

# COMMentary

September 2011 | Volume 2 | Issue 1

## CCIM goes to China

By Tynesia Ross  
Graduate Assistant

Travelling more than 6,600 miles away this past summer, students and faculty from the Dept. of Communication Studies and the Dept. of Telecommunications teamed up for an immersive learning project in China.

The project, which lasted six weeks from May 10th until June 19th, was funded by a four-year grant through the Rinker Center for International Programs to aid the travel of Ball State students to China. The hope is that Ball State University will build a lasting relationship with Hong Kong Baptist University, a university also respected

for its communications program.

The trip was led by two members of the Ball State University faculty: Nicole Johnson, Instructor and Assistant Director of Debate, and Chris Flook, Instructor of Telecommunications. The pair took five undergraduate students and two graduate students on the trip.

"We had metaphorical classes," said Johnson when describing the structure of their curriculum in China. Not only were the students equipped with a reading list that covered topics ranging from the state of the economy in certain regions to historical elements of specific cultural aspects, but students had to maintain a blog and complete "mini" research assignments on a weekly basis.

"We would give them a prompt on



Submitted Photo

**CHINA TRIP** — Immersive Learning group near near Houhai Park in Beijing. From left to right: Ariana Brown, Matt Wolf, James Almquist, Stephani Amato, Rachel Lefkakis, Rashietta Woods, Jasmine Bussey, Nicole Johnson and Chris Flook."

Monday and one example would be to find something in Hong Kong...either a phenomenon or something that they were really interested in... and compare . . . how it is now under Chinese rule to how it was under British rule," explained Johnson.

Students had about one month to finish their final projects when they returned to Muncie. One student designed a mock website that displayed pictures and text explaining certain aspects of the Chinese culture. Stephanie Amato, a Communications Studies major, did her final project on how sports are often used as a common language, not only in the social sense but how it holds influence in the political realm as well.

"One thing I found fascinating was most people we came into contact with related the United States with basketball,

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## Young and Williamson Receive "Distinguished Alumni" Award

By Beth A. Messner  
Associate Professor

In April 2011, Dr. Kelly Young and Mrs. Nancy Williamson received "Distinguished Alumni" Awards from the Department of Communication Studies. The awards, presented at the annual Awards and Recognition Ceremony, are designed to honor the contributions that alumni have made to the department and their chosen careers.

Kelly Young graduated with both a Bachelor's Degree ('96) and a Master's degree ('97) from the Department of Communication Studies. After serving as an instructor at John Carroll University, Kelly entered the doctoral program at Wayne State University and completed his Ph.D. in 2005. He then joined the Wayne State faculty where he currently serves as an Assistant Professor and Director of Forensics.

Throughout his career, Kelly has been devoted to the world of academic debate. As an undergraduate, he was recognized as an All American Debater for Ball State's

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Submitted Photo

**ALUMNI HONORED** — Nancy Williamson and Kelly Young received their Distinguished Alumni Awards from Beth Messner.

**BRANDI FRISBY (M'07) AND KERRY BYRNES (B' 05; M'07)** - published (with 3 others) "Topic Avoidance, Everyday Talk, and Stress in Romantic Military and Non-Military Couples," *Communication Studies*, Jul/Aug 2011, 62, 3, 241-257.

**KRISTI SHEELER (B' 87; M'89)** - was appointed Chair of the Department of Communication Studies, IUPUI.

**DANA WYATT (M'10)** - is an Assistant Marketing Design Business Analyst with Country Insurance and Financial Services.

**CARA COLLINS (B'07; M'09)** - is Relationships Manager for Branch Banking & Trust in Scotland Neck, North Carolina.

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## Kendra Tarr joins faculty

By Nathan Erwin  
Student

Kendra Tarr may be the only new faculty member to join the Dept. of Communication Studies this fall, but she is far from new to the department. Tarr completed both her undergraduate degree and her Masters degree in Communication Studies at Ball State. She has always found teaching to be her forte: "As kids we would play school and I would always be the teacher."

She believes her continuous tenure with the department can be credited to the faculty who have taught here. "They inspired me to teach in the Communication Studies department; they are good role models," she says.

During Fall Semester, Tarr will be teaching Introduction to Fundamentals of Public Communication (COMM 210), Interviewing (COMM 325), and Interpersonal Communication (COMM 440). She also will be a COMM Club advisor, for which she is actively recruiting new members.

As a Master's candidate, Tarr received the "Outstanding Teaching Award" from the Dept. of Communication Studies (Spring 2011) and the "Excellence in Teaching Award" from Ball State's Graduate School (Spring 2011).



Tarr

While some of the classes that Tarr is teaching are new to her, her extensive background in Communication Studies as well as her genuine interest and recognized skill in teaching, will serve her well in this endeavor.

Don't think that Tarr is strictly business, however. If you visit her office, you will notice various Star Wars memorabilia. "I'm pretty much a Star Wars nerd," says Tarr.

## How to secure your ideal internship

By Nathan Erwin  
Student

Internship experiences for Communication Studies' students have been known to run the gamut: from human resources and sales to animal rescue and fundraising, to name a few. Whether students are working in a professional office or serving as a volunteer, students understand the importance of internships.

The foundation of a good internship begins with good planning. There are several very important questions students should consider when securing an internship: What field do I want to work in? What type of company do I want to work for? What locations would I consider? Am I willing to take either a paid or unpaid internship?

The next step in the process is to apply for an internship. Dr. Peggy Fisher, the Internship Coordinator for the Dept. of Communication Studies, should be your guide in the application process.

She encourages students to apply for as many internships as possible.

Ashley Keeling, an Organizational Communication major, was a Human Resources Intern at the Autozone Distribution Center in Danville, Illinois this summer. She noticed that applying was not always the easiest process: "I only applied to about four places," she said, "I got extremely lucky and this internship basically fell in my lap." Ashley advises "Apply to an internship that interests you. There is no point in being absolutely miserable for 150 or 300 hours. Keep applying until you find the internship that is right for you."

Devanny Kuhn, an Interpersonal Communication major, interned as a bridal consultant at an event planning company in Louisville, Kentucky. Devanny advises, "Just put yourself out there and call a company to learn more about them; putting your name out there is a

great way to network."

Sheri Neikamp, a graduate student in Communication Studies worked with the Animal Rescue Fund. Her experience was different from the other two. She used established connections to land her internship: "Because I had previously had an internship with ARF, I only applied to work with them. I wanted to use my established connections there to be able to do more advanced work during my graduate level internship." For those considering graduate school, this could be useful to remember.

No matter how you land an internship, the work experience can help you gain insight into possible career fields and move forward on your career path. This was the case for Jack Barfell, a Communication Studies student who did his internship with a Public Broadcasting station in Fort Wayne. He worked in the

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team. For the past 14 years, he has coached collegiate academic debate, successfully instilling the value of competitive debate in many students. Several of Kelly's students have placed as quarter-finalists and semi-finalists at the national tournament of the National Forensics Association (NFA), the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA), and the American Debate Association (ADA). He also has been recognized as a Top Regional Judge by CEDA on numerous occasions and has served on the CEDA Topic Selection Committee and the ADA Executive Committee.

Kelly's contributions to Ball State's Department of Communication Studies have been equally as substantial as the contributions that he has made to the world of academic debate. In particular, he has returned to judge debate tournaments and has been instrumental in facilitating the graduate ca-

**"Kelly's contributions... have been equally as substantial as the contributions that he has made to the world of academic debate. "**

reers of several Ball State Masters students who sought to pursue doctoral work at Wayne State University. When reflecting on his experience at Ball State and its influence

on his career, Kelly stated, "Rarely does a day go by where some words of wisdom from Richard Nitcavic, Mike Bauer, Beth Messner, or Jackie Buckrop run through my head as I work with students and faculty. I greatly appreciate being recognized as an Alumni of the Year from the department and remain ever thankful for the knowledge, skills, opportunities, and life lessons I received during my time in the department."

Nancy Williamson initially started on a path that differed from that pursued by many Communication Studies students. In 1988, she earned a Bachelor of Theology and Missions degree from Bethany College of Missions (Bloomington, MN). During her

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## Messner Receives "Dean's Faculty Award"

Dr. Beth Messner's Fall semester began on an exciting note when she received the "Dean's Faculty Award." The award was presented by Dean Roger Lavery during the August 19, 2011 meeting of faculty from the College of Communication, Information, and Media.

The award is given annually to the faculty member in the college who the Dean believes has demonstrated the highest level of performance in scholarship, teaching and service. Lavery cited Mess-

ner's "top tier" teaching, research and scholarly presentations on hate speech, and exceptional service efforts in the area of diversity and administrative support as reasons for her selection.

According to the Dean, "When it comes to Beth's work ethic, think 'Energizer Bunny.'" Department Chair Glen Stamp agrees. "Beth is involved in so much of the work in the department, the college, and the university. She is truly invaluable."

**"When it comes to Beth's work ethic, think 'Energizer Bunny.'"**

**Dean** | College of Communication, Information and Media

**ANNIE (ADAMS) HAMILTON (BA '00)** - has been named Vice President, Relocation Services for CENTURY 21 Scheetz Relocation Services in Indianapolis, IN.

**YILI LI (M '11)** - presented a paper entitled "West and East in Organizational Communication" at the SAUPO conference in Atlanta, Georgia in April 2011.

**MIKE BERGMAIER (M '11) AND NICOLE JOHNSON (M '06)** - received a "Top Paper" award from the Argumentation and Forensics Division of the National Communication Association. They will be presenting their paper entitled "Embracing the Diversity of Voices: Mechanisms for Pedagogical Inclusiveness in a Fragmented Debate Community" at the November 2011 NCA conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana.

**BETHANY (PLANTON) TURNER (B' 11)** - is a grant writer/fundraiser for the recently opened Tuscaloosa office of the United Saints Recovery Project. This nonprofit organization assists economically distressed neighborhoods that are recovering from disaster and helps them become more resilient when responding to future disasters.

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If you are an alumnus of the Department of Communication Studies and would like to contribute information about yourself for a future issue of *COMMENTARY*, please contact Glen Stamp at: [gstamp@bsu.edu](mailto:gstamp@bsu.edu) or Beth Messner at: [bmessner@bsu.edu](mailto:bmessner@bsu.edu).

Please note the year you graduated and whether you received a Bachelor's or Master's degree, and any information about current employment, involvement in the community, awards/honors, or other life events that you wish to share.

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### *Editor's Note*

Alumni notes are based on information received from the Alumni Association and individual e-mails. The Department of Communication Studies apologizes for any omissions or changes that have occurred since receiving this information.

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through sports we had a common ground for communication,” explained Amato.

Visiting influential landmarks like the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and the World Trade Financial Center were only a few of the many stops that the group made. Potential networking opportunities led students and faculty to companies like Jones Lang LaSalle, the second largest real estate company in the world; CNN International; CCTV, a television network in China; and ESPN International.

“The students had an opportunity to network professionally, but the purpose for each visit differed slightly,” said Johnson.

### FIND OUT MORE:

Students interested in more information can contact the Rinker Center for International Programs at [intadmit@bsu](mailto:intadmit@bsu).

Students received a variety of presentations at these organizations. For example, an ESPN representative talked about how coverage may differ from country to country. At Jones Lang LaSalle, students listened to a presentation on the importance of internal and external communication and the many different cultural approaches to public relations.

“There is such a huge benefit to learning about a new culture while experiencing that culture,” explains Johnson. She strongly believes that students should take

the opportunity to travel internationally to experience the way that their view of the world can be reshaped.

The students weren’t the only ones who were experiencing new roles as researchers and bloggers. Johnson’s role change from an instructor at Ball State University to an instructor in an immersive learning project was an eye opening experience for her.

“Instructors that work on immersive projects tend to serve more as mentors rather than just the person that is making a decision on the quality of your work. You also develop friendships and very close relationships with the students that you travel with because you all are experiencing a level of vulnerability that is never really experienced in a classroom,” said Johnson.

With two years left on this grant, the opportunities are endless for students and faculty interested in travelling to a place with such a rich history. Whether you are looking to earn six credit hours in a setting outside of the classroom or want the opportunity to meet professionals working in a rapidly globalizing world, this trip is packed full of opportunities for personal as well as professional growth.



*Submitted Photos*

**TOP PHOTO** — Ariana Brown, Rashieta Woods, Nicole Johnson, and Stephani Amato on the Great Wall.

**BOTTOM PHOTO** —Gulou, the Drum Tower of Beijing

## AWARD | continued from page 3

study at Bethany and immediately after, she devoted herself to mission work in both the Dominican Republic and Mexico. Her interest in being of service to others and her ability to communicate fluently in Spanish enabled her to help improve the quality of life in the communities that she served. Nancy later returned to school and earned her Bachelor’s degree in Organizational Communication from Ball State’s Department of Communication Studies in 2008.

Nancy currently serves as the Educational Research Manager for Astral Industries (Lynn, IN), a company that produces steel products such as burial caskets. In this position, she is responsible for designing and implementing training and development programs and managing

the efforts of other employees. Nancy also serves as a training consultant to People Resources (St. Louis, MO), an international organization that companies can hire to provide their employees with a variety of counseling, wellness, financial, medical and other services. Prior to these efforts, she served as the Director of Communication for Muncie Alliance Church for several years. In this capacity, she was engaged in training, team development, systems management, and strategic planning. Through her career in training and development, Nancy has found a place to pursue her passion for problem-solving and helping small businesses deal with difficulties in smart and collaborative ways.

In addition to demonstrating excellence in her field, Nancy has made important

contributions to the Department of Communication Studies by serving as a dependable and insightful guest speaker in Communication Studies courses and as a regular participant in the department’s bi-annual Alumni Conference. In this way, she has provided Communication Studies’ students with a powerful model of professionalism. Yet, Williams is quick to credit others for their support of her work. As she notes, “Without the teaching, encouragement and mentoring of the... Communication faculty, the reality of my dreams would never have been reached. They laid a solid academic foundation for me, and always saw the future filled with opportunity creating an ‘I can’ attitude. . . . I’m very grateful for my alma mater.”

# Teaching assistants learn the ropes

By Liz Spangler  
Student

Communication Studies teaching assistants are a family of their own. Before the semester even starts, they attend a three-hour social, go through hours of training and have a chance to meet faculty and staff. By the end of the week, it's almost as if they've known each other forever.

The week begins with a three hour social for just the teaching assistants. They have the opportunity to meet and get to know each other before they endure hours of required training to be able to teach their classes.

Then the 34 teaching assistants must go through 20 hours of training to be prepared to teach a COMM210 class. They learn things such as how to lead a class discussion, how to create lesson plans, the best way to answer class questions and the typical grading scale used for the class. They also had to go through some university training to get an overview of univer-

sity policies, services and grades.

Teaching assistants are not only from the Communication Studies department. Graduate students outside of the department are eligible for the assistantship position, but must be standout students in their department and have strong public speaking skills themselves given that they will be teaching a class about the subject.

The Friday before classes begin features a faculty and staff cookout where the teaching assistants can meet and get to know the faculty they will be working closely with during the semester.

Once the semester starts, the teaching assistants must attend weekly meetings with Kathy Denker to check up on how they are doing within their classes. "I'm really proud of how the teaching assistants are doing, they are catching on quickly," says Denker.



*Submitted Photos*

**COOKOUT** —Graduate assistants socialize with faculty at a cookout the Friday before classes start.

## *Students team with MOMS to teach debate*

By Tynesia Ross  
Graduate Assistant

The end of September signals the start of an important immersive learning project for select members in the Muncie community.

Titled "Advocacy and Justice: Immersive Learning and Debate," this project will give Ball State students the unique opportunity to teach middle school students the art of debate. Heading this project is Nicole Johnson, Instructor and Assistant Director of Debate.

"My students are doing three things: they are tutoring students at Motivate Our Minds (MOMS) in debate, they are preparing a proposal for Ball State to host the 2012 Governors debate and they are also competing in debate themselves," says Johnson.

The students working on this project come from departments across campus. Jordan Habayeb, Chelsea Roberts, Brooke Ebert and Emma Giorgio are Communication Studies majors. While Kassie Markovich is studying English Education,

Harrison Bartel is studying Telecommunications. Representing the Dept. of Legal Studies is Chris Kozak and from Political Studies, Lauren Henry. Regardless of their major, each student will be earning nine credit hours in the Dept. of Communication Studies.

Starting on September 26th, students will be heading to Motivate Our Minds to volunteer two hours per week. One hour will be dedicated to helping Drew Shermeta, the MOMS faculty contact, while the other hour will be spent facilitating the curriculum.

Johnson wanted to focus this particular project on Motivate our Minds because she believes in the organization's mission. MOMS also has a big population of middle schoolers, which Johnson states is "an ever-increasing population of students that are getting involved in debate."

Motivate Our Minds was established in 1987 and has been dedicated to helping youth from Muncie's low-income areas.

Focusing on tutoring children in subjects like reading and math, MOMS continues to be an important and influential part of the Muncie community.

At the end of the program in December, the entire project will culminate in a debate that will take place over the course of a week. Johnson also hopes that by the students focusing on such a specialized activity like debate, that they will inadvertently build fundamental skills like critical thinking, improved literacy and improved communication skills.

"At the very least, if we leave MOMS and have a noticeable difference in just the interest and the activity of debate, we would then have tapped into what our goal was. Having the interest and just engaging in debate will take care of the rest," added Johnson.

**FIND OUT MORE:**

Interested in learning more about this immersive learning program? Contact Nicole Johnson at: [njohnson@bsu.edu](mailto:njohnson@bsu.edu).

## SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY | 17

**Communication Studies Tailgating Party**  
Bethel Lot across from Scheumann Stadium  
4:00-7:00 p.m.

**Football** vs. Buffalo, 7 p.m. kickoff

TUESDAY | 20

**Professional In Residence** guest speaker  
Matthew Tully, 7:30 p.m., LB125

FRIDAY | 23-25

**"Fall Fiesta" Speech Tournament**  
Western Kentucky University

FRIDAY | 23

**Professional In Residence Fall News Roundup**  
10:00 a.m., Letterman Building and Ball  
Communication Building

SATURDAY | 24

**CCIM Deans List Ceremony**  
Emens, 10 a.m.

**Football** vs. Army, 2 p.m. kickoff

SUNDAY | 25

**T.A. Game Night**  
Graduate Student Bullpen, 6:00 p.m.

TUESDAY | 27

**Communication Club Charity Kickball  
Tournament**  
Field Hockey Area, 5:00 -7:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY | 28

**Professional In Residence**  
Otis Sanford, 7:30 p.m., Pruis Hall

## OCTOBER

SATURDAY | 8

**NEDA Workshop and Debate Tournament**  
Capital University, TBA

FRIDAY | 14

**NFA LD Tournament**  
BSU, TBA

SATURDAY | 15

**NEDA Tournament**  
BSU, TBA

## COMMENTARY

SEPTEMBER 2011  
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

### | Editor and design |

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Beth Messner, Associate Professor

COMmentary is published monthly for the faculty, students and alumni of the Ball State University Department of Communication Studies. Any comments or suggestions should be directed to: [bsucommstudies@gmail.com](mailto:bsucommstudies@gmail.com)

INTERNSHIP | continued from page 2

**"immerse yourself in the culture and learn from the individuals who you work with; they are the experts at what they do and can likely give you insight into a new perspective you never knew about."**

Robin Phelps | Graduate Student

business and marketing department and helped raise funds for the organization. Jack advises that, "Internships give you great experience in the work force and provides the leverage you need after graduation when looking for jobs."

Ashley's experience helped her better understand what it is like to work in Human Resources: "I conducted periodic interviews with the employees; I tried to ask (the employees) questions that would encourage conversation about what was going on in the warehouse and what HR could do to help."

Devanny's internship highlighted the importance of communication in establishing relationships with clients: "I was constantly communicating with either the bride, the mother of the bride or the vendors... I had learned that you have to form a relationship with them because they have to trust you on a high level."

Graduate students Robin Phelps and Trevor Nash also learned important lessons through their summer internships at Ball State University. Robin worked for the Sponsored Programs Office. Based on her experience, she encourages interns to "immerse yourself in the culture and learn from the individuals who you work with; they are the experts at what they do and can likely give you insight into a new perspective you never knew about." Trevor's internship was

with the Building Better Communities program. He learned two important lessons: (1) "there will be times when you will have to motivate yourself to do the work" and (2) "enjoying the job makes work easier, if you only care about the pay check then you probably will not be performing at your fullest potential."

If you are required to do an internship or are simply interested in what an internship can offer you, see Dr. Peggy Fisher. Dr. Fisher has valuable information to share about the search process and also is responsible for approving your internship journey.

Her office is located in LB 312 ; she also can be reached at 765-285-1958 or [Pfisher@bsu.edu](mailto:Pfisher@bsu.edu). Internship information, including information about application procedures, can be found on the department's website as well: [www.bsu.edu/commstudies](http://www.bsu.edu/commstudies). An internship can be an incredibly valuable experience for both your education and your career. Do not hesitate, start applying today!

### FIND OUT MORE:

- Students interested in more information can contact Dr. Peggy Fisher at [pfisher@bsu.edu](mailto:pfisher@bsu.edu), 765-285-1958 or in her office in LB 312.
- Information about application procedures can be found on the departments website: [www.bsu.edu/commstudies](http://www.bsu.edu/commstudies).

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