MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello! Can you believe we are almost done with another year? Like everyone else, I find it difficult to fathom that we have been in a pandemic for over two years. We are a resilient group! In fact, I would say that we have learned to thrive in many ways. I see professors and students using what they learned during COVID to adapt and improve their learning. Students are taking notes with different electronic devices and relying on each other more to help learn the material. Professors are using flipped classrooms and hybrid approaches in ways that enhance students' learning.

We are also conducting more community engaged research and enrichment projects in the department. For instance, some of the undergraduate students who started out in Dr. Walid Afifi’s Community Engagement Class have been continuing their community-based projects throughout the year and are making an impact in Isla Vista and the surrounding area. One group is close to receiving funding for the first-ever free grocery shuttle that takes students directly from IV to the Calle Real Market, in a loop all day Saturday and Sunday. Another group of students is working to provide increased access to information for the parents of first-generation Spanish-speaking students. Many of these parents don’t know what their children experience in college, and don’t know where to start in helping them. The final team is working to eliminate the drugging of drinks in downtown Santa Barbara bars, an increasing problem in the community. They are doing so by raising funds to purchase cup lids and by developing a campaign to change city policy to require training of all bar staff on how to spot and stop drugging. These are truly remarkable projects that are going to enhance our community. Look for the article on page 11 that highlights some of these projects. Thank you for making a difference!

Numerous faculty and graduate students are also conducting research that is incredibly timely and important. For example, Dr. Miriam Metzger is currently researching ways to fight the misinformation “epidemic.” One project investigates the effectiveness of different sources of fact-checking (professionals, artificial intelligence, crowdsourcing, etc.) and another is looking at the use of emotional appeals as a means of understanding why fake news/misinformation is effective and also how to counter it/reduce belief in misinformation. Dr. Dan Lane’s research team is investigating how individuals and groups use communication technology to create social and political change. In addition, Dr. Muniba Saleem has been examining how media influences intergroup relations between racial, ethnic, and religious groups. Her work examines how exposure to media stereotypes of minorities can influence hostile attitudes and behaviors toward depicted members. Her recent research explores how racial/ethnic minorities cope with negative media images of their social group and how they get motivated and empowered to restore a positive image of their group. Check out her work on a recent NPR interview: https://www.npr.org/2018/04/13/601524253/the-weight-of-our-words. As a final example, graduate students Nitzan Navick and Allison Mazur collected data on sexual harassment in the workplace in virtual spaces during COVID-19. These are just a handful
of examples of the innovative and significant research being conducted in our department. Most of this research could also only be accomplished with the assistance of our undergraduate research assistants, who do a remarkable job!

I am looking forward to Career Day this weekend. This is such an exciting opportunity to connect our Communication Alumni with our undergraduate students. Our Alumni Council has also started a new mentoring program this year where 75 alumni mentor undergraduate students one-on-one about their career development. In addition to this wonderful mentoring program for students who are preparing to graduate, we also have another mentoring program in the department to help students transition into the major. This mentoring program is geared toward helping students develop effective study habits, learn how to navigate the major and the university system at large, and provide other essential life guidance and mentorship.

There are a lot of exciting things that have happened this year in the Department of Communication. I look forward to finishing out the year strong and celebrating your success at graduation!

Tammy Afifi, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair

The Gaucho Communicator
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SPRING CLEANING
Self-Care and Relaxation Advice

By: Courtney Poon

What does self-care mean to you?
I'm an introvert. So that also means that by spending a lot, giving yourself more time, and focusing internally rather than externally. Also, trying to take care of other people, prioritizing yourself, and your well-being.

What are some things that cause you stress?
In grad school, it is actually very stressful. So, I think a lot of times, there are work related things like guidelines, conference submissions, rejections, from journal articles. And taking classes, teaching classes, or just trying to keep up with your work progress. But there's also various personal stress. I think we all have been really stressed during the pandemic. And I haven't been able to go back home for more than two years.

Are there any activities you enjoy doing to relax?
I want to go back to swimming or playing tennis again. I want to get off zoom meetings, have more in person meetings, be outdoors with more friends, and do more exercises like hiking like at Inspiration Point. I also like to go to the beach all the time. Sometimes I travel to Ventura, Pasadena, or even SoCal.

Any other advice?
I think one thing that I add, especially for undergrads, is that classwork is just a small part of your life. And when you don't do as you expected, it's totally acceptable. Like, I got into grad school. And I had classes where I got C's or B's, and there are subjects I'm not good at. And you should take the chances to explore college life, campus life, and life outside of campus and explore the city.
What are some things that cause you stress?
Knowing I have a deadline coming up or even just the day to day like knowing I have a lot of stuff I need to be doing. And sometimes when you take that time to do self-care, it can be more stressful. But I think it's important to tell yourself that you can only do so much every single day. You can't always be productive, you can't always be working, because that's not going to lead to a healthy lifestyle.

How do you cope with stress?
During COVID I was alone by myself a lot, which made it stressful because I couldn't do a lot of that self-care where you're hanging out with people. I ended up getting a dog, a little pandemic pup. He makes me feel less isolated. There's something about hanging out with a dog that makes you feel good.

Are there any activities you enjoy doing to relax?
I've been working on really taking care of my body. So that can be exercising or trying to eat healthy. I recently started going to core power a little bit, doing some hot yoga. I think there is that mind-body connection. Exercise does make you feel better, unfortunately. There's some truth to that. Going to a workout class really forces me to stop working at least for an hour and try to clear my mind a bit.

Any recommendations for the Santa Barbara area?
I love the weather here. You really got to take advantage of being able to get outside. Hiking Montecito Hot Springs is pretty cool. Trail walks, like Ellwood Beach, are also nice. My favorite is Hendry’s Beach which has an off-leash dog beach. I personally like walking around State Street, the Funk Zone area, and the courthouse. There are so many cool things to see there.
Any recommendations for the Santa Barbara area?
I like going to the farmer’s market. I just met this person who told me that they work at a gay bar in Santa Barbara. And I didn't know there was one, but now I kind of want to go. I also like going to the water tower.

Any other advice?
There are always going to be external stressors, like finances and assignments, but the only thing that you really have control over is eliminating the internal stressors. You just have to change your perspective. When things work out, it’s great. And if they don't, well, then I'll just find another opportunity. Obviously, it sucks to apply for a job, worry about getting it, and then get rejected, but there will always be something out there.

What are some things that cause you stress?
I think the only things that really cause me stress are if I take on too many things, and I don't have enough time to really put my all into it. I don't like taking something on and then doing it at 20%. I'd rather put in a lot more effort and really do it right the first time. Also, keeping up with social ties can be stressful. So it’s definitely important for me to make sure that I have a balance of things.

How do you cope with stress?
Something that's been helpful, which I've actually neglected the past few weeks, but I've gotten back into it, is making lists of things that I need to do. And even, just like writing or saying to myself that I'm going to take this amount of time to really relax and take this kind of break. Also, setting deadlines for when I need to get things done has really helped me structure how I was going to week.

Are there any stressful habits that you want to get rid of?
I think I should remove myself from scrolling through social media mindlessly because it doesn't really take away a lot of my stress. And I'm just like, well, now I just wasted about 20 minutes sitting there when I could have been doing something else. Like even though I'm looking at it as a break from my schoolwork, it doesn't really feel like a break.
Are there any activities you enjoy doing to relax?
Listening to music drawing, sometimes going on YouTube. I personally really like driving as another way of just going out and relaxing. I really like the route up to Solvang. The drive is really pretty because I love the mountain roads. Also, there's a Starbucks along the way that I always like to go to.

Image credits: C. Poon, JEShoots.com (via unsplash.com), M. Henry (via unsplash.com)

Harnessing the Power of Alumni-Student Relationships

By: Lian Benasuly

UC Santa Barbara communication alum are paving the way for mentorship programs in the UCSB community, creating a safe space for communication students to learn what they may not be learning in the traditional classroom setting. From general professional development advice to more specific industry-based questions, communication students are gaining insight from the people, who not so long ago, were in their same positions as them.

Since this past January, 80 UC Santa Barbara communication alumni have taken time out of their schedules to sit down, one-on-one, with communication students who signed up for the first-ever UCSB COMM Mentorship Program. Mentees and mentors schedule their own virtual meetings to talk about a wide range of topics, such as resume building questions, navigating post-graduate life, and even more casual conversations about Isla Vista and UCSB social life.

Mentees have received advice about utilizing UCSB's communication degree in a variety of diverse fields. The versatility of the communication degree compels a lot of students to pursue UCSB's communication program. But, it also means that students need to do their research to figure out where they want to apply their knowledge, says Renee Thomas, a UCSB alum and current mentor.

One mentee explains this phenomenon. “You can really apply skills in communication in every industry. But because I have so many options, I knew I needed to start whittling them down and a great way to do that is by learning about what jobs are out there first,” said second-year Communication student Bella Strollo.

Thomas says that she would have benefitted from a mentorship program while she was at UCSB.

“I really didn’t know what was outside of the key focuses that the COMM department focuses on like marketing and PR,” Thomas said.
Mentorship is a vital tool that students should take advantage of in order to set themselves up for success in their post-graduate lives, according to a study published in the National Library of Medicine. The researchers found that mentoring relationships can facilitate professional connections, impart technical knowledge onto the mentees, and this can ultimately lead to financial success.

The COMM Mentorship Program ran a pilot program last fall, in which 12 mentees and mentors participated. Through this quarter-long pilot program, both the mentees and mentors provided input about what their conversations entailed and the structure of their meetings.

Mentees and mentors were not given specific topics to talk about. Rather, they were able to choose what made the most sense for the both of them. The mentees learned a great deal about themselves, their professional goals, and what they want to accomplish both in the short and long-term.

Michelle Lee, a fourth-year communication student, learned from her mentor, Leslie Klonoff, how to not underestimate herself and her accomplishments.

“I came into this program with a feeling of imposter syndrome and Leslie always made me feel good about myself,” Lee said. “I learned to not minimize my own achievements and to not compare myself to other people. She taught me that if I constantly compare myself to other people, I will never be happy.”

The program is geared towards the mentee, which made her feel at ease, Lee said.

“From the beginning, Leslie said that I could get matched with someone else if it didn’t work out. The program is really flexible and if you are hesitant on joining the program, just go for it,” Lee said.

Lee’s positive experience in the program compels her to give back, as an alum, through this mentorship program in the future.

For some people, reaching out to and finding mentors can be a daunting process. But for others, mentorship has been easy to come by.

One is Jonathan Gruber, a current mentor in the COMM Mentorship Program. He has had natural mentorship throughout his life. But, Gruber acknowledges that mentorship can be an intimidating and difficult process for people.
Jonathan Gruber is a current mentor in the program

“Mentorship and building a strong network can be hard to come by for some people, so I wanted to give back,” Gruber said.

From his time as a UCSB student until now, he has always believed that Gauchos are always there for each other. Gruber stresses the importance of not being afraid to ask for help, because UCSB alum will more likely than not go out of their way to help.

Although the mentors are told to meet with mentees three to four times throughout the quarter, Gruber believes that meeting more consistently even if it’s for a shorter amount of time can be beneficial both for the mentee and mentor.

“It would benefit everybody involved to meet more recurring for smaller amounts of time. This keeps it consistent and makes it a more valuable and efficient experience for both the mentor and mentee,” Gruber said.

Leslie Klonoff is a current mentor in the program

As the school year slowly comes to an end, mentors and mentees are continuing to meet. Next fall, a new batch of mentors and mentees will be able to sign up. The COMM Alumni Council hopes to continue to build engagement between current students and alum.

Klonoff, a member of the COMM Alumni Council, wants students and alum to learn about the value in being involved in the Communication Department through this program.

“This program is teaching both the mentors and mentees how to be lifelong connected to the COMM department at UCSB,” Klonoff said.

Image credits: L. Benasuly, Nadir $YzYgY (unsplash.com)
A Year in Transition: An Interview with Department Chair Dr. Tamara Afifi About the Return to In-Person Instruction

By: Ashley Alvarado

On March 10, 2020, Chancellor Yang announced that UCSB would be transitioning to remote instruction for the entirety of spring quarter. But as COVID-19 persisted well into the summer, it became increasingly clear to students and staff that online instruction would not be coming to an end anytime soon. It was not until Fall of 2021 that students and professors alike returned to campus, and the transition back to in-person instruction officially began.

Even for seasoned professors, the return to in-person instruction amid a global pandemic posed new and unique challenges. To understand how professors approached teaching in such unprecedented circumstances, I interviewed Department Chair Tamara Afifi. In 2021, the National Communication Association named Dr. Afifi a Distinguished Scholar and awarded her the Gerald M. Phillips Award for Distinguished Applied Communication Scholarship for her work in the areas of family and interpersonal communication.

A: So, let's start off by going back to March of 2020. So, the Coronavirus has just spread across the U.S. We've just gone online. How did the structure of your classes change when remote learning began in 2020?

TA: I mean, I think as a whole, we adapted, all of us, very quickly, kind of, because we didn't have a choice. I mean, it's like, there's a pandemic, and we all thought it was going to be over by, you know, a few weeks, and obviously that didn't happen, but we kind of had to quickly adapt. And I think as professors we relied on each other a lot. And I think that speaks highly to our department in that we kind of used each other as resources. [...] I think we kind of put our heads together and figured out what works, and the same thing doesn't necessarily work for every instructor. I am not the best with technology. And anybody who reads this newsletter will laugh because they know that's true. So I'm kind of old fashioned in that sense, but I feel like Zoom actually worked okay for me because I was so able to be approachable and personable with my students. [...] But I definitely missed the in-person instruction 100%. I just don't like looking at blank screens. There's just a distance there, there's a disconnect. So I enjoy seeing people every day, enjoy seeing their faces and chatting with them asking how their weekend is, and there's something about the in-person energy that you feel in a classroom that's different.

A: Would you say your experience with remote learning was positive or negative?

TA: [...] I don't know that it was either. I think it had positives and negatives. I feel like some students really liked the format and I think it made them more comfortable because it was - they could kind of do it at their own pace. I feel like for other students, it exacerbated their anxiety. I think for me as a professor, I didn't really like it very much if I'm being honest, because I'm definitely more of an in-person professor. I just like to have that human contact with people, and I like them to be paying attention with each other and paying attention in the classroom.

A: What does the structure of your classes look like now?

TA: I just went back all in person. And I, you know, said if you love to - if you would like to
have a zoom office hour just email me and I can set that up, but otherwise, my office hours are in person, all my classes are in person. And I have adapted to some students who have like - there might be like a significant challenge that they're experiencing. Whether it's panic attacks, or, you know, some significant like mental health challenge or physical health challenge or they're immune compromised or whatever, then I can provide my old class that has all the videos on it and allow them into that GauchoSpace.

A: I think it's kind of a strange balance professors are trying to find right now because they want to, you know, have everything be in person but at the same time, they still have to take these cautionary measures, because, you know, people are still getting sick, we still have to be aware of, you know, COVID potentially spreading, so it's kind of interesting seeing professors trying to find that kind of sweet spot where they can accommodate those students who are being careful while still giving other students the experience that they want.

TA: And respecting each person's space and their choice. And you know, I explained that in class too, an understanding that if someone isn't wearing a mask, like they have their own set of family experiences and situations; it might be like, you know, everyone is vaccinated or whatever and boosted but they might [sic] everybody in their family also might be like vaccinated and no one's immune compromised, but other people who decide to wear a mask might have a totally different set of circumstances or beliefs or whatever or just want to be more cautious and we just need to honor those perspectives. [...] But it is definitely this tightrope of like, you want to be respectful to everybody. It's hard to know what to do.

A: What did your remote teaching experience teach you about teaching in general?

TA: That I think you can kind of teach in any mode, in any way. And it's really ultimately about the connection that you formed with your students. If you're approachable, if you're authentic, if you're passionate about what you do that will come through to students, regardless of how you're [sic] the mode that you're using to communicate, you'll find a way to connect with them. [...] I study and teach family communication, in addition to interpersonal conflict, but the family one in particular was very eye opening because at the beginning of the pandemic, a lot of students had to go home. And we always assume that your family is healthy. And that it's a place of de-stressing. But for many young adults, it was the opposite, right, where it wasn't the safest place to be for their mental health, and to see that happen for students was really . . . I'm glad that I had that space for talking about family communication and those office hours to kind of help them attempt to manage that [...] But I don't know that everybody was aware of all the things that students were facing because they didn't talk about it.

This interview has been abridged for formatting purposes. If you would like to listen to the full interview, head to this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-03buArSqvWtiUAGIT1mg0_eWiOiLNF8/view?usp=drivesdk
Or, if you would like to read the complete and unedited transcript of the full interview, head to this link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YITrsAqns-cFAw7efkjm3yJ7jTALqwkTWGfVNFwanT_k/edit

Image credits: A. Alvarado
Gauchos for Change

By: Romi Benasuly

We are so lucky to be a part of a university that is adamant about helping others and strengthening our community. Many of the projects discussed below stem from Dr. Walid Afifi’s Community Engagement Course (Comm 168), a class that aims to foster structural change in our community. If this sounds intriguing to you, we encourage you to take this course, which will be offered in the Fall 2022 quarter. Here are a few of the amazing community projects spearheaded by UC Santa Barbara Communication students.

How does the experience of taking on this project been for you?

The experience of taking on this project has been rewarding, to say the least. It has been fascinating to see the inner workings of local activism in the Santa Barbara area and how community members use their resources to make tangible change. I didn’t know this going into the project, but the histories of both Carpinteria and Santa Barbara are deeply intertwined. It feels great to serve the community that I’ve had the privilege to call home for the past four years.

How do you foresee continuing this project and what do you wish to accomplish?

I foresee the project finally moving forward, with us finally being able to conduct interviews with community members in Carpinteria. These interviews will hopefully give us a lens into the experience of people of color currently living in Carpinteria, which in turn will allow us to provide the city with the information necessary for them to alter structures within the local government to create a more equitable and welcoming environment for their residents.

What advice would you give to other students wishing to start projects to help their communities?

I have two pieces of advice that I would give to students who are looking to start their own community projects: Be patient and be sure to consult the people you want to help before committing to a solution. While everyone wants to support their community as quickly as possible, don’t feel too bad if you hit roadblocks and setbacks. This is normal and you’ll be able to adapt and overcome them with time! Also, be sure to center the community you serve in your projects by consulting community members throughout your process. It’s too easy to get carried away and inadvertently hurt the community you ultimately wanted to help.
**Quinn Costello, SproutUp**

**Objective:** aims to teach elementary school students about environmental topics like sustainability through activities, experiments, and discussions to cultivate the next generation of passionate caretakers of the Earth.

**What motivated you to start this project?**

I was motivated to join the Environmental Leadership Incubator because I thought it would be an invaluable opportunity to make a small difference in Santa Barbara. It was in the ELI class that my colleague and I decided to partner with national SproutUp to bring accessible environmental education to local elementary schools.

**How do you foresee continuing this project and what do you wish to accomplish?**

SproutUp is now an official club on campus, so I hope that helps to continue the project for many years to come! We have lots of underclassmen who are student teachers right now and hopefully they will transition into leadership over the next couple of years and help it to continue. We are also focusing on fundraising to be able to expand into more classrooms and reach more kids.

**Carlos Lopez, First Generation Project**

**Objective:** aims to help parents of first-generation students better understand college to help their students navigate it.

**How has the experience of taking on this project been for you?**

Taking on this project has been very life-changing and reminded all of us to appreciate everything we have been able to accomplish. When we analyzed all the responses we received from our survey, a sense of humility fell over us because our parents could relate to and had endured the same emotions mentioned by parents in our results. Overall, this project has been extremely rewarding and
we plan to continue this project so that parents don’t continue to experience guilt about not being able to help their child and have a better understanding of the resources that the university offers.

**What is the biggest challenge or obstacle you have faced with this project and were you able to overcome it?**

At the moment, the biggest challenge we faced was receiving responses from first-generation parents, in order to be able to understand their struggles and implement better solutions and resources for them. Thankfully, with the aid of EOP, we were able to send out our surveys through their newsletter which eventually led to 54 parent responses. A big shout out to EOP for the help!

**What advice would you give to other students wishing to start projects to help their communities?**

Some advice we would give to other students is to remember where you come from and be proud of everything you have accomplished thus far. Now it is time to think about the future generation of students who are going to face the same obstacles that hindered us during our first couple of years. Whatever changes you want to make, you can achieve it as long as you strive for it and give it your all, just try and you will see how rewarding it truly is. :)

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**Objective:** aims to provide students with a direct route to the Calle Real Center and back to Isla Vista, allowing students without accessible transportation to grocery shop at favorites like Trader Joe’s and Nikka Japanese Market.

**What motivated you to start this project?**

My sister and I were frustrated with having to depend on other people to get to the grocery store and we realized that this was a problem that our friends and other people in our community experienced. We did research and found that other UC campuses have grocery shuttles. Because of this and a couple of other reasons, we felt that UCSB students should have access to one as well.

**What is the biggest challenge or obstacle you have faced with this project and were you able to overcome it?**

Funding. Funding. Funding. When speaking with students in our community, they likewise see the importance of implementing a project such as this one. But it has been much more difficult to convince funding sources of the need for this project. We are actively working to overcome this barrier by gathering more resources and reaching out to more funding sources.
What advice would you give to other students wishing to start projects to help their communities?

Find something that you are passionate about and work with people that are passionate about it also. Without motivation and determination, it'll be that much harder to see a project through. It’s not easy but it is rewarding so persevere, even when you encounter obstacles.

*Image credits: R. Benasuly, S. Rounce (unsplash.com)*

**GAMES CORNER!**  
*By: Ziad Matni*

**WORD SEARCH PUZZLE**

**Communication is Key!**

```
C N E T W O R K S C I R C O
C C S E H P S C V A E E O R
A E H C R A E S E R C S M G
M C C Y G E E R M E N P M A
P H C A E B S R F S E E U N
U U S U R V E Y S E I C N I
S M E D I A R B R C T I Z
R G S O D R V O A K S T C A
R R S E C E I R O B R A A T
U O E C S V C H T D E T I
C U M H A U E D A T A D I O
S P C H P S O C I A L R O N
B S E U C A L Y P T U S N S
I B E C N E L L E C X E E V
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Play this puzzle online at: [https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/3606499/](https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/3606499/)

*Link to Online Version*
GAMES CORNER!

COMMSWORD PUZZLE!

CLUES ARE ON THE NEXT PAGE!
CLUES

Down:
1. Social inequalities contribute to this (among other things).
2. We have 2 of them in the department!
3. Is all media this?
5. Argentinian cowboy.
6. Graduating students in this department all started here.
7. What you can wear to early Zoom meetings?
8. The type of math you have to become proficient in as a Comm person.
9. The type of research you might do with a survey.
10. One of many things we have the "best of".

Across:
5. What you have when you send a very long thumb-typed message?
6. (abbrev.) Type of device you might want to use to measure brain activity.
7. He coined the famous expression "the medium is the message".
8. The type of research you might do if you want to study power dynamics in communication.
9. The type of research you might do if you want to study power dynamics in communication.
10. The type of research you might do if you want to study power dynamics in communication.
11. The type of research you might do with a factorial design.
12. Another field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
13. Another field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
14. What every grad student in the department aspires to write one day.
15. A(nother) field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
16. A(nother) field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
17. A(nother) field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
18. A(nother) field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
19. A(nother) field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
20. A(nother) field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
21. A(nother) field in industry common to many Communication graduates.
22. A(nother) field in industry common to many Communication graduates.

Answers are posted on the next page! No cheating!

Credit due to thewordsearch.com and education.com for generating the images.
ANSWERS TO COMMSWORD PUZZLE!
Congratulations
2022 Graduates!

The Communication Department is proud of you and wishes you the very best going forward!

Commencement is on Sunday, June 12th at 9:00 AM. Don’t miss the turning of the tassels at the end of the ceremony!