

School of Communication Alumni Newsletter Fall 2023

Director's Note

Welcome to the Fall 2023 issue of the School of Communication Alumni Newsletter! It feels great to be back in the School of Communication after my term as Interim Dean of the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts. We have an exciting newsletter for you! Our new Advancement Interns, Malia Liao and Evan Barker, have been busy interviewing people, gathering information, and taking photos to share lots of news with our School of Communication community this month.

Please take a few minutes to browse through our newsletter sections – we are working to establish a new format for “Highlights” sections for Alumni, Students, Research, and Forensics. I would love to receive your feedback about our newsletter content and structure. Please let me know with a personal email at hcanary@sdsu.edu if you have suggestions for future newsletters.

I hope to see many of you at our Annual Alumni & Awards Banquet on May 4, 2024. You'll receive details early next spring, but we hope you save the date to come back to campus to celebrate the many accomplishments of our alumni and current students.

Warmest Regards,



Heather E. Canary

Dr. Heather E. Canary,
Professor and School Director

Alumni Spotlight



Randy Bernstein

Alumnus Randy Bernstein, who graduated in 1982 with a Bachelor's Degree in Speech Communication, made a significant contribution to SDSU during his time here. He was a dedicated member of both the Aztec Baseball and SDSU Speech & Debate teams. In addition to his commitment to both of these teams, he also has an interesting story to share from his baseball days.

One of the memorable experiences during Bernstein's time on the baseball team was an exciting fundraising game against none other than the San Diego Padres. This special event served a dual purpose – it provided a thrilling opportunity for the Aztec Baseball team to showcase their skills against professional athletes and raised funds to support the university's programs.

Now, in partnership with his wife Aly, their generous gift will provide sustaining support for the SDSU Speech and Debate Team. In recognition of their significant donation, the 'Little Theatre' has been renamed to the Bernstein Theatre. This historical space will serve as the official headquarters for the SDSU Speech and Debate Team. Their generous donation supports team travel, recruitment, and coaching staff. The newly designated space will offer an ideal environment for the team to focus on fostering enthusiasm and ensuring a safe space for students to excel in competition, prepare for life beyond graduation, and develop leadership skills.

Reflecting on his time at SDSU, Bernstein shared his gratitude for the Speech and Debate Team, which played a pivotal role in shaping his career. He expressed a desire to give back to the program that had a profound impact on his life. He hopes that the newly established Bernstein Theatre will have a positive and lasting impact on everyone involved.

[Support the Speech & Debate Team Here](#)

Dr. Patricia Geist-Martin Scholarship for the Study of Gender and Organization



Dr. Patricia Geist Martin

The *Patricia Geist Martin Scholarship for the Study of Gender and Organizing* has been established to support students who are working to better understand the dynamics of gender in the workplace. By understanding the power of the feminine in our leaders, the need for a more balanced approach to work, and the barriers to belonging that limit success, these emerging scholars can help to shape the models of organizing and leadership into the future. Dr. Lisa Howard Schenk, Alumni Advisory Board member and founder of the Patricia Geist Martin Scholarship Fund noted:

"I don't think I realized the impact Dr. Patricia Geist Martin has had on my life as a mentor, colleague, and friend, but as her retirement party approached, I found myself reflecting on what a difference she has made in my life. In honor of the role she has played in my life and the lives of so many others, I found a way to help other young graduate students achieve their dreams.

This fund is designed to support students who are seeking through their scholarship to improve the ways we work together so that the opportunity to thrive is spread more evenly and the outcomes of our efforts are more sustainable.

To support this new scholarship so it reaches the level needed to begin distributing funds to students, click on the Director's Fund below

[Director's Fund](#)

Research Spotlight

In the heart of National City and with the help of its residents, graduate students from our Politics of Health Communication seminar embarked on a transformative research project. Their focus is on brownfields, the underutilized lands negatively affected by perceptions of contamination and pollution. This hands-on initiative aims to bridge the divide between academic knowledge and real-world application.

Under the guidance of Dr. Rati Kumar, these students embraced a culture-centered perspective, immersing themselves in the National City community to conduct a needs assessment. Through interviews, they gauged the community's understanding of brownfields. The insights gained from these interactions will serve as the foundation for a comprehensive media campaign. By using a health communication lens to examine the data, students highlight the critical link between health and



This project serves as a pivotal moment for our students, offering them a unique opportunity to understand community work that transcends the confines of class readings, while at the same

environmental injustice. This approach, inspired and supported by the SAGE project's deep roots in National City, ensures that the information disseminated will be authentic and resonate with the community.

Throughout this endeavor, our students encountered challenges that tested their problem-solving skills and adaptability. For instance, when faced with low participation due to a technological gap, the students didn't shy away from revisiting their strategies. They demonstrated resilience and a commitment to inclusivity by going back into the community, reevaluating their methods, and embracing a more accessible approach.

demonstrating solidarity with the National City community members' lived experiences.

As the graduate students continue their progress on this project, we applaud them for their dedication, resilience, and unwavering commitment to creating positive change. Through their efforts, they have not only elevated their own learning but also exemplified the transformative power of communication in building stronger, more informed communities.

Student Spotlight



Gianna Panzardi

From Marin, CA, Gianna Panzardi is a senior student majoring in Communication and currently serving as the President of Lambda Pi Eta.

For Gianna, communication is more than just a focus of her studies, it's a way of connecting with the world around her. She thrives in social interactions, finding joy in every conversation and valuing the impact genuine communication can have.

As the President of LPH, she has embraced the opportunity to shape the direction of this organization, grateful for the freedom to build Lambda Pi Eta's presence within our school. Gianna finds herself in community, surrounded by fellow students who are equally passionate about communication.

One of Gianna's most cherished moments in her academic journey has been her connections with faculty members. She deeply values the relationships that she has built with her instructors, and being known as an individual with a unique voice. These connections have enhanced her learning experience and reinforced her commitment to the field of communication.

Looking ahead to the next year, Gianna plans to stay in San Diego after graduation. Her aspirations include gaining valuable work experience and possibly attending graduate school to further her studies in communication. She's excited about the multitude career paths available to her and the challenge that lies in making a career decision. However, Gianna sees this challenge as an opportunity for self-discovery and growth. She is driven by the desire to make a difference, one conversation at a time. As she prepares for the next chapter in her life, we are confident that her passion and dedication will continue to inspire us all.

Internship Spotlight

AZTEC SUMMER SPOTLIGHT



"I had the pleasure of working under multiple financial advisors, which allowed me to expand my knowledge within the financial world. I learned about the importance of investing, how to market to specified groups of people, create annuities, and organize life insurance plans."

MORGAN DELWICHE SENIOR, LACROSSE



WEALTH MANAGEMENT INTERN AT CETERA FINANCIAL GROUP

Our students benefit from valuable experiential learning in our Internship program! Employers consistently emphasize the importance of internship experience for their incoming employees. The School of Communication

Internship Program has grown by leaps and bounds over the past few years. We now have a structured Internship Handbook to guide students and partner organizations through the process. We offer variable credit so students and internship partner organizations can curate the Internship plan that meets everyone's needs.

Does your organization need interns? We love working with our alumni and their organizations to give our students opportunities to put their communication education into action in internships!

To learn more, check out the School of Communication internship page, [link here!](#) To get started as an Internship Partner Organization, contact our Director of Internships, Dr. Chuck Goehring, at cgoehring@sdsu.edu.

Dr. Charles Goehring



Forensics Update



SDSU Forensics has been hard at work this semester. Our team has a strong roster of both returners and new recruits; including freshmen and transfer students. We have already attended 5 tournaments this semester from regional showings in Los Angeles to out-of-state travels to Portland, Oregon, and Peoria, Illinois. Our amazing students have also participated in our first Forensics Showcase that took place in our new home, The Bernstein Theatre, which helped in fundraising to assist in sending more of our students to nationals in Spring. We are also excited to share that our student leadership has been very active this year in coordinating tabling events to increase awareness of our program across the SDSU community and organizing philanthropic efforts through a clothing donation with Associated Students. We are excited about our upcoming Fall Championship tournament at Mount San Antonio College in December and the Gaske Memorial Tournament that we will be hosting at SDSU the first weekend of February.

Please follow our Instagram to stay tuned for some updates from our amazing students as the year continues!



Ashley Nuckels-Cuevas,
Director of Forensics

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[Visit the Forensics website here!](#)

What Your Gift Can Do

The School of Communication relies on private support to fulfill our mission of providing quality graduate and undergraduate education in the field of human communication. Click the link below to make a gift to the School of Communication or choose from one of our specific programs.

[Donate here](#)

Save the Date!

The Annual Alumni and Awards Banquet is on May 4th!



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