trash). [*The State Hornet* photo by Kelly Kiernan]

Alumni news
and happenings?

Let us know!

Email to:

Andrew.Stoner@csus.edu


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Watson named Dow Jones intern

Senior Adria Watson was named one of 78 undergraduate and graduate students in the United States to participate in the Dow Jones News Fund 2020 internship program.

Watson, a journalism major and a staffer at *The State Hornet*, will complete her internship in the Data Journalism Program for investigative reporters and editors.



■ ADRIA WATSON

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time ever the internships are being offered “remotely.” Students participating receive internship training, \$1,500 scholarships and memberships in professional organizations.

Watson is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ). She recently completed an editorial internship at CalMatters via the Emma Bowen Foundation summer internship program.

ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

Kayla Aragonés BA '19, has lived out first-hand the value of internships pursued during her undergraduate studies. While majoring in public relations at Sac State, Aragonés accepted a summer internship with Edelman PR. Edelman, one of the nation's most respected public relations firms, were so pleased with her work in their Sacramento office that when her work came to an end, she was offered an assistant account executive position in the firm's San Francisco office.



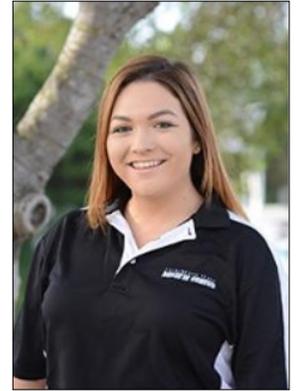
■ KAYLA ARAGONÉS

“I now work with clients including digital consulting firms within information technology and financial services, and creative software application companies,”

ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

Aragones said. “I've learned a ton about the PR industry in the 10 months I've worked for Edelman and I have been able to develop relationships with media among other rewarding accomplishments.”

Jennie-Marie Britton BA '19, has been named the interim operations assistant for the Sacramento State Aquatics Center. A former member of the university's women's rowing team, Britton has served in various positions at the center as part of her love for water and rowing.



■ JENNIE-MARIE BRITTON

Daniel Deo BA '13, is in his fifth season as the video coordinator for the Sac State baseball team. He previously served as director of operations for the baseball program, and worked in the Sac State Athletics Facilities & Operations Department.



■ DANIEL DEO

Dakota Fitzsimmons BA '19, has been accepted to the Production MFA program at Loyola Marymount University for the fall 2020 semester.



■ DAKOTA FITZSIMMONS

Dale Means BA '84, is a design pathway teacher at Sacramento's New Technology High School. His classes expose students to the study of visual communication through understanding, evaluation and application of elements of art, design and animation.



■ DALE MEANS

■ CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

■ Dr. Juliane Mora BA '01 /MA '05, is an assistant professor of communication studies at Gonzaga



■ JULIANE MORA

University in its College of Arts & Sciences. Mora, who earned both her MA and BA from Sacramento State, completed her Ph.D. in communication at the University of Utah. She has been teaching for more than 15 years and her research interests are in communication pedagogy at the college level, particularly the practices educators use to work for social justice through classroom instruction.



■ RICK NELSON

■ Rick Nelson BA '94, the owner and former CEO of Direct Technology, is the chairman of the Launch Consulting Group. He recently led efforts to raise funds for the Carlsen Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Nelson admires Sac State alum Dale Carlsen, founder of Sleep

Train Mattress Centers, for whom the center is named.

“Young people need a place to go and find out how to lead, how to create and advance their own personal ideas,” Nelson said. “It’s the key to fast, specific development of young talent.”

■ Christine Solis BA '16, is the student representative with the Women in Cybersecurity Critical Infrastructure community (which includes cybersecurity experts from the National Security Council, the FBI, and many private companies). She is also a volunteer with the Cyber Security Forum Initiative completing research on cyber doctrines and operations for the U.S., NATO, China, Russia, North Korea, Iran and other countries. Solis completed her master’s degree in Applied Technology at Georgetown University. She was



■ CHRISTINE SOLIS

recently awarded the 2020 Women in Cybersecurity Scholarship in order to complete the Google IT Professional Certificate.

■ Harvinder Uppal BA '16, was recently profiled by *The Galt Herald* for his leadership in promoting fundraising and awareness for breast cancer research.



■ HARVINDER UPPAL

Uppal, a native of India, launched his clothing line, Inspire Clothing, in 2019 as a way to lend a helping hand to those battling breast cancer.

Uppal hopes to attend medical school in the future and credits Sac State with helping him get a good start. “Many doors opened for me and I became involved in the community (while at Sac State),” he said. “I found my

passion to give back to others and helping underserved communities.”

While completing his degree in communication studies, Uppal started the campus-based non-profit organization known as Bhaghat Puran Singh Health Initiative, that continues to raise awareness of public health issues in the Indian community.

Alumni news to share?

Email us at:

Andrew.Stoner@csus.edu

PR major makes resonance work for her

Leslie Valdivia '14 worked at a variety of nonprofits, government organizations and PR agencies, where she used skills learned at Sacramento State to run marketing campaigns and pitch countless stories to the news media.

It's more than slightly ironic that Valdivia's biggest project, Vive Cosmetics, has landed her in publications such as *Oprah Magazine*, *Buzzfeed* and *Teen Vogue* - all without a single pitch, paid influencer or major ad purchase.

It might speak to the power and resonance of Vive. Valdivia, a public relations major, and her friend Joanna Rosario founded the company in 2017 to bridge what they say was a galling disconnect between the cosmetics industry and Latinx women, who collectively are among the country's largest purchasers of cosmetics.

In Vive, Valdivia and Rosario set out to build a company that drew from and reflected the experiences of Latinx people. The company hires Latinx models with diverse skin tones and backgrounds and makes an effort to work with and hire other Latinx people or organizations. That contrasts, Valdivia said, with an industry that typically features "token Latinas" with light skin and tone-deaf advertising campaigns that clearly did not include Latinas in decision-making.

ALUMNI NEWS



■ LESLIE VALDIVIA

"The Latinx experience that I felt was not represented," she said. "I wanted to create a brand that represents the diversity within our own community."

Raised in Lodi by parents who were Mexican immigrants, Valdivia was the first in her family to attend college, arriving at Sacramento State in 2009. She majored in biology and then nursing before changing course to public relations, which she felt better matched her talents and personality.

Valdivia was a persistent student who never gave up on an assignment, said journalism lecturer Timi Poeppelman. One such assignment involved live reporting on Twitter, and at first Valdivia struggled. But, Poeppelman said, Valdivia continued to work at it until she was so skilled she was teaching it to other students.

"She went, maybe in a year's time, from it being a huge struggle to being the expert on it," Poeppelman said. "As she's done all these amazing things after graduating, I'm not surprised, because she keeps chipping away at it and owning it and making it her own. It's really cool to see."

Outside of the classroom, Valdivia kept busy. She was a member of the Latina support-network club *Mujeres Ayudando la Raza* and the Sigma Pi Alpha sorority. She worked as a student employee in the Orientation, Services for Students with Disabilities office and University Communications, among other places.

"Working on campus, going to school and participating in extracurricular activities made my experience a really positive one, and I think that's what led me to solidify connections in the community," she said. "Sac State is really engrained in the community, and I think working here and having experiences here led me to having some great opportunities after I left."

"The reason I got into communications was thinking about, how do I use myself and my language to create some kind of change or bring people knowledge for them to create change?" Valdivia said. "How can we uplift our community, and especially the community I belong to, in a positive light? And if it's not there, how do I create that change or contribute to it?"

Sacramento State helped build for Valdivia, a foundation for the success that has followed. Her public relations courses and extracurricular activities provided practical skills and connections. It also exposed her to a diverse set of people and viewpoints while helping her become comfortable with her own identity.

"Finding community and relating to other people really helped me move forward, embracing who I was," she said. "The brand I created is about embracing myself as a Latina, and all the diverse experiences we have."

■ Article by Jonathan Morales

Brian Blomster: Finishing what I started

To a transfer student from a relatively small town, Sacramento State in the late 1970s was a big-city place with smart instructors, interesting people, lots of trees, and opportunity.

I planned to enjoy my time here, graduate, and pursue a career in journalism.

But I skipped a step.

Just a few units shy of my bachelor's degree, I was offered the sports editor position at a local newspaper. Getting a journalism job was the reason I was attending college, so I put the quest for a degree out of my mind, though maybe not out of my heart.

ALUMNI NEWS

Five years passed and I was back in Redding, fulfilling my childhood desire to write for my hometown paper. Then it was 10 years, and I was at The *Sacramento Bee*, married to a former classmate who earned her bachelor's in Journalism at Sac State the same semester I dropped out.

A couple more professional stops, and I was looking back on a long, successful communications career.

“Something was missing, and as my son and daughter earned their college degrees, it became clear: With the finish line in sight, I had stopped short, and it bothered me.”

I wanted to know firsthand how it felt to go through Commencement, the joy and satisfaction I saw in my kids when they accepted their diplomas. Maybe it was realizing that dropping out was at odds with what I'd been taught. Maybe it was just being the only one in the family without a degree.

But then I was back at the university, a late-career jump-start as Sac State's News and Communications director. It was a dream job, but also a daily Green & Gold reminder that, proud though I was of this university and my place in it, I couldn't call myself a graduate.

Something more came into focus, though: I had a chance to fill in the educational blank spot from four decades earlier. Not because my life had suffered for it or because the outside world cared one way or the other, but because it was an imperative, something pulling hard at me.

Soon I was back in class, carrying six units in two spring semester courses. My professors, Diego Bonilla and Fred Molitor, brought to each class the kind of enthusiasm and inspiring expertise - as well as personal style - that I found engaging. They were patient, considerate, exacting in their academic expectations, and unfailingly kind.

With urging and help from Joanna Sampanis in the Registrar's Office and Communication Studies Chair Dr.

Gerri Smith, I took my final class during the Summer 2019 session, a writing-intensive history course taught online by Dr. Candace Gregory.

Because of Sac State's ProjectAttain!, an increasing number of students return every year and

complete their degrees, a serious point of pride for the university and a significant benefit for a region that depends heavily on Sac State graduates.

Though very personal, my success in attaining this degree pulses with an energy generated only by an institution and its people living up to a calling - giving their help and support unbidden but with great care and precision.

Completing a process that began at Sac State in 1977 falls a little outside the prescriptions of the university's Finish In Four and Through In Two initiatives, both successfully boosting on-time graduation rates well ahead of California State University's Graduation 2025 goals. But, while it took me 40 years longer than planned, it happened, showing clearly how seriously Sac State takes its mission.

I can only say how much I look forward to seeing you at Commencement next spring. And to Sac State and the people here, thanks.

■ *Article by Brian Blomster*

Blomster specifically credits several persons with assisting his success: Jeannie Wong, senior vice president of University Communications; Ed Mills, senior vice president for Student Affairs; Noelle McCurley, Student Affairs Administration; Joanna Sampanis, Registrar's Office; and Dr. Robert S. Nelsen, president of Sacramento State University.



■ BRIAN BLOMSTER



SACRAMENTO
STATE

Christine Miller helps lead 'reboot' of Carlsen Center

Communication Studies Professor Christine Miller is among those excited about the "reboot" of the university's Carlsen Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

A new interim executive director and a \$1 million endowment will guarantee the continued growth of a centerpiece project mark the rebirth of the University's Carlsen Center

"The way local and global economies function is changing as businesses and social ventures shift to adjust to an innovation economy, rather than the kind of atmosphere where you start at one place and stay for your entire career," said Miller, who had served as the center's administrator-in-charge since the departure of founding director Katherine Cota in May 2019.

"Now you make your career often moving around and doing different things," Miller said. "The Carlsen Center is poised to acknowledge that difference in the business and social landscape, and to help people tap into it."

Miller, a professor of Communication Studies since 1987 and the university's interim vice provost for Strategic Services, and Jyoti Das, board chair of the nonprofit Cognitive Exchange, led the center for six months. As the entrepreneur-in-residence, Das presented the boot camps and Venture School, and built a network of mentors from the local business community.



■ CHRISTINE MILLER

"I believe the center is uniquely positioned to strengthen and grow our region's innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem by fostering collaboration among stakeholders and producing a new wave of student entrepreneurs," said Cameron Law, the new interim executive director hired in October.

Law added, "I believe the center will be a valuable pillar in fulfilling President Robert S. Nelsen's vision for establishing Sacramento State as an anchor university," referring to Nelsen's push to weave Sac State more tightly into the Sacramento region's social, economic, business, and leadership fabric.

A \$1 million endowment from Western Health Advantage (WHA) will bolster Global Entrepreneurship Week, which provides several days of high-level instruction and spotlights young creators looking to make their mark.

The endowment funds speaker fees, prize money, receptions, and networking opportunities for Sac State's annual celebration of innovation and the spirit that drives startups and innovators who dream big. It is the second major gift to the program - and the second by a prominent Sac State alumnus - after the \$6 million given by Dale Carlsen '84 (Business Administration) and his wife, Katy, to launch the center in 2017.

Their goal was to create a hub for transforming the region's economy and a place to inspire students to become creative thinkers. The 10,000-square-foot center is housed in the University Library.



◀ MASKING THE MESSAGE — Dr. Timothy Howard, professor, spoke to CBS-13 in Sacramento about the changes in communication occurring because of the need to wear facial masks amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.



▲ 'OSCARS SO WHITE' — Professor Jenny Stark, spoke to ABC-10 in Sacramento about the need for greater diversity at the Academy Awards.



◀ MODERATING — Lecturer Scott Kirchner, served as the moderator of a large community forum on addressing homelessness, reported by CBS-13 in Sacramento.

FACULTY NEWS

Communication Studies faculty news

Communication Studies faculty work continuously to fulfill the research and scholarly activity portion of their duties.

Here are some highlights of our faculty's recent activities:

■ Sigrid Bathen, adjunct faculty, moderated a panel in March on *"Women in Media."* The panel, sponsored by the Renaissance Society at Sacramento State University, discussed the history and future of women in professional media jobs.

■ Dr. Michele Foss-Snowden, professor, led a workshop titled, *"How to Avoid 'Death by PowerPoint': A Guide to Creating Effective and Engaging Presentation Aids"* sponsored by the Center for Learning and Development at Sacramento State University.

She also appeared as a guest on the podcast series, "The New Normal in California," presented by California Groundbreakers. Dr. Foss-Snowden discussed "Pandemic Picks" for home-bound television viewers.

■ Dr. Timothy Howard, professor, was featured in a story by CBS 13-Sacramento regarding communication challenges presented when wearing a facial mask. Because facial expressions are covered by masks during the coronavirus crisis, Howard recommended, "Use your physical gestures where you might use your hands, eye contact where you can really get into it, and then the voice tone where you can show people your enthusiasm." The story by CBS-13 was picked up by CBS affiliates across the nation as massive amounts of coronavirus-related stories filled the media.

FACULTY NEWS

■ Dan Janos, assistant professor, had his animated film *"Flora My Dear"* accepted at Fear No Film, part of the month-long Utah Arts Festival in June. *"Flora My Dear"* also screened at Artist's Television Access in February as part of the X-peri-Mental Film Show, and was invited to the Ashland Film Festival in April. Unfortunately, the latter was canceled due to public health concerns.

■ Kathy Kasic, assistant professor, was awarded a Sacramento State Research & Creative Activity Faculty Award for 2020-21 for her research on *"Subglacial Salsa: Films and PBS Learning Media of Antarctica."*

Kasic also published a chapter in the *Handbook of Ethnographic Film and Video* edited by Phillip Vannini and published in April by Routledge. Kasic's chapter, *"Sensory Vérité,"* explores an alternative approach to creating ethnographic documentary films involving the format of ethnography through observational documentary, heightened sound design, long takes and haptic imagery.

Kasic also received a supplemental grant from the National Science Foundation to finish a feature-length film



Mendocino Mentions

about the Antarctic expedition, *"3600 Feet Beneath the Ice."*

She also produced a music video for a band called King Ropes for their song, *"Girls Like Us."*

■ Donna Knifong, lecturer, presented on Sacramento State's "Listening to Students" program at an International Listening Association virtual meeting in April. The ILA is an affiliate of the National Communication Association.

■ Dr. Shawna Malvini Redden, associate professor, is the co-author of "How Social Media Discourses Organize Communication Online: Multi-Level Discursive Analysis of Tensions & Contradictions in Teens' Online Experiences" (with A.K. Way) in *Communication Quarterly*, 67(5).

Malvini Redden is also the co-author of the chapter, "Emotion and Relationships in the Workplace" (with Dr. Sarah J. Tracy) in a new text, *Movements in Organizational Communication Research*. She and Tracy are also co-authors of the chapter, "The Sturcturation of Emotion" in the text, *Origins & Traditions of Organizational Communication: A Comprehensive Introduction to the Field*.

■ Dr. Christine Miller, professor and interim vice provost, and Dr. Nick Burnett, retired associate dean and professor, joined forces to publish a chapter in second edition of *Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods and Media* edited by Sheree Josephson, James Kelly and Ken Smith. The chapter by Miller and Burnett is titled, "Stolen Valor, More Panic and the Ethics of Digital Vigilantism." The book was published in April 2020 by Routledge.

■ Fred Molitor, lecturer, had a manuscript accepted for publication in the *Journal of Nutrition Education & Behavior*. The study found low-income California adults living in census tracts with higher numbers of policy, systems and environmental interventions reported more healthful dietary behaviors across three key measures.

■ CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Mendocino Mentions —

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Molitor also presented two studies at the American Society for Nutrition meeting in Seattle in June, about the risks of childhood obesity for children of obese parents in minority families, and dietary behaviors among low-income households based on the gender of caregivers.

■ Dr. Kikuko Omori, assistant professor, was recently awarded a Pedagogy Enhancement Award for 2020-21 to support her project, "Developing Online Problem-Based Learning Modules for the Hybrid COMS 100C Course." COMS 100C, Introduction of Scientific Methods in Communication Research, is a required core course regularly taught by Omori and others.

■ Edward Ortiz, lecturer, is the author of a new screenplay, "Stormbringer," which tells the story of an impulsive small town reporter thrust into a world of danger and tragedy when she refuses to stop investigating a murder.

■ Jenny Stark, professor, was featured in a story broadcast by ABC-10-Sacramento regarding the issue of minority representation in Oscar-nominated films. The story, which ran in conjunction with the Academy Awards presentation in February, addressed the popular hashtag, #OscarsSoWhite. Stark noted that only 16 percent of the academy are people

of color (which is double the number from five years ago), but membership continues to lag for women. "There have been changes, but it's pretty clear that that wouldn't necessarily change the total makeup of the Academy and cause any sort of significant changes in their choices (for awards)," Stark said.

■ Dr. Carmen Stitt, professor, has published results of a content analysis examining 25 years of American newspaper articles on midwives, doulas and the women who use their services. Co-authored with Ashley Perron, a Sac State alum who works at Sparkloft Media in Portland, the project grew from work started by Stitt and Perron when the latter was still an undergraduate student. Titled, "U.S. Newspaper Reports of 'Alternative' Birth Health Care 1989-2014: A Content Analysis Using Framing and Narrative Structure," was published in *Psychology of Popular Culture* in July 2019.

■ Dr. Andrew Stoner, associate professor, was the featured guest on *Journalism History*, a podcast from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. He discussed his 2019 biography on the life of author and journalist Randy Shilts. Stoner is also a panelist for "Historic Media Coverage of LGBT Issues: San Francisco & Other Key Places" at the 103rd AEJMC convention in August.

2020 Chicanx/Latinx Recognition Ceremony

Given social distancing restrictions, the Serna Center moved the annual Chicanx/Latinx Recognition Ceremony into a "virtual event."



■ GABRIELLA BERMUDEZ

Communication Studies major Gabriella Bermudez, ASI vice president for finance for 2019-20, was selected as the sole student speaker.

Also participating in the "virtual" event were Comm Studies faculty Dr. Jacqueline Irwin, professor; Chris Patterson, adjunct faculty; and Dr. Andrew Stoner, associate professor.



■ JACQUELINE IRWIN



■ CHRIS PATTERSON

SCHOLARLY AWARD — Dr. Andrew Stoner, associate professor, was awarded the Outstanding Scholarly and Creative Activity Award for the College of Arts & Letters during the 2020 Outstanding Faculty Awards.

