

ALUMNI Newsletter

• INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION •

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY • SPRING 2007



photo by Taylor Copeland, '08

Junior Michelle Baker presents at the team showcase at McFall Center in November. She was one of two Falcons to earn top speaker in the nation.

Forensics and Debate Team returns to department

The department of interpersonal communication welcomed the university Forensic, Speech and Debate Team who moved over here from the department of theatre and film.

"It has been a very healthy, very happy transition for the team," Paul Wesley Alday, director of Forensics and Debate, said.

The Forensics, Speech and Debate Team was established in 1919 as a co-curricular, competitive team committed to promoting communicative, creative and performance excellence on campus. Alday said it is the oldest competitive student organizations on campus.

The team was originally part of the School of Communication Studies in the 1980s, before the department of theater and film went its separate way. So the recent change for the program is not entirely new but rather is a return to the familiar.

"It just felt like the right time for a homecoming," Alday said.

The invitation to return comes with several other perks for the team.

In addition to the support of the department of interpersonal communication and the enhanced opportunity for publicity, the team also now enjoys a larger practice space located in 031 West Hall.

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New BGeX courses offered to students

Last fall, International Studies/ Interpersonal Communication 210, taught by Lara Lengel and IPC 102, taught by Canchu Lin, were added as the first interpersonal communications classes in the BGeXperience Program.

With values as the main objective for BGeX courses, Lengel and Lin jumped at the chance to be part of this program for incoming students.

"This program gives a great deal of scope and flex to develop a concept of values applying to the course," Lengel said.

All first-year students are required to participate in the BGeX Introduction component that runs from Friday through Sunday before the beginning of the fall semester.

Following the BGeX Introduction, students continue with the same small group, professor and peer facilitator in the general education values course that they selected.

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photo by Jake Gallardo, '08

Students in Lara Lengel's BGeX IPC course work outside on the beautiful day before the start of fall semester.

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Forensics

"Our team is one of the many hidden secrets on campus," Alday said. And the group certainly has the credentials to back up this statement.

Team members, who travel to weekend competitions around the region to perform a variety of different public speaking events, interpretive performances and debates, have racked up quite a bit of hardware.

In addition to being current state champs, the team presently holds the longest winning streak in Collegiate Forensics Association history with six back to back titles.

But the team's success extends far beyond championships and individual awards.

"The primary reason we exist is for skill development," Alday said. "These are the things that get people jobs and keep them employed."

This season also marked the return of Falcon Forensics to the National Forensics Association National Championships, where the team placed fourth in their division. The



photo by Taylor Copeland, '08

Stephanie Guigou presents at the McFall Center.

largest national competition, NFA had 800 participants from over 80 schools.

"This certainly has been an exceptional year and we look forward to continued growth in the years to come," Alday said.

There are over 1,500 alumni of BGSU's forensics team, including author Philana Boles, Rebecca Biggs of NBC News in Atlanta and most recently, the 2005 and 2006 Faces of Fox Toledo, Leah D'Emilio and Abby Bollenbacher.

by Taylor Copeland, '08

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BGeX

The program is designed to help all first-year students make a successful transition to college, while establishing close relationships with their professors and fellow classmates.

Lengel's course examined communication and culture dynamics in other international cultures while identifying similarities and differences between her students' values and those of other cultures around the world.

"In my class we came up with a list of values and discussed the concepts of them while critiquing the diverse difference of values throughout other cultures," Lengel said.

Lin was also enthusiastic to include the topic of values within his course. Although the class was primarily about communication studies, he was able to incorporate the ideas of principles and morals with public speaking and other forms of communication.

One requirement for Lin's class was a values paper. Students were asked to keep a journal of group activities and personal activities that they participated in regularly. Then, they were asked to analyze these activities by exploring the values involved with their actions with a communications perspective.

"I was able to awaken the consciousness of values behind things we talk about in communication studies," Lin said. "We would discuss the values dealing with making a public speech and democracy."

Both teachers said the most rewarding part of this experience was the relationships they gained while teaching these classes.

"The level of intellectual intimacy between the professor and students in this class was a resourceful tool for guiding the students through their college experience," Lengel said.

Both professors plan to teach an IPC 102 course for the BGeXperience program in fall 2007.

by Rachel Pazdziorko, '08

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Oliver Boyd-Barrett
PUBLISHER

Ashley Lumm '08
Lynnea Hinton '08
EDITORS

Maggie Timlin '08
Lauren Shindollar '08
NEWSLETTER STAFF

Kelly Taylor
ADVISER

The Alumni Newsletter is an annual publication of the Department of Interpersonal Communication and is mailed free to all graduates of the program. Its purpose is to keep everyone informed about happenings, achievements and other news of department faculty, students and alumni. If you have news, questions or comments, write us at the address below.

School of Communication Studies
Department of Interpersonal Communication
Bowling Green State University
302 West Hall
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403
419.372.8349
419.372.0202 FAX
www.bgsu.edu/departments/ipc/

school of
commu studies

Research grant helps Perrysburg Heights explore its community values

Radhika Gajjala, an associate professor in interpersonal communication, received a service learning grant from Partnerships for Community Action and the Center for Innovative and Transformative Education at BGSU.

Gajjala used the grant in her work with the Perrysburg Heights Community.

Gajjala, her students and the community group, worked to create a mural in the community center that displays the core values of the Perrysburg Heights Community.

To figure out what the Perrysburg Heights Community felt was meaningful and important to them, Gajjala sought the help of students in two of her classes—COMS 640, a graduate level research class, and IPC 405, a computer class that focused on cultures and organizations. Through these classes, Gajjala and her students were able to conduct research on the history of the community.

Her graduate class helped to gather oral history and oral narratives of members of the community.

These histories were gathered through interviews and were taped

and converted into podcasts.

The undergraduate class was helpful in accomplishing this task because of their technology background.

Anita Serda, the administrative assistant for PCA/CITE and a second generation member of the Perrysburg Heights community, said three values kept coming out in the interviews. These included faith, community and the feeling of family across the community.

Using these three values, Gajjala's group and the community members created a mural on the wall within the Perrysburg Heights Community Center. The mural was funded with the help of the grant.

"This grant was an opportunity to offer something to the community instead of taking," Gajjala said.

One of the main goals of the project Gajjala said was to bring the generations closer together and present a positive image of this culture to society.

Children, ages 7 to 15, of the community helped to gather oral histories through interviewing older community members.

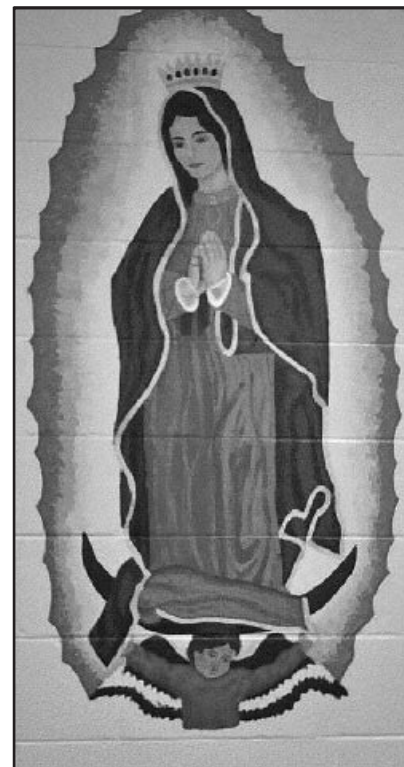


photo from Radhika Gajjala

This is just one section of the extensive mural Debra Zapitelli, Radhika Gajjala, the BGSU students and the community group created. The colorful mural represents Perrysburg Heights' core community values of faith and family.

Because the children were directly involved in the project, they were able to gain so much more from the experience. Rather than just seeing the finished mural, they were a part of creating it.

Serda said it gave the children opportunities to learn about their roots and their heritage. It also allowed the children to see that they have talent and a voice.

by Amanda Palmer, '08

BG maintains relationships with Tunisian university

Improving the teaching of media and journalism in Tunisia and the North African region was one of the main reasons the grant-funded project was designed by professors Lara Lengel of interpersonal communication and Catherine Cassara of journalism.

Though the grant, which was funded by the U.S State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative, officially ended in the fall, the BGSU community continues its relationship with the Tunisian university.

Many boxes of English-Language books given by students, staff and faculty have been sent overseas.

"We have been mailing the books, hundreds of copies," Cassara said.

The relationship between BGSU and Tunisia taught people on both sides.

"The relationship is worth it. We want to further it," Cassara said.

Some workshops dealing with the media at large and a video conference about specific projects are planned for the spring to bring together the staff and faculty of both universities.

Cassara also said they have pending applications for grants from the state department. Results are expected late summer or early fall depending on when Congress finishes its funding reviews.

by Neema Ndangarange, '08

New professors

Croucher brings strong work ethic

Fresh out of school, Stephen Croucher, has come to the interpersonal communication department with a strong work ethic -- the same that got him through his college years.

As a journalism major, Croucher earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Croucher wanted to be a journalist, but found working with the newspapers burned him out.

"As nerdy as it was, I like theory -- working with people," he said.

He went on to earn his master's degree in rhetoric from Minnesota State at Mankato.

The conference brought a broad range of people to Turkey, including attendees from across Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

"Very few Americans, maybe two or three," Croucher said. "That's why I liked it."

In July, Croucher will travel to the Netherlands for a conference on immigration and diversity. His presentation will be based on Muslims in Europe and their trouble adapting as immigrants within the country.

The people attending this international conference primarily include political scientists, journalists, economists and philosophers.

Croucher said he will be one of very few people attending from a communication department.

In addition to the honor of speaking at a conference this summer, Croucher's first book will come out this summer. The book is titled "France and Islam: The Failure of French-Muslim Cultural Adaptation."

"It is one of the first efforts by a social scientist to systematically investigate the inter-ethnic conflicts in France," said Eric Kramer, a University of Oklahoma professor and co-chair of Croucher's doctoral committee.

In the book, Croucher features voices from Muslims and non-Muslims on why Muslims are having trouble adapting to the French culture.

"Muslims want that hyphenated community," Croucher said. "They want to be known as French-Muslim."

This book is a place for people to speak out on the issue of Muslim and non-Muslim people adapting to a certain community or culture.

As a true military brat, Croucher never called one place home while growing up; however, he recognizes South Carolina as his original home.



photo by Miranda Everitt, '07

Stephen Croucher

Upon recalling his younger days in South Carolina, Croucher chuckled and made reference to not understanding how we, as people from the North, deal with the freezing weather that plagued us this winter.

According to his colleagues, Croucher is a hard, diligent worker.

"He's a pretty hard worker," Julie Burke, department chair, said. "He's in here everyday plugging away."

Burke said the fact that he is in his office nearly everyday makes it very valuable to the students who are seeking help in class. She also said Croucher makes things easier for her by volunteering when things need to get done.

Croucher's strong work ethic benefits all at BGSU.

by Troy J. Amormino, '08

“
As nerdy as it
was, I like theory
– working with
people.

–Stephen Croucher

”

Then, in spring 2006, Croucher earned his doctorate from the University of Oklahoma. While at Oklahoma, he was also in charge of the forensics team, which he said was a time-consuming job.

"He completed his coursework and dissertation for the Ph.D. in just three years," said Todd Sandel, a University of Oklahoma professor and co-chair of Croucher's doctoral committee. "Most doctoral students take four years or more to complete the degree, so you can see how dedicated he was as a student."

He has brought that same dedication to BGSU. Croucher was recently invited to attend the Freedom and Prejudice Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, as a keynote speaker.

While there, he delivered a presentation on "The European Union and the Hijab: Can the Two Coexist?" The presentation discussed how Muslim women who wear a hijab in certain European countries have sparked laws intended to prohibit the wearing of the hijab.

Butterworth finds place in higher education

Michael Butterworth tried to stay out of higher education.

Higher education moved his family around. Born in Kalamazoo, Mich., Butterworth moved with his family to California at the age of 3. Though they lived in California for 10 years, it was in four different cities. From California, his family moved to Flagstaff, Ariz., for two years, and he started high school. The final move was to Macomb, Ill., where he graduated from high school.

"All these moves were connected to my dad's job changes in higher education," Butterworth said.

Michael Butterworth tried to stay out of higher education.

His father was the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Western Illinois University. His sister has a doctorate in English literature and his brother-in-law has a doctorate in creative writing. They are both on the faculty at Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas.

Michael Butterworth tried to stay out of higher education.

He wanted to go into communication consulting and training. After earning his master's degree from

Northern Illinois in 1996 he took a job at a computer training company as a full-time trainer.

"I had done some coursework in training and development, and thought this would be the route I took," he said. "But when I decided this position wasn't ideal, I ended up applying for a full-time faculty position at the College of Lake County, a community college in the Chicago suburbs. That got me back into education for good."

The new assistant professor, who earned his doctorate from Indiana University in 2006, has found a place in higher education and students and faculty at BGSU reap the benefits of that decision.

One of the benefits of Butterworth's hiring is his strength in the classroom. During the time Butterworth spent interviewing for the job here, he had to teach a class.

Julie Burke, department chair, said he did a great job in the class. "It's really hard for someone to take over a class for one day," she said. "He was so effective. More than 75 percent of the class participated."

Lauren Hogan, a senior who had Butterworth for two courses, said she would rank him as one of her top 10 professors in her four years here. She said he didn't just lecture; instead he got the students involved.

Butterworth said he has a lot of experience in performance-oriented arenas – music, theater, speech team, radio broadcasting.

"I think that helps in the classroom," he said. "Teaching is a kind of performance. I think the more energy you put into it the more classroom interaction can take care of itself."

Butterworth said he tries to make decisions ahead of time about examples that students can relate to while also challenging them with things they are not familiar with.

"The bottom line is that if students believe you want to hear from them -- and they're much better at sensing insincerity than we give them credit for -- they're more likely

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Teaching is a kind of performance.

I think the more energy you put into it, the more classroom interaction can take care of itself.

-Michael Butterworth

”

to talk," Butterworth said.

When not in the classroom, Butterworth's research interests involve the relationship between organized sports and democratic culture.

"I view rhetorical criticism as a form of political critique, so I try to challenge language and actions with sports that are unjust or anti-democratic," he said. "I have mostly focused on baseball, both because I follow it closely and because it presumes to be the most American of sports."

Which begs the question, "What teams does he follow?"

"Chicago Cubs, without hesitation," he said. "I'm mostly loyal to Chicago teams."

Butterworth said he likes the collaborative attitude of his colleagues.

"Doors are always open," he said. "People enjoy talking to each other, and we treat one another with respect. I can genuinely look forward to seeing and talking with my colleagues here."

Though he said his first year is kind of a blur, he has a book proposal and three projects in the works.

"I have also been making some noise in the department, proposing some changes to the curriculum," he said. "I want very much to develop more opportunities to incorporate civic engagement and political citizenship themes in our courses."

Opportunities abound, and it seems pretty clear that Butterworth is making the most of them in higher education.

by Kelly Taylor

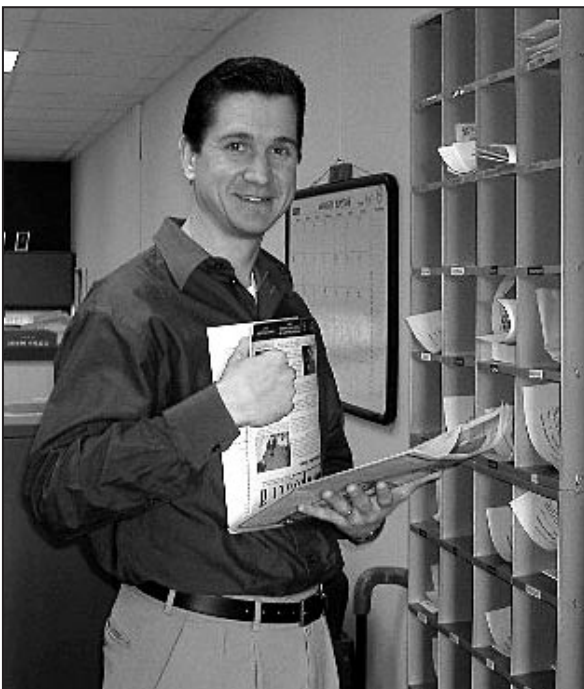


photo by Laurie Evans, '08

Michael Butterworth

USG president uses his major

Growing up with his brothers, sisters and mom, Bernard Little became the man of the house. He helped his mom make decisions every day. It didn't take long for that to spark an interest in leadership that has lead to his current position as president of Undergraduate Student Government.

In high school, Little helped with administrative responsibilities. The only student trusted to hand out teachers' checks, Little often stayed hours after the dismissal bell.

During this time, he said he gained friends and mentors of school administrators and was always as involved as possible.

For college, his priorities were different. Little said he wanted to stay out of organizations to focus on enjoying college life. Yet two weeks into his first semester, he became part of the Kohl Hall council.

Shortly after, Little was a part of seven different organizations in his first year alone. "That's how I live," Little said. "Being busy is my life. I thrive off that. I wasn't stressed; that's just where I find my fun."

Little was drawn to interpersonal communication because of the emphasis on establishing trust and

friendship through one-on-one interaction. "That's the best form of communication," Little said.

In a position that demands extraordinary public speaking skills, Little feels his own natural abilities combined with what he has learned as an IPC major allow him to truly connect with his audience.

"I never imagine people in their underwear when I speak to them," Little said. He said he never reads from a script either, instead focusing on making everyone in the audience feel like he is having a casual conversation with them.

Little's academic adviser, Julie Burke, said she is proud to have a student from the department in such a visible and vital role.

She said the effective communication that Little has learned through IPC has allowed him to step up to the plate. "I think he relishes those opportunities," she said.

Jodi Webb, associate dean of students, has known Little for years. She said his communication skills on a personal basis allowed him to stand

out at orientation events, connecting with new staff and making students and their parents feel welcome.

Webb said Little has always been able to jump in and take the lead when it is needed and keep everyone at a certain level of comfort by his friendly, outgoing attitude.

Little said a major driving force is the presence of mentors.

One of those is Ed Whipple, who is the vice president of student affairs. Little said Whipple has been like a father to him.

Because of the impact Whipple and others have had on his life, Little said his goal is to help others in the same way.

To do that, Little said he plans on being in an educational leadership role, either the principal of a school or president of a university.

Whatever the job, Little said he wants to "be a blessing to a college student or to a high school student."

Little is looking forward to graduate work at Miami University of Ohio, following graduation. "It's been a great journey," he said.

By Barrett Dornier '10



Bernard Little
IPC major and
USG president

Honors & Awards

IPC Scholar

*Cummulative GPA
of 3.75 or better*

Freshman

Audrey Brown
Sheila Campbell

Sophomore

Katrina Caldwell
Michelle Doyle
Mackenzie McRoberts
Erica Thomas

Junior

Stephanie Gorse
Daniel Stypa

Senior

Casey Tshanen
Heather Kovacs
Lauren Martin
Jeri Taube

SCS Fund for Excellence

Erin Small
Dan Stypa

R.K. Tucker Award

Kelly Bowman

Rising Star Scholarship

Maryellen Jacks
Erica Thomas

Outstanding Senior Award

Lauren Martin
Jeri Taube

IPC Faculty Award

Michelle Baker

Forensics

Hanna and Shine
Scholarships
Michelle Baker
Amanda Hensley

Forensics Grant-in-Aid Scholarships

Michelle Baker
Jennifer Cole
Kayla Combs
Michael Hensler
Amanda Hensley
Maryellen Jacks
Jennifer Myers
Jacob Redfern
Kenneth L. Rogers Jr.

Non-traditional student wins scholarship

IPC student Jeri Taube won a scholarship from the Association for Women in Communications Professional Chapter in Toledo.

Taube said winning this was not only an honor, but a life changing experience which has inspired her to pursue a career in communication.

Taube, 58, came back to school three years ago. Because she entered college in her mid 20s or later, she is considered a non-traditional student.

During her first semester, she took a communication class and was

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Love Your Body Day

Class event reaches campus

Students in two sections of an advanced level interpersonal communication class called Gender and Communication organized a "Love Your Body Day" on Oct. 18.

Nineteen students volunteered to coordinate the event held outside the Bowen-Thompson Student Union from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The students chose to have their involvement count as their term project grade as opposed to doing a traditional research paper.

The student-led event took its lead from the national Love Your Body Campaign begun in 1998 by the National Organization for Women.

When the students learned about the idea, they wanted to get actively involved on their own campus, instructor Tracy Barton said.

The purpose of the event was to raise awareness about women's health, body image and self-esteem, and the impact of all the negative messages people receive every day.

Barton said they also included men's issues as well because there were men in the classes and these images are also harmful.

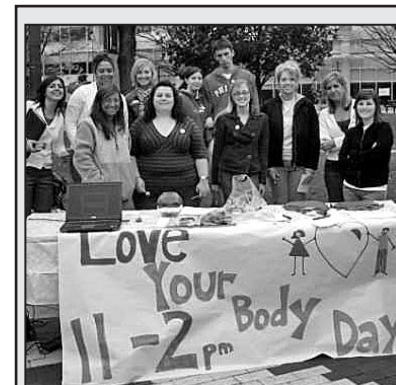
Having a positive body image



leads to lower rates of depression and anxiety, and increases overall well-being and health, according to NOW.

Some of the students shared findings from body-image surveys they conducted among BGSU students.

They were also displays on healthy



Students involved in the event:

Katie Allison	Elisabeth Hrvatin
Kelly Bowman	Marissa Kittel
Jilian Braver	Jennifer Krinov
LeAnn Coward	Ashley Little
Amanda Driscoll	Liz Mantel
Jonathan Edmunds	Sarah Oomen
Crystal Gee	Brittany Shiley
Jessica General	Noel Soltero
Kari Hannig	Juliana Weaver
Ashley Hohenberger	



eating and demonstrations on healthy practices such as yoga, tai chi, kick-boxing and self-defense.

Wellness Connection, a branch of the Student Health Services, partnered with the Gender and Communication classes for the event.

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Taube wins scholarship

inspired by the professor to teach. "I want to do this, and I'm not going to waste any time," she said.

Criteria for the scholarship requires an above average grade point average, enrollment in either Bowling Green State University or University of Toledo, a standing of sophomore or higher and a recommendation from an instructor in communication.

"We were very impressed with Jeri's application" Maria Jadwisiak, a scholarship committee member, said. "We felt she was very deserving and were most impressed with her being a non-traditional student."

Taube said, "As a non-traditional student, my applications are so detailed because I have a time advantage and have experienced a lot."

IPC instructor Tracy Barton who has had Taube as a student, said, "You just like her! She is a great role model because her goals are explicit and the fact that she is a non-traditional student is very motivating."

Taube will graduate in 2007 after only three and a half years. She plans to get her master's degree so she can teach communication classes at the college level.

by Angela Stein, '08

CONTRIBUTION

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Class year: _____

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