Alumni receive first annual recognition award

Annie Adams Hamilton (BA '00) and Mike Polites (BA '96, MA '03) received the first annual Alumni Recognition Award from the Department of Communication Studies at its Spring 2010 Recognition Ceremony. The award was created by Communication Studies faculty to acknowledge the contributions that Communication Studies alumni have made to the department and to their respective professions.

During her undergraduate career, Annie Adams Hamilton was elected as the first President of the newly created COMM Club. Since receiving her degree, she has returned to Ball State on numerous occasions.

FIND OUT MORE:

TOURNAMENTS
The debate team will be competing in at least three tournaments this semester beginning with the first weekend of October at Anderson University. Other tournaments are in November at Capitol University, and December at Ball State.

PARTICIPATE
The debate team currently meets Mondays at 5:00 p.m. and is open to interested students.

MORE INFORMATION
Contact Mike Bauer at mbauer2@bsu.edu or Nicole Johnson at nljohnson@bsu.edu.

Debate team wins 2010 National Championship

The Ball State University Debate Team defeated teams from across the nation to win the National Educational Debate Association Championship in March at Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina.

With teams in all three final rounds and a final total of 100 team points, this was the team’s most successful national tournament.

Their victory was led by Director of Forensics Mike Bauer, Assistant Director of Debate Nicole Johnson and graduate student coaches Dallis Pike, Natascha Atwood, Stephanie Amato and Mike Bergmaier.

“I was impressed at how well the debaters balanced competitiveness with a desire to work with new students,” Bergmaier said. “They worked tremendously hard, but also took time out to recruit and mentor novices. It’s rare for a team to achieve that kind of balance.”
Department welcomes new faculty members

With nerves so intense she would become physically ill when speaking in front of new people, Assistant Professor Kathy Denker is proof that “anyone can get better (at public speaking) if they just work at it.”

Denker supervises the COMM 210 program, leads the large lecture portion of the class, and helps train and then supervise the graduate student instructors as they work with the discussion sections.

Denker enjoys her work at Ball State, especially because, “I... get to work with a great department and individually with really great graduate students.”

Denker is working on research that looks at the intersection of power and interpersonal relationships. Her current projects include how dual earner couples co-construct work-life concerns, how issues of class factor into dual earner couples co-construct work-life concerns and how advice books recreate work-life norms and how silencing occurs in the classroom.

As an Assistant Professor of Rhetoric, Dr. Kristen McCauliff teaches undergraduate and graduate classes in rhetoric and advises graduate student theses projects.

McCauliff, who joined the department last year, has a master’s in speech communication from Wake Forest University and a PhD in speech communication from the University of Georgia. While at the University of Georgia, McCauliff’s research largely involves rhetorical examinations of mediated political communication, particularly that which speaks to issues associated with gender and underrepresented minorities.

In her free time, McCauliff loves to cook and read blogs. She also claims to have an “unhealthy obsession with college sports,” loves her COMM 322 class, her colleagues and “especially teaching and working with

Ashley Coker was a graduate assistant for the Department of Communication Studies for two years before she joined the faculty in the fall of 2009. Coaching and traveling with the speech team are part of Coker’s position as Assistant Director of Individual Events, as is teaching departmental classes. Coker received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Ball State University and participated on the speech team while in college.

Whether teaching or coaching, Coker loves the challenge of creativity as well as watching students fall in love with their speeches. A proud collector of magnets, Coker loves rivers and lakes and is not one to fear much of anything. Her strategy to cope with stress? To “lay face down on the ground, even if I’m in public.”

Mary Moore returns to Ball State as Director of Individual Events. This semester Moore is involved with coaching the speech team as well as teaching Introduction to Public Speaking and Rhetoric of Popular Culture.

Moore received her master’s in communication studies from Ball State where she has previously been employed as an instructor.

Working closely with students and watching them grow into speakers, better students, and empowered citizens are what make Moore’s position enjoyable for her. Outside work Moore’s time is occupied by her family, including being the mother of 6-year-old Lincoln and 4-year-old twins Woody and Lucy.
Program provides real-world experience

The Communication Studies department provides opportunities for students to gain real-world experience through the Immersive Learning program.

According to program supervisor Nicole Johnson, students participating in this year’s immersive project range from Telecommunications and Communication Studies majors, to Political Science majors, with a variety of minors represented.

Johnson said an important aspect of the program is the leadership opportunities it provides students, explaining that, “students take the lead in making decisions” in the student-led project.

This semester the immersive learning class, entitled: “Advocacy and Justice: Immersive Learning in Debate,” is working with Broad Ripple High School (BRHS) and Madison County Problem Solving Courts. At BRHS, students will be teaching debate skills and preparing high school students for a debate competition that will be hosted on the Ball State campus. In working with Madison County Problem Solving Courts, students will be preparing a multi-media PR presentation to be used for educating local governing bodies about the alternative sentencing initiatives.

“Our students gain so much valuable real-world experience from immersive projects,” Johnson said. “Along with establishing relationships outside of the university, our students are also exposed to decisions, dilemmas and triumphs that would be impossible to replicate in a traditional classroom setting.”

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Communication Studies at IUPUI, also is a prized departmental alumni. He has contributed to the education of the department’s undergraduate students as both a graduate teaching assistant and a guest speaker. In addition, he delivered an inspirational keynote address at the 2009-2010 COMM Club Alumni Conference.

Reflecting on his award, Polites stated, “When I found out that the department wanted to honor me ..., I was truly humbled .... I take so much pride in being able to give back whenever I can, whether it’s to the department, the ATO fraternity, or the university. I would encourage other students to do the same.”

Polites demonstrates this same attitude through his training and consulting activities and his talents as a stand-up comedian. His latest enterprise is “Comics That Care,” an organization through which comedians donate their time and talents to support local charities such as the Salvation Army.
Communication Professional Network club provides networking resource for students

The Communication Professional Network (CPN) is a student club that provides all CCIM students with opportunities to network with area professionals and alumni, and practice professionalism.

Started last year by Journalism graduate Shayla Kaiser, CPN hosted a career panel last fall and a speed-networking event last spring. CPN plans to continue coordinating these two events, and is working on also hosting a more social event this year.

“The Communication Professional Network is truly the first student club that bridges the gap between the four departments in CCIM,” said Nicole Johnson, faculty advisor for CPN. “This unique position provides the students who join this club a sharper edge to approaching their careers after graduating. In addition, students and alumni benefit by keeping in touch with campus, but also learning from predecessors.”

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Working with students outside of the classroom and building lasting relationships are reasons Nicole Johnson enjoys her position as Instructor of Communication Studies. Johnson wears many hats, including serving as Faculty Advisor for the department’s immersive learning program, working as coach and Assistant Director of the debate team and teaching classes.

Johnson received her master’s in communications from Ball State in 2006 and worked with the University’s Correctional Education Program from 2006-2007. Prior to joining the staff at Ball State, Johnson worked as a visiting instructor for the communication department at Berry College in Rome, Georgia.

An accomplishment Johnson achieved recently was climbing the Sydney Harbor Bridge in Sydney, Australia.

Instructor Gayle Houser enjoys the opportunity she has teaching undergraduate students and working with the students in COMM Club. In addition to teaching four classes Houser is the faculty advisor for COMM Club, serves as scholarship faculty advisor for Chi Omega fraternity and serves on various department, college and university committees. Houser, who received her master’s in speech communication from Auburn University, came to Ball State from Utah State University where she taught in a lecturer position. Prior to that, Houser accumulated eight years teaching experience as a senior lecturer at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Ariz.

In her free time Houser likes to grind her own wheat and make fresh homemade bread.