

## IN THIS ISSUE

Communication Studies, Journalism areas to unify	1
Alumna found value in journalism, communication majors	1
From the Chair	2
Meet the faculty	3

## Communication Studies, Journalism areas to unify

**T**wo University of St. Thomas academic departments – Journalism & Mass Communication and Communication Studies – with distinctive but increasingly overlapping missions are joining forces.

The newly established Department of Communication and Journalism will debut in the 2007-2008 school year, bringing together 15 full-time faculty, 30 adjunct faculty and 550 students who will have majors or minors.

“I am pleased with how the process has turned out,” said Dr. Marisa Kelly, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “The departments have talked for years about whether to unify, but something always got in the way. This time, the faculty put together an outstanding proposal, and I believe an even stronger, more vital and more effective department will emerge.”

One of Kelly’s first steps was to appoint the new department’s leaders. Dr. Kris Bunton, who joined Journalism & Mass Communication in 1993 and has been chair there since 2005, will be chair of the new department. Dr. John Cragan will be assistant chair. Dr. Bernard Armada, chair of Communication Studies since 2003, will be on sabbatical next year.

In a memo to Kelly last December, faculty from the two areas said a combined department would better position St. Thomas “to build upon our shared focus on communication in all its forms, while also drawing upon our distinct and longstanding disciplinary histories.” Benefits include:

- A stronger curriculum. Decisions have yet to be made about curriculum changes, including whether to maintain the five concentrations (print, broadcast, advertising, public relations and media studies) in Journalism and how Communication Studies’ general major might change. “For instance, we might design a major that emphasizes images – their creation for documentaries, webcasts, podcasts, TV news and ads,” the faculty memo says. “Or, we might develop a shared specialty in political communication.”
- Better recruitment of faculty and students. More new Ph.D. graduates have interdisciplinary backgrounds and would fit best in a joint department, the memo says. Students would be attracted more to a program that reflects an environment “where media forms overlap and where the journalist and communicator are sorely challenged to adapt.”
- Less confusion about identity. Faculty admit that current and prospective students, parents and alumni regularly confuse the departments’ names and programs. “In a period of increasing convergence between communication forms,” the memo says, “our distinctions – such as electronic media production and broadcast journalism – seem increasingly artificial.”
- Shared space, activities and equipment. Journalism majors might more easily work on Campus Scope, a television program produced by Communication Studies. Digital video cameras owned by both departments will be shared, as will budgets for other equipment and repairs.



### Alumna found value in journalism, communication studies majors

**F**or Amanda Lutz, a 2004 St. Thomas graduate, double majoring in communication studies and broadcast journalism was a natural choice, and one that has come in handy.

Lutz had to take two communication courses for her broadcast journalism concentration and wanted to double major in some discipline, so a communication studies major seemed like an obvious choice, too.

“The two majors were different enough to feel like I was learning different things,” said Lutz, a producer for a morning newscast at KSTP-TV in the Twin Cities. “But at the same time I was learning similar things so that they worked in conjuncture with each other.”

Lutz still is discovering in her profession how well those majors worked together. “Taking

# From the Chair

by Dr. Kris Bunton



## Double majors see added value in new department

**O**ur newly established Department of Communication and Journalism focuses on many communication types, whether interpersonal, intercultural, organizational, rhetorical or mass-mediated through journalism, advertising and public relations. Our combination signals that we see what many of our double-majoring students have long understood: Communication forms can intertwine so closely that it's difficult to separate them.

I asked some seniors how they decided to double-major. Laura Wegner, who majored in Communication Studies and Public Relations, said, "I've always been interested in the 'human' aspect of communication – theories of how we communicate, why we choose the methods that we do, how each person and relationship differs. After some thought, I realized that the practical methods of the Journalism & Mass Communication Department truly benefit from learning the 'how and why' of the Communication Studies Department."



Laura Wegner

The seniors told me their most valuable experiences as double-majors were studying with excellent professors, completing professional internships, studying communication abroad and learning through activities such as Ad Club, Campus Scope, Communication Club and the Public Relations Student Society of America.

These seniors said their experiences prepared them well for life after graduation. Angie Stein, who majored in Communication Studies and Advertising, said, "I am starting a full-time position with Target working in the Human Resources Department, specifically in recruiting. I hope to someday become part of Target's events marketing team. Working in a company



Angie Stein

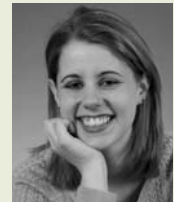
of over 300,000 employees will require effective communication skills daily."

Establishing a new department makes sense to these seniors. Mairzy Russell, who majored in Communication Studies and Public Relations, said, "It's no secret that there was overlap in these two majors. In combining the departments into one, UST will be able to provide a more unique and diverse course load to students interested in Journalism & Mass Communication and Communication Studies."



Mairzy Russell

Ruth Carlson, who majored in Communication Studies and Broadcast Journalism, said, "I think with the combination and possible addition of new courses, students will have more freedom to take what they really want to take. As a combined major, students will also be free to study another field outside of the department more thoroughly. It will almost be like getting a triple major!"



Ruth Carlson

Wegner said, "I really wish I was a freshman right now! I would love to be able to start out in the combined department. I think the new department will allow students to have more options for courses and more flexibility for deciding what career path they eventually want to take. Plus, the Comm Studies and Journalism departments have some of the best professors at St. Thomas. I do not doubt that students who choose to major in the new combined department will leave St. Thomas with a great education."

I think so, and I hope our readers will, too. E-mail your reactions to [kebunton@stthomas.edu](mailto:kebunton@stthomas.edu).

*Kris Bunton*

# Meet the Communication and Journalism faculty

**O**ne of the challenges in combining two academic departments is how to successfully blend full-time faculty with different backgrounds and interests.

St. Thomas will be at an advantage in this regard because the full-time faculty in its existing Journalism & Mass Communication and Communication Studies departments unanimously agreed last December to recommend a combined department.

Here are the 15 full-time faculty in the new department. (For more information, see [www.stthomas.edu/journalism](http://www.stthomas.edu/journalism) and [www.stthomas.edu/commstudies](http://www.stthomas.edu/commstudies).)

**Dr. Betsy Anderson, assistant professor**

She joined the Journalism Department in 2006 and teaches Public Relations Principles and Public Relations Writing. Her research interests include public relations and new media, especially in building interactive relationships with consumers.



**Dr. Bernard Armada, associate professor**

A Communication Studies faculty member since 1997, his courses include Argumentation and Advocacy, Modern American Rhetoric, Music and Rhetoric in Popular Culture, and The Rhetoric of Public Memory.



**Dr. Carol Bruess, associate professor**

She joined Communication Studies in 1998 and specializes in gender, family and marital communication. She teaches Intercultural Communication, Communication Theory, Organizational Communication, and Family Communication.



**Dr. Kris Bunton, professor**

A journalism faculty member since 1993, she became department chair in 2005. She teaches Media Ethics, Mass Communication and Society, and Gender, Race and Media, and co-teaches the latter course in London during January Term.



**Dr. Thomas Connery, professor**

The senior faculty member of the new department with 25 years at St. Thomas, he served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1998 to 2006. He teaches Literary Journalism, Mass Communication and Society, and Media Ethics.



**Dr. John Cragan, professor**

On the Communication Studies faculty since 2003, he teaches Public Speaking, Communication Theory and Small Group Communication.



**Dr. Robert Craig, professor**

He joined the journalism faculty in 1994. He teaches Visual Communication and Graphic Design Studio. During January Terms, he has offered the Visual Communication course in England, Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands and Italy.



**Dr. Dina Gavrilos, assistant professor**

She joined the Journalism Department in 2006 and teaches Advanced Public Relations and Mass Communication Research. Her research addresses how media construct racial, ethnic, national and other identity categories.



**Dr. Mark Neuzil, associate professor**

He has been on the journalism faculty since 1993 and previously was a reporter in Minnesota and Iowa. He teaches Mass Communication and Society, Journalism History, and Theology and the Mass Media.



**Michael O'Donnell, associate professor**

He has been a sports reporter, editor and page designer for 25 years at newspapers and joined the Journalism Department in 1999. He teaches Editing, Writing and Design for the Web, Visual Communication, and Mass Communication and Society. He advises the Aquin.



**Dr. Debra Petersen, associate professor**

She has taught in Communication Studies since 1990. Her courses include Rhetorical Criticism and Rhetoric of Race, Class and Gender. She directed the Luann Dummer Center for Women at St. Thomas for six years.



**Dr. Ellen Riordan, assistant professor**

She joined Communication Studies in 2005 and teaches Electronic Media Production and Society and Documentary in American Culture. She is advisor to KUST, the cablecast radio station at St. Thomas.



*Continued on page 4*

*Continued from page 1*

both the majors made me well-rounded,” she said. “They really complemented each other well. You didn’t feel like you were re-learning anything, and that helped me a lot once I got my job.”

Before moving back to the Twin Cities and KSTP, Lutz worked for two years as a television reporter in Wausau, Wis., and felt like a “one-woman band” who did it all.

“I had all the skills I needed to go out and shoot a story and edit it,” Lutz said. “I didn’t have to be taught from scratch, so that really, really helped.”

Both of her majors had strong suits that help her now. Her journalism courses focused a lot on writing, while her communication courses emphasized technical aspects in shooting, editing and producing stories.

Lutz believes had she not taken both majors, she would not have received the same experience. She also thinks that combining the Journalism and Communication Studies departments is a great idea for students who want to study in those areas.

“I think it will be like one-stop shopping,” she said. “They’ll be able to get the balance between true, solid journalism but then they’ll be able to expand on those communication courses.”

— Marie Connor '07 ■

*Continued from page 3*

**Dr. Kevin Sauter, professor**

He focuses on political communication, and has taught in Communication Studies since 1982. Courses include Electronic Media Production, Television Criticism, and Public Speaking and Persuasion. He has taught J-Term courses in Hawaii, South Africa and Mali.



**Dr. Tim Scully, associate professor**

He has been in Communication Studies since 1990 and teaches Electronic Media Production, Television Production in the Field and Advanced Video Production. He has produced hundreds of video programs, including documentaries in Kenya and Australia. He advises Campus Scope, a student video magazine.



**Dr. Wendy Wyatt, assistant professor**

The four-year Journalism Department faculty member teaches Media Ethics, Media Writing, and Gender, Race and Mass Media, co-teaching the latter course in London during January Term. She coordinates the department’s Whalen Symposium on Media Ethics.



UNIVERSITY of ST. THOMAS

Department of Communication and Journalism  
Mail #5013  
2115 Summit Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105