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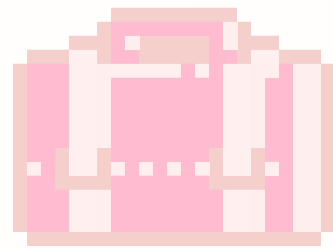


farewell



# Comm Career Day

by Paul Priess



*The Communication Department held its 17th Annual Comm Career Day on April 20th. Current Communication students were able to see what career opportunities lie ahead after graduation. A wide variety of UC Santa Barbara alumni took part in an interactive networking event to widen their professional connections.*

Comm Career Day offers current students the opportunity to see what fellow Communication majors have done with their lives post graduation. At this year's event, UCSB's Communication Alumni provided valuable information for those looking to make the transition into the professional workplace. The event took place in Corwin Pavilion where alumni and current students were able to sit and interact with alumni based on their career fields and interests. Over 300 individuals, combined of alumni, faculty, and current students, gathered to attend the event.

The 17th Annual Comm Career Day was kicked off with a panel of alumni in various career fields. This year's theme was: *Hitting Your Stride*. This could not have been more true for the panelists who have used their communication skills from UCSB to obtain successful careers. For example, UCSB alumni Nick Duggan has been helping develop people and organizations for more than 20 years and is passionate about making work more meaningful for all.

More specifically, his website describes how he currently serves as Senior Director of Inclusion & Development at AppFolio, a high-growth software company named one of the best places to work in the US by Fortune Magazine. Along with this, Nick also offers leadership coaching through his company *Deeper Work*, and hosts the podcast "Going Deeper with Nick Duggan: Leading with Inclusion, Authenticity, Meaning and Soul."

After the Q & A, current students were able to talk with fellow Gauchos in numerous career fields. Here, alumni gave tips and tricks to navigating life post graduation, emphasizing the importance of networking. IHeartRadio and NerdWallet were just some of the companies represented who gave current students a look into the professional world. The event represented career fields from marketing and advertising to journalism and public relations.

Spencer Stacy is a fourth year Communication major who attended the event. He says, "I thought the event provided us with a unique opportunity to network and learn about the many different careers we can pursue. It was nice hearing from alumni about their post-grad experiences. I especially appreciated the panel speakers who went into more detail regarding their career path. More students should be taking advantage of the many opportunities these events offer".

*"Comm Career Day serves not only as a networking opportunity but also as a testament to the enduring value of a Communication degree from UCSB."*

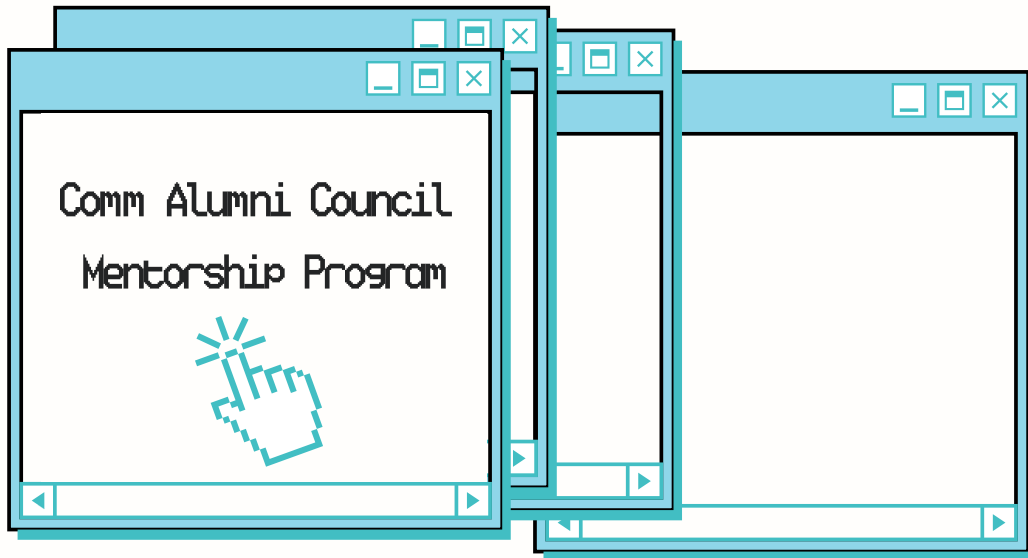
Comm Career Day highlighted the numerous opportunities that a UCSB Communication degree can provide. By showcasing the achievements of alumni like Nick Duggan and providing a platform for current students to engage with professionals across various industries, UCSB reaffirms its commitment to empowering students for life after graduation. Comm Career Day serves not only as a networking opportunity, but also as a testament to the enduring value of a Communication degree from UCSB.



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◀ Students meeting with UCSB Comm alumni at Comm Career Day.





# Comm Alumni Council Mentorship Program

by Julia Prager

*The UCSB Comm Alumni Council's Mentorship Program connects students and alumni for invaluable career guidance. Led by Jonathan Gruber, the program has seen remarkable growth, with over 200 mentor-mentee pairs formed this year alone. Participants Sierra O'Toole (mentor) and Julia Martinez (mentee), share inspiring stories of professional development and meaningful connections, showcasing the program's impact on the UCSB community.*

***Interview with Jonathan Gruber, UCSB Comm Alumni Council member and Chair of the UCSB Mentorship Program***

**Hi Jonathan! When did the mentorship program begin?**

This is the third edition of the UCSB Comm mentorship program. Rick Goldberg and Brianna Ryan founded the program together.



This year, Jordan Gomez, Lilliana Karadavoukian and I ran it. When the program was founded initially, I signed up, got matched with a mentee, and had an awesome experience. My mentee's name was Katie; She always came very prepared and engaged to ask a lot of questions. I feel like from a mentor and mentee relationship, the mentor will frequently approach the relationship from their lens, but only the mentee truly understands what's going on in the world of the mentee the best.

So, I would come in with some ideas, but our most productive time was when she would come to me with questions such as, "I'm interviewing at XYZ company, what would you do ahead of the interview to learn more about the interviewer, or what language should I use in a follow-up? What are some of the things that you would do to make this a more impactful interview experience? How can I leverage my connections through UCSB to get in front of better quality interviews?"

As managing director at my firm, I oversee all hiring for L.A. County. I've interviewed over 900 people over the last two years, so I've gained a great understanding of where interviewees tend to fall short and what makes somebody stand out, so I was able to have a really productive two-way relationship with her. She ended up being offered the main position that she was hoping for. So it was really cool to see the evidence of how a mentor-mentee relationship can really create a lot of opportunity.

The following year, I got involved in a small leadership role within the mentorship program and I stepped into the Chair position this year to oversee the entire program.

**Great. And what are some positive results you've seen come from the mentorship program?**

Last year, we had 117 active pairs. This year, our goal was to get up to 140 pairs, and we ended up at 201 pairs. We had 80% growth from one year to the next. Each year we gather countless testimonials of the success stories produced from this program.

*"We had 80% growth from one year to the next."*

**Wow! How can students and alumni get involved in the program?**

We have everybody go to one single spreadsheet or one Google form that we gather people's information from. Obviously everyone is a Comm major, so we look at what occupations mentors are in and what occupations mentees are looking to get into. Some questions include, "How much time are you willing to commit to it? How important is it for you that your mentor is in the same industry as you?" We try to get a lot of information from people, and then go through and pair people off one by one in hopefully the most ideal match possible.



***Interview with mentor/mentee pair:  
Julia Martinez & Sierra O'Toole***

**Julia Martinez (mentee):**



**Hi Julia! Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and why you decided to participate in the mentorship program?**

Well, I found out about the mentorship program through the Comm Department emails, and I decided to give it a chance because I really wanted to connect with someone who has gone on to have a career outside of Comm. I thought it would be a cool experience to meet someone who did Comm at UCSB and see what they were able to achieve, and gain some insight on that!

**Can you share a specific lesson that you've gained from your mentor this far?**

I remember the first few times I met Sierra, she gave me a rundown of what it took for her to get into her position now, and she gave me a lot of tips on marketing. And even now, I texted her a while ago asking if she could give me help me with a cover letter, and she did!

So I just think it's great to have someone to reach out to if you have any questions.

**That's great! How has your mentorship experience impacted your career goals or your personal or professional development?**

Sierra has guided me to multiple job postings. She has given me so much advice and reassurance about my future and what I want to do.

And I think that's helped me a lot because I'm a third year student and unsure what I want to do post-grad, so just having her there to guide me and show me different options has helped me so much.

**Wonderful, thank you. And what do you think are some of the key ingredients for a successful mentorship partnership?**

One of those key ingredients is having an open mind with your mentor regardless of whether they have different career goals. Make sure to be fully present, listen to what your mentor has to say, and try to get the most out of it because it's up to you to figure out what you want to gain from this relationship early on!

**What advice would you offer to other students that are considering joining the program?**

I would say, just do it! Just do it, and be as open as possible to your mentor and make the most of it, because they are here for you.

**Start**

***Interview with mentor/mentee pair:  
Sierra O'Toole & Julia Martinez (cont.)***

**Sierra O'Toole (mentor):**



**Hi Sierra! Can you share a bit about your professional background expertise, as well as maybe a little bit about your time at UCSB?**

So I would say it was my time at UCSB that really ignited me and motivated me to get into the career path that I'm currently in. When I was at UCSB, I had three experiences that were really impactful for my career path. First was being a Research Assistant in the Comm Department with two different graduate students. One was especially interested in studying health literacy and nutrition education, and so I got to work with her on those projects.

I was also an internship through Student Health, which was called HEAL at the time, Healthy Eating and Living, and that was awesome. I also took Health Communication and some other classes that really inspired me, like Comm and Emotion. I really wanted to combine my passion for health, preventative health, education, and communication, and so that's what I ended up getting into. I work in Marketing, and recently transitioned; I worked in the food and nutrition industry for a long time and now I work in the proactive health industry.

**Awesome, thank you so much. What motivated you to become a mentor in the program?**

I have had some really amazing mentors in my life, and I know it can be really helpful, especially when you're at a bit of a crossroads or not sure what to do.

Just hearing other people's stories and challenges and their thoughts about what they have done and how they've gotten to where they are has always been really helpful for me. So I thought, I'm at a point where I'm almost 13 years into working, and I figured that I could help some students that were in the same spot that I was right before I was graduating.

**What do you hope to offer your mentee through this program?**

I hope to offer her whatever she needs, whether that's advice, help with things such as reading resumes, reading cover letters, connecting her with people that I know in various industries; really just meeting her where she's at and being a resource for her.



*"We all remember being students and being a little bit lost. I've had really great mentors and people that I still stay in touch with over the years and you never know how much it could help someone."*

**What has been the most rewarding aspect of being a mentor for you so far?**

I attended Comm Career Day and got to meet Julia in person and see all the other Comm students there, and that was great. I attended Comm Career Day as a student, and I was really eager and excited, but I was also so confused. Like, okay, I'm studying Communication, and I really love this major, but what do I do with it? What career paths are open to me with this major? I remember as a student knowing how helpful that day was. So I would say meeting Julia and other students that were also in the mentor-mentee program, and knowing that it's really helping and supporting students was really impactful.

**What do you believe are the key ingredients for a successful mentorship partnership?**

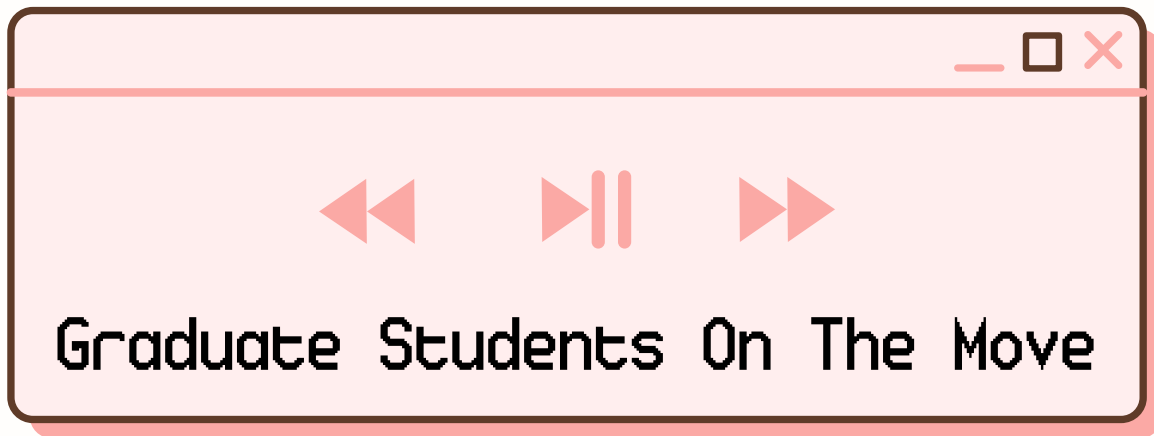
I think the key ingredient for a successful mentorship relationship is being open, really trying to provide as much support as possible without it being super opinionated. Obviously, you know, we all have our own experiences, but just really trying to meet the student where they're at and with what they need the most help with.

I would definitely say the student coming to the mentor with very specific objectives in mind and having a plan of needing help with a specific thing, or I am interested in this, how can you help? I've had a lot of experiences, but I also don't want to overwhelm the student that I'm working with. So it helps for her to come to me with real specific goals or objectives that she has for this partnership, so I can guide her appropriately.

**Thank you so much, it sounds like this partnership has been an incredible experience for the both of you. What advice would you offer to other alumni considering joining the mentorship program?**

To definitely do it, it's very fulfilling. We all remember being students and being a little bit lost. I've had really great mentors and people that I still stay in touch with over the years and you never know how much it could help someone.

*To find more information or to get involved with the program, you can visit <https://www.comm.ucsb.edu/alumni/involvement/digital-mentoring>*



# Graduate Students On The Move

by Paul Priess

Start

*Take a moment to celebrate some of our amazing doctoral students who are taking the next steps in their academic careers. Below are three of our graduate students who have landed incredible opportunities to continue their teaching and research careers. Each graduate is committed to research with meaningful social impact.*

## Abdullah Salehuddin

Abdullah Salehuddin has accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professor position in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. Academically, his future goals include learning how to integrate bio-physiological markers of stress, such as salivary and hair samples measuring chronic and acute cortisol levels, into his research projects investigating the effects of family relationships on individual, relational, and health outcomes.



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## Allison Mazur

Allison Mazur accepted a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, a research center renowned for its sexual behavior and intimacy research. Allison will be working with Dr. Zoë Peterson, the Director of the Sexual Assault Research Initiative, on sexual violence prevention research. Specifically, Allison will be working on projects such as developing measures for sexual victimization and perpetration.



## Chris Otmar

Chris Otmar accepted a position as a Postdoctoral Fellow at UC San Francisco's School of Medicine in the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine. He will be examining the effects of social media use on the mental health of LGBTQ+ adolescents. He also plans to continue researching how to enhance social connection for individuals with anxiety-related challenges.



senior honors



thesis spotlights



# Senior Honors Thesis Spotlights

by Julia Prager and Stanton Li

*Meet some of this year's senior honors thesis students and learn about the incredible work they've done designing, researching, and writing their very own senior honors thesis. For more information about doing a senior honors thesis, visit <https://www.comm.ucsb.edu/undergrad/involvement/senior-honors-program>.*

## Alhees Basharmal



*Alhees Basharmal is a senior Communication major and student on the Pre-Medical Track.*

*Email: [alheesb@gmail.com](mailto:alheesb@gmail.com)*

*Research interests: Mental Health Communication, Media and Digital Communication*

**Can you provide an overview of your thesis topic and the main research questions you sought to address?**

Yes! Have you seen how on social media sites like Instagram Reels or TikTok, you sometimes find people talking about very common symptoms that someone may have? They will kind of generalize things someone may have, like Generalized Anxiety Disorder or Borderline Personality Disorder.



My big research question I have is how mental health awareness through the use of non-professionals via social media video clips can significantly impact people's beliefs about their well-being (specifically their subjective happiness) along with people's intentions to seek mental health help.

I was thinking that based on social identity theory, if people feel that they resonate with a mental health condition, they may feel happier and identify more with this community that they didn't think they were part of before. They may feel like they have friends in these communities and they may feel better, but their intentions to seek mental health help may deteriorate since they may already feel happy where they are – especially for someone like a kid who is not really a medical professional speaking on it, or like a friend telling them about these things. I also looked into how stigma around a mental condition can also impact people's subjective happiness and mental health seeking intentions. I'm still in the data analysis stage and I'm trying to figure out what significant findings I may have had, but essentially that was the inspiration for me to look into it.

**What inspired you to choose your particular topic for your senior honors thesis?**

I love social media. Additionally, I'm a Communication major, but I'm also Pre-Med. So everything regarding medicine has always interested me, but I really like to find the overlap between communication and medicine, and I believe mental health is a key field that is overlapping in both.

I was a research assistant (RA) for Dr. Nikki Truscelli and her research focused on how virtual reality (VR) may help patients with dementia and may help with triggering memories.

Of course, like most students, I've also spent a lot of time on Instagram Reels and TikTok. I've noticed that every time mental health content from non-professionals comes up it just annoys me a little bit. I find myself asking things like, "Who are you and why are you leading people to these harmful paths of self-diagnosis?" I wanted to start digging into this and see if that's how people actually feel. Do they feel better about their well-being, or do they feel worse about their well-being? Also, if my analyses show that people have less intention to seek mental health help after watching nonprofessional videos (social media videos), then that could have severe impacts on our generation's mental health as seeking professional help is more important than most people know.

**Can you discuss any specific experiences or moments during your research that were particularly memorable or impactful?**

During my research, I was making the videos that would be used as stimuli. My experiment was online so I made these videos and I asked for help from my dad (who is a physician) to come up with a fake mental illness. Then, I posed as a doctor for one of my videos and a social media influencer for the other, because the experiment I'm testing involves the level of credibility/professionalism.

I feel like that was the most fun I had during this whole project, just making these videos and letting my creativity flow and getting into the mindset of the social media influencers that I'm trying to critique and evaluate.

### **How did you go about organizing the process of writing your thesis?**

I've been very lucky to work with Dr. Abra, the Professor leading the Senior Honors Thesis class, as he's helped all of us in taking the class down the right path. The first quarter was spent just kind of spitballing ideas and finding things that you're interested in. I reviewed a bunch of literature in the field during my first quarter and I also set up the design, so a majority of my thinking happened during the fall quarter.

In class, we'd have to get up in front of our 6 peers and present where we're at in our thesis process. You're drawing everything that you're working on, and sometimes you don't even get to finish your sentence before someone's like, "Wait, how does that work?" and then you're kind of thinking, "Oh wait, this is a horrible way to approach it" and you change your whole design. That was the most stressful part.

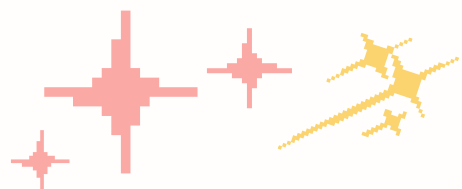
During winter break, I made the videos, designed the method and the whole experiment. I wrote little narratives for stigma and then submitted them to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Winter quarter was the easiest because I was just waiting for people to do my experiment while touching up on my thesis, especially my literature review section.

Now that I'm in spring quarter, I'm doing data analysis while trying to tie all my findings together and it's a little bit stressful. I received an Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) grant and so I'll be making an URCA colloquium poster soon. After that, I feel like I will be a little bit more relaxed and more fun because I'll be writing and editing my thesis, and then I'll present it at the end to Communication faculty!

### **What advice would you give to other students considering doing a senior honors thesis?**

I would honestly just say to go for it! I wasn't sure myself if I should do it, but if you see the application and you're even slightly interested, I would say do it. I didn't know that this was what I wanted to do, but as I did more research on it, I thought to myself, "This is really interesting, it's fascinating."

Hearing ideas and just breaking down the steps of writing a thesis into these three quarters and having peers that are doing it with, it makes you feel like you're in another little community and you just feel so accomplished by the end of it. I've already done so much, I have IRB approval, I've received an URCA grant, like I already have so many things under my belt and I didn't think I would get here. I think just taking it one step at a time and if you're interested in it, I would say go for it.



## Francesca Giannotta



*Francesca Giannotta is a senior Communication major with a Certification in Technology Management.*

*Email: [francescagiannotta@ucsb.edu](mailto:francescagiannotta@ucsb.edu)*

*Research interests: Organizational Communication, Risk Communication*

**Can you provide an overview of your thesis topic and the main research questions you sought to address? And, what inspired you to choose this particular topic for your senior honors thesis?**

Yes! My junior year I joined Lambda Pi Eta, which is the Communication Honors Society, and I attended last year's Senior Honors Thesis presentation day. I left feeling so inspired by their hard work, motivation, and the meaningful contributions they made to the world of communication research.

I left all hot and ready to go do a thesis of my own, but I knew that if I wanted to it was going to have to be something that I was really passionate about, and my passion has always been about people.

In the past couple years, I unfortunately lost three of my friends, my people, to accidental fentanyl overdoses. I know that's not just the case for me, but it's the heartbreaking truth for many kids and young adults. Accidental fentanyl overdoses have surpassed car accidents as the number one leading cause of death for young adults in the United States, which is crazy. Being at UCSB and in Greek life in particular, we are not naive to the fact that we have a party culture here, and within that party culture, a cocaine culture. Cocaine is very often laced with fentanyl, so this passion built my idea for my research: *Decoding the High*. My research is exploring UCSB students' perception of cocaine, and I'm looking into how UCSB students' affiliation with different organizations on campus, specifically Greek life, UCSB athletics, ROTC, professional organizations, cultural organizations, and no organizations, and how their affiliation with these organizations impacts their perception of cocaine on campus and in our surrounding campus community. The hope through my research is to find groups that are most susceptible to usage and come up with a more effective and empathetic intervention and prevention plan so we can all stop losing our people.



**Can you discuss any specific experiences or moments during your research that were particularly memorable or impactful?**

Honestly, the whole process has been both impactful and memorable. The emotions definitely come in waves. As I said, I came out of that seminar hot and ready to go. I was super excited, super passionate, and honestly, super curious, which I think is a really important feeling to have when you're doing research. If you're not curious, passionate, or excited, then there's no point in doing research because you're just gonna be wasting your time.

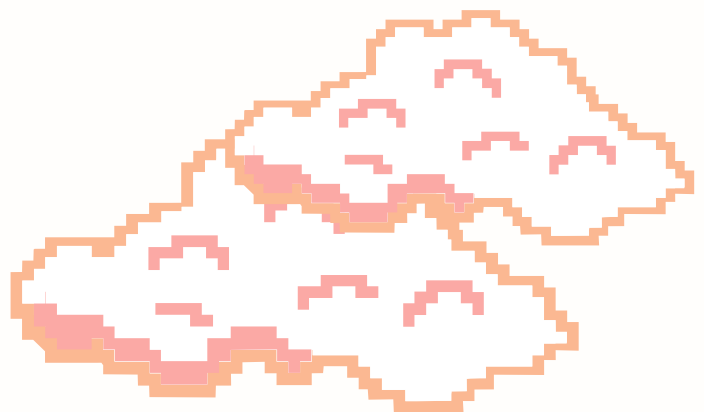
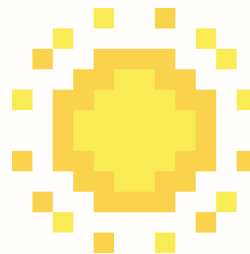
But it definitely comes in waves. Going through data collection is when you hit a low point with frustration, burnout, people not showing up to your study; It can definitely be difficult. But then when people do come and show excitement towards your topic, it really is the extra motivator to keep you pushing and going.

For me personally, I'm very proud of myself and the other students completing theses because it's so much work. It takes a lot of dedication and I'm just super proud of myself and my other six classmates who are doing it. It is long, long hours in the library and a pretty grueling process, but it's definitely all worth it.

**What advice would you give to other students considering undertaking a senior honors thesis?**

I absolutely recommend completing a Senior Honors Thesis if you are curious about something.

My advice would be to pick a topic that you are very, very passionate about because that passion is going to be what pushes you through the hard times, the frustration, and the long hours at the library. It is a very difficult and grueling process, but when you do it on something that you're genuinely passionate and curious about, that's what keeps you going. If you stay dedicated, it's all going to be worth it in the end, and I definitely recommend it as it's been a really fun process. I've gotten so close with my other classmates, and I've gotten the opportunity to be connected with a lot of really influential Communication researchers, who I'm now on a first name basis with, which I never would have imagined before. The world of Communication academia is really cool to get into and I definitely recommend doing a thesis if it's something you're interested in!



# Tian Ding



*Tian Ding is a senior Communication major with two minors in Applied Psychology & Professional Writing - Civic Engagement.*

*Email: [tian\\_ding@ucsb.edu](mailto:tian_ding@ucsb.edu)*

*Research interests: Organizational Communication, Health Communication*

## **Can you provide an overview of your thesis topic and the main research questions you sought to address?**

Yes! In the Communication Department, we have an Honors Thesis program. It is a one year program divided into three quarters. During the first quarter, we discovered our topics or research interests and reached out to different faculty members to brainstorm ideas. There were six other students in the Honors Thesis program and we talked to each other about our topics and we also revised some of the topics we had.

In the last quarter, we focused on wrapping up and conducting the data analysis we collected before preparing for the presentation.

My specific research interest is in the interdisciplinary area between Organizational Comm and Health Comm. As undergraduate students, we have mandatory online trainings that must be completed before we come to UCSB. My research involved thinking about whether the training was really an effective way to educate students about health related information, as sometimes I felt they could be mundane.

## **What inspired you to choose your particular topic for your senior honors thesis?**

During my second year I designed and participated in the Civic Engagement Skills Program and I designed a navigation tool for students to read and access resources. At that time, I had this idea.

I knew that even though UCSB advertises student support programs via things like resources on class syllabi, those descriptions don't tell you where you should go. They just give you descriptions and you have to scroll over again. That's how I came up with the idea for an "identity pass", where a user basically fills out what they may need to answer those questions and then directs them to resources. Following this, during my third year, I thought about how we could introduce these training modules more effectively, as I felt that students didn't particularly care about them.

**Can you discuss any specific experiences or moments during your research that were particularly memorable or impactful?**

Yes! There are a lot and I'll share both one good one and one tough one. I think one good one is when I was working with Dr. Gibbs and Dr. Truscelli. I talked to them about my Senior Honors Thesis and they were always really supportive. Sometimes I felt like I was behind on stuff like data collection and worried about my progress, but they would constantly provided me support. It was also very fulfilling to see people completing my survey. I saw I reached more than 100 participants on SONA and I just still can't believe that.

I would say one tough experience was preparing for the presentation. Dr. Abra really wants us to be well prepared for the presentations we have at the end of the quarter, which are in front of all of the faculty members. I remember in the first quarter I didn't know what I was saying; It felt so bizarre. I had to go to the podium and talk about my study and I remember Dr. Abra throwing all these questions at me. I was so nervous and I still find it a little bit intimidating to be honest.

**How did you go about organizing the process of writing your thesis?**

As I mentioned before, during the first quarter, we write up the proposal. We conduct a lot of literature reviews. I remember Dr. Abra taught us how to do them specifically for a thesis and not just for a class. I remember one time he just randomly grabbed a communication paper in a journal and he showed how those authors were doing their literature review.

It helped change my way of thinking and changed my way of doing it so I could complete it more effectively.

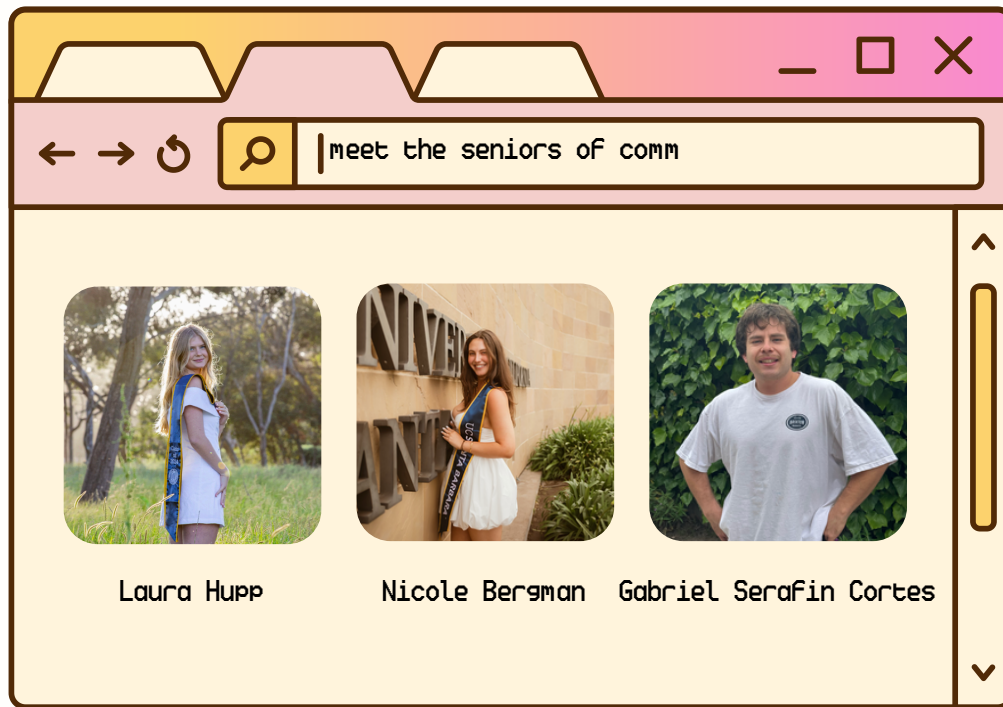
After I finished my proposal, all that is left is the discussion, as well as the results. Dr. Abra also told us that we have to remember to document everything, especially any changes we make in the study. I kept that in mind as I did make some revisions during winter quarter. For example, some survey questions would change or some formatting would change, which I then documented and revised in my message section.

**What advice would you give to other students considering doing a senior honors thesis?**

I think my biggest advice for students who are considering doing a Senior Honors Thesis would be to figure out what kind of future you want, like going into research and becoming a researcher. If you just want work experience, I would say a Senior Honors Thesis might not be a good fit for you. Additionally, I think the biggest thing to remember is finding something to research that you are truly passionate about. That's why those literature reviews in the beginning of the quarter are so helpful. It's also very helpful to talk to different faculty and get a sense of what kind of things are being researched. There are so many areas you can research, but you need to find a topic that you are passionate about and keep thinking about, like even when you're in the shower or elsewhere.



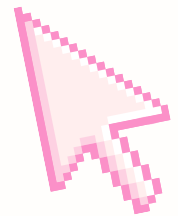




# Meet the Seniors of Comm

by Julia Prager

*Hear from the class of 2024 about their experiences and advice!*



## Laura Hupp



**Looking back on your time in the Comm Major, what were some (or one) of your favorite classes or experiences, and why?**

I really enjoyed Professor Abra's Group Comm in Multiple Contexts. Dr. Abra is such a wonderful teacher and turned every class into a story. I also found that the information learned in that course applies the most to my everyday life. I genuinely looked forward to going to that class everyday. I also loved Dr. Andy Merolla's Nonverbal Communication course.

**What do you consider to be the biggest takeaways or lessons you've learned from studying Comm?**

I think how purposeful every part of communication is. Even aspects that we do subconsciously, there is a reason *why* we do them. Also, how powerful communication is has stuck with me. Our verbal and nonverbal communication is probably our greatest tool.

**If you could give one piece of advice to current or future Comm students, what would it be?**

Communication is not the easy way out and the work we do is some of the most important in the world!

**How has your perception or understanding of Comm changed since starting your degree?**

I think I'll probably echo my previous answer with how powerful and versatile it is. Coming to UCSB, majors for students looking into journalism, PR, and marketing are pretty limited. Communication was almost a default; Now I realize how it encompasses all those fields

**How do you plan to apply the skills and knowledge you've gained from your Comm degree to your future career or endeavors?**

I think in general being able to have strong communication will be useful in all aspects of life. If you think about it, most industries require strong communication. Doctors have to have bedside manner and finance professionals have to be strong negotiators. It will always play a role in my career, especially with hopes to work in the PR/Marketing & Journalism field.

## Nicole Bergman



**Looking back on your time in the Comm major, what were some (or one) of your favorite classes or experiences, and why?**

One of my favorite classes during my academic career here at UCSB was COMM 175GW with Professor Stohl. This class talked about the history and implications of gig work in an interesting format. Each week we held student debates to discuss and analyze course material. The interactive aspect of this class made it fun and exciting to show up and do the work. These debates sharpened the way we understood the material, but also helped in improving our critical thinking and public speaking skills. Debating with peers, about contentious issues with varying viewpoints, brought the theoretical parts of communication studies into real-world context.

**Can you share a specific project or assignment from your time in the Comm major that stands out to you, and why?**

My favorite assignment that I did in the Comm major was the Marketing Communication project. As a team, we developed a marketing campaign for a non-profit organization and then later presented it to them. This was extremely insightful because it presented the material in a practical sense in which I was able to clearly visualize the nitty-gritty of some aspects of marketing. It was a very interesting group project, and I loved the real-world context! It felt like a peak into post-grad work.

**Are there any particular professors in the Comm department who have had a significant impact on you? If so, how?**

I'd like to shout out Professor Stohl for being such an incredible professor! This past year, I took both her Global Communication and Gig Work courses. In these classes, I felt engaged, encouraged, and excited by both Professor Stohl and the course content. Her love of teaching is clear, and her care for her students' well-being created a safe environment for students to learn and make mistakes. Thank you Professor Stohl for everything you taught me this past year!

## Gabriel Serafin Cortes



**What do you consider to be the biggest takeaways or lessons you've learned from studying Comm?**

If there is one thing you should take from Comm, it's that there is more complexity to interactions between people and the world, and that not all social phenomena are simple and can be answered definitively. Comm explores a broad range of topics that aim to answer complex questions, which is a takeaway that I use and apply to my own personal life and how I go about making decisions. Whatever practical skills you can take and use from Comm can be applied to improve your life and make you more educated. These are my key takeaways.





**If you could give one piece of advice to current or future Comm students, what would it be?**

Take classes that seem interesting to you! Make sure you are on top of class registration pass times so you can have the best shot at getting the classes that appeal to you. It will make the process easier, and the classes you find interesting you will learn the most from.

**How do you plan to apply the skills and knowledge you've gained from your Comm degree to your future career or endeavors?**

I plan on using my degree in research on sports, and as I work to become a personal trainer, my Comm degree will allow me to have access to potential research or educational roles in fitness. My knowledge base with my Comm degree also makes moving into those roles a bit easier while supplementing my education in fitness related fields.

**Are there any particular professors in the Comm department who have had a significant impact on you? If so, how?**

Dr. Gordon Abra had a particular impact on me because of his teaching style. It is a more traditional instruction, and his witty cynicism and directness brought somewhat of a relief to me. He's hard not to follow either with his animated lectures, and you won't get bored coming to his class!

**congratulations  
class of 2024!**





# Journey to Comm

by Stanton Li

*Hear from some members of the UCSB COMMunity and how they first got involved with studying Comm.*



## Norah Dunbar

"I had never heard of communication, but I saw a class called "Argumentation and Debate" in my college catalog. It was taught by the UNR debate coach, Ronna Liggett. I joined the debate team and took many classes from her. I think I actually majored in "Ronna Liggett", not Communication. She encouraged me to go to grad school."

◀ *This was taken at my college graduation party with my debate coach, Ronna Liggett. She recently passed away but she was an important role model for me so I dug this photo out to post in her memory on her Facebook page.*

## Jiaying Liu

"Back in the summer of 2011, a group of US scholars came to Beijing for a summer institute introducing all of their cool Health Communication projects. It totally blew my mind, and next thing you know, I'm packing my bags to chase down a PhD in Health Comm in the US!"

*Inspired by great mentors*



## Sofia Cavaness

"I loved being curious about the world and the idea of having a career revolve around this curiosity sounded amazing! Communication is the basis of everything."

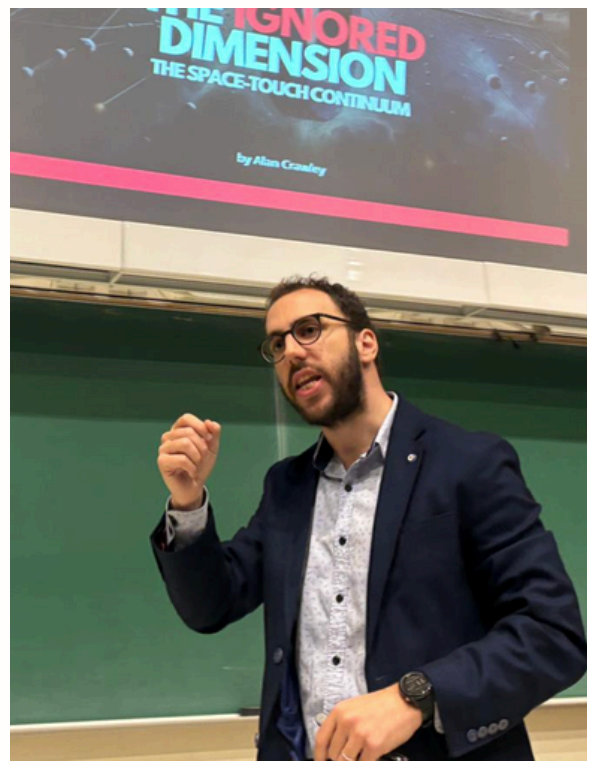
*Just can't get enough of UCSB!  
Keep the degrees coming:)*



## Alan Crawley

"If it weren't for my curiosity, I wouldn't be here. This curiosity pushes me to expand my knowledge, which temporarily satisfies my desire to learn more. I am eager to engage in research and share this knowledge in my lectures and classes, following the principle that 'teaching is the best way to learn.' My hope is to inspire and motivate students to pursue their passions, just as I have been motivated to pursue mine."

*Invited Guest Lecture for COMM 111, Dr. Norah Dunbar's class. Topic: The Ignored Dimension of the Space-Touch Continuum, What We Communicate Through Distance and Touch*





# farewell

*Thank you for reading our newsletter! This edition marks the final one made by our current team. We've enjoyed creating it and we hope you've enjoyed reading it as well.*

*Warmly,*

*Paul*

*Stanton*

*Julia*

*Nikki*



**Paul Priess (editor)** is planning on moving back home to the Bay Area after graduation. With a major in Communication and a minor in Professional Writing, he hopes to start a career in sales and travel abroad over the next few years.

**Stanton Li (layout designer and editor)** is moving back home to San Francisco after graduation. He is grateful for all the amazing experience he's had at UCSB and is looking forward to beginning a career in user experience (UX) design.

**Julia Prager (editor)** has had the pleasure of writing for the Comm Department Newsletter this past year. She has absolutely loved her four years here at UCSB and will be moving to NYC this summer to start her post-grad career working at AlphaSights!

**Nikki Truscelli (supervising faculty)** is closing a chapter as a Lecturer at UC, Santa Barbara this quarter. She will begin a tenure-track position at Central Oregon Community College in Bend Oregon in fall. She is grateful for the amazing experiences she has had while being part of this COMMunity and the amazing students she has had the privilege of learning from.





**GOODBYE  
FROM THE 2023-2024  
NEWSLETTER TEAM**

