



Professors and Students Collaborate on Research

By Jaclyn Antonacci

Izabella De Souza knew she needed to be published.

She knew that publishing research was a crucial step to reaching her ultimate goal of becoming a professor, but she was unsure where to start. That's where Dr. Pixy Ferris came in.

Ferris, a professor for the professional communication program, has published everything from journal articles to books. In the fall of 2013, the pair began working together on a study of luxury retailers and social media marketing.

"I knew Izabella as an undergraduate," Ferris said. "We have the same mental process, so it was a good fit."

Ferris was able to help to serve as a guide through the process, helping De Souza develop a robust research design and analyze complex data.

"She worked with me every step of the way," De Souza said. "Since she's done so much research and has been published so many times, she knows all the guidelines."

De Souza hopes to present at conferences around the nation, a skill Ferris helped to cultivate when she encouraged her students to present their research in the university's Martini Room in a style that mimicked professional conferences.

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Note from program director Professor Lorra Brown



Professor Lorra Brown

One of the most rewarding aspects of being an educator is hearing from graduates who attribute their success to what they learned in our M.A. in Professional Communication program, working with our faculty.

Many of our graduates have been recently promoted or earned coveted professional positions in global corporations, public relations firms, start-up companies and non-profits. Others have successfully transitioned into new careers as social media managers and digital marketing specialists.

These professional achievements are a testament to the quality of our students and our continued commitment to creating a curriculum that pairs a rigorous academic foundation with relevant strategic integrated marketing communication knowledge and technical skills needed for success in a myriad of rapidly evolving global industries.

In this issue, you'll hear about some of these successes, courses and projects which make our program so compelling. You'll also enjoy insights from faculty and professional partners who are industry leaders in communication, public relations and social media.

Please enjoy this newsletter created by the students of PCOM 6000: Survey in Professional Writing, taught by Professor Regina Pappalardo.

I'd love to hear about your professional achievements or discuss how we might help you to achieve your personal, academic and professional goals!

GRADUATE STUDIES WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

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Communication Leaders Offer PCOM Students Insight Into Industry Trends

By Ashley Farrell and Gabriella Mera

The Professional Communication graduate program is designed to keep its students one step ahead of the profession they are pursuing. The program

provides communication professionals with a foundation of knowledge and skills that are needed to achieve and advance in their fields.

All courses are taught by experienced faculty who are accomplished

scholars or who have held senior-level positions in global communication industries, major media networks and public relations firms.

"Today, professional communication does not allow for silos," explained Melissa Bass, WPUNJ professor and manager of internal communication for the United States Golf Association.

"Marketing, advertising, digital, social, customer service, sales and other functions all play a major role in creating an integrated communication plan. Students need to prepare to function as part of and within each of these marketing-based functions."

In addition to the program's experienced professors and rigorous academic courses, students attend seminars presented by senior leaders from global companies such as ESPN, Ruder Finn, IBM and Wyndham Worldwide. These professionals share insights and stories that help students keep up with industry trends and strategic approaches to help organizations manage their business challenges.

"Things have shifted so rapidly because consumers now control the buying process, as opposed to businesses controlling it in the past. It's important to note that blogs, social media and organic search traffic are the three least expensive methods of lead generation for businesses," stated Nicholas Schreck, a senior account manager at the DSM Group, a full service marketing, advertising and public relations agency.

"The biggest takeaway that anyone interested in this field should know is that people don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it."

According to recent guest speaker, Anthony Guerrieri, external relations leader at Mars, Inc., communication professionals are increasingly serving an "influencer relations" role and must consider third-party influencers well-beyond media including bloggers, researchers and analysts.

To be successful in this rapidly changing environment, professionals must be agile, versatile and strategic problem-solvers.

Why Did You Choose the PCOM Program? (in 140 characters or less)



Ashley Farrell

As a professional, I want to offer my future clients as much expertise as possible.



Jaclyn Antonacci

I knew I had more to learn and #WPUNJ felt like home.



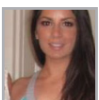
Juliana Quintero

The program allows me to connect the dots and evolve my skill set.



Amaryllis Muniz

I am able to apply what I am learning from the program to my career goals.



Kim Casamento

This program has allowed me to learn and grow as a professional. #WPUNJ



Gabriella Mera

This industry changes every day. I want to make sure I am as educated and prepared as possible.





Program Professors: Active in Academic Research

By Rebecca Costantini

The research faculty within William Paterson University's Professional Communication (PCOM) program examines a vast array of topics at the forefront of communication trends. Three faculty members in particular, Dr. Sharmila Pixy Ferris, Dr. Matthew Crick and Dr. Kyung-Hyan "Angie" Yoo, specialize in identifying communication patterns in videos, social media outlets, technology and education.

Ferris' research focuses on communication and technology and the impacts that technology has on society, especially higher education. Ferris' research originates from the late '90s when she was collecting data for her dissertation at the same time Tim Berners-Lee created HTML for the web. HTML was revolutionary and, according to Ferris, introduced a new virtual dimension to small groups and organizations.

"I do research because I love it," Ferris said. "I am interested in sharing my findings with a larger community, but my research primarily originates from my own interests."

Ferris has authored six books on technology and education. Her most recent publications include *Teaching, Learning, and the Net Generation* (2012) and *The Plugged-In Professor* (2013), co-authored by Hilary Wilder from William Paterson University's Educational Leadership and Professional Studies Department. Ferris and Wilder are currently working on a forthcoming book titled, *The Unplugged Professor*. Ferris is also conducting ongoing research with Professor Rosa Soto, director of Latin American and Latino Studies at William Paterson University, on how immigrants' eating habits are affected when they come to the United States.

Crick studies the beneficial impacts YouTube has on its users when used for educational purposes. Crick's research originated from a student focus group he held while composing his dissertation. During the focus group, a student explained that he watched a YouTube video on how to tie a tie because he did not have a father figure in his life that was able to teach him.

"My research prompted me to look further and identify

Program professor Dr. Matthew Crick

communication formations that were not being explored on the academic side,” Crick explained.

Inspired by the student’s story, Crick oriented his research toward analyzing how people utilized YouTube for purposes other than entertainment.

Crick’s research underscores YouTube’s educational value and also raises awareness of its power potential. According to YouTube, over one billion users visit the site each month, and 80% of the website’s user traffic is international. Every minute, hours of video are uploaded to the site domestically, reaching more concentrated amounts of people than leading cable providers.

“YouTube is the largest repository of moving images and sounds in our culture and in the world,” Crick said. “I want to alert the research community and encourage people

“I try to understand the role of technology in human behaviors to better inform researchers who are interested in online communication and also provide insights and implications to practitioners,” Yoo said.

Yoo is currently conducting three research projects that examine the audience participation and engagement levels of social media and online travel websites. Her latest project examines the dynamic between university-hosted social media accounts and students to gauge whether the university accounts promote campus camaraderie among students. PCOM graduate assistants Jaclyn Antonacci and Juliana Quintero are assisting Yoo with the project.

“We plan to investigate the students’ motivation to engage in university social media communication,” Yoo explained, “and also

to look at YouTube in a different way. There are important insights beyond the pet video.”

Yoo’s research is grounded in four elements of communication: digital communication, online consumer behavior, online trust and persuasive/human technology interaction.

the relationship between social media engagement and students’ sense of belonging in the university.”

Concurrent with her latest research, Yoo is analyzing 10 organizations’ Facebook posts and determining whether the audiences engage with the content through “Likes,” shares and comments.

Recent Publications

- Brown, L. (2014). 5 Signs You’re Not Holding Yourself Professionally Accountable. In *PR Daily*. New York: Ragan Communication, Inc.
- Crick, M. (Forthcoming 2015) *Power, Surveillance and Culture in YouTube’s Digital Sphere*.
- Ferris, S. P., & Soto, R. (under review). *An Ethnographic Analysis of US Culture and Caribbean Food Practices*. Under consideration by T. Cassidy & F. Pascheguignard, (Eds) for a book titled *Moving Meals and Migrant Mothers* now is a separate project, to be submitted to the University of Toronto Press.
- Ferris, S. P., & Wilder, H. (Under review). *Dark Age or Digital Renaissance? Education Revisited*. Submitted to *Multicultural Education and Technology Journal*.
- Pappalardo, R. (2014). *The Backgrounder Re-skin: Writing the Corporate Story in the Digital Era*. In *PR Writers Guidebook*. New York: PR News Press.
- Yoo, K.-H., & Gretzel, U. (2014). *Premises and Promises of Social Media Marketing in Tourism*. In McCabe, S. (Ed), *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing* (pp.491-504). New York: Routledge.
- Yoo, K.-H., Sigala, M., & Gretzel, U. (2014). *Exploring TripAdvisor*. In Egger R., & Gula I. (Eds.), *Open Tourism – Open Innovation, Crowdsourcing and Collaborative Consumption challenging the tourism industry*. Springer.

Yoo is also authoring a journal paper for a three-year project she is concluding on the credibility of travel reviews and evaluations.

Crick, Yoo and Ferris are three of many PCOM faculty members who encourage PCOM graduate students to start their own research projects in order to produce a comprehensive master’s project, a published journal article or a research poster for a conference. In order to

take advantage of research opportunities within the department, Crick, Ferris and Yoo suggest the following:

“Speak with different faculty in the department and see if their interests align with yours,” Ferris recommended.

“Write all of your ideas down in one place,” Crick advised.

“Find topics you want to investigate,” Yoo said, “and participate in WPU research day activities.”

“I do research because I love it.”

- Dr. Pixy Ferris

The Role of Graduate Assistants

By Tanka Vasilev

What is a graduate assistant?

For Juliana Quintero, who is a research graduate assistant in the Communication department, being a grad assistant “means that I get to work for the university and have them pay for my tuition.”

In her position, Juliana updates and maintains internship opportunities and resources for undergraduate students.

As the journalism and public relations graduate assistant, Jaclyn Antonacci has a wide range of responsibilities, including developing the Commu-

nication Department’s social media strategy. For Jaclyn, being a grad assistant puts her “in a position where I can help students.”

Kim Casamento, who will be graduating this May, works in the university’s marketing and public relations department carrying out social media campaigns. Her main focus is Twilyp, which was created by Kim and Jaclyn as a communication channel for students. With skills she has gained through her coursework and assistantship, Kim has been able to “start a business while I’m still in school” called Cas Social.



The graduate assistants work 20 hours per week.

Between working hours and classes, our graduate assistants are busy, but Juliana says she would “highly recommend anyone who is interested in furthering their education

to check out the graduate assistantship.”

For more information, visit www.wpunj.edu/admissions/graduate/prospective-students/graduate-assistantships.dot.

Student Profile: Amaryllis Muniz

By Juliana Quintero

William Paterson University graduate student Amaryllis Muniz ('15) has a love for learning, which stems from her family’s traditions and values. It was her family that inspired her desire to pursue her thirst for knowledge.

When choosing a graduate program, Muniz said she thought of the relationships she made with professors during her undergraduate studies at William Paterson University and felt that they were irreplaceable. This, and the campus’ proximity to

her home, sealed the deal.

The decision to come back to William Paterson University and join the Professional Communication program was fairly easy for Muniz. She wanted a program that would allow her to dive further into the facets of integrated communication. She has found this in the strategic and corporate communication track, which has an open curriculum that Muniz said has allowed her to develop her creative and intellectual abilities.

“My career is falling greatly into place, and

I chose this program to learn more about all aspects of communication and implement them within my work field.”

As a marketing communications coordinator at Fagor America, Muniz applies the knowledge she has learned in class to her current job, giving her a competitive advantage.

Muniz also works part-time for Shami Fine Watchmaking, a local watch repair service center. As the company’s marketing and social media coordinator, Muniz increased the company’s exposure and landed



Muniz, '15

a column in the well-known jewelry magazine JCK.

Muniz would like prospective students to consider pursuing a graduate degree, especially within the Professional Communications field, as it “opens several doors and opportunities for a bright and prosperous future.”

Alumni Spotlight: Sean Donovan

By Kim Casamento

Sean Donovan is a William Paterson alumnus who was part of the first graduating class of the Professional Communication program in 2012. Sean is currently the partner marketing specialist for iCIMS, a software company in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

When and why did you decide to get a master's degree at William Paterson?

I've always wanted to obtain my master's degree. After graduating from Stockton College, I decided to work for a year and gain some experience before going back to school. After researching a number of different programs in the area, and meeting with Professor Lorra Brown to discuss my professional goals and objectives, the decision became an easy one for me. I really liked the fact the program was brand new and thought I would benefit tremendously from taking the courses that were offered. After meeting with Professor Brown, I applied the next day and was excited to start that fall.

How has the program elevated your career?

My master's degree really helped polish the skills I obtained during my undergraduate studies. Right from the start, I learned how valuable writing skills were. I thought I was a decent writer until I handed in my first assignment. It was a major wake-up call, but through the guidance and support of the faculty, my writing improved dramatically within the first year of the program. I obtained my most recent position because I had my MA, and the candidates I was up against did not. In addition to polishing [your] professional skills, obtaining your MA opens up tons of doors and allows you to network with a ton of professionals.

What skills have you learned in the program?

Writing! The program made me a better writer, and it shows at my job on a daily basis. Before I started at my current role, I had to provide a number of writing samples. Throughout my time in the program, I saved all my work and put together a portfolio. I would not have had those samples to share if it was not for my time in the program. I would also have to say that the program made me more comfortable speaking in front of people and presenting. I had to present a number of different times through[out] my time at William Paterson, most notably when I presented my thesis in front of everyone in the program, including faculty.

Online Extra:

Visit <http://youtu.be/1ULTKf7bum0> for a full interview with Sean Donovan.



Professor/Student Research Continued

Despite De Souza's 2014 graduation, Ferris' mentorship has not halted at all. The pair is currently working on submitting their study to academic journals including the International Journal of Online Marketing.

The alumna also credits Ferris with assisting

her in finding her current role, adjunct professor at William Paterson University.

De Souza is one of many students to take advantage of the professional and academic guidance provided by the program's roster of knowledgeable professors.

According to De Souza, the publishing process is available to all students who seek it out.

"If a student knows they want to get published, that can be achieved," she said. "Professors are there to help. It's up to the student if they want to take it."

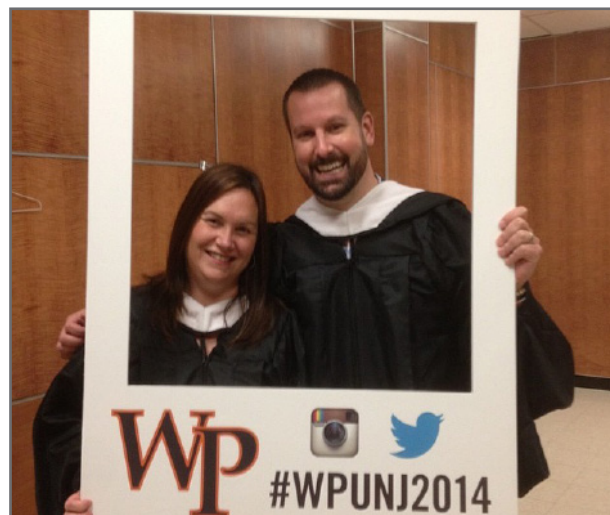
According to Ferris, research is beneficial to professors as well, and seeing students reach their goals and fulfill their ambitions is a rewarding experience.

"Every student brings their own passions," Ferris said. "And that's always what makes it interesting."

Expert Insight

*Tips shared by guest speakers in
PCOM 5110: Professional Seminar*

- “The secret of success is to get the bottom up and the top down. The support of leaders and employees being on the same page is vital.”
- **Andrea Trachtenberg**, *JCPR*
- “My four career tips to you are: be purposeful, be positive, be persistent, and be patient.”
- **Armando Triana**, *Coyne PR*
- “If you do good work, good work will follow. Build relationships with peers as much as managers and make them see what you are capable of.”
- **Anthony Guerreri**, *Mars, Inc.*
- “Whatever you choose to do, have a reason and passion behind it. Those are the things that people want; they want to see how you’ll change their life for the better.”
- **Nick Schreck**, *The DSM Group*
- “How you communicate makes a huge impact on your growth in the business. Listening, collaborating and having a clear mission in your role is vital.”
- **Liz Wellinghorst**, *W Communication*
- “Demonstrate an active and smart online presence and always out hustle your competition.”
- **Keith Green**, *Synergy Events*



Class of 2014 PCOM graduates Randi London and Brian Fanning at commencement.

Save the Dates

February 8, 2015

Graduate Open House

University Ballrooms, 1 to 3 p.m.

April 1, 2015

**Deadline for graduate
assistantship applications**

April 10, 2015

**The New Jersey Center for Social Media
Research Summit in partnership with
the M.A. in Professional Communication**
Ballroom C, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

April 19, 2015

Graduate Open House
University Ballrooms, 1 to 3 p.m.

Now accepting applications!

Apply online at www.wpunj.edu/graduate

Prospective students must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and an undergraduate grade point average of 2.75 (out of 4.0) in their major. Applications should include two academic letters of reference, a writing sample, and graduate record exam (GRE) scores. Further information is available through the Office of Graduate Admissions at 973.720.3641 or wpunj.edu/graduate.

Considering graduate school, but aren't sure? You may take up to three classes (nine credits) as a non-degree student before formally applying to our program!