



GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

UC Santa Barbara Department of Communication

2021 -2022





GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

2021

FROM THE GRADUATE DIRECTOR

As I write this, September 2021, it seems like the pandemic continues to linger in our midst, but hopefully, the latest surge will be short-lived. Plans are for us to be able to return to our campus departments and hold classes in person again. We all long to return to something close to normal again.

Over the past year and a half, we certainly learned the capability of communication technology for teaching and some elements of research. While many of us will never be a fan of teaching online—we now know we can. We also have learned that we can invite guest speakers to join our classes via Zoom, regardless of their location, and we can use Zoom for office hours

when we must be away from campus. For many of us, we now know that we can conduct some research online, or meet and work with collaborators regardless of their or our locations. At the same time, we also learned how much we value seeing our colleagues and students face-to-face.



This year will be extra-special because we are welcoming our 2020 and 2021 graduate student cohorts to our department for the first time. Even though we feel that we know you, there’s nothing like being physically together to develop immediacy (isn’t there research on that? :-). Recently, I met with a colleague to work on a writing project together. It was wonderful. The day flew by and we got quite a bit accomplished. That caused me to want to start a weekly Writing Room. Starting on Wednesday, September 29th, you are invited to join us from 2-4pm (or any portion thereof) in SSMS 4143 to write. Work on whatever you choose—a class paper, conference paper, thesis or any other project. We hope this quiet time to write with others will be productive for you and help to establish a writing habit. I tried to find a time that most students are available, but if it doesn’t work for you in the fall, hopefully it will in winter or spring.

As you settle (back) into the department, please remember that we are here to learn from and support each other. Let me know if I can help.

Karen K. Myers, Professor and Graduate Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Graduate Director	2	2021 Graduate Committee	7
From the Chair	3	What We’ve Been Up To...	8
2021 Cohort	4	Thank you, Tania!	10
GSACC	6	2021 - 2022 Events	11



FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Hello! After nearly 18 months of remote learning, we are thrilled to be back in person in the fall. Even though there will still be challenges this coming year, the pandemic has taught us that we can handle anything that comes our way. There might also be some benefits to remote learning going forward. For instance, remote teaching made it easy for instructors to invite guest speakers from across the globe into their classes. At the same time, we understand the value of human contact and being together in the same shared, physical space. Not only does it reduce feelings of isolation, but it fosters creativity and a sense of community. As the new Chair, I'm excited for what the future holds and for the essential role you play in it. Over the past year, we have taken actionable steps toward making our Department more diverse, inclusive, and equitable. We also continue to emphasize the value of community-engaged research and using our knowledge to help the communities around us. We look forward to working on these and other important initiatives together next year. Perhaps most importantly, we simply look forward to spending time together!

Tammy Afifi, Professor and Department Chair

Department of Communication

UC Santa Barbara
4005 Social Sciences & Media Studies
805.893.4479 | comminfo@comm.ucsb.edu

Graduate Director: Karen Myers
Newsletter Editors: Ava Mar & Alison Schwartz

NEW FOR 2021 - 2022

GRADUATE DIRECTOR OFFICE HOUR

Wednesdays 1:00 - 2:00 pm
SSMS 4141

Something on your mind? Issue? Idea? Just want to chat? Come meet with Karen Myers, Graduate Director, in her office!

WRITING ROOM!

Wednesdays 2:00 - 4:00 pm
SSMS 4143

Writing can be a solitary endeavor, but it doesn't have to be. Let's meet once a week for two hours to work on writing projects together. Work on your class papers, theses, dissertations, conference papers, journal submissions, whatever you want to work on. We can start each by talking about our goals for the week or asking for feedback on a research/writing issue. Thereafter, we will minimize chit-chat, but feel free to bring snacks.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

3rd Friday of the Quarter
3:00 pm

FALL: Securing Grants
WINTER: Teaching at a Teaching-Focused School
SPRING: Non-Academic Careers

2021 COHORT



**LAURENT
WANG**

I received my B.A. in Communication from UC Santa Barbara in 2021, and I am more than excited to start my Ph.D. journey at the place where I was cultivated. I am currently interested in the social and cognitive uses of digital technology and their implications for larger societal issues, such as digital inequality. My most recent research investigated credibility perceptions of different fact-checking sources, and effects of human-AI synergy on users' algorithmic bias detection. When I am not doing research, I enjoy traveling, cooking, listening to Cantonese songs, and spending some time with my cat Linus and my plants.



**QING
HUANG**

I recently received my MA in Communication Studies from the Moody College of Communication at the University of Texas at Austin. In 2018, I graduated from Huazhong University of Science and Technology with a dual degree in Communication and Computer Science. In between my undergrad and graduate degrees, I worked for a year as a Communication Trainee at the United Nations University Institute in Macau. Chronemics, technology, and personal relationships are key elements in my research. I am passionate about the intersection of interpersonal communication and computer-mediated communication, as well as their relational and health outcomes. I am an "expert" on the Werewolves board game. I enjoy swimming, traveling, and watching sci-fi movies. My newest hobby is to plant sprouted potatoes in my apartment.



**KYLIE
WOODMAN**

I completed my degree at the University of Alabama in Birmingham with a BS in Psychology and a BA in Communications. As an Alabama native, I grew up sipping sweet tea and eating slow-smoked BBQ – my favorite food! My time at UAB was often split between research (family functioning and child development) and campus engagement (university event planning). After graduation, I transitioned to a Post-Bacc position at Yale University, coordinating a national study of adolescent brain development (ABCD Study). My current research converges at the intersection of media-mediated family functioning and youth brain development. Outside of academics, you can find me crafting, 3D printing brains, or venturing outdoors!



**JADE
SALMON**

I received BAs in Communication and French, as well as a minor in Psychology, from the University of Arizona in 2021. I have experience in interpersonal and mass communication, and my prominent research interest is in friendship development and maintenance. My undergraduate honors thesis centered on sex and gender differences in behavior in the context of best friendship. I'm looking forward to further developing this research. Outside of my studies, I'm known as the tabletop gamer in all my friend groups. I absolutely love sharing social experiences with others, and I find that board games are a great way to bring people together. I may or may not have a collection of 110+ games! I also enjoy drawing and playing video games.



**XINYI
(CECILEY)
ZHANG**

I received my BA in literature from Beijing Normal University in 2019 and my MA in Communication from the University of Oklahoma. My research interests focus on human frustrations with technology and cultural differences in technology appropriation.

In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, playing video games, watching anime, and writing. I also love to travel.



**REBECCA
(REBE)
JAMES**

Hello, my name is Rebe (she/her/hers). My research focuses on resiliency, compartmentalization, trauma, and Health campaigns and Service-based learning. I use an interdisciplinary perspective, primarily drawing from Health Communication and Interpersonal Communication, also delving into topics that intersect race, gender, and class. I have special interest in preventative health care, reproductive rights, conflict management, community resiliency, and Media Studies. I plan to utilize my knowledge, research, and teaching to play a key role in the movement towards educational equity for any organization I am a part of. I am eager to leverage my experience as a data analyst in academia into data interpreting and visualizing skills to drive growth. While also at SDSU, I was a research analyst for the Fowler School of Business, a communication specialist for Latinx Resource Center, and a digital marketing specialist and media coordinator for Well-being and Health Promotion, running large-scale events and campaigns focused on student health and success. In previous roles, I created learning material for students in Hawaii centered on telecommunications skills and mathematics. I enjoy being outside and exploring! I also love to garden, read, and hang out with my dogs. I am currently working on becoming a better cook and baker now that I have my own kitchen.



**HANNAH
OVERBYE**

I received my B.S., with a double major in Psychology and Communication from the University of Illinois in 2019. After undergrad, I spent the next two years working as the Lab Manager for Stanford's Psychophysiology Laboratory in the Bay Area. I am SO excited to move down to Santa Barbara and experience what the SoCal hype is all about. In grad school, I hope to explore perceptions of racialized political disinformation and how this type of news spreads online. In my free time, I love running, learning about cybersecurity, and drinking lots of coffee. I also just love spending time with people, so I am down for almost any group activity.



**SHAWN
HILL**

I received my B.A. in English from Old Dominion University and my M.A in criminal justice from Arizona State University. I have been in law enforcement for over 20 years, and based on what I have seen, believe the profession can benefit greatly from embracing evidence from communication theories, and implementing evidence-based practices in the field. I am currently most interested in exploring intergroup processes and their impact on the police-public relationship, especially with those groups that often have strained relationships with police. I most love being with my wife and two children ages 11 and 7, and my two Rhodesian Ridgebacks. When there is spare time, I enjoy triathlons and playing music.



**JACOVA
SNYDER**

My passion for organizations and communication first began during my undergrad at Azusa Pacific University. After finishing my BA in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication, I moved back home to Phoenix, AZ where I spent several years working for a recruiting company and most recently in student life at Grand Canyon University. During my postgrad years in the workplace, a basic understanding of communication theory helped me immensely as I learned to navigate an unfamiliar professional landscape. I am interested in studying socialization, assimilation, and organizational culture so I can help equip young professionals with tools to thrive. I am very excited to move back to California and begin my studies at UCSB! In my free time I love working out at OrangeTheory, sharing meals with friends, exploring outdoors, and reading!



**CHLOE
GONZALES**

I received my BS in Communication Studies from the University of Texas at Austin in 2021, with an emphasis in interpersonal communication. I have grown up my whole life in San Antonio, Texas and definitely consider Texas BBQ its own food group. Being a transfer student myself, I worked for the Transfer-Year Experience Program as a peer mentor during my time at UT which further solidified my passion for teaching and counseling others. In graduate school, I am interested in exploring interpersonal and family communication, identity, and race/ethnicity. In my free time, I love watching and obsessing over movies, writing with my fountain pens, training my 3 dogs, and learning Norwegian.

GSACC LEADERSHIP

"As we embark upon a new academic year with all the excitement and anticipation of getting back to some sense of normalcy, we also remain aware of the continuing uncertainty of the pandemic. The past almost two years have challenged, and continue to challenge, each of us in different ways. Yet while we have different backgrounds and experiences that have shaped us, our life paths have led each of us to this department at this point in our lives. We are all capable, intelligent, resilient, and we all need reminders of this from time to time. We need each other. It is my hope that we approach this year with a spirit of compassion, kindness, and understanding. I know things are difficult; I know things are uncertain; but I also know we can get through this together."

ALL-GRAD REP NAN WILKENFELD

ALL-GRAD



Nan Wilkenfeld

ABD



To be selected

PHD



Gwen Petro

MA



Carmen Chan

FIRST YEAR



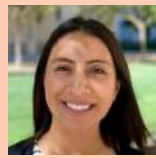
Cynthia McLeod

GSA



Chengyu Fang

TA LIAISONS



Nancy Molina-Rogers

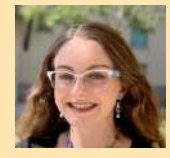


America Edwards

OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES



Chantel Haughton



Nitzan Navick

SOCIAL CHAIRS



Allison Mazur



Chantel Haughton



Nan Wilkenfeld

DEI GRADS



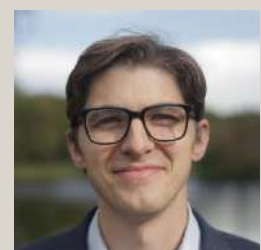
Matt Giles



To be selected

GRADUATE DIVERSITY ADVOCATE

Dr. Dan Lane will serve as this year's Graduate Diversity Officer for our Department. Each academic department on the UCSB campus selects a faculty member to serve as their Graduate Diversity Officer. As the Graduate Diversity Officer, Dan will take the lead in supporting graduate student interests related to diversity, equity, and inclusion within our Department. He encourages graduate students who have questions, concerns, or suggestions related to DEI to contact him at dlane@ucsb.edu.



DR. DAN LANE

2021 GRADUATE COMMITTEE

The Graduate Committee includes faculty representing our department's diverse interests, the Graduate Program Advisor, and the Graduate Director who serves as chair. This committee is responsible for all oversight and policy changes to the graduate program. One of the committee's most significant tasks is reviewing prospective student applications and—in consultation with the department's faculty—selecting the individuals to admit to our program. They also are responsible for outreach to attract potential graduate students, reviewing grad students' research grant applications, nominations for department and central fellowships, and for suggesting and reviewing updates to the graduate student handbook.



Dr. Jennifer Gibbs



Dr. Scott Reid



Dr. Dan Lane



Dr. Karen Myers
Graduate Director



Dr. Muniba Saleem



Dr. Miriam Metzger



Tricia Taylor

GRADUATE TA COORDINATOR

Dr. Dolly Mullin provides pedagogical leadership and support to graduate students. Each quarter, she has the challenging task of working through graduate students' busy schedules and assigning them as teaching assistants (TAs) to our undergraduate courses. Dolly also teaches COMM 500 every fall quarter, which offers graduate students tools to develop their pedagogical skills. She works closely with many of our graduate students who TA the introductory communication courses that she also teaches.



DR. DOLLY MULLIN

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO...

Will You Miss Anything About the Stay-at-Home Order?

Taking random karaoke breaks during the day.
Jesse King

I'll miss spending all day with my dogs, Lulu and Moo.
Nitzan Navick

An excuse to have food delivered.
Kristy Hamilton

Meetings on Zoom.
Michael Stohl

1) Not having to commute an hour to campus! 2) Having my dog next to me while I work. 3) Being able to make myself look "presentable" quickly and only from the shoulders up! (LOL)
Dolly Mullin

I'm really grateful that I was able to work remotely during the pandemic and that I get to continue working from home while also getting to spend a ton of time with my dogs.
Rebecca James

Wearing pajamas to work and not having to prepare meals because my refrigerator is only 6ft away!
Mandy Czarnecki

Cooking my own meals every day :)
Qing Huang

It was an "order" – nothing I will miss about it!
Musa Malik

I enjoyed learning a lot about video and audio editing for teaching.
Andy Merolla



How happy my dogs are with all the attention :)
Shawn Hill

I will miss being able to work from anywhere; it was great working from my mom's house in San Diego and spending time with her. I'll also miss the ability to call up any friend and know they're probably not busy and just catch up.
Francesca Palermino

Seriously, the best part about lockdown was that we really got to know our neighbors! We would get groceries for each other, alert each other when we saw a store had toilet paper in stock, and we got together every Friday for happy hour out on our driveways. We feel lucky to know them better.
Norah Dunbar

Spending more time with my husband (Dave) and sweet little kitties (Tessa and Tammie).
Karen Myers

The thing I will miss the most about the "stay at home" orders is the extra quality time with my kids and dogs. :)
Tammy Afifi

I'm going to miss having an easy excuse for being lazy and unhealthy! I can no longer blame my lack of exercise on not being allowed to go to the gym...
Jade Salmon

Spectacular Zoom wardrobes - professional on the top, party on the bottom!
Tricia Taylor

I will miss the invaluable time I got to spend with my family and dogs due to being back home.
Chloe Gonzales

That no one can tell that you are attending formal meetings in pyjamas.
Paula Wang

Find Any New Hobbies During the Pandemic?

Baking bread and cookies!
Musa Malik

Does eating Doritos count as a pastime?
Norah Dunbar

New hobby: jewelry making!
Nitzan Navick

I became obsessed with putting together jigsaw puzzles, and I got back into my childhood hobby of playing video games. My Nintendo Switch became one of my favorite possessions over the past year. Also, this isn't so much of a hobby, but I've learned that having free time is valuable for my mental health – who would've guessed? I hope I can keep that up as things go back to normal.

Jade Salmon

I learned some new DIY skills, spent a lot of time researching many other upcoming home improvement projects, and took a lot more walks and in the process got to know our neighbors much better!

Dolly Mullin

My quarantine project was training my family's new puppy. Another new hobby I acquired during the pandemic was playing Settlers of Catan which also ended up being my Texas Snowpocalypse pastime!

Chloe Gonzales



Trying new recipes and growing sprouted potatoes.
Qing Huang

Cooking fabulous meals without meal kits, sharpening my French-speaking skills, and beating my personal best for most episodes binged in one sitting without falling asleep on the couch.

Tricia Taylor

Teaching my dog to talk with buttons. Her favorite button is "treats!"

Kristy Hamilton

During the pandemic, my three-year-old and I became gardeners and turned our backyard into a small orchard (planted 2 cherry trees, 2 apple trees, 2 pineapple guava trees, 1 apricot tree, 1 peach tree, and 1 mandarin orange tree). Now we have a squirrel that visits us a couple times a week to carry off apples from one of the trees. Squirrels got to eat too!

Jennifer Kam

Gardening (my kids eat the fruit & veggies out of the garden before I can harvest!)

Shawn Hill



I continued my hobby of refurbishing and refinishing vintage furniture! I am currently working on refurbishing some retro dining chairs from the '60s and a gold vanity from the '70s.

Rebecca James

I joined a few book clubs to get myself to not only read more, but to still maintain a sense of community and connection while in isolation.

Mandy Czarnecki

We have a compost bin out back and some time this last year, an errant tomato seed we threw away must have germinated and sprouted INSIDE the compost bin. It poked a tendril through an air vent, and grew into a very robust bush that we have named, Trash Tomato. The fruit are delicious and not, as we feared, tinged with egg shells and coffee grounds. With mixed feelings we've watched it grow more heartily than any other tomato plant that we actually meant to grow. Daily checks and frequent pickings will be something I will miss about the stay at home orders; raising accidental tomatoes is my new hobby.

Joe Walther

A new hobby that I acquired was practicing aerial arts and roller skating; both things I've always wanted to try but didn't dedicate time to prior.

Francesca Palermino

I must have made 20 loaves of banana bread in the past last year. Also, who knew jigsaw puzzles were so much fun?

Karen Myers

Lots of home DIY stuff.
Andy Merolla

I hand sewed a dress, skirt, and two-piece top/shorts.
Jesse King

Ping Pong.
Michael Stohl

Zelda - Breath of the Wild.
Paula Wang

What Are You Looking Forward to This Year?

Being near other humans! Jesse King	Meeting my advisor and fellow cohort members for the first time. Paula Wang	Background noise! Kristy Hamilton	Getting back on campus as a student! Shawn Hill
1) Incorporating into my in-person classes some of the new teaching techniques I learned during remote instruction, 2) the active involvement with students (not to mention the fun and theatricality) of teaching classes in a large lecture hall, 3) department parties! Dolly Mullin		Academically, I am really excited to start my Ph.D. program! I am looking forward to learning and growing as a student and a person. Personally, I am looking forward to meeting new people, exploring Santa Barbara, and cooking at home more. Rebecca James	Making memories again! Mandy Czarnecki
Playing board games in person with new friends. Qing Huang	Seeing family and friends in person. Meeting the new students. Andy Merolla	Getting to meet our 2020 and 2021 grad cohorts in person! Tricia Taylor	I'm looking forward to seeing people face to face! I really want to host board game nights, have dinner parties, and just generally connect with everyone in person. I've become less social during the pandemic, which is confusing for a loud, outgoing extrovert like me. Jade Salmon
I'm most excited to go to an in-person conference and present my research, and to see all my friends from other universities across the country after almost two years! (Fingers crossed) Nitzan Navick	I am most looking forward to not taking for granted what it means to be able to meet people in person, be with my loved ones, and be healthy. Chloe Gonzales	I'm most looking forward to traveling to the east coast this summer to visit family, and becoming a certified aerial fitness instructor. Francesca Palermino	
The things I look forward to most next year include travel, seeing everyone in our department in person, and watching my daughter graduate high school! Tammy Afifi	I cannot wait to see the 2020 and 2021 cohorts together for the first time. I'm also looking forward to actually seeing the faces of my undergrad students when I lecture! Karen Myers	An opportunity to "detox" from the digital classroom. I'll still be looking at a screen but its nice to know I can also look at the ocean! :) Musa Malik	
			Seeing students and hopefully seeing colleagues in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Michael Stohl

THANK YOU, TANIA!

On July 18th, the department gathered at the home of Tammy and Walid Afifi to thank Tania Dunson for her 15 years of service in the department. She served as financial assistant, undergraduate advisor, and most recently as the department business officer. Because she has developed an outstanding reputation on our campus, she has accepted a position as the new Director of Policy and Administration for the College of Letters & Science. She will be missed!

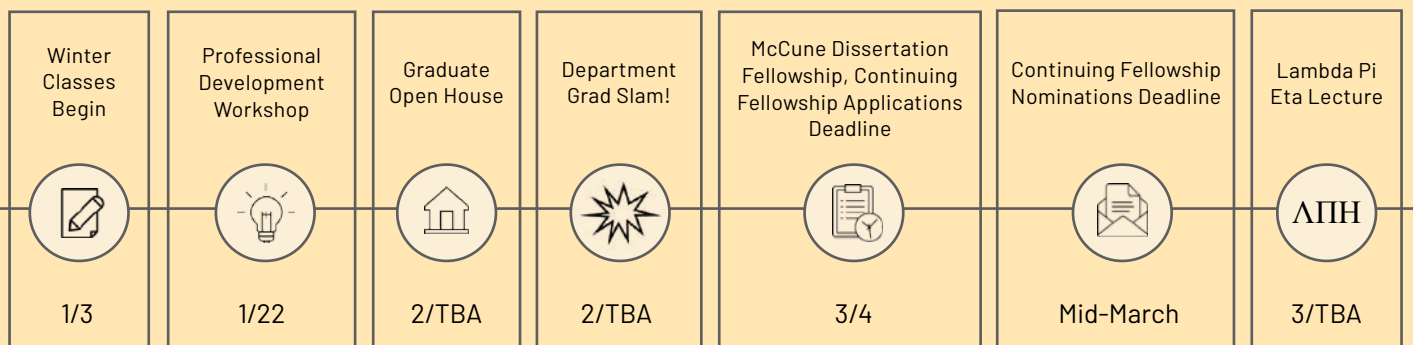


IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2021-2022

FALL 2021



WINTER 2022



SPRING 2022

